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MF026 Islands and Bridges: Communities of Memory in Old Town, Maine

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Benoit Bouchard, Bernard “Bing” Bouchard, Albert “Bert” Morin, Walter Nadeau, and Beatrice Morin, interviewed by Amy Bouchard Morin, Part 3

Benoit Bouchard

Bernard Bouchard

Albert Morin

Walter Nadeau

Bertrice Morin

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FEBRUARY 18, 1994

ALBERT MORIN'S KITCHEN

Session of Reminiscence with: Benoit Bouchard, Bernard (Bing) Bouchard, Albert (Bert) Morin, and Walter Nadeau (also Beatrice Morin--Bert's wife)

ABM Amy Bouchard Morin
 BJB Benoit Bouchard
 BB Bernard (Bing) Bouchard
 AM Albert (Bert) Morin
 WN Walter Nadeau
 BM Beatrice Morin

BJB I think we'd better start with Walter, because I've lost a lot there. I remember so much--because Walter's older brother Wilson and I--he used to haul me over to dad's store. Now the main thing--most of that property in that area belonged to the Nadeau's--your grandfather.

WN All three houses. BJB All three houses belonged to them--and the house I lived in was a barn. WN Stable.

BJB The stable was in back and the ice shed was in back--because my father used to cut the ice down below here. That ice was 30 inches thick. I'd like to have Walter start on this--I think he'd be the one to tell. You go ahead, Walter, as far as you can remember about your--that property all together and I can add on.

WN Well, you see the middle house where the Choinard's lived--that was the old Nadeau house. That's where my grandfather lived. BJB That's where I was born.

WN Yeah. And my grandfather lived there. Well, my grandfather--of course my family was kind of a funny situation. My grandmother was married to a Mr. Nadeau--which was Pearly Nadeau's father--well they had two children and then this Mr. Nadeau died and my grandmother married my grandfather--which there were four children, which I was in. And then my grandmother died and my grandfather remarried a woman--we used to call it through Sears & Roebuck catalog--he ordered her from Canada. He ordered her from Canada. So she was twenty years younger than he was. Well, he didn't live too long and they had two children, so the first and the last wasn't related at all--but we was all Nadeaus. See what I mean--nobody was related, just the ones in the middle were related--half brothers and half sisters and what have you. And so my grandmother went back to Canada not--my step-grandmother went back to Canada and she sold the property. My father took the middle -- er the store and he sold the two other houses to Choinards and Bouchards. That's how that came about.

- BJB Well, I always wondered how that was--because see your grandmother built the house that--I was born in the Choinard hou--the house in between.
- WN Yeah. See, my grandfather ran the store for 32 years and my father ran it for 16 years
- AM Now, you say where you lived was a barn. I don't remember that.
- BJB There was a barn in back. Definitely a barn-- WN It was in back of the house. BJB And that's why Pa bought the house that you (Beatrice) lived in--LaPlante. My father bought that house so he had an opening in back to build his garage. Now that garage was built right on the corner in back of Beaulieu's. Then Pa had that barn--- WN And there were sheds there.
- AM Now when did WN The Treadwells and then Mrs. Tedd.. AM When did the Treadwells move there?
- WN Oh, a long time ago. But not before--before that was St. Louis. BJB St. Louis..yeah.. Ludger.
- WN You remember the one that had a peg leg?
- AM Oh. Pegleg St. Louis used to live there. WN He used to live where Jerry Lawrence used to live. Well, before that he used to live there.
- BJB Yeah. Well that house burned. And then Treadwell bought the place and then Mrs. Tedd. WN That house didn't burn--it was the house next to it. BJB It was in back of it between Taylor's and.. WN It was right betw--it was where the Treadwells live now and then there was a little house right there. And they lived--you (Beatrice) lived right the house in front of it. Remember the road went like this--
- BM And there was a house that burned too don't forget. The house that burned was there. That was--
- BJB That burned while you were living there. BM Yeah. AM That's where she was....
- WN I can remember..I was 12 years old and I saw Mr.--oh, Johnny Clukey's grandfather. Here he is standing on his shed with a little garden hose trying to keep the fire off his shed. ABM Trying to keep it off his shed? WN Fatty Cyr came by and he stepped on the fence and knocked the whole fence down. What was tragic...Some of the kids came out one side and some came out the other and the father didn't know which came out where. They thought the father was inside and then the Father thought

the mother was--

BM That's right. My father didn't know where they were. My mother got out of the window with the baby and my father got out the best he could with the others. ONeal was the baby then and he was so small they could put him in a teacup.

WN He was just a baby.

BM Yeah. He was a little, little infant.

BB Do you remember when my father had a poolroom?

BJB/WN/AM Oh, yeah.

ABM Where was that, Bing? BB Behind the -- ABM In the house across from where he (BJB) lived.

BJB That was in the front room of your house.

BM When he was running the poolroom--he was still barbering though wasn't he?

BB Oh yeah. He had the Barbershop up there and the poolroom was in the middle. We were upstairs...we were living upstairs and dad heard a noise down--so he went down and Wilfran Treadwell was breaking in. ABM Oh, geez. BB Oh, he was a character.

BJB When we were out to the lake his mother came and--we never locked the doors-- BB Oh, no.

WN She was worse than the kids.

BJB Well, she came in and stole money out of the china closet there.

BB She'd stick up for the kids..there was nothing you could do.

BJB Oh, no. Oh, no.

WN They'd steal something--they'd be in their shed and Guy Moores he'd come up and get the bicycles out of the shed...

BM I wonder if he's still living?

WN Wilfran? AM The last I heard he was in New York. BM I heard he was. The last we heard he was. WN He was about your age wasn't he, Bert? AM Yeah. Yeah.

BJB Yeah. He used to play with us. WN I remember..Wilfran and Ted Shina and Lavoie all joined the service at that same time.

- AM Well, Wilfran--that's where he met Ted Shina--he brought him home on vacation and that's how he met Agnes St. Louis and they got married.
- WN See..That's how that came about. A lot of history. Your talking about stores. You go right out from Front Street around--I can tell you about all the stores.
- AM We mentioned that one day and we forgot all ab--never even thought about Freddy Taylor's store.
- WN You remember, Guago's? BJB Oh, yes. BM Oh, yeah. That was in the middle of the hill, huh? WN Bernier's..right down the bottom of the hill. BM Bottom of the hill, yeah.
- ABM Now Guago's--what did they do there? WN Oh, it was kind of a little-- AM Just a little hole in the wall. BJB It was right on the hill there. WN As you come up Front Street--you'd just barely come over the tracks and there was a little store right there. AB Wasn't that really dug out--it looked like it was dug out.. AM There was a little back room in there--built on the ledge.
- BB I had a barber shop there. BJB That's right, too. AM We used to go there and play penny-anti.
- WN Yeah, there was a ledge in the back room there. ABM You'd go play penny-anti on the ledge? AM Oh, Yeah.
- BB Do you remember the barbershop there? AM Yes. At the foot of the Island hill? Sure. BB Now right there where you are talking about. We used to--upstairs where Guago's used to be. And then I moved it across the street to.. BM Cormier-- BB Cormier.
- BJB Cormier--downstairs.
- WN You know over Guago's there was Mrs. Henderson that lived there--and of course she had a wayward house.
- ABM Oh, one of those houses.
- AM Yeah, oh yeah. WN She used to entertain all the lumbermen.
- BJB Patoune was a customer. BB Oh, Patoune. BJB Oh, boys, oh boys. AM We had a little bit of everything up here.
- BB I remember Mr. Thibodeau--down here on the corner, and there was Landry's. AM Of course, Mr. Thibodeau was blind. BJB He was blind.

ABM Now, is he the one that sold the candy and he had to have coins because he knew what the coins were?

AM Right. Because, once in awhile--see he'd get stuck. Somebody would pass him a dollar bill and they'd claim it was a five dollar bill. That happened to him a few time that I know off. I used to go down there..I remember my father used to go down about every night, and I'd go down with him... and there was always a bunch of old men in there and they used to have The Commercial and they'd ask me to read the paper to them. I used to read the paper to them. [A lot of talking at once - I picked out what I could understand.] ABM So you used to read the paper to the fellow that was blind... or to the whole bunch of them. AM Yeah. They'd hear about something that happened was in the paper they'd make me read about it. ABM They couldn't read. AM None of them could read..none of them. They were all old men at that time. You see..I was born my father was an old man.

BJB My father used to have a barbershop at that time..And then Beaulieu had a barbershop where the Shuffle Inn is--way, way back.

BB Beaulieu? BJB Yeah. BB Oh, yeah, yeah. WN They owned the property there. The Beaulieus always owned that property. BJB And he rented that and the Beaulieus lived right across from him, remember? WN What was the name of the Beaulieu guy that was about your age..we used to have a nickname?

BJB Chin. Chin Beaulieu. What was his first name? WN Oh, cripe, Nobody had first names up here. BJB I remember I put the siding on that house when I was in high school--on our house--the house that you (Walter) live in. I put the siding on there, but I was not strong enough to carry that up the ladder, you know...so he hired Chin and..oh, what was his name--what was the boxer's name then...WN Johnny Bouchard, you mean? BJB No. No. from the Island...WN Clement Violette? BJB No, the other one--he was a small one--a little fella. WN Clem St. Louis... BM Lagasse --Henry Lagasse was--- WN Henry Lagasse. BJB Yeah. Well, then he had an older brother that was a carpenter--AM Francis WN Francis BJB Yeah. He went to Pa at the office.. you know.. and he said "Geez, John. I don't have any work" --it was during that big depression, you know. And he says, "I don't know what the hang we're going to do. I've got a family to support." Well," dad says, "I've got work but Ben's got the job." He says, "I'll work with anybody." So, he came and he worked with me--Chin and he. And I kept them bringing those--those sheets were that long you know. It went fast. Well I'd be up on the staging and I'd be able.. they'd have to go up and down. WN Was that the asbestos shingles you put on. ABM Those asbestos shingles. WN Yeah. In fact I just took them

off last year. Yeah, those shingles were on for over fifty years. BJB He goes back to the office two days later and he says, "That Pegleg!" he says, "You're not going to get me to work with him anymore. I never worked so damn hard in all my life. He kept both of us going."

BB I'll never forget when Rosaire put a roof on your house there.

WN That was a Godsend. BJB Oh, boys. I used to have to go up there an shovel that. WN I wasn't going to go up and shovel that every time there was snow up there.

BB I used to watch him from the barbershop. See the roof was like this -- and he cut them with a chainsaw. He cut all the--oh, what do you call them? WN Rafters.

ABM He cut the rafters with a chain saw?

BB Yeah. He'd mark them and then he'd cut them with a chainsaw.

ABM He was a chainsaw carpenter. BB Everybody laughed at him but by gorry he did a good job.

WN In fact my attic roof (floor) is the original ceiling--I didn't take it off. It's still there. That's the floor on my little attic. It ain't very high over here but it's pretty high over there.

BJB Yeah. Cause if went downhill.

WN Course..the thing pitched. See what happened it would melt in the front then it would flow down to the edge and form ice in the thing you know. And, Christ, it would leak all over the place. I remember one year we had to poke holes in the ceiling to get the water to come down. In the bathroom, I poked holes over the bathtub so it would go in there. ABM You wouldn't have to have a pail. WN Oh, it was awful.

BJB The good old days!!

WN I mortgaged my house about four times. Every time I had a disaster I had to go mortgage my house. There was always something.

BJB I can remember when your father was a fireman--you know when he got rid of the business. He--every time he'd come by he used to talk to me. I'd be either in the swing--because they'd carry me out there and sit me in the swing you know. So I got to know your--and your mother--good land, I was always over to your place.

WN I don't know why they ever called her "La Noir".

- BJB La Noir. AM Your father was a police officer too wasn't he?
- BM Fireman.
- AM Wasn't he a police officer, too?
- BJB Oh, yes, he was.
- AM He was sitting in the middle of the road there..right on the corner of Center and Main BJB In a box. AM To direct traffic. ABM In a box? AM It was just a little box about--
- ABM A little square box in the middle of the road. AM Yeah. He used to be sitting right in the center--you know where you go from--where there used to be a drugstore and go to the bank. BJB It was right in the middle. AM Pearly Nadeau used to be in there too. ABM It's a good thing they didn't have traffic like they have today. AM You know, I don't remember your father being a fireman, but I remember him being a policeman.
- BJB Fatty Cyr was too. We used to give him coupons for a license. He couldn't tell the difference.
- WN I tell my kids today--I used to go up on top of academy hill in the wintertime and slide all the way right down through Center Street across the bridge right onto the Island. "No, you didn't do that." I say, "Sure, there was no--nobody drove cars in the wintertime. Nobody drove cars--they put them up in November and didn't take them out until April.
- BJB When I went to college I used to hitch hike to save a nickel on the tra--bus--not the bus but the trolley cars.
- WN When I went to college they used to cut across backfield to go to the University of Maine. Across backfield. Kids today don't walk.
- BJB To save five cents. And to come back there used to be a little station there--they took that road going on to the campus [across from the steam plant today]. We used to stand there, Worcester and I, and hitch hike to save five cents. Five cents was money.
- AM I can always remember the collection--had that little machine. Put the nickel in and it would made a noise. ABM It went click, click so he knew.
- WN It used to be ten cents to Orono, ten cents from Orono to Veazie and ten cents from Veazie to Bangor--so, it was thirty cents to go from Old Town to Bangor.

- BJB And we all went to the movies--you remember--Daniel Boone and Buffalo Bill AM The Nickel Theater. BJB Yeah--a nickel, a dime. We used to stop at the A&P on the corner and buy a box of tidbits, cheese tidbits--a nickel. AM Yeah, I bought a good many of those boxes. BJB Now, what's change good for? Just to pay tax.
- WN And the KC Hall was right over the A&P.
- BJB That's right. When I used to play in the band, my father would take me with him and when one of the drummers didn't show up I'd play the drums and dad would play the other. The City Band.
- WN The Water Street-- AM Yeah, the bank. BJB No, no, no. The other one. WN The one before--just coming off the bridge when you make that turn at Water Street.
- BJB New Central Theater. AM Where the Bucket of Blood used to be.
- BB When I went to the meetings it was up over the bank.
- WN You know where the American Legion Hall is now--well that was the New Central Theater. Right on that corner going back to Water Street was the A&P--but when you went it was over the Merrill Trust.
- BJB Pheb Dumont's building was right on the corner--they moved that over and they lowered the ceiling. You remember, they cut the roof off just like they did the bank. It was a three story thing--the bank.
- ABM Which bank.
- BJB The Merrill Trust -- Key Bank. WN The top floor burned.
- ABM The top floor burned, and so they cut the top floor off and put a new roof.
- AM There was a little Indian boy burned in there too, wasn't there? They found him in there--they thought that he was the one that set it afire.
- BJB That burned when I was away at school. WN Kind of crazy, huh?
- BJB This is what you call reminiscing isn't it.
- BB Yeah. Go way back.
- WN And we had more people that made liquor and rum, you know.

ABM OK. Let's talk about during prohibition.

AM I've got a story to tell you about. Geez. I'll never forget.

WN I'll just tell you a little story which I like. ABM OK.

WN Spike Richard used to live right down here on French Street. And his father used to make homebrew and they had a big crock like this and they put it back of the stove. On the back of the stove there was a rack and they put their stockings--those stockings would fall in the homebrew and they'd wring it out. ABM Oh, my land! WN The old man would say, "Jesus, that's good homebrew!"

AM Mine is still better than that. I don't know if I should name the names or not. ABM Go, ahead. It doesn't matter. AM It was Joe Labree. BJB Oh, yeah. AM Remember old Joe--he used to live down back--down the bottom of--right back of where Labrees is there. He used to sell homebrew. Four or five of the guys went over there and drank the homebrew mix--and they ran out. He had a crock that was ready to be used the next day--he was going to fill his bottles the next day. So they start dipping into that, see. They drank pretty near the whole of it. In the morning they picked a little kitten out of there. That guy--he says, "I have been wondering where that little bastard was."

ABM He was drunk in the bottom of the homebrew.

WN Where Bunny and I used to live--St. Louis used to sell beer and liquor up there in Gray's Lane. And, Christ, every weekend the students would come, they was loaded with --of course this was prohibition time. ABM Right. They knew where to go. WN So, we used to have guys that would drive to Canada to get loads of lobster and half the load was full of liquor. ABM They'd bury it under the lobster. WN Yeah. There were big five-gallon cans of liquor that was 200 proof. ABM Oh, my Lord. AM That's why they called it Split. ABM They'd either cut it or die. BB Yeah. Burn your stomach. AM They'd split it three or four ways. There was myself, Wilfred Cote, Pat Martin, Winkum --no. BM Isn't that something. I can't think of his name. Petit Will.. AM Petit Will Cyr, Coy Russell--well, my brother-in-law used to make a batch of beer every week. Back then it wouldn't cost a dollar--dollar-and-a-half to make a batch of beer. He would make the batch of beer and go up over to St. Louis and buy a gallon of Hand Brand Liquor. We'd go down there on Saturday night and drink all that beer and that gallon of liquor and sometimes end up over Ma Russell buying some more beer.

- BB Oh, God. That Ma Russell. ABM Why are you shaking your head about Ma Russell. BB Well, I used to be a newspaper boy and when I'd go collect for the newspaper she'd want to play cards for the weeks newspaper. She used to smoke and drink, you know, and she was a tarter. Oh, oh boy!
- AM Remember the old grandmother, too. She always had a big pipe.
- WN Yeah. She had one of those gray pipes.
- BJB Old Mrs. St. Louis--the old, old lady had a clay pipe, too. She was right in back of where she (Bernice) was brought up.
- WN Oh, yeah. I remember that. There were some wild times at that Russell place. Just down below here. That was kind of a way-ward house, too--to some degree.
- BJB Yeah, and the students used to come up with these Model T Fords when Bessie Theriault, you know the barber, moved and bought the Lavasseur house--remember? Well, those two girls were nice looking girls-- BB Oh, yeah. BJB Well they'd come up from the University with these Model T Fords and Leo Richard and that crowd, you know--just two or three years older than I am--they were the ones--they'd go and take that darn Ford and turn it up-side down.
- AM Of course, you remember Boy St. Louis--his name was Boy the crippled one--he used to have a little game store. BB Yeah, he used to have a little place--Mrs. Madore, remember she used to have a grocery store up there on---BM These things I had forgotten completely. But they come back. BJB It comes back. That's why I wanted him to get started.
- WN This woman was a--over powered over the men. Her poor husband, he'd be about eighty-nine, and she'd be right out there and "You do this" and she'd sit there in the rocking chair and, "You do that". ABM He'd do it. WN Oh, yes. He was afraid of her. ABM This was a tough lady.
- BJB She always had a lawyer hired to fight her battles. My grandfather lived right back of her, see.
- AM Do you know if that girl found that Rider of the King Log book?
- ABM I don't know. I haven't talked with Mary yet. But I know she wrote it down.
- BB Remember Louis St. Louis? AM Who? ABM Louis St. Louis. BB Petit Boy.
- ABM Petit Boy. Is that what you called him?

WN Everybody had a nickname. BM Oh, all the time. Everybody on the Island had nicknames.

WN When I was in the mailroom--people would come and say, "Who's Nanum Richards--what the hell is his name?" ABM What was his name? WN Rudolph. ABM I never knew it. I always knew him as Nanum. BJB We had another name for him too. BB Then there was Polock. AM Galosh St. Louis. ABM Who? Galosh? BJB Snotty St. Louis, and La Mogue. WN I think the worst was the Ouellettes--Bidoune, Scrub and Plotte. Everybody had a nickname--the majority of the men had nicknames. BJB Polock- BB I knew his name was Everest. BM Lala ABM Who was Lala? AM Lala Richards. WN Lilac BJB Winkum, Snotty, La Mogue, ---F-F-F-Five Inch. ABM All right, tell us the story of Five Inch...how Five Inch got his name. BJB Oh, we've got that on there. ABM No, we haven't got it on the tape. BJB Well, my father owned the store that he sold to his (Bing's) father. Our first store was the front room--you probably just barely remember it. Then he bought the store across the way. In the front window..had a big glass window in the front there with pipes across that window to keep from falling into the glass see. Because it was the whole front of the store. And the kids would come in the winter and put their tongue on there and it would stick to the pipe. Now, that window on the Fourth of July--he would fill that thing up--it was about as long as this almost--and that was filled up with firecrackers and everything else. Five Inch--ah--Francis, his name hadn't changed yet..Francis comes in and he said, "J-J-J-John, I want some F-F-F-f-f" he couldn't get it out. "J-J-J-Jesus, John, I want some F-F-F-F-five inch." "Alright, Five-Inch," so he sells him the five inch, and the name stuck. ABM So he was five-inch after that.

AM He was quite a musician, too. BJB Yeah. He played the fiddle. Played by ear. Never took a lesson. AM Never took a lesson in his life. WN Him and Mrs. what-you-call from Orono played together. BJB Duffy. BJB I played with Duffy before I went away to college. WN They used to play dances all the time. BM That's just about all there was at that time, anyway. There weren't many other bands or orchestras.

BJB We were playing one night in Milford--the Milford Town Hall. We always played there on Friday and Saturday we played in Bradley. Because I played with Dad and Petrie--the old man had a glass eye and he was a terrific musician. He'd be playing, you know, and that glass eye fell out one time, and he picked it up and he said, "hold everything." And he starts feeling around and he finds the eye picked it up, wets it with his mouth and stuck it in his eye socket. So those are some of the things. WN He couldn't put it in dry. BJB Those are some of the things...

- WN Danny O'Keefe, he had a glass eye. I didn't know this. I went to a Boy Scout Camp when I was about ten or twelve years old. I was camping and he'd go plunk (he pop it out). I'd say, "What the hell did he do there?" I didn't know he had a glass eye--he was only a kid. ABM Oh, my. I wonder what happened. WN I have no idea. I never did find out. ABM I must have scared you half to death. WN Cripe, I didn't know what happened. Oh, God, it was funny. But dances. We used to go to dances, my wife, my mother and I and my father, we'd all walk to Milford. It would be four or five.
- BJB What I started to tell you about that dance. Nanum--we were tuning up and getting ready, you know. And Kaka Gallant comes in and, Nanum hollers--you know how Nanum was-- he hollers, "Hi, Shit." He comes up on the stage and he says, "Now, listen here there Nanum. That's far enough. I do not want to be called Shit in society. Now you remember that or we're going to clash." My father had to step between them. My father was playing the drums then, Nel was on the saxophone --
- AM Boy, he was some dancer though, that Nanum. BJB Oh. Every
- AM And his sister there, the whole-- BM They were all very, very musical...
- BJB And singing. I've got a tape from Senior Citizens--Nanum was there and Janet was there and some of the senior citizens were singing with Bella playing the piano. Geez. I took that to Florida and every time I'd play it I'd cry. I'd get so homesick because I could see all those people. You know most of them are gone.
- BB We'd go over and visit Bella. Pearly used to say, "Bella, play the piano for us." She'd always play the piano and she'd sing. WN She still does.
- ABM You didn't have to convince her. BB Oh, no. BJB Bella's always ready. WN When she was young we used to get together in houses and she'd play all afternoon on Sunday. We'd all sing and-- BB She was about your age, huh Ben? BJB Yeah. WN I sang at your (Ben's) place. Your mother used to play all the time on the piano. She was quite a girl. On Sunday nights we'd get together--
- BJB Well, mother started all of us on the piano. And then I played the slide and the violin and the drums. That's how I went through three colleges.
- BB I remember Uncle Johnny playing the xylophone. WN I used to like that. AM I love the xylophone.
- BJB I was fourteen years old when I started and Pa was in the

store, and Uncle Peter came and he said, "Gee, John, we're stuck. Charlie's sick, very sick and I haven't got a violin player." Of course, I only played classical music then--I didn't touch jazz or anything. But, when Pa was out of the house and mother was in the store too, then I'd start that Orthophonic Graphophone that we had--which was the main thing then, it was really something. I'd put Woody Rudolph on there and I'd start playing jazz to beat hell. So, I was there fiddling away, you know, and Uncle Peter --he graduated from the conservatory of music and was telling dad about that and he stopped and he said, "Who in hell is playing violin over to your house." "Well," he said, "Ben's practicing. He's not playing..That's Ben playing--he's the only violin player over there." So they went--they came in the back kitchen door--walked in the archway--and I was back to it, and I was sawing away, having a hell of a time. ABM Cheating. BJB Uncle Peter... I was just thirteen or fourteen years old.. Peter says, "Geez, Ben, can you read music?" Pa said, "Sure you ought to see what he plays." And he pulled out some music--classical music. "Geez, John, we've got a violin player. We'll take Ben." He went out in his car and came in with the orchestration and put that on the music stand and sat at the piano and said, "Go ahead, Ben. Let's try it." I played to beat the band and we played for a prom up in Lincoln. Pa went and bought me a blue serge suit--you know with knickers. BB Ha, ha. Knickers--didn't I hate those. Oh, I hated those. BJB And I was always small, because I'd only been walking for five years then--I was nine years old when I started walking. He went and got a little white shirt and black bow tie. And they sat me right on the edge near the piano and I fiddled away. They were all in dress suits then--they had to wear a tux.

WN Do you remember the Indian Orchestra he had. I went dancing a lot of times to that Indian Orchestra. Boy, he must have had about twenty or twenty-five pieces.

AM Who had that? WN Peter Bouchard--his uncle. He had a big orchestra. There must have been at least twenty musicians.

BB You remember him? AM Who? BB Peter. AM Oh, yes.

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BJB He started bottling where Landry--what was the one--the liquor guy--lived on the corner across from his father's store. Landry, down at the foot of the hill. Petit Boy--Boy Landry. He--that's where my uncle started his bottling plant. AM Down there? BJB Yeah. And then my father invented---

WN I have to tell you a story about that. I know another story, Ben. This Boy Landry, he used to sell liquor. BJB And how.

WN And for some unknown reason--every time the searchers -- they used to call them---

ABM The inspectors..

WN Yeah, before they even left Bangor everybody in Old Town knew they were coming. ABM How did they know that? WN Well, they had a network, let me tell you, it was unbelievable. BJB and Guy Moores was friendly with his wife.. WN So Boy Landry, he didn't have anyplace to hide his liquor so he'd take the man hole in the street out and stick his stuff in there and put the manhole back and they never could find the damn stuff.

ABM The manhole in the street? WN Yes. That's where he'd put it. ABM Who ever would have thought to look there?

BJB Oh, the Island had quite a name.

WN Oh, everybody used to--was it Petit Boy St. Louis that lived down on Hayes Street? Well, he used to hide his in the ledges down in the back. We'd go steal it--drink his liquor and then we'd sell him back his bottles. ABM Sell him back his bottles? WN Yeah . BB Emile St. Louis. WN Oh, Emile. That's right.

BJB One fellow had--I remember somebody coming in the store and he said, "Well, I've just had a wonderful hideout made, John." Who was that..Felix Lavoie, was it?..Somebody came in anyway and said, " I just ripped out a wall and I had a tank fitted in the wall and a pipe in the cellar (just a tube). He put his liquor in there. He'd haul it in from Canada and put it up in the attic and slide it in there. They couldn't find it. ABM Right in the wall.

WN Well, St. Louis had the same thing. He said all the partitions in the wall was all empty. He'd stick them all up in there and put the thing--you never knew it was there.

AM Pearly Nadeau-- BB Oh, they had all kinds of places to hide.

BJB Well they used to split it. WN They'd split it two or three ways. BJB They could tell. You'd buy a bottle and you'd turn it up--and they had a way they could cut the bottle bottom out--suck that out and half and half--and seal it up and sell it.

ABM They cut it out of the bottom of the bottle?

BJB Yeah. They cut it out. I don't know how they did it.

AM You know those bottles of blacking that you used to blacken the stoves. People in those days--like my mother and all the

neighbors--they always used to blacken the stoves--and they'd throw those bottles away. We'd find those bottles, Pepper Martin and I, and we'd work like hell to wash them out ..clean them up..and sell them for five cents apiece.

ABM To the guys that were bootlegging. AM Yes, they'd give us five cents apiece. ABM It must have been a job to clean those bottles.

BJB They used to bring that stuff across in five gallon cans and they'd pour that up there and they'd fill the bottles from down underneath. I don't know how--

AM One time Pearly Nadeau took us to his uncle lived in Waterville. WN Yeah, I know him. I went to that place. AM He used to be a bootlegger. WN The Chez Paris in Waterville. AM He took us down the cellar and he said, "I'll show you how I hide my liquor." He had two-by-fours down there with a board on it. He'd pull one nail out and that board would turn over and inside that was groves and liquor in there. And he had a stairway and he'd pull up a nail--one nail--and that board would come up--liquor there. He had a drainage--bottles tied together down that drain.

BB They had all kinds of ways. You found Emile St. Louis' hideout by the river. Oh, yeah. Down in the ledges. Five gallon cans. WN I remember when I was a young kid--you know how kids are--the searchers were after this..it was a Model A car and it was just loaded with five-gallon cans. Every time he'd make a corner he'd heave a five-gallon can out. So, he went down between the Island School and--you know that little road--well in those days it wasn't a road--he went down that road and when he got down there they caught him, but he didn't have nothing in the car. Every time he'd make a turn he'd heave one out. The Island was just loaded with five-gallon cans.

BJB They were specialists at handling it. AM Boy Landry was also a bootlegger, but he was also a poacher. WN Oh, yeah. He was in everything that guy. AM I used to live over to Paradis' there, you know the back rent--Mina Paradis. Of course, it had a beautiful cellar. I got up one morning to go down there to get some wood--there was a deer laying down there. Her (Bernice's) father was living with us at that time. I come upstairs and I go "Where in hell does that come from." I woke up [can't make it out], he said, " Boy Landry was chased and he threw it in my cellar." I said, "Get that God damned thing out of there." Boy, I was scared to death. Closed season. ABM Of course, they'd have nailed you guys because you were the ones with it in the house. Am I guess they would have.

WN There was never a dull moment around here. When I was younger than these guys--they used to play a game call Odd or Evil. Oh, my God. They'd hide all over the Island. Some would even go to bed--you could hunt for them all night and they'd gone home to bed. AM More than one time I got caught in the clothesline--running around in the dark. Those low clotheslines--you couldn't see them you know. BB It wasn't lighted like it is now. ABM They didn't have street lights. It's a wonder you didn't kill yourselves.

[Bert showed a picture of a group on the Island]

BB I guess there's four of them dead, huh. AM There's more than that. BB There's Arthur St. Marie, Babe St. Louis...AM Bishop.. BB Oh, Bishop..I forgot AM That's Donut's brother--that's Donut Bishop's brother. BJB What was his name?--Henry? WN Leo Morancy-- AM Willie Michaud's dead. The only two living is these two and this one. I think that's Eva Oaks, isn't it.. BB Eva Collins--she's still around. Oh, that's Cook--that's the Bishop--I can't remember what's his first name--Louis Bishop. That was Donut BM Donut was Alfred. WN Well, you know what happened they was all donuts. They Big Donut and Little Donut. Puggie - Big Puggie and Little Puggie. ABM For nicknames. WN Yeah. ABM Big Donut and Little Donut and Big Puggie and Little Puggie. WN Seymours. ABM Oh, I remember Puggie Seymour, sure. BM I never knew Puggy's name until the obituary. WN He probably was five foot tall--but drink. Wouldn't he drink. I picked him up a good many times when I was newsboy and dragged him all the way down to his mother's--and his mother used to live way down the end beyond--down near Dada Cote's. He used to live upstairs. He'd be right in the gutter--face down. ABM Face down in the gutter..drunk. WN I'd drag him all the way down--I couldn't pick him up. ABM So you had to drag him.

BB Did you know your father used to work for my father when they used to play cards. He used to rake the money in for him.

BM A nickel a pot or a quater a pot. BB Yeah. Whatever it was, yeah.

BJB When they got married I got her father to paint my house. He was a painter.

WN Puggy Seymour--the oldest one--they lived right over here on Front Street. Well every night he stop over the Shuffle--so Tracy would send up one of the kids to tell him it was time to come for supper--then he'd come back and his father didn't move so she'd send up another kid. Well the third time she went up and she'd grab him by the neck and down the street he'd go! ABM Grab him right by the neck, huh. WN Well, she was a big woman. ABM She was? WN Oh yes, she must have been

about five-eight or five-nine. He was only a short guy. She grab him--he wasn't even stepping on the ground on the way down the street.

ABM You'd have thought after the first time that happened he'd have learned his lesson--but I guess not. BJB The good old days.

BM I'm telling you.. if that store could tell stories.

WN Remember the games we used to play over at the Island School and they'd replay it over to the Shuffle. My God, we played ball games and they'd argue all night long about all the mistakes in the thing. AM It's a wonder we didn't break more windows than we did.

BB I used to like to go behind the fence. WN Down the ice shed, huh? BJB Perro's Ice Shed. WN He used to get all the drunks in his bar to cut the ice, down in Daigles there-- BJB and it hardly freezes over now.

AM First, Second or Third Stream--I can't remember. WN As far as I can remember, it was First Stream--because they had to lug it by horse. BJB Yeah. Horse and Buggy. AM Yeah, Mr. St. Louis used to be the boss. BJB Double runners and they had those big cross-cut saws--not cross-cut--but

WN I cut some for Mr. Richards there--Z.Y. down there. Those big saws, my God--[made sound of saw cutting ice]--

ABM You'd be lame at the end of the day. I bet.

WN I guess! You were tired too. That's hard work!

AM The ice was thicker those days too. BM Bert's got pictures of that somewhere. ABM That would be good to have for the book when they do it.

WN He had an ice shed right at the end--down--let's see--Bodwell ...er Hildreth Street. Right down the end of Hildreth Street... there's a cove there...he cut it right out of the cove and leave his ice right there. AM Right there by Everest Richard's place. That's where they started. He used to live where Vernie Cust lives now. BB You mean Gréau? WN Yeah. We used to call him Gréau He was a rugged guy.

BJB Leo Richard..Now they'd bring me in the store and I'd sit there and they'd come and they'd say, "I'm going to take Wow." They used to call me Wow before your (Bing's) brother was named Wow and then I said, "Don't you dare call me Wow." ABM You didn't want to get mixed up with that Wow, huh. BJB Anyway, Leo and Snotty St. Louis and there was another fellow-

-now wait a minute, who was the other fellow? Puggy Seymour! And I had a double runner my father made and they would collect coal along the railroad tracks. When the engineer would go by they would holler, "Hey, we need some coal." ABM He'd shovel them out some. BJB He throw some out to them and they would get a whole bag of coal and they'd come and sell it --either to Pa or --

- WN Of course, they used to have a grain mill down there by the railroad tracks. And they used to take up--they'd have big, oh, slabs of wood--they were like planks and they'd drop them off there, and they weren't down on the ground more than ten minutes and somebody would---ABM Didn't last long, huh?
- WN They were going down the railroad tracks with them. They'd pick them up.
- AM Do you remember when the --oh the corner house there.. BM Sirois AM Sirois, used to live there, the girl that was crippled there BM Alice AM She used to sew the bags of grain.
- ABM She sewed the grain bags. AM Yeah. When there was a hole in them she sewed them. BM For all the years that I can remember.
- WN They used grain bags for everything. BJB She sewed grain bags for the grist mill. That's where Fred Choinard worked.
- ABM They used to make sheets out of them, didn't they--or did I dream it? Scmebody told me that made sheets. BJB Yeah. They made curtains out of those--well they could get those there. ABM They were a nice cotton--they weren't like the burlap--they were cotton.
- WN They came in bulk. You know what I mean. The car was just loaded. That's why they'd put those heavy boards so to keep the grain inside.
- BB You'd put your hand up there and the grain would come out. We'd pick it up and put it in a bag and go sell it.
- BJB Well, those big boys always used to take care of me. And one that I remember and I just worshiped was Thibodeau--Henry. He used to pick me up and sit me up on his shoulder and he'd take to different places..he'd take me over to Laliberty's Bakery there and they would sit me on the table and Ludger would swear like a pirate--Geez he swore--the baker. He came from Van Buren. He was the head baker. That whole bottom floor where your (Bing's) father's barber shop -- all the back part there was a big brick oven in the back wall -- WN LaBelle had one too. BJB And they used to put four foot edgings to make

the bread. You remember-- WN Not Labelle--BM Liberty--WN Laliberty BM That's what they call it now Laliberty. BJB Your house..where you lived.. You remember that bakery, huh, Bert?

BM You couldn't reach him?

BJB No, I couldn't. I happened to think. The last time I saw him, his wife was in the hospital the same time my wife was last spring. He saw me, and he came and talked to me. Geez, he's shriveled up--he's smaller than I am. He used to be a good sized man. Anyway, his son came in and talked to me too. He lives across where the bridge is in Stillwater on the right where all the lights are. That's his son and he lives in the next house--the big white house--and he had that store across the way. He sold that. Archie must be ninety. AM He was an old fiddler. BJB He used to come and get me to go practice up in the third story in that house. Way upstairs. And we'd get up there--it was kind of finished up in the front. He'd set up a music stand and we'd play. He was terrific. AM You must remember that bakery, don't you? WN Oh, yeah. AM How old are you? WN Seventy-eight. AM Aren't you old! BJB He's Regina's age. BM I said he was about my age. BJB I'm eighty-two, I'm going to be eighty-two the eleventh of April and Van WN The same age as Wilson. You and him are four years older than I was.

BB You and my son Bernie are the same day. BJB April..yeah, I remember. BB And I'm the fourth of April the same as Leona Taylor. BM Which one? WN Leona? AM They lived right there. BM Pete's wife? BB The old Leona. AM They were both Pete's wife. BJB She was quite old.

WN Yeah, they were both Pete's wives. BJB Leona was the bookkeeper for--worked for her father. WN Yeah, she worked in the store for him. BJB Yeah, because Wilson would come and get me and we'd play in the store. BM Need to tie them down. He's French. WN Are you having a hard time with him? ABM Well, he keeps putting his hands in front of his mouth. I don't care if he moves them around, but he puts them right here. BJB Yeah.. and we used to give her a hard time.

WN Yeah, I used to live in the back of his [Ben] house there and I was always in and out of the house all the time. That's why I bought it--I knew the house. AMB That's right. You knew exactly. WN I don't know what happened--but, I remember once in the cellar--the cellar was full right up to the window. I don't know why. And Dicky and I were down in there paddling in some kind of a boat or something--your father was mad as hell cause we were down there. He said, "You God damn kids, you're going to get drowned down there." ABM In the cellar? Water--what to heck happened to make that? WN Well, we were

only this high (4 feet) and the water was way up here. Well the cellar always leaked and there's no drain there. You see there's no sewer line..no drainage on Union Street.

BJB You know where -- Well, when your grandmother --my father had that foundation put in by old Mr. --what was his name? BB He put ours in too. BJB He put in that foundation-- WN Well, that's been there for a long time. BJB Well, he put it in. I just barely remember it. There was a fountain---ah, a well in the bottom of that cellar near the front of the--probably there's a hole there isn't there? That used to back up in the spring. WN In the spring. ABM Well, sure in the spring the wells filled up.

WN That's probably where it come from--see I was a kid I don't remember where it came from.

BJB One time we were all--there was Nel, Me, Van and Regina--that was before Dick was born--and the cellar filled up but it was the main broke in front of the house, and that backed up through that well and filled right up. See they had to come up--

WN In those days they didn't have furnaces down in the cellar--you know what I mean--they didn't have that problem. We had fun just the same. ABM Oh, of course you did. Oh, yeah.

BJB And dad had the foundation and had a furnace put in--Dubay--old Mr. Dubay.

WN Was that a job to take that furnace out! ABM You were the ones that took it out? WN A big round thing..and it had a cement wall about this [7 inches] thick. The only way I could get it out I had to break it up. ABM I was going to say, you must have broken it up. WN I had to--couldn't get it out any other way. It had big old [??]--air conditioned furnace. The walls inside were about that thick with cement. Geezum, cripes, was that a hard thing to break up. BJB What was that? WN The old furnace you had down cellar.

BB Your drain goes down on -- WN On Bosworth. Not anymore. BB Oh, no. They put one in there didn't they. WN I did. I had a single one going to Front Street. BM Goes on Front Street now. You did that when--two years ago. WN A couple years ago, yeah. Well, see, from where I was to Bosworth Street was 220 feet and it went underneath four houses. ABM Oh, my lord--under the houses. WN Yeah and any problem--I was on the bitter end. Everybody had a problem--I had it. ABM It came to see you. BJB It backed up. WN So, where I had a porch on the back...I eliminated the porch and made a bedroom/den and so --I have to tell you the whole story. I had to go to the zoning board, and he said you've got to have

- ten feet-- I said, "What the hell are you talking about, 10 feet. There's not ten feet on the whole Island. I can reach my next-door neighbor standing on one side. When I paint the house I can't paint this way [up and down], I have to paint that way [sideways]. ABM No room to put your elbow. WN No. You got your ladder straight like this and you're painting like this.
- BM I never could understand that.. they took so many houses down because they were close and that was the closest one that ever was--that could be.
- BJB Yeah, and they could have opened up Grays Lane.
- WN It's not really a lane but it is. Because all that property is owned by one person. BJB Yeah. That's right.
- BB Where your (Walter) garage is they tell me there used to be a road.
- WN Yeah. The story to that is old Mr. Beaulieu that owned Beaulieu Brothers --they were going to make a road right through there for Gray's Lane and he hurried up and put a foundation there so they couldn't do it. The property is all screwy on the Island. The houses sit this way [square to the roads] and the property is this way [at an angle]. Figure that one out.
- AM My property doesn't come this way [square], it comes this way [at an angle]. BB Forty-five [degree]. AM I'll tell you a story about..If the city would take what they own it would go right half-way through my bedroom.
- WN And, Mrs. Treadwell--those sheds they have across there--they thought they owned that--they didn't own that at all. They didn't go across the Lane at all their property. BJB For Pete's sake. WN No. They didn't own that over there. BJB Who owned it? WN You know--you remember where Mrs. Tedd used to live? Well they had a shed--Mrs. Treadwell had a shed on the other side--they didn't own that they... ABM They just built a shed. BJB They just built it. WN They just put it there and nobody ever said anything. BM There was no zoning board then. WN I had my house surveyed and I figured, cripe, I'm going to have that--No--I didn't own it at all.
- AM Look where your father had his house there--where I used to live there where Louis Taylor's house. He used to have a big shed there and his next-door neighbor, Landry there used to live in the same.., they had a great big shed right there-- it went in right near the barn there.
- BB Well, the drain from that house cuts right across Louis

Taylor's--between Louis Taylor and Liberty. All the houses in the middle all go one way or the other -- either Bosworth or Front. There's no drainage at all. ABM There's no drainage on Union.

WN I don't think there's drains on this street either.

BB Cause I know Taylor...he wanted to built his store he wanted to put a foundation there. He said, "The pipes are in the way, you've got to move them." I said, "I can't move those pipes. Where am I going to put them." He said, "You've got to move them. I'm going to put a foundation." Anyway, I went to a lawyer and the lawyer said, "How long has it been there?" I said, "Oh, God. I don't know. Thirty or forty years." "Oh," he said, "He can't make you move them." WN Once they're there, they're there. BJB Yeah. Grandfather's clause they call it. BB So he had to build--you remember how the back part was up. You had to go up some steps. Well that's how he had to build it. He never liked me for that--but BM Who was that? BB Louis Taylor. WN Well Louis Taylor never liked--I went to school with him, I know. He and I were in the same class in school. A lot of people don't remember Mr. Taylor's store. I tell that BM I know. It just came to me like that. Sometimes older people might know something. WN See. The way it was the house was this way--you went down three steps and there was the store. It was flat. BM Just a little room and they had penny candy mostly. Because we were at school too across the road.

AM Well, do you remember when the--where the swimming pool is now used to live there. WN Mossey. BM My Lord. Raymond King lived there. WN No. Mossey--his cousin. BM Well, he was related to them. WN Raymond King lived down below the hill, down on Bosworth Street just as you get down, there is a house sits way in there. There was a laundry in back and he was right in front--a duplex house.

BM That was a small house. BJB Yeah. And they had a crab apple tree and everybody went to get crabapples. And that's where Old Dexter used to get

WN I ran into one of the Mossey kids.. I says, "Did you know your family used to live on French Island?" "No! We didn't live up there." I said, "Oh, yeah." I said, "Where the swimming pool is, that's where the house was." BM It wasn't a very big house either. WN That wasn't a big house, but there was a house there.

BJB Yes, and the oldest one was in my class. Edgar. Edgar McIninch.

WN And then one of the other kids, Reginald I think was in my

class.

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BJB Well anyway there was another thing there that --that family. Old Dexter used to drive horses to haul the lumber from Milford to the Box Mill. He was an old thin, tall fallow. He was the one that came in and sat on the bench in my father's store. They used to meet there all the time--they always did in those stores. Well, anyway, he was sitting there one time and he said, "John, I've got an awful toothache. Geez, John, can't you do something about it." "Well, what do you want me to do? Pull that out?" "Yeah!" He had one tooth. That thing was that long (over an inch). He says, "I can't take it anymore." Pa said, "Do you want me to pull that out?" He said, "Yeah." Pa takes a pair of--he goes in the car and gets his tools--a pair of pliers. I was sitting in--it's almost like a high chair that they used to put me in to get me out of the house--otherwise they'd sit on the front porch and I'd be talking to everybody going see. So, Old Dexter was sitting there and groaning and groaning so Pa said, "All right." He put the things in boiling water--to sterilize them--and he goes grabbed that tooth--and it slipped right off that tooth. Almost killed the old boy. "Haven't got it yet, John. Come on, get that damn thing out--it can't be any worse." Crying. Pa grabbed hold of that and pulled that thing and honest it was that long [showed over an inch]. I never saw anything like it. AM He did good to get it all out. BJB Blood was coming out. So, Pa had some cotton batten in the first aid kit so he said, "Here. Bite on this." Geez. It's a wonder he didn't kill that old man. He got it. He came back the next day. Dad said, "How do you feel?" "It's a little bit sore, John. But, it's better."

WN You talk about the store where they used to talk. Well they used to do that in my father's store, too. They had barrels of everything in those days. They'd be around the box stove and there'd be a pickle barrel and the cracker barrel. They'd be dipping in the pickle barrel and take some crackers and they'd tell all kinds of yarns. And that stove, geez, it would be almost as red as this paper here. [pointed to a bright red paper]. BJB It was a pot-bellied stove. I remember that. WN You could put a whole bunch of kindlins--we used to call them--a whole bunch right in that stove. When that thing got going--holy mackerel.

BJB It's a wonder half the Island wasn't burned. You know that.

AM I can remember my father--every fall of the year he would buy a barrel of flour, and a box of those crackers--you know how big they were. BJB Yeah, they were the big ones. They were good, too. AM I don't remember how many pounds there were but there was a lot of pounds. BJB Soda crackers they called them.

- WN We had everything in barrels. In our store we had--oh, I can't remember. BJB Peanut butter came in a big tub I remember and the oil would be on top--they'd have to stir it. And then they had the coffee--they ground the coffee. BB There was a pork barrel too.
- BM I can remember they'd take the cover off and dig in there for some pickles. BB My mother used to say, "I've got to have some molasses. Here, here's a quart. Go over to Levasseurs." They had a crank. BJB They would crank it out of the barrel.
- AM Same thing with kerosene. We used to get kerosene by the gallon.
- WN We had a 250 gallon tank--it's still down there. For ten cents you'd get a whole gallon of kerosene. Ten cents.
- BJB Well, we bought gasoline for ten cents a gallon on Water Street--at Morin's--the shoe repairman. BB Cheaper than that too. They had these gas wars and I had a Model A Ford and I couldn't put a dollar in. ABM You couldn't put a dollar in. BB I couldn't put a dollar in it would overflow. BJB Ten gallons for a dollar.
- BJB Then you had to pump the gas into the bottle and then let --
- WN The old Shell gas station. You'd pump until you'd get the five gallons in there and then let it drain out.
- BJB Lizzie Morin was the one that owned that part of the business. Then it was Alex Morin who ran the shoe repair--WN The shoe repair right on Main Street. BJB Yeah. Main Street and Water Street--it went right through. WN It became a sandwich shop after that.
- BB Do you remember the people who lived up top of Academy Hill that had that gas station. WN Oh, yeah. McLaughlin? or something. I can't remember their last name--something like that. BB That was the one. They'd pump.
- WN The tank was way up on top so you had to crank it up to the top, then you'd take the hose and it would drain. ABM It just gravity fed out. WN Yeah. It just fed out by gravity.
- AM We used to gas up on Water Street--when we were going to school you [Ben] always used to stop there.
- BB They used to have gas wars and it went down--I saw it as low as twelve cents a gallon. WN Yeah. We had seven gallons for a dollar BB Twelve gallons for a dollar is what I meant to say.

- WN Ten gallons was very frequent. BJB That was in 1920?--well I was driving the car then--1927. All I had to do was fill in the paper and send it to Augusta and they sent me my license. Fifteen years old.
- WN I remember that Dodge touring car your father bought. Remember that. Remember the touring car your father bought..the Dodge with the big balloon tires.
- BJB Oh, yeah. In 1927. That's the one I learned to drive with--and my right leg wasn't strong enough--and mechanical brakes. And the barn door--I'd drive it in the barn and hit the back. Dad would say, "It's all right, Wow. Go ahead." So I'd drive the thing in and hit the back of the barn. The two-by-fours all came off the sill. ABM You knocked the two-by-fours off the sill. He said, "Ben, you almost went through." But, my God, he did all right. He taught me how to drive. He'd say, "Go down and get some gas, Ben." So I'd drive down. I had my license.
- WN That was a good way of getting your license. You sent your three bucks. No exam, no nothing.
- BJB All you had to watch for was horses. ABM There weren't enough cars on the road--they weren't worried about an accident. BJB Aunt Ida..do you remember Aunt Ida..Brissette was one of th.....(can't understand all talking at once)
- WN The roads were all crowned. You almost had to drive in the middle of the road. If you didn't, you'd go right over. ABM You'd go right off the side.
- AM Do you remember George Dubay when he was a State Policeman. Anybody on the Island wanted their license would go see George. "George I need a drivers license." "Get in the car." He'd drive around the Island and he'd give them their license.
- ABM Right there. Imagine that.
- BJB He's the one that sold my father that 1927 Dodge. Hey, that had French Morocco leather seats. That was something. And how he demonstrated it--you know the walk--coming out the door there and they had a little raise. He drove that car right there and went right up over that walk with those balloon tires.
- WN Those balloon tires impressed me when I was a kid. They looked--they were humongous.

SECOND TAPE A

- WN We're all petered out.
- ABM It won't take long you'll get started again.
- WN When we lived over the IGA, of course, we had an open porch. There was no such thing as closed porches then. We'd go out there and make *la tire*. You know-- BJB Oh the stretched candy.
- BM I was telling Bert that the other day --it was Tuesday. In the olden times we would be out here stretching candy.
- BJB Oh, I made it so many times. BB My father used to make it every -- AM We used scissors to cut it. WN Oh, yeah. BB That and corn balls. BJB Corn balls--that's my favorite. Oh, boys. WN I used to make corn balls. BJB And when we had a stormy day I used to make raised donuts. When I had a stormy day from school, I'd stay home and I'd start making raised donuts. I used to do a lot of cooking.
- BB You know what I used to like was Nelly's chips up there.
- BJB Yeah, they were good. They were real chips. BM I forgot about that.
- WN I can't believe there was a store there. BB It's just like frozen french fries and fresh ones.
- BJB Then Uncle Eddie had a shoe repair--your father's [Bing] brother... the twin... had a store there.
- WN That was the one that lived in Millinocket, right. We used to go up--every time we'd go to the game he'd sit on our side. He'd say, "Geez. I'd better be quiet. Millinocket will kill me if I go there." WN You know, that's funny, because he almost starved to death there. And then he went up to Millinocket and, my God--- BJB He cleaned up. Then Ludger came--er, went to Millinocket and started a shoe store there and he became independent and came down and bought his father. AM Who was that, Ben?
- BJB Ludger--the oldest one. He was in Florida with us for eight years. BB You said he used to go visit you. BJB He still comes--he came this summer, but we weren't home at the time.
- [Bert took a piece of chocolate] WN Looks good, huh, Bert? Close your eyes and take one, Bert.
- BJB I'm not supposed to have chocolate, but don't tell anybody.
- BB Well, I'm right on the verge of being a diabetic.

- WN You got a witness right there. ABM I won't tell. WN No. You won't tell. ABM It's on tape. All mama has to do is listen to the tape. BJB Blackmail. ABM I'm going to play this tape for mama. BB You forget about the tape there Ben.
- BJB When you can afford it you can't eat it. BB I know. WN They call this the golden years--everything's the matter with you but it's the golden years. BB Yeah! BJB Tarnished like hang. AM They sure as heck do.
- BB Well, they've got me right on the verge of being a diabetic. So I don't dare.
- WN I'm one of those. BM You are Walter? WN I'm not yet but ABM Right on the line. BM On the border. WN Well, the only thing good about me--I never smoked in my life so that helped me. ABM That's right.
- BJB You know I didn't smoke until I went to college. I was twenty-one years old, and in the Frat house there was a long table in the study room and we had a beautiful fireplace in there. And all the fellows would sit there at the table and I didn't smoke...I was 21 years old. I'd have headaches all the time. So I went to Dr. Larson and he said, "There's nothing wrong with you, Ben. He says, "Everything's all right." He says, "Do you smoke? I smell smoke on you." I said, "No. I don't smoke." He said, "Why don't you try it." I started smoking and I'll be darn no more headaches. That took care of it--because I was in that smoke all the time... You could almost cut the smoke with a knife. ABM Imagine. A doctor telling you to smoke.
- WN Oh everybody used to smoke in those days. ABM That was a sign of being grown up, right?. When you were grown up you smoked. BM That was it.
- BJB This was good. I'd get a box from home. Van was a good cook, you know. And she'd send me a box of cookies and all kinds of things. And I'd get it, "Oh, Ben's got a box." You know what that was. I'd say, "Come on fellows." They'd pick me up and sit me on the mantelpiece. It was up that [four-five feet] high. I couldn't move. If I'd move I'd fall off. They ate all my stuff and then they'd pick me up and take me on their shoulders and take me down the bakery and buy me something. ABM You never got the homemade goodies.
- BJB This Wilson Goodwin was a big football player--and he'd carry me. We had to go up a hill to go to classes. He'd pick me right up. Nothing to it. He got shell shock in the service.
- BM Just like me I started smoking when I was twelve years old. I smoked for fifty-two years. I quit at age sixty-four.

- WN I used to go with a gang of guys and they all smoked. I was the only one that didn't smoke. I was in the minority. Now it's just the other way around. BM You had no desire to smoke either, probably. WN No. BM I never did either. WN Well, my father was a chain smoker. BJB Oh, yeah. One right of the other. WN He'd smoke four-and-a-half packs a day. One right behind the other. And, he'd smoke a half-dozen cigars. He had the house in a haze all the time. ABM You didn't have to smoke..you got it second hand. WN He'd get up in the morning, cough his brains out and pick up a cigarette. That left an awful impression right there. I'm not going to smoke if I have to get up and cough my brains out then smoke another one. He had four ... three sons and none of them smoked. Wilson carried cigarettes but he never smoked.
- BJB I smoked from 21 --I was 21 years old until I was 42 .. I smoked. I used to go down in the fireroom. I'd leave the office and go down in the fireroom and smoke with the janitor. I'd have something to go down and see a teacher or something I'd always go in the fireroom and have a smoke. And so, when Denny was born, I used to sit him in my chair with me and I'd read to him every night. He'd turn his head. After supper I always had a cigarette. So, I'd just opened an Old Gold package, and I picked it up and I lit it and started smoking. Denny began--[turning away]. I said, "What's the matter, honey?" "I don't like that." I said, "You don't." I put it out, and I put that package right on that stand beside my chair. That was it. I never touched another one. Ed Michaud was there and came upstairs .. Ed Michaud was my janitor..and he said, "Hey, you aren't coming down any more. You haven't been smoking with me." I said, "No. I don't smoke anymore." He said, "Aw, come on.".. You know how he was. I said, "No I haven't." And I've never touched one since.
- BB My wife quit smoking and she gets terrible headaches now. She said, "I think I'll start again see if that will help get rid of those headaches." BJB Don't tell her that's how I started.
- AM I got three grandchildren. Now their father and mother smoked like a chain. None of them smoke.
- BJB My father never smoked. BB My wife stopped smoking the month before we got married. BJB He never drank and never smoked.
- AM Becky's husband used to smoke a lot, but the minute Becky thought she was pregnant-- He hasn't smoked since. ABM Good for him.
- BB Oh, what a monkey to have on your back.
- BJB It's not good. And you know, I'm so sensitive to it now.

- AM Oh, it bothers me now. And it's so expensive. BM I wouldn't smoke for that reason only. ABM It's like taking dollar bills and setting a match to it. AM \$16-\$17 a carton.
- WN You buy a pack of cigarettes out of a machine and it's \$1.75.
- BB You can't buy them for that now--I think they're \$20 a carton so I understand. I don't know. I haven't bought any. WN Well, they've got all brands--I think the average runs about \$18 - \$19 a carton. But if you buy the bigger brands-- ABM The name brands.
- WN I remember after World War II. We used to call...Lucky Strikes.
- BB That's what I smoked. WN Lucky Strikes--the green went to War. They took the green off the package during World War II. AM That's what I learned to smoke on...Lucky Strikes. I used to buy them down to St. Louis' the end of the Island bridge. A package.. They used to come twelve in a package in those days. Paid a dime.
- BJB Well during the War they were fifteen cents. That's how the Morin Brothers cleaned up--Louis and Edmund.
- WN They didn't only clean up in cigarettes--they cleaned up in houses too. They owned fifty houses on here. ABM Imagine that..50 houses. BB I think those were a dime, Bert. I think those were a dime..twelve in a.. WN When World War II started you could buy one of the better houses in Old Town for \$2,500.
- BJB Well, my father before my mother took sick to die, I went with him. He went up across from where John built his house there [Brunswick Street]--what's his name he used to be at the pulp mill.. WN Oh, I know who you mean...Nash. BJB Norwegian man there.. WN Oh, yeah, yeah, Johanson. BJB Johanson..Gus Johanson. He could have bought that house for \$3,600. And then Freddy Weaver's--on the corner, a double lot..beautiful house on Veazie Street, right across from where I live--that went for \$3,200. They were going to pass the papers for that one on Veazie Street. They tried to decide which one...
- AM I bought this house in 1945 from Paul Baillargeon and I think it was \$1200 we paid for it.
- BJB Well, I'll tell you a better one than that. The woolen mill houses on Veazie Street there--you know there were five of them just alike. Well, I thought I was going to get married so Pa said, "You know, Ben. You're talking about getting married why don't you go check on the woolen mill houses. They've been in the office today and they told me that they were all for sale. So, I called up Maynard Eddy at the bank

and I went down and he said--no, Harry Porter-- WN Eastern Trust. BJB Eastern Trust. They had the whole thing. So I said, "I'm interested in buying one of those houses." He said to go up and see. So I went and got the Caouette home. WN Yeah. I remember. \$900. And I made the check right off. He comes..called me.. I went home to lunch the next day and the telephone rang and dad answered. He said, "Is Ben there, John. He said, "Yeah." He said, "Ask him to stop in on the way back." I stopped in the bank. I said to Pa, "They must be having trouble with the paperwork--you know." So I stopped in--he said, "Ben, I'll sell you the whole five houses for \$4500." AB Gee. ABM Can you imagine? BJB I said, "No, I'm not interested. I went up and I saw the one that I wanted--it was the one that was in the best shape--the others were rat holes-- WN Some of them got let go. BJB Oh, they were neglected. This one wasn't neglected--but you know what...they took and ripped out all the receptacles in that house. They sold all the screens. Fred Caouette. But I didn't care anyway. So I got busy--Pa had the mill--so I went to work and I fixed it up all ready, and went right through it from one end. I rewired it, I did the mason work, I built new glass doors in the kitchen for the cupboards and I put in all French doors inside and I really finished the thing. I weighed 98 pounds when I got married. BB I don't doubt it. You never was very big. BJB And I was playing for dances. And I was supervising the playgrounds--because I had started the playgrounds in Old Town. BB Awful--you worked hard! BJB And I was selling World Books making \$25 -- \$75 a night selling three sets. I did all right that summer. But, my God..I worked my pants off. I never worked so hard in all my life.

WN I bought your house for \$5500. BJB Yeah. Imagine.

BB I don't know what my father paid for the house your father and mother sold him.

(Everyone is talking at once - I tried to sort it out.)

BJB Well, Pa set the price for him. BB It wasn't much. BJB No, No. He set the price..Your father was having trouble at that time. Pa said, "I'll sell you that and you pay rent. This is what you're going to pay me every week. You can't miss. And your father never missed...he paid his bills. I never saw a Bouchard that didn't. As hard up as many of them were, BB They always paid their bills.

WN I bought the house in 1956. BB You bought that in '56? WN I lived eight years on Center Street. BB Center Street. WN I lived.. you remember where Boyle's Store was down there .. BB Yeah....No, No I don't. Boyle's Store I remember was up on the.. WN Yeah. As you come down the street.. come

across Oak Street there.. See when you come down Center Street and you go by Oak Street.. it was the fourth or fifth house down on the right. I stayed there for eight years. I was in the process of buying Dr. Gaitani's. I was in the process of buying that. And, I was ready to sign through the VA when I heard about that house. Something told me don't buy that big house. ABM You'd be forever heating it. WN Not only that--it needed umpteen repairs, you know. And the property ran on three streets. ABM That's right. That's right! Sure. WN It was a huge place you know. At the last minute we called them up--I think we were supposed to sign on a Friday, and we called on Thursday and said we don't want it. They came up and saw--and bought..the house was under Ben Sklar then. I bought it through Ben Sklar. BJB Your house? WN Where I live now. BJB Is that so? WN He had a mortgage on it. BJB Oh, yeah. Oh, well that Wop. WN Huh? BJB That Wop that was in..

AM That's just like us when we were living over Franny's. His family was increasing you know and he told us, "Bert, I hate to do this but if you could find a rent I'd appreciate it. I've got to have the whole house. My family's getting big. So, I said, "Sure, I'll look for a rent." I went down to Greatworks. I don't remember which house it was. BM It's right on the corner where all the cars hit the window there. AM About where Marquis is there. We looked at that big house. We opened that door and there was water in the cellar. Then she came home and she cried, she didn't want to move off the Island. Some reason or other, I heard about this house and we got it anyways. BB That was a good move. WN I remember this house was L-shaped. BM Oh, yeah. We had an apartment over there. We had a double--up and downstairs garage. And then there was a shed next to the garage. We tore all that down. Everything in this house is new--every floor, every ceiling everything--except this floor. I had it covered Christmas time two years ago.

WN I remember when the Baillargeon's used to live here. Clukey used to live over there-- BM Irene Clukey. WN Irene Clukey.

BB Remember the house at the foot of the Island hill when you went up Front Street it was right in the road.

BJB Oh, yeah. BB Gilbert?

BJB Gilbert. When the water would come up in the river they'd come right up--

BB They were only that far away from the railroad tracks.

ABM Gee. They must have rocked when the train went by.

- AM The house must have rocked.
- WN Bernier's shed was the same way on the other side. ABM Isn't that awful. WN There was only place for somebody to walk by the track in the back of the building--that's all there was. It was that close.
- BM That's where you were--when you had yardgoods. BB Oh, yeah that was right on the railroad tracks too. AM You had your barbershop there too. Didn't you? ABM Yeah. He had a barbershop.
- BJB Julie Beaulieu was coming down the hill -- speaking of Patoune's house... you know down there-- and he was working outside -- and she's the one who told me so I know it's true anyway-- she was coming down the hill and he said, "Bon jour, bon jour." Elle a dit, "Monsieur Patoune, voulez vous m'dire le temp qui est?" He said, "My dear lady. I would have time but it wouldn't do you any good."
- BB You must remember Petit Landry's place?
- BJB Oh, yeah. That used to be the meat market when I was a kid.
- WN Marquis' Market.
- BM All I can think of is big fish like whole cod or haddock or something like that. He sold it in big pieces.
- WN They lived down on Howard Street -- Marquis-- that big building.
- BJB And Therien had the other big house. WN Do you remember where the market was before?--Marquis' Market. BJB Before he had that down there? WN He was down on Main Street. You know..ah..where..Well, you remember where O.G. Morin used to be. He used to be on the other side of the street.
- ABM Like over near the yardgood--Landry's had a yardgood store over there. In that same block?
- WN Yeah. In that same block. BM Rands [yardgood]. ABM Rands. That's right. WN Originally was a market. That was where Marquis started and then he moved down there. AM Then Louis Taylor ran that place there for awhile. BB On the Island, I know he ran that. WN Yeah, He had the T&K down there. BB Island T&K. WN Then he started one up here on the Island. BB He didn't start it. He bought that from my father. WN Yeah, well..whoever. BB Same thing, huh?
- WN The only thing I remember about your family--your father would holler, "Wow, mon God Damn! Where are you?" AM He was always

looking for Wow.

BB I remember his father used to pick Wow up by the head. ABM Pick him up by the head!? BB Yeah. Do you remember that? WN My father used to pick the kids--to keep them away from the grocery cases. He used to deliver groceries--he'd put their head between his knees and he'd twist their ears or nose--you know. Geez. The kids would see him coming they would disappear. BB He was an awful tease.

ABM They'd run. WN They'd disappear. ABM They wanted to hold on to their nose and ears.

BJB I was away seven years and I lost track of so much. WN The same way with me. I was gone 10 years. BJB Bert brought back so much of it for me.

AM You must remember when Darkie's wife there--what was her name? Louise. She'd come out doors and holler, "Pitou! Memen!" AM You'd hear her all over the Island. WN Those kids they'd go to the convent school and they could hear her across the river. ABM Across the river! WN Oh, yeah. They would come all the way home want to know what the hell she wanted. Boy, she could really holler! AM Oh, she could holler. Gee.

BB That Gilbert that lived at the foot of the hill there--the boy's name was Poop. ABM Poop? (laughter) BM Oh, that's right he used to run the garbage truck. AM He's the one that built our rock wall. Boy he done a beautiful job. WN He was smart. He wasn't an educated man, but he was smart. BJB He was a worker. AM I guess he was. BB He was quite a Poop. WN Oh, he worked for the city a long time.

BJB He was quite a mason. He had a little girl who went to my school--and I remember--I did the testing in every room. I started the testings in the schools. WN Yeah..he had two girls. BJB I tested that kid and she was one of the highest rated kids I ever tested. Smart as a whip!.. little girl.. And that was her father. So you see it doesn't make any difference. Probably a lot of these people if they'd had their chance. AM That's right. Never had a chance to go to school.

WN Everybody was so poor.

BJB And we know what it was like to go from the Island to go to school over there. They put me -- of course, I'd only been in school three years when they put me in the Junior High School. They looked at my records and they put me in the remedial group. They put me in the C group. The end of the month Miss. Johnson went to E.B. Williams and she says, "He can't stay there. He doesn't belong there." So they put me in the B

- group. Well before the end of the year they had me in the A group with the Worcester kids and all big shots. And, there I was with "doze, and dat and dat ting" you know... I had that French accent. Oh, my gosh. But by gosh.
- ABM Was that a common thing with kids that went over from the Island? Because of the language?
- AM Oh, yes. BJB You had to fight your way in. WN We had to fight. ABM To get your place. WN Yeah. Oh, yeah. There was the North End group and there was the Greatworks group and there was the Southern group. ABM And just because you came from the Island .. WN And the French Island, boy that was worse.
- ABM That was the bottom of the groups. BB We were down the ladder.
- BJB We were Skin Island--don't say that to..Bella's not around to hear me. Bella Richards. ABM How did the Island get the name Skin Island? BB The Indian's used to dry their skins up there--it was high. WN Right down--I don't know if you..do you remember the Chapman thing--there? Back there is where they used to land all their canoes and used to skin all their animals and dry their hides there. AM Because it was a high spot and I suppose it ... and it would be windy. BJB And they had another place down at the other end of the Island near--
- WN Near Dada Cote? Down Front Street?--River Street? BJB Near Gene Duplissa. WN Oh, yeah. River Street. BJB That ledge there. Now there is still the foundation there in the river ... Where I used to go there and fish. AM Yeah. I did too. BB We all did. BJB Caught chubs there. BB Suckers. BJB With a safety pin or a pin for a hook and a worm and catch them. Yeah, suckers. AM Horn pout. ABM But, what was there?
- BJB They used to clean, scrape the skins there--everything went in the river so it took care of the waste and then they dried them out in different places like he said.
- WN I used to fish eels. We used to make a bog--have you ever heard of a bog? ABM No. WN We used to lace all the worms on a string lengthwise on a big long string and after you'd get it all laced up you'd tie the whole thing into a ball. They called it a bog. You'd stick it down and they wouldn't swallow that--their teeth would catch on the string. You could get them out of the water but when you got to the edge of the water you had to [he demonstrated a big yank] pull

- quick. ABM Because they could come off again? WN Yeah. Them things were slippery--slimy. ABM Did you used to eat them? AM Oh, yes. BJB The Jews in town used to buy them. WN I used get a kick--we had a family down here named Clukey right down the end of the street-- way down here. They had an old shed. He'd nail the damn eel up there--you know he'd cut the skin around and pull it down---and throw it in the frying pan and it was still moving in the frying pan.
- ABM Oh, my land! It was all skun and it was still wiggling. Ooo!
- AM Do you remember when we used to skin them and cut a piece of skin and put it around your wrist--it was supposed to make you strong.
- BB Oh, yes. BJB Oh, yeah. BM My grandmother used to salt them. BB I remember the first time that I was called Bing. Do you know who called me that? You (Ben). ABM He named you Bing. BB Well, I don't know if he named me--but it stuck.
- BJB But, I was Wow. I was always Wow, until Wow came along.
- ABM How come he called you Bing? BB Well, Bernard, Bernie, or Bing or Barney. ABM He decided Bing was it and it stuck.
- WN I got a lot of free haircuts when he was learning.
- BB My son was Bernie--he was Bernard too--but he's Bernie.
- WN We got a lot of free haircuts out of you when you were learning.
- BB Yeah. ABM You practiced on your buddies, huh. BB Yeah. I remember father put a second chair. Frankie St. Louis and Harold and there was four of them there--the four oldest ones. They used to come over for haircuts when I was starting. Free of course. My father would touch them up a little so they wouldn't look too bad. ABM Fix your mistakes. BB But I remember Bert when he used to fight on French Island there in the ring. The last one I remember you fought with Apple Nadeau from Greatworks. They were both pretty darn rugged, both of them.
- WN Apple Nadeau was short and stocky. He was big from up here--you know big shoulders. BB I remember that. ABM That must be why they called him Apple--he was built like and apple. WN I know it. BB Well, he was more or less--he was rugged. WN His name was Wilfred and when we went to Junior High--Wilson was there and I was there--Walter and Wilfred--we had W. Nadeau. Of course, he was the one that got into trouble. Apple, you know. And of course they always blamed it on us. E.B. Williams was a hard man to deal with. Geez.

BJB That's the only time I was ever sent to the office--was when I went to Junior High School. My grandfather died--1924 was it--1924--and I didn't have my homework. Miss Baston--WN Oh, Miss Bastard--she was a tough one. BJB So, I was in class and she was collecting the papers and she said, "All right, Benoit, you didn't pass in your paper." I said, "No, I didn't get it done." "OUT!" Didn't even ask me why. WN No explanation. AM No excuses. BM She was a tarter though. BJB I missed school for two days and then she lived right on my street of all things. So, I was in the office..you know where the office was..that little hole up over the stairs--so I came around and EB said, "Benoit, what are you here for?" I said, "Well, Miss Baston sent me." "She, did what for? What did you do?" I said, "I didn't do anything. I missed--you got the paper right there. You put it on the spindle when I gave it to you to give me a slip." SO.."Oh, my goodness. Come on, Benoit." Here I am the little runt about that high and he puts his arm around me and starts walking down the hall. He said, "I know she didn't know, Benoit. She didn't know." That, Benoit. So, he knocks on the door and calls Miss Baston--"go sit down, Benoit." So I went in and sat down and he talked to her. She said, "Oh, Benoit, I'm so sorry. That's perfectly all right." "You didn't give me a chance to tell you." So, Benoit got out of it. But it's the only time I was ever sent out.

WN That reminds me of the story of your wife--when you used to live--well, where you live now. I used to deliver mail. We had Sears & Roebuck Catalogs. Well, they weighed four-and-a-half pounds apiece. So, we couldn't carry too many--so we'd bundle up four or five and put them on the steps. And every time I got to his (Ben's) house they were gone. I said, "What to hell is she doing with those things." So, she was teaching school so I didn't get a chance to see her. So, one day I finally found her. I said, "Agatha, what are you doing with those catalogs I leave here?" "Oh," she said, "I deliver them down to the people down the street."

ABM She was delivering the mail for you. WN I said, "Oh, No! You're not supposed to do that."

BB I'll never forget when Van told me one time that Walter used to deliver her mail up there. Well, he had to go to the bathroom.

WN I had the runs. Geez. BJB And, you had to stop! WN Well, they weren't home. You don't know the real story. BB Well, that's the way I got it from her. WN What happened--I rapped on the door and there was no answer and .. Geez, I had to go. Well, the bathroom was over here and there was three doors. One going in and one going down the cellar and there was someplace else. The stool was right here. So here I am

sitting on the toilet and she comes out of the cellar with all her curlers on--she let a SCREAM!. ABM You scared her to death! (Laughter) BM Oh my goodness. AM Who was that? BJB My sister, Van. BB Van.. Van Cowan. ABM You must have scared her half to death. BB I didn't know that she died.. that's why I didn't go to her wake. WN She never forgot that! Of course, I knew her. Of course in those days your mailman was a mechanical person--I didn't drink, didn't get cold, didn't get hot--nothing, you know.

ABM That's right. You get on that long route there--you were a long time between pit stops. WN That's right.

BJB And today they go by automobile..huh, Walter. WN Oh, yeah. They ride all over the place now. BB You go up there and there's more cars. BJB And you get everybody else's mail.

AM Somebody brings a bunch of mail for every street.

WN Well, down on South Main I used to deliver-- ABM You did to us too.. on South Main. WN Down to Center Street. When I first came back from the War--on my streets I had five Robert Thibodeaus and four Joseph LeBlancs. In those days there was no addresses--there was just Mr. & Mrs. Robert Thibodeau, Old Town, Maine. So, who the hell do you give it to. So I'd say to the first one, "Well, if it isn't yours give it back tomorrow and I'll give it to the other guy." I don't know. Sometimes they could tell me which one it was. ABM Well, just by the return address they probably would know, "Well, this isn't mine." WN Well, sometimes if they had somebody like Pam and Joe I could pretty well tell who it was. Gee. It was awful.

BB Nanum got a letter and it was addressed Nanum Richard.. Nunum or Rudolph..I don't remember, Skin Island, Maine, Old Town. ABM And he got it. WN Sure. We delivered a letter to Mrs. Shiro lived up on the corner of North Fourth and Center--and it was just the name of a boy and a girl, Old Town, Maine. It came from New Hampshire so I figured well, she was originally from New Hampshire -- this is the only people I know by that. We delivered that letter to her and she never could believe that we delivered that letter. It belonged to her. I mean. Today, they don't--- ABM Today if you don't have the zip code and the four digits after forget it.

(Everybody talking at once - try to sort it out)

BJB Hey, Walter, we don't have the same mailman or girl on the street. WN They ship them all around. It's the same way here. We have a girl one day and a man some other day--somebody else. We don't have the same.

AM Memere and Pepere. ABM Yeah. My brother's two children they write to Mum and Dad and it's "Memere and Pepere Bouchard".. but they put the address.

BJB Well, I've been calling them up because I had some stock certificates that got dropped in my driveway all wet. And then I had some important mail. Well, the telephone bill..I'd made a check and put it in the box..and they took it. Somebody called me up down the street.."Hey, Ben. I found your telephone bill here and it's soaking wet." WN Sloppy, aren't they, huh? So, I went down there and I lit into them. They're still doing it..delivering across the road the neighbor. They just... ABM Whatever's handy.

WN Sis King used to live on the corner of Eaton Street and Brunswick--she was brought up right behind us, you know. So I used to stop there for a cup of coffee.. go to the bathroom. There was a woman across the street was eyeing me--and I knew she was eyeing me.

TURNED THE TAPE

WN It was so bad--her husband worked at PCF and she had one of those little pools for the birds. And she had a little pail with rocks in it.. and she'd only want certain birds at that thing--she'd throw rocks at them. At night he'd have to come home and pick up all those rocks again and put them back in that pail. ABM Imagine that. WN Oh, she was a tarter. We had wild ones. ABM And the mailman would know them all too. WN When we finally got the trucks, you know, of course people watches what the mailman does. I said, "I don't have to watch what you're doing. Every Tom, Dick and Harry is going to call and tell me what you're doing." So this one day I got a phone call, "Postmaster, did you know that your mailtruck is going the wrong way?" I had to think you know. I said, "Maybe he was running out of gas and had to come back to the station." "I never thought of that." ABM It's going the wrong way, imagine that." WN Oh, I know. They'd watch everybody. We had a lady that got a Canadian paper--she was from Canada and it always came on Wednesday. And, Dean Cobbleson--the one that just died there--he used to live across the street from her. And in those days you could stop and take a meal where ever they were. I used to say, "For cripes sake, Dean, leave her stinking paper before you go eat." Once in awhile he'd forget it. The minute he'd forget--boy that telephone would ring and she would bail me out. Oh, Geez. I said, "For Cripes sake.." BB Blame you. WN Oh, yeah. And another woman her Time magazine didn't come on the right date and she'd call me and give me a hard time. So one day I said I'm going to fix her. I went down to the stand and bought her a damn Time magazine and delivered it to her. And she was so embarrassed she said, "Do you want a drink?" (laugh) When

you deal with the public it's unbelievable.

BJB How many years were you there. WN I was there 30 years. I had 8 years in the service so that counted too. AM I wonder how long Mr.--the first one we had on the Island--WN Mr. Bonneau? BJB Yeah. Bonneau. WN He was--he worked --I know that exactly--he worked there 41 years and that forty-first year he was working for nothing. ABM For nothing! BB He could have drawn... WN Well, he retired he was getting 50 cents more than he did with his regular salary. He had reached the critical point that if he retired he didn't lose any money--he'd make as much staying home--but he got to the point, he had nobody--his wife had died and his family was all gone. ABM He felt it was better for him to be working. BJB He was terrific. BM He had bad feet. Poor guy--I can see him walking now. BB The last place he lived--or the last place I knew was right on French Island where Harold St. Louis used to--across from-- WN That burned. BB That burned.. that's why Harold bought that lot. BJB I wondered what happened to that house. That was a big house too.

WN History--I know a lot of. AM That's just like mother and I--when I was a young kid--I used to have a bad name. When we got married--I know some people marked the calendar. WN I had the same trouble. AM You know who did that--Old Mrs. Thibodeau down there--Darky Thibodeau's mother. She was good for that. ABM She used to keep track of everybody, huh. WN When you'd get married she wanted to know how many months before you had a kid, you know. AM She had nothing better to do. WN My wife got pregnant on our wedding day and we were just exactly nine months. AM We got married the fifth of June and the baby was born the ninth of March. Nine months and four days. ABM You got through it. BJB I got married in July--we went the next July and then one month after. We went just exactly 13 months.

BB We got married--well, the first time--on the Fourth of July and Bernard was born on the eleventh of April. Nine months and a week. AM Is your first wife still living. BB Yeah. She's in Greenville.

WN I got married twice too, you know. AM Yeah. I know. BB You did? WN Yeah. I married Betty Goudreau the first time. I put them both in the hospital the same time--my child and her the same day. AM A pretty woman. BB What did you say, Walter. I didn't get that. WN Betty Goudreau. She was in the Sanitorium for three years. BM As long as that? WN TB in those days. And all the Sanitoriums in those days were full. The only way you could get in there--somebody had to die to give you a place. My child died--he was nine months old--he had a tumor in his liver. I had him in the Boston Children's Hospital in Boston and five doctors operated on him

and they told me he would die in fifteen days from the time they opened him up and he did. He died on the 25th of July. When I got married the second time--my first child was born on the 25th of July. ABM For heavens sake. Isn't that something. WN And it was a boy. The boy would be in his 50s now. He'd be 50 something. He was born in '42. And this was all during the War. I was trapped no matter which way I went. Geez. I couldn't get away half the time. I depended on my parents and my brother to help me out. It was a hard choice.

BB It was rough then, wasn't it. WN A lot of it I don't remember--my mind just blanked it out.

BJB Oh, Walter. While I think of it. That boy that Gene and Georgie brought up--what was his name? WN Emile. BJB What happened to him? WN He got killed in Canada. Him and supposedly he had a wife--were on a pilgrimage in Canada and a trailer truck fell right on top of them. ABM Oh, my land. BB Emile--I remember him. WN He was living in L.A. at the time. BB I used to cut his hair all the time. WN They spoiled him rotten. BJB Oh, boys--oh, boys they did. AM Is Georgie still living? WN No. She died three years ago. BJB She was quite old. WN She was 94 or 95. BM I didn't think she had died. WN Yeah. I had put her in--not in a nursing home--a boarding home for two or three years and then we put her in a nursing home and she only lasted about--let's see. She took sick right after..it was only about six months --she took sick on her birthday the day after Christmas and she only lasted a day. I got her old Father Levelle to come and say the last rights. We'd known him since he was a little kid. He was a devil. I don't know how he became a priest. His parents spoiled him rotten. AM Don't talk to me about him. I don't have no use for him. WN He's a funny man. BJB He's an odd fellow. AM He sure is. WN Very odd. BB Where is he at, at St. Josephs. AM No he's down to Brewer now. WN The one way down on South Main Street-- BM St. Therasas. ABM On the way to Epsteins. AM Near the restaurant there ABM Captain Nicks--WN No. ABM Morrills. I knew I'd get it in a minute--I knew it wasn't Captain Nicks WN Your so young-- ABM I just named the wrong Captain that's all. BB So many Captains. WN I'm going to have to leave at 4 o'clock.

ABM You're going to have to leave at 4. This should be done by 4. I wanted to ask you something. What about Baillargeons. They had the funeral home. How did all this start?

WN They started on Hayes Street. They used to have a horse--a hearse-- ABM A horse hearse. WN Horses pulled it. When we was kids we used to have to shovel Hayes Street all the way out so he could get through. And everything was at his home.

BJB That hearse is in the museum. Yeah, that's that hearse-- ABM

- Here in Old Town. BJB Yeah. It's glass. WN It was all glass--It's a beautiful hearse all glass. BJB And they used to have a hat [with his hands described a top hat] and dress all in black. And the women had all the veils.
- WN And then they went down--to what they called the Northview. ABM Yeah. The Northview Hotel. WN That originally--That's where he was then--then he moved up on South Main Street--down about where Right Aid Drugstore is--ABM In that area. WN Then they eventually moved up on North Forth Street. BM Now you say they moved--they moved the business or the family. WN The business. The old people always stayed. AM They always stayed there until he bought Uncle Frank's house.
- ABM Now what did he used to do? Did he embalm them at his place and bring them back to the home? BJB Yeah.
- WN And then they ran a business with it--they had a kind of paint store. ABM And that's when they used to run that Firestone - -that was the part of the paint store.
- BJB In '31 he embalmed my mother right in the house. They embalmed them right in the house.
- WN I used to work for them. ABM You did? Well that must have been an exciting job. WN I only had five jobs. Every time we had a kid I'd go get another job. I tell you this one incident--Calix and I was going to pick up one Bucky Beaulieu's nephews got killed in Kittery, Maine. And we got half-way down there and the State Trooper stopped us. Calix said, "What the hell is he stopping us for." His wife had contacted the State Trooper to stop us to pick up another body on the way back. ABM He's got them coming and going. WN We picked up two of them that day. Those were the days we used to service Howland. And everything was in the homes then. We had to set up all the chairs. We'd have funerals--I'd go up there and unravel that one and have the funeral there and then hurry up come down and do a funeral down here. Oh, it was a mess. BJB When did you do that? WN Oh, Cripes, I can't remember. In those days also, when I used to work in the woolen mill back in the '30s we used to be drivers for the funeral. Everybody would offer their cars but they couldn't get off in those days. ABM Nobody'd drive..they had to work. WN They couldn't get off like they do now, so we used to drive their--I used to work the midnight shift at the woolen mill and by 8 o'clock we were at the funeral home driving cars. ABM Driving other people's cars.
- AM I can remember anybody died--the neighbors would come in and do all the cooking. And the day of the funeral after the casket was out they clean the house. You'd come back and the house was all clean, dinner was all ready. ABM Those were

neighbors weren't they.

WN Yeah. My father..down on Heald Street... BM Wherever..who died..The bedroom they used was always cleaned, all picked up,.. BJB The beds made everything. BB.. and everything was set back the way it was supposed to be.

BB That's one thing I'll say about French Island when anything happened they were all there. WN We knew that. Because when I moved from Seventh Street back to the Island--of course, on Seventh Street you could have died and nobody would have come. I came up here and we took sick--it was in December--and I think everybody on the Island brought food in--see how you was--could they do anything for you. They were good for that.

ABM Good people. BB I always liked French Island. BJB It's different today, huh Bert. ABM It wasn't the college students, huh?

BJB Poor Walter. ABM I sympathize. AM You've got them on both sides of you, ain't you? WN All around me. All around me! Over to Dubay's I got a kick there--they must have ten cars and they can only put about six or seven. They pile them one on top of the other. BM I thought they were supposed to park only one car....there had to be one car for every apartment. WN Forget it. ABM Dream on. WN Where I live--between Choinard's and my old house--and where you lived--they've got nine cars in there. BB Back on Gray's Lane, you mean? WN No, No, no--where it's all fenced in. BJB You're lucky you've got it fenced in. WN Oh, yeah. I've got it all fenced in. I used to have a four foot fence. Now I've got a six foot fence. BJB I don't blame you. ABM You might end up with a ten foot fence. BJB They'll come in by helicopter.

AM I remember over to Dubay's house--the upstairs apartment..in the window, they had a statue of a nude girl in there. WN In the summertime over where your barbershop was--you know that porch that comes off to the side there, they're out there with their lawn chairs on the porch sunning themselves. ABM On the roof? WN Yeah. ABM Oh, yeah. It was the same thing home. WN This must be--well in those two houses there --must be at least 15 or 20 in there.

ABM But you know the law says that there can be no more than 6 unrelated people living in the house. Ho, ho, ho. Dream on.

WN What law is that? ABM The city zoning says that--but I mean--believe it. WN In Bing's barbershop one night there was 50 students in there. There was no place to sit--they were all standing. I am telling you it was like a hive. And they were urinating all over the street. ABM All over the yards. The same thing home. WN On the cars. Cars going by they'd

urinate on them. Police come up three times--but what the hell is two policeman going to do with 50 people. What the heck...They'd have to need an army to get them out of there.

BB When I had the barbershop at the foot of the hill, I wanted to put an upstairs so I could live there, you know. The ordinance wouldn't pass it--there wasn't enough parking place. WN Yeah. That's the big story. That's what happened where I lived before. The guy wants to put another apartment downstairs--that's the reason they won't do it because there's no place to put cars.

BJB But they've all got three or four cars--not only the college students and I can sit on my porch, and I counted twelve cars from just where I sat. They were all--now LaBrees have got two trucks--wait three trucks and a car--four cars right there. ABM In one house. BJB Yeah. Lawrence Waye has two. BM Everybody has a car today. WN I have three cars at my house. We own two and my daughter owns one.

ABM Everybody's working and they all go different directions--you've got to have a car. You used to take the trolley--or the bus.

BJB And then..next door to me ..she has one..that's the only one. And the across the street they have two cars and a truck. Three right there. So there's five cars in two houses. WN I bet every family in Old Town has two cars anyway. BB There's two upstairs and we have one. ABM Well. BM So we have three there all the time. BJB You know there's so many automobiles.

WN You can't believe the traffic. I come home sometimes at ten o'clock at night--Stillwater Avenue is just loaded with cars. Going down--you know before you never see anything down on Main Street--down on Center Street. There's cars coming from every direction.

BJB You go to MacDonalds and try to get out of there. You go to the Governors and try to get out of there. BM Or Ames. BJB You sit there and you shake. So, when I go to Macdonalds I usually cut around and go down the College Road.

ABM Speaking of all the traffic. With these two beautiful hills, did you guys ever slide down those hills? I can't imagine that you didn't.

WN Oh, yeah. BJB You wouldn't do it now though. WN Our biggest slide was Goodin's Hill. (everybody talking at once) Slide right down the river.

ABM Slide right down onto the river. BM We used to walk across

the ice to go to church right across the river. AM We used to go to church across the ice all the time. BJB Well, sure. ABM It was a lot quicker, wasn't it? BM Wouldn't do it now. ABM Oh, gosh no. It's not thick enough. WN By Thanksgiving everything was froze. ABM Yeah..and it was froze thick. It wasn't just a skim. AM Many morning we'd crawl underneath the cars (railroad) to go to church. WN Either crawl through between, or underneath--one or the other.

BJB Good old days.

AM And every Sunday when we'd go to church across the river there would be some water there--because the PCF would close down and they'd back some up. BB Yeah--we'd cross over. WN My kids used to say I've got PCF up my nose. ABM PCF up their nose? (laugh) WN They didn't know what that was. So they'd say, "I've got PCF up my nose." ABM Oh, that's cute.

WN You know it's funny--all the seven kids I had--they all have fond memories of living up there. AM You had seven kids? WN Well, I didn't. My wife did. The mailman kept going to the house. ABM The darn mailman wouldn't stay away. BJB They used to say the iceman. BJB She must have been ready to kill that mailman. AM I didn't realize you had that many children. WN I've got four boys.. I've got 20 grandchildren.

BJB Holy Moses. You did your part brother.

WN Sometimes I have to say, "How old are you?" ABM Who's your father? WN How far are you in school? BJB Put a few more years on you and when you want to call one you go down the whole list. WN I do that now. One of my sons says, "I'm Jeffrey" I say, "Wait until I get to you." BB Five boys and two girls? WN Four boys and three girls. BJB That's what we were. WN There's Jeannie and Becky and Mary. BB Oh, Mary. WN Mary's the last one..the baby. She's a schoolteacher. Jeannie and Becky are very efficient in everything--they are carpenters, plumbers. ABM Do anything. WN Computer experts.. BJB Another one over here. WN Sewers--what have you. There ain't nothing they can't do. You ought to see the carpentry work. She made an office for her husband--you'd swear to God it was done by a carpenter. She's one of these girls you can't help her. ABM She'll do it herself. WN She took a pool table apart and lugged it out to camp. BJB Slate? WN Slate and everything. She took it apart--put it out--and set it up out there. Oh, I'm telling you. You ought to see the steps she made for out the lake and stuff like that. Makes me look sick. I can't even nail a nail straight. BB You do pretty good Walter. You've come a long ways since-- WN I used to buy your beach wagon's didn't I BB Yes, you did. Always bought my cars. WN When Bing got done his beach wagon I buy it. ABM He'd say, "I'm ready to

trade it in. And you'd buy it." WN That's right. BB. Yeah. WN That '57 Chevrolet was the best car I ever had. Geez. BB That was an awful good car. WN There was one of the Treadwell girls got married (???)--and they had bought a brand new car and we had a temperature of about 50° below zero and snow up to here. I was outdoors--didn't use the garage then. So I got out there and put the key in and started right up. This guy--we had to drag him out--brand new car he couldn't even start. Gee. That Chevrolet was unreal. BB That was a real good car. A V-8 too.