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

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Albert Morin and Bernice Morin, interviewed by Amy Bouchard Morin, Part 2

Albert Morin

Bernice Morin

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INTERVIEW WITH ALBERT (BERT) MORIN
IN PORCH OF HIS HOME (19 FRENCH STREET - ON FRENCH ISLAND)
(Present were Bert's wife, Bernice and their granddaughter and
her baby boy)

AUGUST 27, 1993

2:30 P.M.

ABM Amy Bouchard Morin
BJB Benoit Joseph Bouchard
BM (Bert) Albert Morin
BEA Bernice Morin

BM My mother and father were both Canadian born--ABM They were both born in Canada. BM Yeah, Right... .course my mother was three-quarters... she was a... she migrated to Canada... that is she didn't... she was adopted. ABM She was adopted. BM When they had trouble between the highlanders and lowlanders in Scotland. And, of course, mother was pretty near all Scotch. And then she met my father, course she was married when she was only thirteen, I think it was. ABM Is that right? BM Yeah, and my father was 10 years older... 12 years older than she was.

ABM Were they married in Canada?

BM Yeah. ABM They were married in Canada. BM Yeah. Then they migrated to Old Town here. ABM To Old Town. BM Yeah. Course, they were a big family... my father's family was 23 children. And they lived right down there by where Mrs... the England girl lives there now.

BJB Bouchard?? BM Right down here where Mrs... . . . BJB Violette? BM Huh? BJB Violette? BM No, No. BEA What house are you trying to say? BM Right down here by where Mrs. Russell used to live, Ma Russell. BJB Oh, yes. BM That's where I remember my grandfather. My grandmother I don't remember at all. But my grandfather I can remember. He had a long big white beard, always smoking a pipe.

ABM Now, what was your father's name?

BM Aimable. ABM Aimable. OK. And so he was Lawrence Morin, Senior's brother. BM Brother. ABM They were brothers. So you are a first cousin of Rachel. BM Right.

ABM See, I've already interviewed Rachel, so I'm just kind of setting this in the tape. She gave us a breakdown, she named as many of the brothers and sisters as she could remember and your father's name was there, Aimable. She said they used to call him Lovey. BM Yeah. Yeah.

ABM Ok. So they came down, now were your mother and father-- mother and father they were born in Canada and they were married in Canada. Your mother was about thirteen. They

come down here, did they settle on the Island right off?

BM Yeah.

ABM Why did they come to the States? Do you know?

BM That I really don't know. ABM You don't know. Probably for work. BM Well, I guess the whole family moved in at one time I guess. ABM Probably. BM Cause like I say the family was--

ABM And they were already married when they came down. OK. And then they moved on the Island. How many brothers and sisters do you have?

BM Me? ABM Yeah. BM They're all dead now but I had two brothers and four sisters.

ABM OK. Can you name them and... you know the brothers, the sisters who they married and that. It's kind of nice to get it on tape.

BM Cause, my two brothers they both got drowned when they were little. ABM Is that right? BM Yeah, they both drowned in the same place across the river here. ABM Oh, for heavens sake.

BM One in the winter time and one in the spring of the year.

ABM Went through the ice. How old were they, do you know?

BM One was seven and one was nine, I believe. ABM Oh, my land. Your folks must have been devastated! BM He was going to meet my father at night... cause my father used to work at the Jordan, and he went across the ice to meet my father to come home. ABM To walk back. Oh, my land. So you're the only boy, you're the only one surviving.

BM As a matter of fact, I'm the only one living now. ABM And you're the only one living now. Were you the baby of the family? BM Right. ABM You were the baby. OK. And what were your brother's names. BM George and... see one got drowned the year 1912 and the other was 1908 or 09, I can't remember. One was named George and the other was named, hum... ABM That's ok. Let's talk about the sisters and it will come to you. BM Yeah. ABM That's what happens with me too. And your sister's names were? BM Christina, Almeda, Florence and Lodia.

ABM How did you spell the second one that one I'm not sure. BM A L M E D A. ABM Because that's an unusual name, I want to be sure to spell it right when I transcribe it. OK. Now you were born... were you born on the Island? BM Right.

ABM You were born on the Island, and you've always have lived on the Island. BM Never moved of the Island. ABM Never moved off the Island. BM Been here for 80 years.

ABM There you go. By gorry I guess I've got some history here. How about... did you go to school at the Island school?

BM I went for a few years. ABM Just a few years. BM Then I went to the convent school. ABM OK. Now when you went to school... you spoke French at home. BM Right. ABM You did. BM Cause mother couldn't speak English.

ABM OK. So then you went to school. Could you speak English when you started school?

BM I believe I could. ABM You think you could. BM I thought I could. ABM OK. Because a lot of people have said that when they went, that was their first contact with English, they always spoke French in the home. BM I think I could. ABM You think you could speak both. BM Yeah. Because my sister was married to an Italian and he couldn't speak French.

ABM Ah, ha. So you had to learn to speak English. BM That's right. ABM I see. So you went to school and it was English at the school here. Who were your teachers over there?

BM Oh. Gosh. ABM You don't remember? BM No. I know that I didn't have the Pratt girls. ABM You didn't have the Pratt girls. BJB Linnie O'Connell. ABM I bet you had Linnie O'Conner? BM Yeah. Miss O'Connell. I had her and the only one I can remember is in Junior High School cause I liked her so much. Miss Dickinson. ABM Inez Dickinson. BM Yeah. ABM Yeah, I had her too, and I loved her. Wasn't she a gem. BM Oh, geez. I had her for English class. ABM Oh. She was wonderful. BM Yeah.

ABM Then you went to Saint Joseph's School, did you?

BM Yeah. I went there for... I don't know, until the eighth grade. ABM Ninth grade when you went to Helen Hunt. BM Used to go to seventh grade the Helen Hunt... seventh, eighth and ninth wasn't it? ABM Yeah. That's what it was. BM That's when I went in the seventh grade, Helen Hunt.

ABM And you liked Helen Hunt. BM Oh, yes. Very much. ABM Did you like going to the convent school? Or do you remember?

BM Not too well. Because I couldn't read or write French.

ABM Ah, ha. So, and you had gone here long enough that you didn't pick up the beginning. I see...

- BM Because we used to take catechism and bible history all in French. I couldn't read French. ABM And you were lost.
BM I guess I was.
- ABM Who were your neighbors when you were growing up.
- BM Well, there was... in the house that I lived there, that was over where Louis Taylor's wife is living there now, there used to be next door to us was Mrs. Landry. And, next to us was the Liberty bakery shop. And then across the road was Herbert Martin, and down below the hill was Mrs. Ladd, and then Mrs. Nadeau, and Petit Cock Fornier.
- ABM Just around you. OK. When you played. Who were your friends? Who were the buddies you chummed around with when you were growing up?
- BM Pepper Martin, Leo Paradis, and Bernard Landry, Pat Cormier.
- ABM So, what did you guys... what did you guys do? BM Ben. ABM And Ben? Did you play with Ben too?
- BM Of course, I used to ride with your father to school you know. ABM Oh, you did? BM Oh, yeah. Yeah, well what we used to do, we used to go up to the American Woolen and try to get those bobby... bobbins ABM Those bobbins. BM So we could make a ball and play ball in the road. And we'd have a... if we didn't have a bat we'd have a board cut like a bat and a ball, a yarn ball. ABM So, you made do? BM That's right, yeah. And we'd pitch horseshoes, and in the winter time we used to shovel snow and play in the snow, you know.
- ABM Did you skate on the river?
- BM Well, not too much. Because I wasn't allowed too much to go on the river. ABM I can imagine. BM My mother and father kept pretty close watch on me. But as I grew older I was allowed to go you know, and skate and that stuff. ABM You know to watch how thick it was and all that. BM That's right.
- ABM And you used to go fishing?
- BM Oh, yeah. ABM Did you have a boat or did you just go off the ledge, or... BM As I grew older I lived with my brother-in-law Paul Morancy on Nadeau Street. He built a boat, and course when we used to drive the river run... four foot logs. I used to be on the river saving wood. I used to save enough wood to last all year. You know... and that's...
- ABM You heated with wood... you heated the house with wood?

BM Oh, yes. In those days that's all they were using.

ABM In the winter, what did you do... you came home, you had dinner, and it was dark already, what did you do for entertainment after supper?

BM Well, I used to go with my... there used to be about four of five families that would get together two or three times a week and play cards. ABM Play cards. BM I used to go with my father and mother cause they... no matter where they went they took me along. ABM They took you. BM That's what I used to do in the evening, and when they were playing at my house there well then I had two games, soldier's game I used to shoot, and like that you know. But I wasn't allowed to go out after dark. ABM No, not alone. BM No, no.

ABM You didn't go out after dark alone. What were your favorite places to play? Did you... BM What's that in the winter time? ABM Well, winter, summer, wherever?

BM Well, in the summertime we used to go in the Pick Parker field, you know. We used to play ball there all summer long. And thay's located below they used to go swimming. Of course, I didn't go swimming. ABM You couldn't go swimming. BM But I used to go watch them swim there. That was about what I did all summer was play ball. Of course, I went to the movies quite a lot too. My father gave me a few cents... the movies quite a lot. In the wintertime, well, we used to go down the "Five-Inch" hill there, slide there or up there by Mrs. ?? Cote, slide up there, you know. That's about what we did.

ABM That's what you did. Mostly, you played ball in the summer, and then you played skating and whatever in the winter. BM Not much else to do. ABM Not much else. No TV, no radio.

BM In the evening, we used to play "Odd or Evil". ABM Um, hm. BM And then once in awhile we have the hoop there, you know, little round hoop there, roll it along there. ABM You used to roll it along with like dowel type thing? BM It used to be a barrel stave, there you know. ABM Yeah, a barrel stave hoop. BM We used to cut it in two and tie one end on a stick on the half and have a little wheel and roll it along. ABM Yeah. BM Of course, we used to... One thing I used to do too, I used to make a long piece of wood, drive a... that you could... BJB Stilts. BM Yeah

ABM You used to make stilts. BM Oh, yeah. And then we used to find milk cans you know that just had a hole on one end. Put them on your feet and ABM So they'd curl up around your feet and then you'd make a racket.

BM Right, run. You'd make an awful noise.

- ABM What were your holidays like? All right, let's start with let's say Christmas. What were your Christmas' like?
- BM They were great. ABM They were great. BM Yeah. My father and mother never had much money, but I always managed to get toys, and a stocking full of fruits and that stuff. And we always had a great Christmas dinner. ABM You had a good Christmas dinner. What did Mama used to cook? BM Turkey. ABM She always had turkey Christmas. BM Turkey or either a big chicken or rooster you know. ABM Your mum a good cook? BM Oh, she was a great cook. ABM She was a great cook. BM Oh, I guess she was! ABM What were some of the things you liked that she used to make special? BM Bread. ABM Oh, she made her bread. BM She used to make bread and put it on the sideboard to cool you know. And I used to watch my chance, she used to cover it up you know with a kind of damp cloth, I used to go and I'd cut the heel you know off, when it dries on the top there. Oh, she used to give me the devil for that. ABM You used to cut it off. That was good, huh. When it was warm. BM With molasses.
- ABM Oh, boy. That sounds like it was pretty special. Now what was Fourth of July like? Did you celebrate a lot around on the Fourth?
- BM Well, yeah, I used to try to save a little money to buy firecrackers and that stuff, you know. But a lot of the time I used... of course my father about the only time he had off was Christmas, Fourth of July and Labor Day. And a lot of times, I don't know what he did, but we used to go pick choke-cherries. ABM Choke-cherries. BM I used to go with him a lot, I don't remember what he used to do with that. BJB Wine.
- ABM Maybe made wine. BM I don't remember. BJB They made wine.
- BM I used to go... I remember one time going with him and coming back, and the trolley had run over a little girl up there by the North End. I'll never forget that. Just a little girl. My father wouldn't let me stop and look, he just kept me... ABM He rushed you right by, huh. Isn't that something. BM Trolley ran over that little girl.
- ABM So, what did your father do to earn a living?
- BM He was a box mill manager. He worked in Jordan Lumber. ABM He worked in the box mill.
- ABM And, did you, any in your family take music lessons? Did anybody? BM Just my son did.
- ABM Your son did. But your brothers and sisters never did. You never did. Now you didn't have the radio. Was there any

music around on the Island?

BM Well, when my sisters were both working at the American Woolen Mill. They bought a phonograph that you cranked. ABM a phonograph. BM And they used to buy, about every week they'd buy a record.

ABM And then you'd listen to that. So that's how you heard your music. Did you ever go to dances?

BM Not until I got older. ABM Oh, sure. BM Sixteen, seventeen, eighteen. ABM Did they have dances on the Island or did you go...? BM No. I used to go to Bradley.

ABM You used to go to Bradley.

BM Bradley Town Hall.

ABM Right. When you got to be in your teens, how did young folks get together? How did you meet your wife?

BM I met her at her house. There used to be a bunch of us would go over there and play cribbage at night. ABM You played cribbage. BM And that's how I met her. One night she was having trouble with her school lesson, and I helped her, and we got to talking and the movie was having Seven... Well, anyway she said, "I'd like to see that movie." BM I said, "Will you come with me?" and she said, "Yes." So that's how we started going.

ABM Imagine that. So all these years later.

BM We went together four years before we got married.

ABM So, young couples would meet each other, they'd go to each other's house, maybe with friends. BM Yeah. ABM Played cribbage, played cards. BM Once in awhile they'd have little parties. ABM They'd have parties. BM Birthday parties, play spin the bottle.

ABM Funny, Rachel talked about playing spin the bottle and BM post office. ABM post office. Yes, she talked about that. So, when you were growing up, what did you think you wanted to do when you got grown up? Did you think of going to school, did you? What happened? It was during the Depression, right? BM That's right. ABM So, that kind of eliminated probably any...

BM Well, I really never had, I thought at one time I might like to be a priest one day. But that...

ABM It kind of went by. So, when you got a job. Your first job was what? When you were a kid probably you had some kind of job.

BM I was sixteen years old when I started working over Jordan Lumber, 55 hours a week, \$8.25 a week. ABM And you were fifteen years old. BM Sixteen ABM Sixteen. My lord! BM Working 10 hours a day and 5 hours on Saturday. ABM Isn't that something. BM And I was working! ABM Oh, sure. You worked hard. That's... BM When that mill would get slack they'd send me over to Milford to stack lumber. You'd wake up in the morning, and you couldn't open your hands were so stiff and full of spl... ABM splinters? BM Oh, gee. ABM Isn't that something. BM Tell that to kids now a days they don't believe you. ABM No. They can't believe that anything was like that, can they, huh.

BJB They wouldn't work for \$10.

ABM Well, no. But then \$10 you could do a lot with \$10. Whereas today, you can hardly get two gallons of milk.

BM That's right. That's about the size of it.

ABM And then, after you worked for Jordan, what did you do?

BM Well, let's see. Then the Depression came along and I went on WPA. ABM you went on WPA. BM And from then... I worked on that for about two or three years I guess. Then I ABM Where did you work there? BM I worked at Mud Pond. ABM At Mud Pond. BM Built that bridge across the pond there. ABM Across the pond. BM Yeah, across the bog. ABM The bog. Yeah. That floating bridge... well, I guess it was a floating thing or whatever. Then they made a road. BM They were pounded down there 60 feet deep in some places. ABM Imagine that. BM Before they hit bottom, solid bottom. And then after that I got a job clearing up the property for the City of Old Town, with St. Peter, the one that married Ozitte, there. George. ABM George St. Peter. BM He used to go to Bangor every day and clear up the property of the City of Old Town. Find out, trace it way back to the original owner. Then from there on I went to the pie plate, and from the pie plate I went to the brush handle, and from the brush handle I went down to the Penboscot Chemical Fibre Company, and I was down there for 38 years.

ABM For 38 years. My land. BM I had a few little... ABM Odd jobs here and there. BM Of course I worked part time for the First National ABM For years. That's where I remember you--it's up there. BM For about 35 years I worked part time at the First National. ABM For heavens sake. There were a lot of characters on the Island. You used to talk about different characters. Who can you think of that you, when I said that who came to mind? Because I saw you grin.

BM Well there used to be Winkim St. Louis. And, White there, ah. BJB Bebe White. ABM Bebe? BM No, ah. BEA Bebe

St. Louis. BM Huh? BJB Bebe St. Louis. BM Yeah, there was Bebe St. Louis, Donut Bishop and Hubble Cyr. There were... Fatty Cyr.

ABM And Fatty Cyr.

BM Wilfred Cote was another one, they were all good guys. But they liked their little bit of liquor you know. ABM Yeah. They had a good time, huh? BM Yeah, they sure did. We used to go out to Sunkase Stream, they had a camp out there. You know, weekends out there... had a great time. Sometimes we wouldn't do according to...

ABM What you were supposed to be doing, huh? Now you went to St. Joseph's School, you had a few years here then you went to St. Joseph's. You don't... of course you wouldn't remember when the new church was built. Do you remember when the old church was still across the street?

BM Yes. Because I used to go there and play Wist.

ABM Wist. What was that? What is Wist? Somebody else mentioned that too. Was it a card game?

BM Yeah. It's just like bridge. ABM Something like bridge. OK. BM Yeah. Only you don't bid, you know.

ABM Yeah. OK. I was wondering, because someone else mentioned that. And I said if someone else says that to me I'm going to find out what it is. OK. And so you used to go there and play Wist. BM On Sunday nights. ABM Yeah. So you remember when they took that down, that church.

BM Well, I remember, it's so damn long ago. ABM All of a sudden it wasn't there. BM That's right. I remember they gave me a hard time. BJB They moved the rectory up for the nuns. BM Yeah.

ABM Where the nuns are. (Dog barks) BM Stop it. ABM Did you ever feel when you went to... BM I'm listening. ABM You're listening. Did you ever feel when you went to school, let's say at St. Joseph's, when you went to St. Joseph's, and it wasn't all Island children, there were children that were from, you know... from the main land. BM From all over. ABM From Old Town. OK. And did you ever feel like... when... probably not when you went there... .but when you went from there to Helen Hunt. Did you ever feel there was any prejudice I guess, but I don't know if that's the word I want. Do you know what I mean?

BM No. I never felt that way. But the only thing that I felt a little bit lost because some of those kids were well dressed, and my mother used to make my clothes, you know. ABM Well, sure. BM And I felt a little bit... ABM Like

you didn't quite fit or belong. BM That's right, yeah. But that... after I went by... ABM You made your friends. BM B the ninth grade then things changed. ABM Sure. BM I started playing basketball, and made a lot of new friends. Then I lost that shyness and...

ABM Sure. (I'd better keep track of this thing... I don't want it to run out.) Were funerals different back when you were growing up. BM What's that, dear? ABM Funerals?

BM Oh, yes. A lot of times people that I knew, I'd go spend all night long. ABM You'd stay there all night. BM Yeah.

ABM They used to have them at home.

BM Yeah. Oh, yes. We'd visit and stay all night long. Say the beads about every two or three hours, come back home in the morning and go to bed. BJB Three nights. BM Yeah.

ABM And then they would be buried across. There's no cemetery on the Island. BM No, no. ABM They'd go to St. Joseph's and then St... Then, what was it, Forest Hill? BM Everybody at that time was buried at the old cemetery. ABM The old cemetery. BM Yeah.

ABM What about weddings back then?

BM Well, I never went to too many weddings. ABM Because you were working probably. BM No. I don't know. I don't know why. But I just didn't.

ABM Were they different? Today when young people get married it's a big splash. And I'm just wondering, back then if they went as all out for weddings as they do now.

BM No, way. They didn't have no wedding dress, no nothing. Just a common street dress and that was it. And there was no honeymoons or anything. ABM No. Couldn't afford them, no doubt. BM They'd just get married and might have a few friends at the house, and a little meal, a little bit of food and that's it.

ABM Did you have to go in the service during the war. BM No. ABM You didn't.

BM No. They a... .I was working down at the mill at the time and I kept... every month I kept getting a deferment, and I was wondering how come? So, one day I was talking to my superintendent down there, Mr. Keefe, and I asked him about that. "Oh," he says, "We're doing that." BM "Well," I said, "I don't want you to do it anymore. If they want me, I'll go." Because I was working in the shipping room, they couldn't get anybody to work in the shipping room. That was hard work.

ABM They were holding right on to you.

BM That's right. So, they'd get me deferred. They claimed it was, you know, during the war you know they probably needed the pulp.

ABM The Island now is a lot different from what it was when you were growing up. When do you think all those changes started? When do you remember them starting?

BM Well, I think they probably started around... .well, lets see. We had our softball league at the Island school, and we had fights at the Island school, that was in the 50s. I think it started around 1960. I would say. Approximately around that area. You know, when I started notice the change.

ABM When I lot of the families were leaving and the homes were made into apartments, also.

BM Well, a lot of the kids got cars, you know they wouldn't play anymore.

ABM It wasn't... .it wasn't a localized community any more.

BEA It had to do with the university too.

ABM And the university too. Yeah.

BEA There were almost as many students at the university...

ABM You said there were fights at the Island school. Tell me about that.

BM Every Friday night Peanut Dubay used to run fights over at the Island school. People used to come around here from Bangor, everywhere to see those fights. We had some good fighters on the Island. There was Cyclone Violette, Peanut Dubay, Pat Cormier, Henry Lagasse. Those were all great fighters.

ABM Now what kind... .was it like boxing.

BM It was boxing.

ABM It was boxing.

BM Yeah. It was boxing. ABM Did they have a ring like they have now? BM Oh, sure. ABM They had everything. Well, isn't that something. BM Oh, yeah. It was everything was up to specifications. BJB It was official. ABM Isn't that something. Right here in Old Town. BM And I'm telling you they used to fill that Island schoolyard on Friday nights.

ABM And that was every Friday they had that. BM Yeah. ABM Huh.

BM And then of course we had a softball league too up there.

ABM And you had a softball league. BM Oh, yes. We used to have four or five teams. We had Old Town and all around. They'd come up here and people used to fill that... we had a little grandstand there and they'd fill that up. ABM And that was at the school too. BM Yeah, they'd come up and fill that grandstand. They really enjoyed em. We didn't have too much big a field, you know. You'd hit the ball over the fence on the left or right you were out, but if it was centerfield it was a home run.

ABM Do you remember when Labree's Bakery started? BM Yeah. ABM Ok. Can you tell me anything about that?

BM Well, I can tell you sitting here, Sunday morning I'd sit on the porch here and see hundreds of cars go by there after church to go pick up their chocolate donuts. ABM To pick up their donuts. They had to go right by your house, huh. BM From what I heard, they got their recipe from Pete Taylor.

BEA Pete Taylor is the one that started it. In a little tiny building there.

BM Up there by... right on the corner of Gray's Lane. They had a little place up there. He started that. And he sold it to Labrees, and they started down the cellar over there, and it kept getting bigger and bigger, and then they moved into a building there, and from there on when they made the change on the Island here, when they had that housing development there, and they got two-and-a-half million dollars for that.

ABM Renova... what did they call that... community... there was a name for that, too. Anyway... they.

BJB That was built on my father's property.

BM That's when they bought... the government bought Labrees and they moved over there [on Gilman Falls Avenue], and they put in those houses there for the retired people. Yeah, I was on that project.

ABM When they enlarged and they built that new bakery, that must have given an awful lot of people on the Island work.

BM It did. Yeah. Sunday was their busy day.

ABM People would come out of mass and they'd come up on the Island to get their donuts. How has the Island changed

physically? I'm talking about like the buildings. Is it different from when you were a kid growing up? Or does it all look the same?

BM Well, it all looks the same but every house, mostly every house, they put in apartments and rented their apartments, you know. And course...

ABM So that eliminated the family closeness and the neighborhood feeling that you used to have.

BM That's right, that's right.

ABM How do you... do you remember as the houses were going up on the Island. Did people build houses? How did things develop here on the Island?

BM Well, from what I can remember there's not too many houses been built in my memory. They were all ... ABM They were all here. This was all... BM A few's been built. But the majority of them were here. Of course, like where your father used to have his lumber yard, course that's been built over there. ABM That was ca... Urban Renewal, that's what it was. They called it Urban Renewal, and they gave grants to places to fix homes and... BM Two-and-a-half million grant so they could.

ABM How do you think senior housing, like they have the senior housing in Old Town and they have, did they build one here in behind the... where Labree was? BM Where Labree was, yeah. ABM OK. How do you think that's affected the Island? Has that affected the Island at all?

BM Well, it put in a lot of strangers. ABM Huh, huh. BM There's not too many people. I don't think there's anybody in there that's from the Island that lives in those apartments. As far as I know. But I think it's a great idea.

ABM Well, it sure helps, I think. Did a lot of the homes get sold and made into apartment buildings? Because of senior housing when some of the older folks on the Island moved into... BM A lot of the houses have been sold. The original owners... well, the original owners are dead anyway. ABM Well, sure... .but I mean... BM But, I guess the children didn't want it. They just sold it to get out of town, you know, to get out of town.

ABM Excuse me just a minute. I think I've got to stop this thing and...

TURN THE TAPE

- ABM OK. Do you remember what businesses there were on the Island when you were a kid?
- BM Yeah. Of course, I remember Ben's father having a lumber yard. And then over here was Lavasseur's grocery store. From there it went to, after they were done, it went to St. Louis took it over. And then, Richard took it over. And then there was Nadeau's store. And then was it IGA that went there, was it? BJB Yeah. BM IGA went there and then there was... BJB or Cloverdale. BM Cloverdale, Cloverdale! ABM Cloverdale? BM Cloverdale, and then there was Mr. Liberty's bread, used to make bread. ABM On the corner of Union and... what is that? BM Front. Front and Union. And then there was Bill Michaud's store. Mr. Landry's grocery store on Front Street. ABM Quite a few little grocery stores, neighborhood grocery stores. BEA (???) BM Well, no, well that Bill Michaud used to run that. Billy Michaud used to run that for years, and years, and years. That's where I used to buy my fireworks, Fourth of July. ABM They used to sell them in the little stores? BM Yeah.
- ABM There were a lot of little grocery stores on the Island then. And the Island people, that's where they got their groceries. They didn't go over... over town most of them?
- BM No. Well, of course Beaulieu Brothers at that time used to have delivery. ABM Yes. Yeah. BM They used to pick up the orders and deliver them. ABM I remember that. BM He had all the Island, so we used to buy a lot of groceries.
- ABM You used to buy a lot from Beaulieu Brothers, and that was on Main Street. North Main Street. BJB And Brissette's Market. ABM And Brissette's Market right across, and they had delivery, so that made it easier.
- BM Yeah. They used to come and take the orders in the morning and deliver in the afternoon. Same way with the ice carts.
- ABM The little neighborhood stores... did people like run bills and pay every week? BM Yes. ABM So that made it easy for them, they could send the kids to the store to get some milk, and they didn't have to give them so many cents for the milk, and then at the end of the week they'd go pay.
- BM They used to run a bill for the week or two weeks or whenever they'd get paid, you know. And of course... ABM And that something that doesn't happen anymore. That's something that's completely gone. BM A lot of those old grocery stores were closed on account of not getting paid. ABM Not getting paid. Right. BM A lot them had a lot of credit on that. ABM They had a lot of credit on the slips...

BEA Can I get you something to drink? ABM No, no... that's fine.

BM We got 7-UP, Ben?

ABM No, that's fine. Ah, I'm trying to think what I haven't covered here. How did the War affect the Island? You probably don't remember the 1st World War, but the 2nd one?

BM There was a lot of boys from the Island that went. Like in my family there was four of them. That is my sister's family there was four went in. In her family that went in. And very near, I would say 90 percent of the houses on the Island were hit. ABM With somebody going. BM That's right.

ABM Were a lot of the young men... Did a lot of them not come back, or were? BM Well... ABM Do you think most of them survived as a... BM My nephew got... died in that. BJB Quite a few, quite a few. BM Yeah, but I don't remember anybody else on the Island got killed. Do you Ben?

ABM You can't think. I was just wondering if there was a big loss of young men.

BEA How about the Lagasse boy, wasn't there one in the navy that was lost?

BM Could be, could be, dear.

BJB And Tedd Lait Post. BM Who?

ABM The Tedd Lait Post

BJB The American Legion post was named after... BM Yeah. Oh, yeah. Well, of course, that was the 1st World War. BJB I remember that one. BM Mrs. Tedd, Mrs. Tedd's son got killed. BEA I remember Mrs. Tedd.

ABM What happened on the Island... like say the automobile became popular? Do you remember when the automobile came on the Island?

BM Yeah. I can only remember Leo Cote having a Model T, was it? Model T Ford. That's the only one I can remember on the Island. ABM That's the one you remember. BM Because we used to jump on the running board, and he'd ride us around the Island.

ABM Ride you around...

BJB My father and Alfred Marquis... Rand Marquis, Joe Marquis and Lil Marquis', father and my father were the first two to

have an automobile on the Island. BM Is that right? BJB Willis Overland... crank, crank, crank. BM I can remember the ones, you used to crank them. BJB They used to hire my dad for weddings, to go to the weddings. He'd get all dressed up, and he'd have to crank that think for half an hour. BM I know it. BJB It ran on a magnito, no battery. BM Of course, I can remember Mr. Marquis, when he used to have his trucking business, you know. He'd a... my father and Bobby ah, other people would go and ask him to take them to Hancock Point to go dig clams. And sit up in that high truck, with seats in there, and almost freeze to death coming home.

ABM What a ride that must have been. Huh? Cause the roads weren't very good... .

BM You'd be bouncing up and down all the time. ABM It's called a Reo Flying Cart. ABM A what? BJB Reo Flying Cart. ABM A R E O Reo Flying Cart. You must have felt like you were flying in it, from the sounds of it. BM That was a long ride to go to Hancock Point. ABM Oh, my land. That must have been a day trip. BM It was. ABM You know, because the roads aren't... Now, the roads were dirt roads then. BM Yeah. Right. For me it was a treat to go to Hancock Point. You know. ABM Well, sure. Something different. The roads on the Island weren't paved. BM No, no. ABM They were dirt roads.

BM And there was plenty of ruts. ABM I bet. It must have been a mess. BM In the spring of the year it was terrible. Because Jordan Lumber used to deliver kindlins and wood on the Island you know, they had those big two-horse-drawn wagons there, and geez that would make some awful ruts in the road in the spring of the year.

ABM I'm trying to think. I've kind of drawn a blank myself here. Do you remember when they started fixing the roads up? They must have, well probably when the cars got more on the Island.

BJB They'd use steamrollers. BM First of all they used to tar them, and you'd throw sand on that. ABM The liquid tar, the tar trucks would come. BM Yeah, and then they'd throw sand on that. I know I worked for them one summer. BJB Union Street, we lived there. Of course, I didn't walk for nine years. They used to sit me on the front porch and I'd watch, and they used to bring the ashes from the Woolen Mill, and that's what they used instead of gravel. And the big steamroller, it weighted tons and tons, and it sounded like a train. BM Yeah, right. BJB And they'd roll that stuff and break it all up and then they put gravel.

BM It was a number of years before they started black topping. But, when they started black topping, I don't know, it must

have been in the 50s, huh?

ABM Your mother, now she had a pretty good-sized family, she didn't have one, two kids... she had a good-sized family. She must have worked awful hard in the house. BM She did. ABM What was a day like for her? What do you remember her as doing?

BM Well, I can remember on Sunday night my father filling the boiler full of water, and putting it on the stove for Monday morning to heat her water to do her washing. ABM Now that was summer and winter. BM Yes, summer and winter. Can you imagine in this weather having a wood stove? BM I can remember, not all the time, but once in awhile I used to love to help my mother wring the wringer. ABM She had a wringer over her tub. BM Yeah. And, have to dump her water and refill it again for the rinse. She worked hard! My mother used to do a lot of cooking. Of course, she used to do sewing outside, sewing for other people. ABM So she was a seamstress. She did sewing for others. BM And then she used to make rugs, braided rugs. BJB She made pants, I remember she made pants too. BM Oh, yeah. She used to make all my pants. And she used to braid rugs, and then she used to crochet rugs. ABM She used to crochet, too? BM Yeah. They used to meet in different houses and crochet.

ABM Did she make quilts? Did she do any quilting? BM Yeah. ABM Did she do it like a quilting bee? Did the women used to get together and quilt and talk nights? I wondered if they did that here. BM Well, they used to quilt, [made his hands go like hooking]. ABM Hook rugs. BM Hook rugs. ABM There you go. BM They used to get together, but as far as quilts, I don't remember that. ABM You think she kind of did that on her own.

BM I think so. I know she used to have little pieces and she'd sew them on the sewing machine. Until she had a bunch of them and she'd... ABM Then she'd start putting them together. Yeah. BM I can remember her at night sitting down there and taking her cloth and cutting them to different sizes. Yeah. She worked hard all right, my mother did.

ABM Women in those days didn't have the electricity and the automatic washers and dryers, did they?

BM We were one of the last houses on the Island to receive electricity. ABM Is that right? BM My cousin owned the house... Lawrence Morin, and we had to fight him to get the lights in. ABM Isn't that something. BM But boy, I'm telling you, the first day we had the lights was great. OH!! ABM It must have been a big celebration. BM Oh, boy, it was great! ABM Turn the light on, have an electric iron. BM Not to have to take a lamp and run around with a

lamp to see.

BJB I remember when we had lamps in our house. And you know who wired it? I bet he did the wiring in your house, they used to call him Whiskey Stevens. BM Oh, yes! Oh, yes! BJB He was always [used his hands to show tipping the bottle]. BM Yeah. I guess he was. BJB Father Mac's father was a plumber. And he did the plumbing in our house. BM I remember Father Mac's broth... father. BJB His father bought that house from Mrs. Nadeau, Alex Nadeau. BM Yeah. BJB And we had an ice house in back where Pa used to cut his ice down at the foot of the hill, the field here. And it was, the ice was that thick [showed two-three feet], and they had men cutting it, and they hauled it up and put it in the ice house. And there was a stall in the back side of it. And in that stall, that's where... I couldn't walk then, but they'd carry me in there. It was all finished up beautiful. And the side of it was the ice house.

BM You must remember when Liberty's used to have the horses too, the garage. BJB Oh, yeah. And John Young used to come up and kiss the horses, do you remember? BM Yes. Gosh, yes.

BJB And sell his poetry.

BM Talking about business on the Island, I miss, too, I miss Louis Bouchard's barber shop, and Mr. Theriault's barber shop on the Island. BJB And Fred Paradis owned the store that my father owned, he owned all that property that was... and Louis Taylor bought some of it. My father owned all that property. BM That's right. I remember that. Used to have a great big barn there. BJB Then he bought the LaPlante house there. BM [Looking at Bea] She was brought up here. I remember that.

BEA That was in Gray's Lane. Right behind where your big... your house was. BJB Right there. So they tore down that. That shed was torn down.

BM There's been quite a change around in that back. BJB Oh, yeah. I haven't been in the back part of it at all.

ABM I don't think I ever did ask you what your mother's maiden name was. BM Levesque. ABM Levesque. BM Well that was her adopted name. She was a descendant from the Ferguson, McHenrys and McGregors. But when she was adopted... ABM She was a Levesque. BM She took the family name Levesque.

ABM Well, let me see?

BJB Has that thing been running?

ABM Yes, it's running. I flipped it over. Well, I can't seem

to think of any other questions. Can you think of anything, dad? BJB He's covered it well. I've enjoyed it. I'm reliving it with him. We used to go to the movies on Saturday at the New Central.

BM We used to go in the afternoon to the Strand Theater and the evening New Central Theater when they had two of them.

ABM So they had two of them. Where was the New Central?

BM On Water Street, right where the... BJB Legion Hall...
BM Legion Hall is. ABM Where the Legion Hall is.

BJB That was a nice place.

BM They used to run serials there. Boy, you wouldn't, couldn't miss that boy. Oh, boy. Oh, boy. ABM You didn't want to miss a week, then you wouldn't know what was happening. Perils of Pauline.

BEA That was continuing.

BJB Every Saturday we'd stop at the A&P and get a little box of crackers and go.

BM Well, I was born on the Island, and I hope to die on the Island! I've been here 80 years, and I don't know how much longer I've got. But I love my Island.

ABM You love your Island. You're right here where you started.

BM Especially my porch. We live on this porch the year round.

ABM Oh, I imagine. Sure. BM We had a furnace put in there and we stay right here on the porch.

ABM Isn't that nice.

BM People go by and my wife will say, "Who's that?" I don't know. ABM Don't know anymore. You used to know everybody.

BM They used to be able to stop. I can remember when I was a little kid there, in the summertime, at night there after the dishes were done, people would go on their... outdoors and sit down there... BJB Sit on their porch and talk. BM And neighbors would all come and walk and stop and talk until nine or ten o'clock at night. ABM Until it was real dark. BJB We didn't need TVs. BM The roads were dusty, Oooh, geez! We'd get a little wind there and [sound of wind blowing].

BEA I'm not that great about TV so it doesn't bother me.

- ABM The neighbors used to visit back and forth on the porch in the summer. BM Oh, I guess they did. To me that was the worst thing that happened, when they got TV.
- BJB Well, it's all... bang! bang! bang! And, you know, this sex business has taken over. Morality is gone.
- ABM How did prohibition affect the Island? You know, that's something I haven't thought to ask too many questions about. But when they had prohibition...
- BJB Well, Bert wouldn't remember this. But Pete St. Louis, ran the restaurant on Main Street had a bar room right on... in Gray's Lane. BM Right. BJB The yellow building up there. And the working men would go, and buy a bucket of beer and go home at night. Then prohibition came and they went out of business.
- BM And then, at the foot of the Island hill, what was his name there... BJB Marquis... oh, Petit Landry ran that. BM No. But I don't mean that, on the other side. That was before.. BJB Oh. Patoune. BM Patoune.
- BEA When you said characters that came to mind, but I didn't.
- BM I remember my father saying that he used to work in the board piles in Milford, and they used to send somebody over with a pail and get a pail full of beer. That was their water. BJB For a nickel.
- ABM A pail full of beer, huh.
- BJB During the big Depression.
- BM When beer became illegal it took away a lot of... ABM A lot of business. BM A lot of business away from the Island.
- BJB You know during the Depression, 1928-29, I was working in Goldsmiths and sold tennis shoes for 49 cents. BM Yeah.
- BEA You can hardly get them for 49 dollars. ABM Oh, my. They're on sale for that now. BJB Yeah. 49 cents. Arrow shirts, that I wore when I was going to college, one dollar. A nice Arrow shirt, 26 dollars today. BM Oh, sure. BJB My suits and I had hand-tailored suits by Goldberg, Harry Goldberg... came from Russia. And he had these bolts of cloth, and I'd pick the cloth and I'd say "Harry, I want something" because I was playing for dances, and I'd say, ... my suits were all taylor made. Thirty-five dollars. Two pair of pants, a vest and a coat. Today 500 dollars. BM Yeah. Oh, sure. BJB Two hundred and fifty dollars would buy a coat.

BM I can remember after we got married there, my wife got pregnant. And we went to bed early one night, on a Saturday night. I guess she was about... she didn't feel good anyway. She was sick all the nine months she carried the Butch. And, we went to bed and she said, "Gee, I'd like to have a radio." So I didn't say anything, I waited a little while, and I got up and dressed up. She said, "Where are you..." I said, "I'll be right back." I run like hell down to Goldsmith there, what was... "Notice it! Notice it!" there. BJB Yeah. Notice it. ABM "See it! Notice it." Harry Goldsmith. "See it. Notice it." BM I had 50 cents in my pocket. And I said, "Harry, I want a radio. I've got 50 cents, and I'll give you the 50 cents, and I try to pay you so much every week." Ok. Ok. I don't remember I paid three or four or five dollars, I don't remember. I ran all the way home and said to my wife, I said, "Here's your radio." ABM What a present that was. Oh, that's nice.

BEA There were a lot of people paying 50 cents a week for a lot of things.

ABM Well that's the only way they could get anything.

BEA There was an old man and an old woman that used to go... what was her name. BM Duke?? BEA Oh, she carried a suitcase... ABM Used to come around with cards... what was her name? Labelle? BEA Oh. That was a different woman. This one is an old woman, she was, all I can think... BJB She was a Syrian, wasn't she? BEA Yes. Yes, now your coming. BJB I remember, and they used to come around. Well, Arthur Goldsmith started here peddling pans... pots and pans on the Island, and when he got a little place BM Yeah. But you must remember another, I think he was Jewish, he used to come on the Island and he'd take orders for clothes, whatever you wanted some, he'd take orders and deliver the following week. BEA Yes. BJB Well, that's the way most of them started. BEA He had a car... but the lady had just a big suitcase, and she'd drag that suitcase.

BM And remember how they used to come up on the Island and buy rags. BJB Yeah. And Wood from way down below Bradley used to go around the Island, "Tomatoes here." He'd come down Gray's Lane you could hear him from the other end. BEA Oh, I'd forgotten about that, Ben. BJB "Five pounds for a quarter, Tomatoes. Five pounds for a quarter." Five cents a pound... now 90 cents.

BM Then Welch from Bradley was for years and years BJB Yeah, milk. BM Delivered milk on the Island.

BJB Eight cents a quart, and if you paid every week they took two cents off... BEA Oh, geez. BJB That was a quart of milk. But we had all the milk we wanted. Pa used to

manufacture ice cream for the ice cream parlor and store. And we had cream for everything. Now I can't have it, can't even look at it. I'd love to eat it.

BM When you stop and think, boy, there's been some awful changes. BJB Oh, boys. BM I never really gave it a... .

BJB I was anxious, because you know you've just made me live over so much of it, because I was nine years I didn't walk at all. BM Yeah, I know. BJB I was in a hospital for seven months. BM You had it rough. BJB They built me over. BM You had it rough awhile. BJB But then I made up for lost time. BM Yes, sir. ABM Well. BM I can remember Nel, and if you wasn't from the Island you'd better not come up unless you had good reason to.

BJB When they'd come up from the university... ABM Who was this, Nel you said? BM Huh? ABM Who was that? BM North End, Great Works, if they came up on the Island to see a girl friend you'd better be sure you'd behave. BJB When the students would come up with a car to see the Theriault girls, and Noel St. Louis and Richards... Leo Richards and a crowd of them, just took that car and turned it right upside down. They didn't come back. ABM They turned it upside down? Geez. BJB Yeah, the gas was running out of it. BM Ben, you must remember Boy and Pat Lavasseur when they used to have a little store in the shed there. BJB Oh, yeah. And one that was a crippled one. BM Yeah, Boy was. Yeah. BJB They went to Walden, Mass. And then Petit Landry had that little store down at the bottom of the hill. You had to stoop to get in. BJB Yeah, because it was sinking and the bridge was up here. And, that's where Amos Marquis had... it was a meat.

BEA Did you tell them you were baptized... you had to go to baptism in a boat? BM No. ABM You went to baptism in a boat? BM No. They carried me across. They were building the bridge in 1913. ABM And they carried you across to go be baptized.

BJB See, I was born in 1912. And I remember the 1st World War very vividly. Because I wasn't walking. Why I remember so much, Bert, I didn't walk and father'd carry me and sit me in the store, and you know they had a bench and everybody sat there, and you know they'd talk and I'd sit and listen.

BM One thing I can remember about the 1st World War is when Albert Fornier, Petit Cock, came home. I happened to be, course I used to live next door, I lived here he lived right there. BJB Yeah, I remember. BM I remember his wife coming up, Jesus Christ I can... I'll never forget that.

BJB I remember 1918 during the flu epidemic. People were dying like flies. BM Yeah. BJB On the Island here, and

everywheres else, all over the country. They were dying like flies. They couldn't keep up with the burying.

ABM What year was that? 1918 you said? BJB 1917-1918. ABM Now is that when Aunt Lena lost her daughter. BJB Yeah. Larouches used to live down here. Charlie Larouche. Right near. BM That used to be... that's where my father and mother used to go a lot to play cards over there, over there and... BJB See, what's-his-name mentioned it. ABM Yeah, Norman Brilliant mentioned that too. His mother used to go play cards with Mrs. Larouche. BEA His mother died coming home playing cards. ABM Is that right? BEA On Good Friday. BM They used to go over to Cote, and over to the next house to Mrs. Cote there where... what was their name? BEA What are you trying to think about? BM Where Doris lives there with that... people used to live there. BEA Oh, that was just before you used to get to Five-Inch's place, there. On that same... .

BM He collected your insurance for a number of years... what was his name? BEA Baker. BM Baker. Ballanger. BJB Oh, yeah. Maurice Ballanger. He used to work for my father. BM Of course, my mother and father used to play cards a lot and play Polliquin. ABM Played what? BM Polliquin. BJB Polliquin yeah, that was the one. Then we played... what was the one we... BM Played Polliquin... 63 or 83. BJB Charlemagne.

BM Oh, yeah. That, I played that, but I can't remember how they play it. But I did play it.

BEA I like to play Polliquin. But I don't play cards well. I don't remember my cards.

BM Polliquin and 63 was my game when I was a young boy. Of course, as I grew older, you know, they used to let me... my father used to sit me on his knees there... ABM And you'd watch him play so you learn.

BM Well, what's the matter with you. (To the baby)

ABM Well, I think we're just about done here.