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Estelle Voter and Henrietta Taylor, interviewed by Albert Michaud, Part 1

Estelle Voter

Henrietta Taylor

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Interviewer Albert Michaud

December 3, 1993

At the home of Don and Pauline Voter in Eddington

Interviewing two aunts Estelle Voter and Henrietta Taylor

EV Estelle Voter

HT Henrietta Taylor

AM Albert Michaud

AM Estelle, we can start with you. Give us a brief outline of your birth.

EV Well, I'm Estelle Voter, and I was born February 20, 1907. I married Edmond (Ben) Voter from Orono. But, I lived all my life in Old Town. I was born in Old Town, and I've lived on the... almost all the same street all my life.

AM You say you were born in Old Town. Do you mean you were born on French Island?

EV French Island. AM And that makes you 80? EV 86. AM 86 years old. EV I'll be 87 in February.

AM Henrietta?

HT My names is Henrietta Taylor. I was born in Old Town. AM You were born of French Island also. HT On French Island. And I married Alfred Taylor... they called him Bebe. And I'm 79 years old. AM So you are Estelle's youngest sister. HT Youngest sister. AM Are you one of the youngest of the family? HT I am the youngest. AM You are the youngest. So, how many people were there in your family? EV There was twelve living. But my mother lost one when he was two years old and the other one at birth. AM Twelve living... what was the ratio... boys and girls. EV There was seven girls and five boys. Six with the one that died when he was two years old. AM So, you being 86 years old were about what... in the middle of the family. EV The fourth of the family... down. AM Fourth from the oldest. EV Right... ah, fourth from the youngest. AM Fourth from the youngest. EV Yes AM So there were eight older than you. EV Eight older than me. AM And my mother being Alvine Michaud was one of the oldest. EV She was the second, because Ernestine was the oldest. AM I thought... just thinking back I always thought that Rudolph was older... that my mother was next to Rudolph. EV Ernestine. AM I'm learning something also here. EV Ernestine was the oldest.

AM So, your house on French Island... I remember it being kind of small. And for twelve people in a house... tell us a little bit about that.

EV It's very easy... we'd sleep three in a bed until one get married, and then we'd graduate to the other bed where one was sleeping alone. It was a problem. A great big table...

twelve sitting around it... fourteen with my mother and father. And boy, that man worked. He never was on welfare and brought up twelve kids and saw us all married.

AM Do you have any memories of that Henrietta... of being so many in the family?

HT Yes, I do. AM Especially you being one of the youngest. HT Yeah... but I don't remember much. EV You must remember that you and I and Claire slept together. HT Yes. And I remember that... AM Claire... for the purpose of this interview is Claire Veilleux... which is another sister. HT I remember that I was always over to your house... cause your sisters were my age. AM So when you were young, my mother lived across the street. HT Across the street... and I was always there. AM So you more or less chummed with my older sisters. HT Yeah. If you mother'd make her a dress she had to make me one. We always got along together.

AM Being such a big family like this... and yourself you must have had a lot of cousins and everything on French Island. Tell us a little bit about that. EV Everyone was our cousin. AM Name some of the cousins. EV There was the St. Peters. Yeah. My aunts... Yeah. There was George St. Peter and his wife, Aunt Lazaire on the Island. AM They lived? EV Way down on Howard Street... the last house. And then on the Island... Aunt Leontine lived on the Island quite a while with Uncle Charles Larouche. Roland was our cousin and Oliver, Dido, and Virgil and all of them. And the Dubays were a big family. AM Those were the Larouches that now some of the boys run the... EV Hirondo. AM Hirondo... that's right. EV Oliver owns Hirondo and Roland and Oliver live on it. AM Those were your cousins. EV First cousins. AM And weren't the Dubays... EV Dubays. Lionel Dubay and Girard and Jerry and Toots... Her name was Leona... Tiny. AM Now, was the father of the Dubays... was that a brother to your mother? EV No... she... AM She was a sister. And Aunt Leontine was a sister to mama. AM And they were quite a large family also. EV Yeah. Aunt Leontine had five boys and one girl, but she died during the influenza. AM And those were all St. Peters. EV Larouche. AM No. I mean your mother was a St. Peter. So all her brothers and sisters were St. Peters. Some of them married Dubays, some of them married... well the boys were St. Peters... there was Dubays and EV There was only one boy. AM And the Bouchards also. That would include Ben Bouchard is your cousin, and Nellie, and John... EV Evangeline, Regina, Olive. AM So like you say they comprised a lot of people that were related on French Island. EV A lot. Almost everyone... at one time we was almost all related.

AM Tell us about some of your childhood memories. What would you do for games. When you were young. EV We played Piton, we played cards, we went sliding an awful lot. AM What was Piton? EV Parcheesi. AM Parcheesi today. And yours were

about the same thing? HT Same thing. Went sliding in the winter. Make fudge... the big double runner your father made. We'd sit eight on that thing. AM Now, I talked to Doris and Gloria and they mentioned that big run. I hardly remember it. But, that was in your time. HT We'd slide until eight o'clock, and then we'd go over to your house and play cards. And your mother had donuts and cocoa for us. That was the meeting place. EV Mama was awfully good about fixing us lunches too when we went sliding. ET Oh, yes. EV We'd come in cold you know. ET ??? all the crowd of our age, and we'd land there cause. We had a good time. AM So mama being one of the oldest kind of took the youngest of the family in as daughters also.

AM What about games outside... like the river? When I was younger the river was part of our living... in the summertime it was boating and ... EV We used to swim down there. AM Where were the swimming holes when you were young? EV Right in back of home. Down Bodwell Street, and right down at the end of Bodwell Street there was a swimming hole right there. HT We'd put a blanket on the shore where I live, and Otis Labree and his wife would come and sit with us. AM Where you live now, you mean? HT Where I used to live. AM Yeah. Down near Heald Street and River Street. HT River Street. Mine was on Bosworth Street that we did that. When the kids were small. AM You're talking about your family now. Right now we're talking about when you were a young girl living at home. HT Right near home on River Street. AM Near where Fred Paradis lived. EV Right. Right there. AM That was about the same... Well, I remember that when I was real small... but that's what Doris remembers. EV I also remember when I'd go to church in the morning the ice was frozen all the time then, and you'd cross across the ice and then you have all them tracks to go over before you'd get to church. And, we'd watch if the trains were coming and run like the dickins. AM So your means of getting to church was crossing the ice... HV And if the thing was too long we'd cross in between... crawl on our hands and knees to get on the other side. AM Cross between the cars. HT And my mother did that, and she just had time to get on the other side that it started. I never forgot that. She was going to church. EV She probably never did it again though. HT No. EV She did it again. AM So. Did you... I imagine in the wintertime you skated a lot. EV Yes. AM And at that time you could almost skate all around French Island. EV You could... but I never was a skater... I couldn't stand on them. HT Me neither.

AM What about movies? Was there a movie house? or was that before your time? EV There were two movies. What was the name of the other one? HT There was the Strand and Central. EV Central? HT Yeah. EV Used to cost five cents. AM Where was Central? HT On Water Street. Somewhere near where Dumont had his store there. AM That was near where the

commercial block was... what they used to call the commercial block... right next to the Strand Theater there was a great big building there called the commercial building? EV You're talking about the Strand... The Strand was on Main Street. HT It was right where the big hotel... there was an hotel there. AM The Fransway Hotel? HT Yeah. That was before. HT The Strand. EV That's the Strand again... you're talking about. ET Yeah. And it was right where Rite Aid is. AM The Strand, yeah. But the other one the Columbia you called it? Was it on North Water Street or was it on the same... up near where the City Park is now in that area? EV Yeah. AM Oh, I didn't know that there was another theater there. And it used to... EV Cost a nickel. It didn't cost very much. AM But they weren't talkies were they? EV No they weren't. They were silent pictures.

AM While we're getting on this subject of entertainment, you and your husband, Estelle used to perform didn't you. Ben used to sing a lot but I never did. AM See. I was under the impression that you played and he sang. EV Well, just once. That was during the amateurs. Ben sang and I played for him that time. AM Tell us a little bit about that. EV Well, Ben was in every commercial there used to be. Not commercial... he was in the minstrel. A lot... in Orono especially. AM Now, Ben was from Orono originally. EV Right. He was very good at singing. He had a good voice, didn't he? He had a very good voice. AM Oh, yes. I remember. EV And he used to love to sing too.

AM Tell me something, both of you, about childbirthing. When you were a little older in life and you got married. I don't imagine you went to the hospitals or anything. Estelle, tell us a little bit about that. EV I never went to the hospital for birthing... I only had one child. And I was at home. My mother and I think it was your mother that assisted Dr. Theriault at my house. AM So, that was the norm on the Island. People had their babies in the house. EV I assisted for one of Henrietta's babies with Dr. Theriault. And I also assisted for Claire... one of Claire's. And I assisted for one of Beatrice Taylor's too... Beatrice Desjardin now. AM So you were what is commonly known as a midwife. EV No. I wasn't. But I used to take care of my mother and father and I did for twelve years... so when Dr. Theriault used to come home, he'd ask me to go with him when one of their childs was going to be born. I also assisted for Adeline's baby. And I also assisted for Alex King's wife's twins. They lived right next door, and she didn't have no doctor and she came over to your house and asked Dr. Theriault to go. So I was at your house for Adeline at the time, and so he asked me to go with him. So I assisted for them twins. AM So you were performing duties of midwives. Maybe there were no registered midwives in those days anyway. EV No. But it was only with Dr. Theriault though. AM Was the doctor always present? EV Yes. Oh, yes. AM Whenever there was a birth... the doctor

was always there. Henrietta... some of your experiences on the same subject. HT Dr. Theriault slept home two nights... for two of them. I had eight kids, and I lost the last one. that was in the hospital. But, I had them all but two at home. And it was your mother and Juliet that assisted. AM Juliet is another of your sisters. HT My sister. AM Juliet King. HT Yeah. It was hard but... And I never had to have a hired girl when I had my kids. One would take one, and the other one would take the other one and when I went to the hospital for gall bladder, I had them everywhere. Estelle had one, and think there was one over to your mother's... and to Beatrice and Eleanor. I was lucky that way. AM What about the ... when you had children at home and there were other children present. What would you tell them? What was the story? HT I'm going to tell you one. AM Okay. HT Who was it that was born, and you took her home? EV Well, mama was sick in bed, and I was living with her... I took care of my mother and father for twelve years, and Henrietta had a baby girl. So, I went over there until she was born and then I wrapped her up in a blanket and I took her home, because the others had whooping cough. So, then the next morning I saw JoJo the oldest one coming down the hill. So mama was in bed, and I said, "Oh, mama, don't say a word. I'm going to put this baby right near you." She said, "Okay." No why or nothing. And JoJo comes in and I said, "Oh, JoJo, come see what memere had last night." She said, "Oh, my gosh, what did she have?" I said, "She had a nice baby girl. A beautiful baby girl." "Oh my gosh," she said, "I've got to run and tell mama. She don't know." Then I told her, "Henrietta had the baby. It's your mother's." and she said, "Oh, I've got to run over and tell her, cause she doesn't know." AM But what were some of the stories that you used to tell about where babies came from? Like I remember definitely, when my mother had a baby at home we went somewhere else, and for your mother being sick or something... they had broken her leg and something... What about... where them some other stories like that or found him under a rock or... HT In the cabbage patch. And I remember when your older sister and I were the same age and we'd see Dr. Latno come on the Island with his suitcase we'd run... because they were going to bring a baby over to your house. It wasn't true, but we thought it because she was having babies every year. AM So they... the mothers never really explained where babies came from. EV Oh, no. No way. AM Under the rocks, or the Indians brought him, or something. HT We'd make our own baby clothes and we'd hide them when the kids would come so they wouldn't see it. EV Now the young ones knows more than we do.

AM Yeah. That's true. What about school? Estelle, where did you attend school? EV I went to the Island School for the first year, and then I went right to the Convent. We used to walk across the ice in the winter. I loved the Convent. Yeah. AM So, who was teaching then? EV My teachers? AM I mean were they nuns? EV The nuns. Sisters of Mercy. Sister

Denise, Sister Alberta, Sister LaSalle... oh, there was quite a few. They were good. I liked them. A few people didn't like them... but I liked them. AM And you? HT Same thing. AM Very same. Everybody seemed to have gone to the Island School for the one year or something. HT Yeah. I remember in the winter... Lionel Thibodeau, the priest, he'd ride me in my sled to school in the winter. AM He would drive. HT Her and him. AM Her and Lionel... Father Lionel Thibodeau. HT Yeah. EV I went to school with him all through the Convent up until the eighth grade, and then he went to the seminary. He didn't graduate the eighth grade. He went to the seminary. AM And he later became pastor of St. Joseph's for awhile. HT That's right. EV I bought his car when he died.

AM Is that right? So, in the summertime it was walk all around to go to the Convent school. EV Yes. Unless our brothers would cross us on the river. They had a boat. We'd cross on the river. But, mostly we walked. There was no bus.

AM What about Memere and Pepere's family? Were they born on French Island, or did they come from somewhere else? EV They were all born in Canada. AM They were born in Canada and migrated here. Where were their homes in Canada? Do you remember where they were from? EV St. Anne. La Beauce. I don't know where that would be. I don't really remember where they were born. I think we've got that some... . HT They weren't far from St. Anne... Levi... EV It was right in Quebec. HT Yeah.

AM Estelle, you had a little experience with a cousin of yours, which I don't think you knew in Canada, when she was getting together a genealogy book of the Matteau family and they discovered that they had... tell us... tell us about that experience... how it all came about.

EV Well, one day the cop called up my house and he wanted to know if I knew a Ben Voter. I said, "Well, yes. That's my husband." He said, "Well, I have a call from Quebec, and it's from Therese Godbot. And she wanted to know if I knew anything about the St. Pierre family." And I said, "Yes." So, he called her back, and then she called me, and she came over to my house, and she told me to get the cop that answered her telephone call because he was very, very nice to her. So I had a meeting at my house and you came and Roland came and Calire and Henrietta... there was somebody else too, wasn't there? Anyway, she came with her daughter. And she brought us a little gift, and then she got into this family affair. She really asked a lot of questions. She made a big book out of it, and I have it. You have it too, I think. AM Yes. She made a genealogy of the Matteau family which your grandmother was a Matteau. EV Right. My mother's mother. AM Was a Matteau. And it went back to the 16th century... of them coming into Canada. And we later went to a family reunion of the Matteau family... a few of us from here. And

we were greeted as "nos cousin des etait", our cousins from the United States, which these people knew nothing about until they had their reunion. EV That's true. And she's kept in touch with me ever since. At least once a year. We used to write more often, but now we write once a year. AM That was a great experience. You remember that Henrietta? EV She didn't go, did you? AM No you didn't go to the reunion. HT No. I didn't go but I remember when they came over to Estelle's. AM But you remember the incident. EV It was you and Rita, Donald and Pauline, and myself. AM Harold and EV Dawn Lacadie. AM Harold and Dawn Lacadie. EV But that was a nice experience. It was a wonderful thing.

AM What were your memories about church when you were younger?

EV I remember the old church. AM Tell us about it. EV I don't remember too much... I was young. But I remember they had a card party. AM The old church... you mean what? Where was it. EV It was on Water Street. AM Old St. Joseph's Church. EV St. Josephs Church... I remember that. I remember going to a Whist party there too. AM You were a young lady. EV Yeah. I was about 16 I guess. But your uncle Tom was over to your house, and your mother and father were going, and mama and papa were going and Tom asked me to go with him. AM My uncle Tom? EV Your uncle Tom. AM Is that Petit Tom you mean? EV Petit Tom. AM I never heard him called that. EV And I went with him to the card party, with your mother and father and mama and papa. Yeah. It was nice. I remember when they started building that church. That's a long time ago. I also remember the covered bridge.

AM You remember the covered bridge. So you must remember a lot of things about the floods. EV Oh, yes! AM The big flood that I remember in 1936 where the bridge they thought would... Tell us about that. EV Well, we was on the Island and then Juliet was living on Howard Street, and the water was coming up all the time so she came over, and stayed with me because they were afraid. And you stayed home... but you was going over to Rose, huh. HT Dr. Theriault called me and told me I had to go across the river, and he wanted me to go on Brunswick Street that woman... for maternity. EV That was quite a flood. HT Yeah. '36. EV We'd go down and watch the bridge... watch the ice. AM They were worried about the bridge being washed out... EV They were very worried about that bridge. HT And then when Millie Lavoie crossed the river to go over her house. And we hollered, "Don't cross." She didn't hear us, and she crossed and the minute she set foot on the shore there was no more ice. That I never forgot that. AM That was on the south end of the Island that used to go over to La Point au Puce we used to call it... which was the Sandy Point Road now. And she just made it on the ice. EV Just made it. Everybody was on the shore there, and that was scary. AM What about when you went to church? Did you go as a family... being a large family... or was there

children's masses or... EV Yeah. Children's mass was at 8 o'clock. AM So you went... EV Children's mass... but a lot of time mama would come with us though. We had to go to church every morning too. AM Mass was every morning. EV We went to communion every single... not to communion... but communion also ... but to confession every single Friday. AM But that was more the doing of the school. EV Of the school.

AM Yeah that was the practice of the school. Well, let's talk about... French Island it was a very well knit community. Everybody knew everybody else. HT Everybody helped each other. EV It was just like a big family. If you needed help, they would be right there. AM What about deaths and mournings. Tell us what would happen when somebody would die on French Island. They didn't go to funeral homes for one thing. HT No. No we had them home... three days. And that was hard. The big meals at 12 o'clock at night. HT We'd sit up all night... there'd be somebody up with the dead all night long. What was his name... Coté, always came when there was... EV Felix Cote. He'd stay all night with us. AM Usually some member of the family would stay with the body all night. EV Oh, yes, and a lot of neighbors also. HT Three days. AM And the other people were very receptive. They helped with... EV Food! You'd have enough food to feed an army. They were very good. You didn't have to need help too long before people showed up. HT No. EV Right away. AM And what about the mourning practices, especially for a widow or something. They were very strict. EV They had to dress in black for a whole year. AM What about the kids? It kind of put a... I remember one of my older aunts in fact it was Ernestine, that I was amazed that we couldn't play the radio or anything. I don't remember for how long but... wasn't mourning very strict also? EV You couldn't play the radio, you couldn't play the piano, you couldn't sing in the house. HT That's why I never learned to sing. HT Ernestine was laid up at mama's house uncle Alex Lavoie was laid up at mama's house. Philip was laid up home. EV Mama was at the funeral parlor. AM And that went on for how long? EV For years. It went on for years until I think mama died. And then I told the girls, I am going to a funeral parlor when I die. Oh. it was awful. So I made arrangements with Ben and I said we'll both go to the funeral parlor. And they said, "Well, when you go we'll talk to Ben. He'll understand. He'll keep you here." I told Ben, "Don't let them talk you into it." And it started right then. Best place. AM What about... how long say did a woman have to mourn if her husband died. HT A year. If her husband died especially, a year. Look at... EV That wasn't in my time though... that was when we were little. My time, but when I was a kid. HT There's Juliet died, six months after that Roy died, and six months after that I think dad died. EV Yes, he did. HT So, see how long we were in mourning. EV And that same year my father-in-law died. AM And you weren't expected to see anybody or especially dating or things like that. EV Oh,

yes. When papa died. Oh, yes, we could. AM I mean when you were younger. Say if your father died or something... say your mother, wasn't she in mourning for a year. EV Mama was, for every one that died. AM But they weren't expected to have dates or anything during that time were they, if they were in mourning? EV Not mama. HT She wouldn't have gone. AM What about the people in general... say on French Island. EV Well, if it was your husband or your wife you would... but like us for our father... we could date just the same. AM No, I mean mostly a widow, or... she's not going to date somebody or see somebody for at least a year. Most of them went longer than that. EV At least a year. No singing, no playing the piano, no... then we had graphaphones. Then we didn't have TV, then it was graphaphones. AM So when you were young, you didn't have radios or anything... you had lights? EV You know the lights... I was eighteen years old when the lights were put on home. HT I was in the seventh grade. AM When you first had lights at home. So, what was the main source of lighting? Gasoline lamps? EV No they were Kerosene. AM Kerosene lamps? EV We had a nice great big lamp... it was one of the Gone With The Wind lamps... that mama had. And that was in the parlor. We'd light that every time we had dates. AM So did you read in your bedrooms... or anything like that, or? EV Yeah. We had lamps. We had flashlights too. AM And graphaphone was one of the old crank kind. EV Yeah. AM And you were eighteen years old when the power was first put on in the house. EV In the old house where I lived. I was eighteen years old.

AM I don't imagine there were many cars on French Island. EV No. There sure wasn't. There was not many bicycles either. Just if you had a lot of money. AM So, when you wanted to go downtown or anything, what was the mode of transportation? EV Your feet. You walked. Transportation to Bangor would be the trolley, or the train. And then you had the bus. AM So you had a trolley, a train and the bus for transportation to Bangor.

AM There's something that some people asked... the reverence for priests and everything. There was quite a reverence when the priest used to come visit. Tell us... EV We didn't let them knock at the door. We had to meet them and open the door before they knocked. And, AM He was really waited on. EV Oh, yes. We met him at the door. HT You had to have a candle to meet him. EV If they came to give communion or to see the sick. But if they come to collect, we didn't need the candle. Yeah. When mama and papa were sick for so long there... I cared for them twelve years... I'd have to meet the priest at the door, and bring the candle and set it on the table near the bed. And of course that had to be all set.

TURN THE TAPE

AM What about different feasts that you remember... what were

some of the important feasts that you used to celebrate as children? EV The one that I remember the most is New Years Eve. My mother would make a great big fricassée. And the lights were off at the house around nine o'clock that night. Everybody would come down. They'd go to dances, but they'd leave the dance hall and come down to our house... Jerry Dubay and Juliet and ??? Cousin, and Martin and all that... and they'd come down to the house, and the minute they would be almost to the house the lights would go on. And everybody was outside waiting to wish us a Happy New Year. We'd play the piano and they'd sing... up until early morning. AM So it wasn't just a family thing. EV No. All the family was there though. Every single one of the family would be there, too. AM Is that what you used to call the Reveillon? EV Yeah. Fourth of July was the same thing. We'd stay up all night in celebration. We'd stay up all night. And the ones that couldn't come that weren't feeling good... we'd go to their house and come back home. AM There was drinking and eating? EV There wasn't that much drinking... it was mostly eating... like pull candy and fudge and all things like that ... little snacks you know. AM Just get together. EV Yeah. A get together. But the New Year was the fricassée. That was a big one. AM Chicken fricassée? EV Chicken fricassée. AM Do you remember that Henrietta? HT Oh, yes. I remember that too. EV We did that... I was married and we were still doing that. HT I remember too, when they'd see my father come down the hill, if they was sitting in his chair they'd all get out, and I wouldn't. I'd say if you want to sit with me, sit. EV Oh, but she was a spoiled brat. HT I never gave him my chair.

AM Well, you were the baby, too. This was a practice of your father and mother. Did this practice carry on into your families? HT No. EV After they started having a lot of kids and everything, they had to stop coming. They had too many babies. That lasted while we were younger. AM But, I mean then when their families started. I remember mama used to have it. We used to go home too. EV Yeah. AM She carried on that tradition, did you people carry it on too. HT Well, mine were too small and then it stopped that tradiiton. AM Then the tradition stopped. HT But, they always called and always came to wish us a Happy New Year. EV Christmas Day too, we'd visit. That was just the family though. We'd each and every one would visit one member of the family, and then go to another house. But then you'd meet on the road half the time. They were going over to your house and you were going over to their house. And then that had to stop because there was too many. AM That was a big tradition to visit family on Christmas. And I think that has kind of stopped now also because... EV Yeah families are too big now. AM Well, that and people realized and then people realized that Christmas is the time to spend with your own family. And they stay at home with their families. Which there was nothing wrong with the tradition at the time... but. EV Which was much better...

AM I remember as a young child was Mardi Gras. I used to look forward to Mardi Gras. EV That was the day to make candy. AM Because we could steal fudge... steal stuff. But people put it out there purposely to be stolen. EV Purposely. AM Tell us about that. EV Well, my mother used to make the brown sugar candy, and I used to make the white sugar candy. AM That's what you call tiere. EV La tiere. Pull candy. Boy, that was good too though. When I was young though... course there was no money and we weren't working so Didut Dubay... her name is Leona... we always called her Didut... So, Didut and I would make the pull candy then we'd send Claire and Tiny, her sister, to sell it. And we'd give them ten cents, and we'd go to the movies. That was fun though. AM Wasn't it the custom that you would put it in a shed somewhere or put it near the door, and it was all right for the kids to come and take it. Which... we thought it was stealing... but actually it wasn't stealing. EV No. HT No. AM It was put there for the purpose of being taken. And of course, we'd go to some houses that... EV They didn't like that idea maybe. AM Yeah. That's right. They wouldn't have candy there when we'd come. Don't you think that our trick or treat today kind of takes the place of Mardi Gras. Because if we went to a place and there was nothing to steal... well, we'd knock at the door, and we'd kind of harass the people a little. EV Then we'd run... we wouldn't let them know who it was. AM It was that way in your time also. EV Yeah. AM And Christmas was a big feast also. Was it more religious then than it is now? Now it's kind of commercial. EV It was a little bit more I think. Now it's really commercial. AM I don't think you had the means to give the gifts then... because... I don't imagine that you people when you were young had the gifts that our kids get today. EV Are you kidding? I guess not! We had a stocking, and we had an orange and an apple in it. No toys. We had toys... well my sister and I one had a doll and the other had a carriage so you had to play together. That's the truth. AM The same gift was given to... the same gift was given to more... and I imagine that hand-me-downs were real prevalent in those days. HT Oh, my God, yes. Kids don't like to wear hand-me-downs now. EV I guess not. HT Mine were brought up on hand-me-downs.

AM Well, I think in my era also. What about dating when you were young. Was there a certain time, a certain age when you were allowed to date, and were you... could you date anyone you wanted? What were restrictions? EV We never thought of dating at 15 and 16 years old... you wouldn't date until you were about 17. HT 16 EV Yeah. But then it was just going to the movies and talk to the boys there... and they'd walk you home... go to the carnival, or go to the rides. HT I was 15 when I went to the carnival, and I was talking to a fellow from Orono, and I turned around and my father was not far from me, and I said, "You go that way." AM You didn't want to be seen. You didn't want your father to see you. EV No. I was 15 years old. The first time I had a date I went to Bangor...

It was the Opera I think we had gone... anyway it was on the trolley. Of course, it finished quite late, so when I came home Romeo was at the waiting room, and he looked at me and he winked and he said, "It's not my idea. It was my mother's she was afraid you wouldn't be on the trolley." So, he ran ahead of us and let us walk in back. Poor Romeo. We were very close. AM I imagine they wanted you to date Catholic boys. EV Oh, yes. Oh, yes. That was definite. AM And did you date much amongst other people on French Island? Did you date French Island boys? Either one of you. HT I married my next-door neighbor. He was my next-door neighbor for a long time. EV I had a lot of friends on the Island, but was never serious with them. AM You used to have a lot of BOY friends ... friends who were boys. EV You know all the games we played there was boys. It was fun, but there was never nothing serious. AM Sex wasn't as prevailing then as it is now. EV In my day... there was no such a thing as sex. no such a thing. A kiss on the cheek... if he was quick enough on the bec. But... AM It was when you got married mostly when sex started. I mean as a rule. EV For me it started when I got married. I wasn't young. AM That's what was expected. EV That was expected. A girl wasn't expected to have sex before she got married. But there was a lot that did just the same though. Oh, God.

AM I was always amazed by French Island being called Treat and Webster Island, French Island, and they also called it Skin Island. HT Oh, I used to get so mad when they said that. EV But there was a reason for that. AM I never knew the reason until I found out, and I always thought the bad... the worse reason for it being loose women. That's why I asked you if you remember if there was wood mills or anything like that... lumber mills on French Island. I understand that it came from a tannery that used to be on the end of French Island. EV I heard that a lot too, but I never remembered that thought. AM Henry Thibodeau told me that before he died. And he said no, the reason they called it Skin Island was that there was a tannery, and they used to bring a lot of skins on the Island to be tanned. EV My father used to tell us that too though. HT Boys, Mrs. Shorette was mad one morning. We went to church during lent, and it was Father Brunell and he said, "Here comes the Skin Island crowd." Hey. She stopped. She said, "I don't want to hear you call me that again. I'm from French Island, and I'm going to stay there, and I don't want to hear Skin Island." Boy she was mad. AM It's not very nice for a priest to say. HT He was always waiting for the people to come in.

AM Were you looked down on for being French by other people from Old Town that weren't of French descent - Franco-American descent? Did they think that you were inferior to them or...? Did you feel that when you were younger? EV I didn't feel that. HT We had as many Protestant friends. EV The only thing I remember though is... if you got a fellow from Orono,

they didn't like the Orono boys. And the Island boys would kind of make of it you know. They'd say, "Oh, you're so stuck up. You're going out with a fellow from Orono." There's quite a few girls in Old Town that married fellows from Orono. AM Somebody else mentioned that in an interview too... that there was a lot of conflict between Orono and French Island... maybe Orono and Old Town, not just French Island. EV Yeah. Oh, it was all of Old Town... Orono and Old Town. Especially French Island thought.

AM Henrietta, while I think of it, you mentioned coming over here that you feel bad every time you go on French Island now. Tell us about that. HT It's not the same. EV I'm so glad I'm still on the Island. HT Every house looks so good. And now every time I go by my mother-in-law's house, and it gives me the blues cause it's run down a lot. Now they've fixed it a little bit. But there was awhile there. Three weeks after that house was sold there, the garage doors were torn. They were stealing, before they sold the house, they were stealing the stuff that was in the garage. But... AM So it hurts you to see something that you remember let go. HT Yeah. That was nice. We stayed there, and... AM What about people on French Island. Has that changed also, now? EV Not the ones that we knew, but there's a lot we don't know. It's tough. I have my scanner on at night, and almost every street on the Island they call for some... AM There's no more French or anything on French Island. EV What broke my heart the most me though, is when I had to leave French Island, and move to Eddington. HT Me too. AM You still have a home on French Island. EV I still have the home but I gave it to... AM You lived on French Island all your life. EV All my life. And I lived almost on the same street all my life. We built my home on... ourselves, Ben and I, twenty-six years ago. AM Do you see a big change now? EV On the Island? Oh, yes! Oh, yes! But I still miss it. HT Me too. I miss it. AM I do also. And I still love to go there, but it's not what I remember. EV Yeah. When I had to leave my home, I'm telling you, it was tough. It was tough. AM Who do you think is the oldest person surviving on French Island... or saying that they don't have to be living there now... but... the one I'm thinking of... is somebody mentioned Ronnie Pooler just died a while ago, and they said that his mother was 97 in the nursing home. EV I think she is. AM Is there anyone that you people remember that is older than that now? HT That's living. EV I don't dare to say... I'm afraid I'm the next. (Laughing) Mrs. Cote died... how old was she. AM She was in her 90s also. EV Oh, yes, but she's dead. Well, living... I can't think of anybody. There's an awful lot of people we don't know on the Island now though. A lot. AM That's what I find when I go up. Because the old homesteads are being sold off, and a lot of them were torn down like my house, and a lot of the other houses were torn down. EV Mama's house was torn down too, because we built right on the same lot. AM Yeah. But I mean like the old Coté family and the old Lavoie

family, there's not many left now. EV Leona Taylor is quite old... Pete Taylor's wife. AM Oh, Leona's still living. EV Yes. AM I don't know how old she would be. EV She's at least 89 if not 90. I think she's 90 I think Mariange told me she was 90.

AM Let's get on to work... . when you were younger. Were you people able to find work as young girls... you know 18-19-20 before you got married? EV I was 16. AM You were sixteen when you started working. EV At the woolen mill. AM You started working at the woolen mill. What kind of jobs were there around? HT Spooler... I remember she told me, I used to go see her, she showed me how to... AM When you see her who do you mean? HT Estelle. And she said, "When you go ask for a job, don't say Bill say Mr. Hollingsworth." I kept saying that until I got where he was, and then I said, "Hey, Bill. I've learned how to spool, could have a job?" AM So you knew the person. EV Yes. Because I'd go and see her often, because I wanted to get a job. And when I moved where I am, they asked me there's two place with two bedrooms. There's the River House and Penboscot Terrace. I said, "I don't want to go to River House." They said, "Why?" I said, "I started working there when I was sixteen years old, and I'm not going to die there." EV I started there at seventeen, and I worked until I got married. AM What did you do for work at the Woolen Mill? EV Spooler. AM So Woolen Mill hired a lot of women? EV Oh, yes. A lot from the Island. HT Almost all the Island worked there. EV We walked. We had to come home for lunch. That's quite a walk.

AM Somebody mentioned, when they went to school they used to walk home for lunch from school. EV Oh, yes. AM That's what you would do? EV Go to school in the morning, come home for lunch, go back to school. We did a lot of walking. HT I worked in three Woolen Mills... Old Town, and the American, and then Striers. And I worked at the shoe shops. AM So you worked all your life. HT All my life. I'd stay home long enough to get to get better from a baby and go back. EV I did it different, I worked up until I got married, and then I didn't work. But, Ben was in business for himself. So I took care of his books. AM A lot of people stayed home anyway. A lot of wives. EV But he never had to hire anybody for his work. I kept his books and all that.

AM What about your father? What did he do? EV Papa was a blacksmith... wasn't he? AM He was a blacksmith. EV Yeah, cause he worked at Barker's Mill. Mama would fix his dinner pail and we'd walk to the mill... during vacation... bring him his lunch. Papa was a good blacksmith. Oh, yes. HT He worked in Witopitlock awhile. He was at a place where he'd hurt his eye. And they brought him home. Do you remember that? He had to go to Dr. Moulton. He was a worker. EV One year your mother and father and mama and papa and all the family, your family and our family went to Benedicta. They

worked in the woods. AM That's what I was going to say. My father used to work in the woods a lot. EV Well my father went up sometimes. AM He worked in the woods also. AM What about church organizations? I think there were a lot more back then than there are now. Directly involved with the church. EV They had the Children of Mary, when I went to school. And when you got married... then they would never get married in the sanctuary, but if you was a Child of Mary you would. That was quite an honor. HT That was your privilege AM What was the requirements to be a Child of Mary? EV Oh. You had to be good. AM You had to be good. You couldn't lie. EV No you couldn't lie, and you had to go to church a lot. Like she did. Henrietta did and I did too. We worked in the sacristy. All during grammar school, I worked in the sacristy. AM You mean that's just charity stuff. EV Charity stuff. Polishing all the candle sticks, and wiping up and dusting the floors, and dusting the seats, and dusting the alters. I worked extra the whole week. HT Cecile and I we'd go to the six o'clock mass, and we'd stay until high mass. They'd bring us to the rectory and give us our breakfast. And then we'd go back. EV You was luckier than I was. I never had breakfast. HT That old lady was nice. She was French.

AM There was organizations for men also. I remember the League of Sacred Heart... and well, I don't know, the Catholic Foresters, I don't think that had anything to do with the church. But that was quite and organization. EV Yeah. That was. HT Bebe belonged to that... and the KC.

AM What about French Island, the fights they used to have on French Island. What do you remember? That was a big thing way back then. HT Yeah. Bebe went and thought he was smart, and he came back with black eyes. He wasn't married then. AM So he fought. HT No. But Rosaire fought. AM That being your brother-in-law, Rosaire. HT Yeah. Weren't there quite a few people from French Island that used to fight too? HT Oh, yes. There was Henry Lagasse and Cyclone Violette and some more too. EV All I remember, I took mama one time and the minute Rosaire had one punch, I had to take mama home. She got scared. AM Cyclone St. Louis used to fight too. HT Yeah. AM There used to be a lot of them. EV The only time I used to go was when Rosaire fought. AM And he used to draw quite a ... well we used to think it was a big crowd of people, but actually when you look there the area is so small that there couldn't have been very many people there. You remember the Hildreth... I think that was your uncle that owned that. EV Yeah. Uncle Johnny Bouchard. AM What about that? What was it? EV Lumber. AM Just a lumber yard... they sold lumber. They didn't produce lumber or anything? HT It was right on Hildreth Street.

EV The first job I went for me, it was the snowshoe factory. But I didn't get it. They weren't hiring the French. AM That

was around Old Town. EV That was at the end of the Milford bridge. As you enter the Milford Bridge, it was right on the end. AM Of course, Chapman's too was on French Island. EV Yeah. It was right at the beginning of the bridge. Brissette was at the end of the bridge. Petit Landry. Pitou was on this side.

AM Let's talk a little bit about blood stoppers, which was a big thing in the French community. Henrietta... do you have any experiences? HT Yes I do. I was a bleeder. Just look at me, and I'd start bleeding. And, I had a big nose bleed and I ran across the road to my brother-in-law, Albert's father, and he stopped me. And another time... I sat on a pair of scissors, and I ran over to my brother, Rudolph, and I told him, "You get to surprise em ... stop me from bleeding." He stopped it. And I had one at the woolen mill. I have faith. AM So you have faith in blood stoppers. Which, there isn't many today. I don't think of anybody today that is a blood stopper. HT No. That's why they can't stop me from bleeding now. AM Estelle, did you have any experience? EV Well, I can't talk too much about that cause I never believed in it. AM Me also. And my father being a blood stopper, and I never really believed it. My mother wanted... it's a gift that you're supposed to pass down, and I was the one was supposed to receive it. But, my mother used to tell me, "think of your father" when I had a bloody nose. "Ma I don't believe it." EV Blanche asked me at one time if I wanted to take over. I said, "No, because I don't believe in it." HT At last there I didn't have to go and ask him. I'd think of him, and that's it. AM Yeah. But I do remember some stories of blood stopping that he has performed, and I really believe there is something to it but I don't... I'm not a firm believer. HT Like now, when I have a nose bleed, that don't help.

AM Well, I want to thank you ladies very much for the nice interview. And, I hope we can do it again sometime.