

This is Karen Graves (?) talking with Mrs. Almos in Port Arthur.

G: Could we start by telling me what year you were born?

A: 1913

G: And where were you born?

A: I was born in a little CPR siding, called Melgand.

G: Where is that?

A: Now this would be, Oh, I don't know, past, well half way between here and White River, I think, on the CPR Mainline. My dad was a CPR pumper. This was when they had the steam engines, and they had to take water, you know, every so many. And ~~there~~ we moved to Cauldwell; he was a pumper there, and then from there, when I was about four, we moved to Jackfish, and he was a stationary fireman there. They took coal in for the docks, the CPR dock there, for the trains, and he worked there till the deasel came in, and then they did away with the coal, naturally, then he was... No I'm wrong. They did away with bringing it in from the States ~~by~~ by boat, and brought it from, from the eh, provinces, somewhere, by CPR boxcar, and it had to be unloaded by boxcar, so they didn't need anymore fireman or anything
li like this, see, to keep things going, to unload the coal, so he was transfered to a place called Britt.

G: That sounds familiar.

A: That's down, oh, around Perry Sound, and there he stayed until he retired.

G: Did you move with him?

A: No, I married, and stayed in Jackfish.

G: Had your parents been born in Canada, or were they immigrants?

A: No. My grandparents came from Scotland as Hudson's Bay factors, up to Moosonee, and my Dad's family was all born there. And they came down to, by canoe, to, where is it now, the CPR anyway. And then just scattered around. My grandfather on my mother's side had a store in Heron Bay. And the rest of the family fished; one uncle had a fishing and tourist business in McDermod. And the others were mostly railroaders.

G: What do you remember as a child growing up in a small town?

A: Well, I don't know. We weren't very rich, we were a big family; eleven of us, twelve of us.

G: Twelve kids?

A: Uhm uhm.

G: Really!

A: Eleven, and adopted my mother's, be more like a nephew to me, but he was adopted, because his mother and dad had passed away. And I don't know, we just seemed to have enough of what we needed. We never had to go without anything, but we didn't have any frills, that's for sure. But I think we were much happier then, than the children these days.

G: You appreciated things I guess.

A: Everything just handed to them, ayh? What we got we really appreciated. And we had to work, you know, I worked from the time I was ^{about} fourteen, for, ten dollars a month, I think.

G: Doing what?

A: Well, I went to help this, he was, Mr. Nichol was the station agent, the gas station agent, there. And she needed somebody in the summer, because she had so much company and that. So I just went and, as a cl-, like a girl helper, ayh. And, that's about all. Went to school until grade eight, and

do help her,

G: How big a school was it?

A: Pardon me?

G: How big a school was it?

A: It was up to grade eight. It was from one, there was no kindergarten, from one to eight ayh. And there was just the one teacher ^{one} We had very many happy memories there, because there was ^{concerts} concerts, and field days, that kids have never heard of, these days. Arbor day, I asked the kids if they had Arbor day. "What's that Nanny?" And, I don't know, ~~th~~ This was the centre of activity, the school and the church, ayh. The church, once a month, there was two churches. So everybody ^{went} to the, and the Salvation Army came, probably once every two months. And strange, I do quite a bit of volunteer

work, and I do a lot for Home League, or^{am} with them alot. And they knew all these Captains, and that, that came to Jackfish, like 60 years ago.

G: What would they have come for?

A: The Salvation Army?

G: Yes, this is the first I've heard of this.

A: Oh, well, just for a service.

G: Counselling type?

A: No, just a church -- a meeting at night, you know. And, everybody would bring a lunch, and we'd have a little gathering after. This one chap, especially. He came from the Yukon, and I just heard recently, through a lady in Home League here, that he died in California. *So we had quite a* These are just the little things that we'd look forward to. We were fortunate enough that we had a pass, and relatives, that we could travel. Where a lot of the other children didn't ayh, we could go free, we had relatives in Saskatchewan and Manitoba and that. So we were able to go... My dad took us pretty often for a trip to Toronto and Montreal if we could afford it. But then I married, and we lived there, it was... I was just saying, some girl came here the other day, said she was tired because she washed the clothes. I said oh, what kind of machine do you have? Well, an automatic, ayh. I said "what if you do like me when Don was, we had one boy, and one still-born child. When ~~Don~~^{Don} was small, my husband was a railroader too, so he had to go out and relieve on the different jobs. And in the winter I had to snowshoe down a hill like about Hillcrest Park, and snowshoe back up with the water to wash clothes. And I said, "And you push a button, and you're tired? And when my brother-in-law wasn't home, I had to chop the ice, to make a hole in the water, ayh. Sometimes it was pretty thick in that bay. And then I'd come up and wash clothes on a board. So, when I look back now, I think, O dear, I wonder how you... My neighbour across here, she was raised on ~~the~~^{her} farm too. She said I wonder how we did it ayh. We sit back ~~and~~^{down} and wonder and really, you know, what... But like I say, I think we were much happier then than now that you could... I know when I go down town now and, we were married during the depression, and when I go down town now and thin k "Gee I wonder if I should, maybe I'll buy this. Do I need it?" That's a throw back from the depression. So it seems strange that life goes on so

G: What kind of social things did you do, say in your married years? Community dances, and things like this?

A: Oh yes. We used to have pie socials, to raise money for the Christmas fund. And bingos, later on we had bingos. But mostly it was, oh, teas, church teas, and pie socials, and cake socials. And what else now, oh, then we used to have snowshoe parties. We'd all get together to snowshoe out to a certain, everybody had a little, tracking camps, like, you know, and you'd make beans out there, have beans and that. Like I say, I was one of the more fortunate ones, Art always had a job, and we had a free pass, so every year of our life we've always had a holiday. Even if it was, I know I'd come back often, with just enough to tip the porter ayh. Or maybe not even that, but we had our pass, and we knew we could get home without any money ayh. But every month, I'd put away maybe even sometimes 50 cents to a travelling fund. And when our holiday came, well that was our money, and when that was spent, we came home.

G: That's an interesting way to travel.

A: But other than that, like, and... I think the teacher was the head of the social, like you know, she put on the Halloween dances and...

G: Would these all be held in the school?

A: Yes. At one time we had no basement in the school, so it was quite a chore to, our seats were on two by fours, and we had to pull them all out, you know. So the, I can't remember, they must have got a grant or something, and they... I was married then, when they put the basement in the school, and this was were we held all our socials, such as our ...

G: How large a community?

A: Pardon me?

G: How large a community?

A: I would say about 35 families. And of course, during the summer the Patterso, you know, these freighter folks, they

would come in with coal for the... It was the only industry there, was the coal industry, for the CPR, for the engines. And it seems every time a boat came in, they'd put on a dance of some kind, and they'd let us know, and we'd put a sign up, and the ladies would bring a lunch, or the boat would bring a lunch. So, pretty nearly every week we'd have a dance.

G: Then this would be with the people who worked on the boat.

A: This was with the, yes, with the Captain and the mates would put it on, like, you see, and everybody that was free on the boat would come. I guess they'd been out on the lake a week, ten, twelve days, and they were happy to get some recreation. At one time we had a pool room there, and that was part of the, you know, they played pool. But that closed down, too. ^{when} we built our own skating rink and looked after it. We played hockey between Rossport, and Schreiber, and Jackfish.

G: Did you seem to have been a lot more sports minded, a little more active?

A: Yes. There didn't seem to be any cliques. Everybody seemed to get together. Then we bought, there was a general store and the Post Office, and Immigration Department there. And we had that, we looked after that, til the place closed up.

G: So that would be an office to receive benefits?

A: Well, no. The officer had to come here to clear the American ships. You see, the American ships came in, and they had a clearance before they go out. So that office was in the store too, the general store, and the Post Office. So then when that closed down, when Jackfish closed down, my husband got a job as a, went out on the road as, he was, of course he's an engineer, this was what he did in Jackfish. But it was more like an emergency; he was sent anywhere from Fort William to, oh, ^{we've been} to the Sioux, to Ottawa, to Mattawa, and anyplace that they needed him, ayh. So we lived, we had our own car on the railroad, and we lived there for seventeen years before we retired. So that was an interesting way to live. I know one weekend, one middle of the week, we were in Rossport, or just out of Rossport, and (interrupted by phone) So what was I saying?

G: You were talking about living on the rail road.

A: Oh yeah. We were up near Rossport, about Tuesday, and they said to Bart, "Get ready, there's a train picking you up, and they're going to stop at White River, and get your groceries, and you've got to keep going til you get to Mattawa, for the weekend." Because they were building an overhead bridge, and you can only do it on a weekend. It was things like this that made it so interesting...

G: So you just took up your car and...

A: Well, the train picks us up, ayh. We were on the railroad, like a, like a trailor ayh. And a train would pick us up and the machine that Bart worked with, ayh, and take us all the way down along. And wherever we were, like if we came into a divisional point, where there's a train waiting for us to take us out, so we'd get there in time. So you never knew what the next job was going to be.

G: I guess, you said you just had the one son?

A: Yes, and when Bart took this job out on the railroad, he had just started high school here, so he was up here like, you see. And when we were close to home, close around here, he'd come there for the weekend, and if we weren't home, he'd go to Jackfish to his grandmother's. So we were there for eighteen years.

G: You said you were married during the depression. How did the depression affect you?

well like I say A: ~~well~~, I think we were very fortunate because on the job that Bart was, a hoisting engineer's job. In the winter they just had, maybe eight or ten staff, or twelve. And they had ^{to have a} time keeper. And none of them could do office work. None of the older men, even if they had more seniority than Bart, they couldn't do the office work, with the result that he was never out of a job. As small wages as he had, we were fortunate; we never lost our insurance, or our house or anything like that. So many of our friends did ayh. Other than having to be very careful, you know, make sure that you didn't go off on a buying spree, or something.

G: Did it affect Jackfish, particularly bad?

A: Not too much. Most of the people there were, I would say have permanent positions, they would be, like section men, and in the winter, like section men, and then they had to keep this plant going, because they had to keep a coal chute going to keep the coal eh, ready to coal all these trains, all these... So it was more of a steady thing, except in the summer they brought in these extra men to help with the unloading of the coal for the winter. But we were very fortunate. There was nobody, I think, out of work in Jackfish during the depression, because of this CPR coaling station, see. Maybe the junior fellas on the way, like on the track were laid off, but pretty well it didn't affect them at all. But all around us, terrible. I know friends of ours that had lost their homes and their insurances, and things like this.

G: Did you get a lot of people travelling through on the railway?

A: Oh yes.

G: men in the box...

A: Boxcars, yes, yeah. In fact there was some of that still when we went on the road. Cause they warned me, I was often alone, you know, out on the siding, and they said not to let anybody in. ~~but~~ this was not like the depression, I think it was just those who were travelling more just to see the, the, cause it was during the war when we were out there, so there was lots of work.

G: How did the war affect you?

A: Pardon me?

G: How did the war years affect you?

A: Ahh, not...

G: I guess things became a little more prosperous?

A: Yes, yes. Well I know when uhm, when Bart went out on the railroad, when we were in Jackfish, there was no union. So he would have to go, he went to work at seven every morning. And if that company, boat company, wanted that boat unloaded for a certain hour, he would have to work, all those hours, maybe sometimes up for 5 o'clock the next morning. And he never got paid for more than eight hours, ayh. So as soon as he went out on the railroad, on the, on the mainline, he was able to join a union, and he did, and I could never get over him being paid, in fact, this was how we bought this house. All the overtime that he made, I put it aside, because I said "If we, you know, this is just money found, because you'd never have it, if you didn't have this job." So this is how we put money away to buy this house. Because if you travelled, at night, with the crane, then he had to look after it, and he was paid for it. And if there was a mainline, and the mainline was busy, then they would have to wait maybe til after 5 o'clock, or 6 o'clock, til the trains were all gone, then go out, and he was still paid. And I can remember my son was, it was during the war, they couldn't get a helper, so the boss asked Bart if he didn't know anybody. So Don said he'd go out. And I can remember the first day Don worked, he had to go out an hour ahead, at six, to get the crane ready, and they couldn't go out til 8 o'clock that night to work, cause the passengers were late (?), it was a mainline job. He made 42.50 that one day. I can remember his dad saying, "This was what I made in a month when I started to work". So it was quite a, it was quite a thing to be able to get paid for what you did. But, and that job in Jackfish, we were paid for eight hours only, no matter how, and you couldn't refuse, ayh. Especially Bart. He was the only who could do this certain job. He had a helper, but he couldn't work when there was men, they emptied these boats of coal, well when they got near the bottom, there had to go men in there to scrape it up and put it in the bucket so they could get it up. Well the helper couldn't do that, because they were scared they'd swing the bucket maybe, and kill someone. So when there was a cleaning job, Bart had to do it all. There was two of them, like two cranes, but they had to do all that work.

G: Was there any talk there of organizing a union?

A: They tried. But, this was the way they got around it. There wasn't enough, uhm, steady members, like. I think

the result was

there had to be ten or twelve. And the CPR made sure that they, (joke and laughter), but the company made sure that they got, you know, that they were kept below that. The steady ones, like, you know. They could have in the summer, but then these were just men that came in for, maybe three or four months, so that didn't count. This is how I think I, I have never voted anything else but social, NDP or , please be careful whatever you call it. Because this was when you heard all about it during the depression, ayh. And I can remember, uhm, Jack MacEvelt, he was organizing, ayh, in Schreiber. He said "I've gone out in the country and preached", and he said "I had to be in a truck, because they'd throw tomatoes at me", ayh, or eggs or anything, if they didn't like him. And I can remember the first, uh, convention I went to in Regina, I said to Mrs. Jacobson, "I never thought I'd ever see the day when I'd be coming to Regina, in a hotel for an NDP convention, ayh, the way it started out, because I know many a time I did without things to, to help calm down there, like, you know, the people that came in ^{and} they always came to our place to sleep, or eat or anything. Mr. uhm, what's his name ^{now} Tate, he's an old timer, Jim Caullie, I was just reading about him the other day, and Jack MacEvelt, of course, he was from Schreiber, and uhm, there sure was a lot of talk of, you know, political talk during the depression, and I think this was for, because, uhm, when you looked around and saw what was going on, these guys working for five dollars a month, I think, on the highway. So, uh... Oh yes, I think the whole of Jackfish was, was CCF then.

G: I've been studying Dorion and Hurkett a lot, and that was a really progressive town during the depression too.

A: Yes. I think all these little towns, you know, that really uh, it hit them quite hard.

G: I guess so. Uhm, I wanted to ask you about the early days of CCF. Did you ever think that it would become sort of a credible third party at the time?

A: N..

G: Did it start off really , really small?

A: Uh...

G: See I don't...

A: Oh yes, like I say, I can remember, especially down our way, because uh, oh there was so many other factions against it, ayh. Strong factions, that people were afraid to, to even talk about it, in lots of places, ayh. Uh, and I really can't remember how it, that was overcome, because, like in Jackfish, nearly everybody was a CCF, ayh. There was the odd one, but uh, they didn't do to much about it, so uh,... But they had no problem there. I think Jackfish was CCF ever since I can remember. And uh, everybody worked, helped, and eh, you know,...

G: Were the women just as active as the men, would you say?

A: Uh, Yes, I think so, uh, 'cause I know I was. And uh, and any of my friends, there was, oh yes.

A: Did you feel that you were, I don't know, taken seriously, that's not quite what I want to say, but you know what I mean... You were as respected, in the Party?

A: Oh yes. Uhm Uhm. Oh yes. Yes, because, uh, what I found, we had so many good arguments, that these, the was arguing against us, You know, they couldn't find anything uh, come back with, really. When we say, "Well, look-et, what's this government doing; five dollars a month, ayh. And all, well Canada was, it's a rich country, and, you know, these are the arguments. We used to get literature ^{of} it, and study it, you know, and have study session, and that, and uhm, and we really... No I don't , we never had any problems down there. It was always, uh, it was always, as far as I can remember... Of course, now, the earlier years I don't know... 'cause I wasn't old enough to vote, and... But uh,... it was always strong, the CCF, ever since I can remember.

- G: Do you, I do..., I think you're probably too young for, to remember women getting the vote.
- A: No, not really, no.
- G: twenties.
- A: Yeah, no, no. It's ahh... You know, I can remember something about it, all right, because I remember arguments,,, I can remember ministers come and arguing, and you know, about... My dad was very religious. Uh, I don't know whether really religious, but he, uh, 'cause people were very religious, and apparently always had to study the Bible very.. And they used to argue these things forth and back, and uh, and uh... This was what he used to, uh, argue mostly with, was because he was figuring that this Bible wasn't quite right., from the things that was said, and then some of the things that was preached, ayh. But like I say, when there's a large family, we all had to get up and do our own chores, and that; there wasn't much to, to, uhm, like ehh, there was chores, and, and then schoolwork, and different things that. We never got much into political, uh, arguments at home. But I really took interest in it when Jack MacEveit started to come down. Of course I was married then. I was nineteen when I was married, and of course you couldn't vote until you were twenty-one, then. But I was really into--My husband has always been, 'cause he said that, uh, his dad was from Norway. And he used to tell them how the big shots took everything there, from the fisherman, no matter how hard you'd worked, you had to... And uh, And so, he was always socialist, if you'd like to call him that. And I haven... I've never voted anywhere else... anything else. So,...
- G: How about transportation in these days? How did you get around?
- A: Oh you know, this is uh, the strange thing too... We have never had a car. We have never had a car.
- G: Really?
- A: And uh, for the simple reason, that in Jackfish there was no highway, when we lived there. Now, uh, the highway came through after we went out on the road, oh maybe a year or so before. And we had to uhm, I don't understand too much about it, but everybody had to pay so much, then and do ... If you didn't pay, you had to work so many days on the road that they had cut in, like. I guess the town did it, ayh. Well then, the car was no good to us then, because we were away all the time. My son had a car right away, of course. But we always travelled by rail, or ship.
- G: How about within the community, though. I guess if things...
- A: Oh. It was all railway, all rail. But the community was, uh, You've never been down past Jackfish?
- G: No, I don't think I have.
- A: Well there's, there's just the railway, in the middle, then the lake on one side, and the mountains on the other. So with the result that the, that the cut-in from the main highway was very hard to put in, because it had to come down through this plane, and then over a mountain, and then (cut back to ?) And there was no place you could--There was no place in the town where you could drive a car. You had to drive just to the railway, and leave it there. So it was all railroad travel, when we were there.
- G: And you'd just walk.....
- A: And just walk, yeah. It was a very small village, something like... Oh, it wouldn't have as much walking space as Rossport, if you've been there.
- G: Uhm uhm. Rossport's really small.
- A: Yeah. But, see Rossport is, is kind of flat, ayh, and at least you can drive into there. In Jackfish you could just come in behind this mountain, there was just a valley in between this mountain, behind the church, and then right down to the railroad. And that's where you had to stop. Oh some people, uh, put planks across there, and went across. But you couldn't go anywhere, so there was no point, ayh. So, ah, everything was by car, by railroad, and it was so small that you didn't need a car, anyway, to get around.
- G: I've been thinking of Thunder Bay standards.

- A: Yeah. Oh, no. I know my aunt, she came from the west, she used to say "I can't breathe here, like, 'cause she lived in the prairie, ayh. And she said she just seemed like she was closed in because there was just this little place to walk, ayh. Mountains on one side, and the lake on the other, and the railway in the middle.
- G: It sounds like it would be really beautiful.
- A: Yes, it was, it was a lovely spot. Uh, a very busy spot because, uhm, in the summer they had, uhm, uhm-a, a pulpwood, the pulp boats used to, uhm, how can I say this? The boats used to come into Slate Island, (that was out quite a way) and load the pulp there, so we had the, uh, men come in then to, they stayed out there all summer and worked on this pulp business. So it was always a very busy spot, in the summer, very quiet in the winter. ~~Anyway~~ But and a good, we had quite a good tourist business when we had the store too--we had a lot of Americans come in there, because beautiful lakes lack in there, very, uh, untouched, ayh.... good fishing, and so we had ~~it~~ *→ a like (?)* quite a good tourist business there, too. The Americans used to like to come in. But, uh, there certainly wasn't any cars around there was no place to drive them, Everything was done by wheelbarrow, if you had to, uh...
- G: Move things.
- A: Move anything; wheelbarrow in, in the summer, or toboggan or, or sleigh in the winter, ayh. I know we used to have to, we burnt coal, naturally--we were on a coal depot, and they used to bring it in bags home, on the toboggan. So, everything had to be moved by hand, wheelbarrow or, that old wheelbarrow outside, that was what we used in Jackfish.
- G: An antique wheelbarrow.
- A: Yeah.
- G: What was life like for your mother, with so many children?
- A: Well, you know, we all had our own job, ayh. The older had to look after the younger, and ah, ~~as many as us~~ as many as us, there was of us, she had borders beside. Men that used to come and work in the summer, ayh, would come ~~board~~ board with us, which she always used to say it doesn't make much difference putting a few more potatoes in the pot, ayh. But we all had our own jobs, and we all had to look after ~~our~~ our own clothes, and things seemed very well organized. I don't know, I can't remember that there was, uh, we all had to look after our own rooms, and beds, and, and uh, we all had our turn to do dishes, and uh...
- G: You had to be a lot more responsible.
- A: Oh yes, oh my gosh, yes. You know, if we ever got up and we I think there was only two of us that was born in Schreiber. The rest were all born at home with a midwife.
- G: Was there a local woman, who acted as one?
- A: Yes, uhm uhm. Bart's mom--my mother and I used to do most of it. And before that there was an Italian lady that used to do it. And uh, it was just, one other thing, just another..... I can remember my last two brothers, they were born in Schreiber, because these women were getting older then, ayh. And uhm, so they, my aunt, she was kind of a midwife in Schreiber, too. So she went there, and had it there. But uh, but uh, I can't remember any, uh, I think today they'd, when I see children, the way they, I think it's just uh, oh, I think it's partly parents fault, today. Because they take the line of least resistance, they say you can't do ~~with~~ that, and they do it anyway, and they don't do anything about it. I can't understand that. I know with my grandchildren here, I say "you do it", and they look at me, and I say "and fast!" Don't sit and look at me." And 63, ayh.
- G: You've got a lot of nerve.
- A: I said "You just...." Of course I do a lot of kidding, but uh, I, I just couldn't take that. When I said somethin' to Don, I said "I want that done", and he went *and* done it, ayh. And if he didn't do it, he just had his privileges taken away from him. And I think this is half the battle. Because they just, just don't seem to

bother, I don't know. I can never forget one woman said "I'll be so glad when they're married, when they're out of my way." Oh! I couldn't understand that. I said "don't you enjoy them?" And then when I saw the way they acted, I thought, "no wonder", but I thought "lady, it's your fault".

G: I think television has a lot to do with it.

A: Oh yes, terrible. Just want and sit and look at that uhm, My little chum was sittin' there yesterday and put the, and put it on for some & sports, and I thought, "I bet you ten years for

G: Is this why you worked?

A: since we moved here. We moved, Bart took an early retirement, we've been here about seventeen years. And he still worked two years, like we bought this house, oh maybe, ten or twelve years before we moved up, ayh. We knew that we couldn't go back to Jackfish, we had a house there, but there was nothing there, ayh. So like I say, we had to buy somewhere, so we, everything we got overtime, I put away to put a payment down on a house, . Well then we bought it, and we rented it for about twelve years. Well then, the people who rented it were going to move away, so I said to Bart, "Well what takin' an early, he, this was how we started to Mexico, in '57, He had an arthritic hip, and they said that, like the winter's a slack time, ayh, 'cause there's no building or anything like that. So, uh, I started looking into going to Mexico. So we went down there, and then, uh, the Mexican next winter they'd, the people said they were going to move, so we moved down then, and we didn't go anywhere that winter. Just

So we've been here eighteen years, and ah, Like I say, we never stary in the winter, except the, the two years since I've been sick. But ah, we've never had a car either, so we've just... Like I say, then, but he came up, he worked, he still worked two years, at, summers, while we were here. So I, I just couldn't sit here and do nothing, so I started to babysit first. Babysat for all the doctors, and that, there. And ah, then ah, this little, this little store down by ah, the clinic, McKay's, they looked, they were looking for a clerk, so I worked there, for ah, five years. Then we were, every winter we'd away, she'd have to get someone else, so... This year we're goin'to, summer we're going up to Alaska, so I said "I'm going to quit", I said "You'll have to get someone else", 'cause it's not fair to her either, ayh. So we came back in October, and then I knew the woman that was working in, in the uh, what do you call the office down there, employment office, and she phones, and "Would you like to go and work at Burk's Pitts. I said "What?" So she said "They're looking for someone for Christmas rush", so I said "Okay, I'll go down and try it". So I went down and then I worked every summer then, for ten years. I really enjoyed it.

G: Did you work, uhm, in your early years of marriage?

A: No, except for our own business, when we had, had our own store, like, you know; in, in the country. But when we were on the road, we were never anywhere, maybe sometimes two weeks, and then

maybe sometimes two days, ayh. So I just ah, G: Are this, I know that there are many opportunities for women to work, in small towns, small industry towns.

A: Small--No, no, no. Uhm, what there was an, an hotel in Jackfish, during uhm, now let's see, that started during the war. But, there had been previously, a hotel before, and it, people died, and they just closed it down. Well then, this family, Spidoni brothers, you've heard of them in Schreiber, I guess. They bought the hotel, and they opened it up, so this was the, really the only place to work, ayh. Cook, or or, ah, upstairs girl, and bartenders. But I never did, I never worked there, 'cause we had our own store, then.

G: You had the general store?

A: Yes, the post office, and this, uh, other office, that the

- Immigration guys So I worked there., most of the time.
But uh, other than that there wasn't, there was nothing
in, in smaller places.
- G: Do you remember any people, I'm thinking particularly of
women, being really lonely, really sort of cabin-crazy?
- A: No. No, I don't think so. Not that I can remember.
Everybody was too busy. You know. Like the men worked
steady, ayh, and the women just had to do, take over for
the men laid off when they had to work, ayh. And like uh,
you just didn't come in and turn a button on, and a
stove go, you had to keep your stove up and carry your
water in. Heat your water on the stove to wash clothes,
and it, and iron, the iron's on the stove, and this all,
you know, it took so much more time than it does these
days. So I say laugh when that girl said she was tired,
pushing a button on an automatic washing machine. Ahh, no
I can't... Oh there was lot's around eh, you know, in the
^{more} the farming district, I think.
- G: Yeah, I guess women really isolated, in the country.
- A: Yes, but we were never really isolated, because we had
mail twice a day, ayh, which is something, because the
mainline went right through it, and the railroad carried
the mail then. And ah, so we had mail twice a day, and
we had, uh, we got fresh fruit and vegetables twice a
week. From town here, they'd come down, on the train.
And fresh milk every morning, 'cause it came on the
train, too. At one time there was seven trains going by
there, ayh, passengers. And uh, So we really weren't,
where we were, we weren't isolated at all because we,
other than that we didn't get out too much,. Like I say
we made our own fun, and, and we uh, oh we were never
without anything. And like, there was a doctor in
Schreiber, which is, was nineteen miles away. And if we
needed him, we just phoned through the CPR phone, to the
station in Schreiber, and he came down on the first
freight. So we really were better off than a lot of
places that didn't even, when they didn't have a highway,
ayh. We at least had the mainline going right
through. And anything happened, well, they were always
kind enough to stop a train and pick anybody up that was
hurt, and bring them in to wherever was, to Schreiber,
or anywhere. I know all the uh, sick people that had to
come to town, they just stopped them, put them on a
stretcher, put them in the baggage car. And then we
came up with them on the baggage car. So uh, and we'd
phone the doctor in Schreiber, and say so and so was on
the baggage car, and he'd come in and see if they needed
a needle or something. He was a CPR doctor then--and a
town doctor too. And if they needed help before we got
to town, well he'd give them a needle of some kind, like,
you know. And we just stopped in time to expect a train
here, and took us to the hospital. The, uh, only thing
that we found, the younger ones wouldn't stay there to
have their babies, ayh. Like, before the babies were born
they came up to town here, or to Schreiber and waited.
But the old timers used to have them right in town
at home. But no, we were, we were very fortunate there,
because, like I say, we were just like on the mainline
of ah, uhm, lots of places that's all they, the only thing
that was, you know, there was no highways in a lot of
those places. So uh, we were, we were, I guess, we never
thought of it then, but now I realize that we were lucky,
much luckier than most people, where they were isolated
away back in the bush.
- G: What did you say, that there was a school in Jackfish?
- A: Uhm uhm, Grade one to grade eight.
- G: And how many did many people go on to high school?
- A: Yes, quite a few.
- G: And they'd have to go to Schreiber?
- A: They'd have to come to town here.
- G: Oh, to here?
- A: Uhm uhm,
- G: Really?
- A: Uhm uhm.
- G: There was no high schools in any of the
- A: There was high schools in Schreiber, but, now, I don't

understand what the ruling was there, I guess you could have gone there, but it, uh, no, I don't think so. 'Cause nobody ever went into Schreiber to.. My son took music lessons, and he had to leave, Like he'd leave ^{at} night at seven o'clock to go to Schreiber, which is nineteen miles away, stay overnight, have his lesson, music lesson in the morning, and come back at noon the next day. But he didn't mind that at all. And first he, the first time he went to White River. He started in White River, but then the music teacher died, there, and eh, I thought "well geees it's much easier to go to Schreiber, because I, that was two days to go to White River, ayh. You went down in the morning, and then you couldn't go back until the next night. So that was the whole weekend, and he, he used to love to fish, ayh, so uhm, this way he went in at night and he was back in the morning. But eh, no, everybody there, I don't know what the reason. You know, I never thought about that. I think that most of them that came up to high school, wanted uhm, to go to technical school, they didn't just want high school. They did their first year, and then they chose their, what they wanted to do, ayh. I think this was why they mostly all came up here. 'Cause I know Don had to come up here. And anybody that came, eh, it was out p, unless they wanted to go to, eh, to be a teacher, then they had to go to North Bay. There was no teacher's college here then either. And-a, nursing, they mostly all came here, because at that time there was a residence that they could stay in, ayh,. Now it's all, isn't it all University and just...

G: The college, stays there, yeah.

A: Yeah, uhm uhm. And, 'cause quite a few nurses, quite a few pupils come out, ayh, quite a few pupils came up.

G: Do you recall the, uhm, it would be mostly boys who continued on to high school? Or was it sort of half and half?

A: No, no, no. Half and half--a lot of ^{uh,} girls, nursing, teaching. Like I say, I know they had to go ~~to~~ to North Bay to teach, because when we wer on the road, we were in North Bay, working, and this young girl was in college there, and she used to come down to visit us, ayh. And this is how I know they had to go to school, into North Bay to go to school, Oh no, the, the, girls had uh, came out, there was as many go, as boys.

....
having more, uh, they were, should go first, were the, uh, foreigners ~~XXXXXX~~. You know, they thought the boys were, should go, and the girls should stay home. But in among our, we, that was never, uh, prevalent were we, you know, girls, if they wanted to go, had the same chance as boys, whereas with some of the foreigners, the boys had to go first. Even if they're dumber. You know. They were the, they were the misters.

G: You mean there ~~were many foreign families~~ a lot of foreign families?

A: Yes, there was. Uhm Uhm.

G: What nationality would be ... → (?)

A: Uhh, uh. Mostly Italians, there was ah, a couple of Ukrainian families, but they were mostly Italians down there. And ah, then all, men that came into work in the summer, brought their families, in Sudbury(?). But ah,

G: Did the community, uh, did they reach together?

A: Oh yes. Uhm, uhm, uhm uhm. Like I say, there were so few, ayh, that it took everybody to, to get anything going. But as I can remember, we had some good times. We used to have big picnics, you know, in the summer. And ah, pie socials, kids didn't even know what a pie social was.

G: What's a pie social?

A: It's a box social, where you make this fanc, oh no, fancy, and there was at this, uh, most of the time there was such a competition on who would make the best, the nicest box, ayh. And uh, then you'd have to have it auctioned off, and... You know, you never hear of those things any more. That was just something you do for... I must, I must suggest that to Home League sometime, just for fun. 'Cause their always looking for something different to do, you know. We have teas and, and things, but that, was different.

different

just

And they always said they could tell the teacher's box, 'cause it was always so much fancier, she had so much to work with, ayh. And I can remember this one guy had quite a crush on this teacher, and ah, this, she just put it in a, in a plain brown box with a bow on it, ayh. And this great big fancy box came up, and he thought it was hers, and he bid, bid so way up high. And here it was a married woman, she had about six kids. And here comes this box, and he didn't bother, and here it was the teacher's. It went for about a dollar, ayh. But, like I say, everybody had to, to chip in, ayh, because it was, but we had, we made our own mi , we had to go and build our own mi shack, put a stove in, to, to change our shoes. We used to do it in the station, and then the officials got mad and kicked us out of there, so ... But everything seemed to, I don't know, everybody seemed to pitch in and, ... I guess smaller communities are like that. I don't know, they always like the... Like I was telling the kids, I think we had just as much fun then--there wasn't many money, but, but we were fortunate enough that nobody was hard up. And, like I say, if anybody had a problem, everybody was there to help them.

G: Yeah, I 've also found that places that women^{really} didn't have so many social service agencies as we do now, there was a whole sort of, policing force within the, in the region. If someone was mistreating his wife, or those kind of problems.

A: Yes, yes. Oh yeah. I think ^{there's} a far too much hand-outs these days. I know I did volunteer work and I do meals on wheels, too, ayh. But boy, oh boy, there's some funny things going on there too. I know I used to go