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Signed

Mark Balin
interviewee

Date 3/28/79

Signed

Gertrude Day
interviewer

Donor Mrs John Day | Master Tape number:

Address: Wales Home, Richmond | 3/28/79 | interviewer: Mark Balin

Tape footage

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Interviewee- Mrs. Gertrude Day

Interviewer- Mark Babin

Were you in the Eastern Townships during W.W. II?

Yes, I was.

Do you want to state your name?

Gertrude Day. Well, I'm Mrs. John Day.

Today's date is the 28th of March 1979 and the interviewer is Mark Babin. Do you have any photos or objects from the time in W.W. II?

Well, I haven't here. You see when we come here all those things went with the farm and my son took them. But I really haven't anything from that time that I would be any worthwhile. I got a few photographs but there just just personal ones not anything about the war. It was a bad time.

O.K. What was your marital status at the time during W.W. II?

Oh I was married and living ... and I had one son then and he was called, but he was put down on a count of his eyes and his feet. His sight wasn't very good and his feet weren't so that he was rejected like he didn't he was called

O.K. That's about your family background also. What was your occupation at the time?

We were farming.

Farming.

We had a farm. A dairy farm.

And where was this?

Well, it was right in this township of ... the other side of Richmond that's five miles from here.

And aye you've done that all your life?

Yes.

Was the pay good? Did you live well with it?

Was what?

The pay well I mean did you live well with...

Yes, we lived well. We worked hard, we worked hard. You were never on a farm? Yes, well you work hard on a farm if you make good.

O.K. When W.W. II began had the Great Depression ended in your area?

Well, it was bad, but well the farmers lived as well as anyone because if they couldn't get sugar they could get some maple sugar and you had your farm to grow on and once or twice we sent vegetables and things out to other parts of the country. We tried, we didn't suffer any more then anyone else but it was a bad feeling to know that our boys were over there fighting.

O.K. Had you recovered from the Great Depression?

Oh yes, things after the war was over it was surprising how quick well the ones that lost boys over there they didn't recover the same, but everyone that didn't loose anyone it had come back but it left a lack of generation of young people. That generation a lot of our best boys were didn't come home.

In what way did W.W. II most affect you?

We worked harder I guess to try to all the good. We worked for the Red Cross and we did everything we could to raise money for the country to have.

Oh I see. So you had a home front volunteer effort?

Yes. We knit and sent to the boys and we did everything we could.

Hum Do you remember what you were doing when you heard that the war had begun?

I don't know that I can maybe the news coming and it came. My memory isn't as quite as good as it used to be. Like you telling me ... and I never thought that you were just asking some questions. It's a long time ago I really remember more about first war my boy was just a few months old and you know it was an awful feeling to have that coming.

Right. How did the war how did you learn of the war's outbreak?

Well, it came all over the was there television then? NO. Well, it was the newspapers then. One person told another it went fast anyway.

Did family members or relatives volunteer for the war?

Yes there were some. My son was scared to death and he didn't know he was turned back, but there was a lot of young men we did know and we wrote to them or sent them stockings or we done something. Some we sent maple sugar, I don't think it ever got there.

What were living conditions like at the time?

Well, they were very much different from what they are now believe

me. Everything was different. The pay was different you know. What you get salary now if you were working in the summer you wouldn't get one quarter of that.

Right, but prices were different also?

Yes, what you had to buy weren't half of what they are now. And it kept getting worse.

O.K. So you didn't have any trouble providing for children?

Not a bit.

Did you have well you had a farm so...

But we didn't waste any money. Everybody made their money go just as far as they could. They didn't spend it running around. They tried to help the war effort to get it over.

Right. How about rationing? What kind of things were rationed at the time?

Well, sugar was rationed. My mother was an old lady living with us and she like sugar and my husband said well if you can't get sugar there is a little sugar place down there and he took down 15 gallons one gallons cans of syrup and he said if we couldn't get sugar we'd have syrup. And most everybody did that, but we had our own animals for meat if we wanted it and hens and vegetables and food so we never suffered. But we didn't waste things. If there was anything we couldn't use it went somewhere for somebody.

Did rationing pose any problems for you?

Did what?

Rationing. Did it pose any problems for you?

Well, nothing particular. We could always do without with what we couldn't get.

O.K. Hum was there a black market that you can remember?

Well, there might have been. I've heard about it, but it didn't affect us one way or the other. On a farm that way we had most everything we wanted and if we couldn't we done without it or if we needed it we got it some way. We never suffered.

Did the change male female ratio affect social life?

At that time, I couldn't tell you. But the you see a lot of the girls enlisted in the army and I think quite a lot of them married boys they got acquainted with there. That's all I know about it.

O.K. Did you or your friends have a sense of national unity or pulling together for a common cause?

Well, everybody pulled together to do the best they could not one pulling the other way like they are now.

O.K. Do you remember either of the conscription crises in 1942 or in 1944?

Well, I remember them in a way, but they really didn't affect my family because my son was turned down and my husband was too old, but we had a lot of neighbors that children there was two neighbors that had had children boys and they all went. No one was all came home luckily.

Do you recall the end of the war?

Yes oh yes. Everybody was thankful it was over.

A lot of celebrations?

Yes, there were bells ringing and anyway it was a sense of relieve it to know there was peace again.

How did the end of the war affect you?

I don't know it affected us one way or the other. We were just thankful to there was peace. And the first war my own brother was in it and he was wounded at the ... and he had no arms at all. I mean no he wasn't carrying a gun. He was in the signal corp. He and another boy from our own town the other two was on horse back. They were going ahead connecting up to the signaling corp ahead of the army and it was Easter Sunday and a sniper from a tree shot him right through his collar bone. He always had to have part of suit padded part of his shoulder was shot away he was in the hospital about a year in France and places. But that was the first war.

Hum let me see. Was there bounty hunting?

Pardon.

Bounty hunting?

I didn't get that.

Bounty hunting. You know O.K. Say people that were running from the conscription.

Oh yes, I think they did. I heard about it. They would stay in sugar places. We wasn't suppose to know it and we didn't do anything about it you know, but there wasn't too much of it around here.

What did you do for leisure time during W.W. II?

Now I didn't get that.

What did you do during your leisure during W.W. II?

Most everybody knit for the soldiers stockings. I don't know if they ever got them or if they fit, but that's what everybody tried to do. I made pajamas and things like that. I didn't have time to knit. Sometimes we'd print up 90 pounds of butter in the week and you take all those things you didn't have much knitting time. My mother knit and I sewed and those things went over and those men were suppose to get them. We hoped they did. They went somewhere anyhow.

Were there any military installations around here?

No not around here. Well, they guarded the buildings. They guarded the post office. Well, people walked around ... and they guarded well they'd be they were soldiers, but they were guarding at home you know. The most of the ones I knew that was doing that were ..., but I knew there was a soldier walking back and forth by the post office. He didn't bother us at all.

How did you feel about zombies?

About what?

The zombies. The people that stayed here during the war.

Yes well we felt kind of bad that our own boys were sent and they were left out, but nobody did anything about it. Nobody fought.

O.K. So hum your saying like hum there was people around here sort of like for a security against espionage or sabotage is that right?

Well, it was very quiet we never heard anything about it. It might have been someone there and I expect there was, but those things were kept quiet. Is there a wind blowing on you from that window?? Just push it shut. I didn't think... I don't want you to get a cold.

It's perfect, just perfect. How about the French English relations how were they?

They were just as good as could be then. It's since then that's that come up. We had good French neighbors and my son had. We couldn't have better. It isn't well I suppose there are some people. It just seems too bad not to have good French neighbors. We always had good French neighbors and grew up with them.

Was there much unemployment around here?

I don't think there was in the war time for the most of them were gone everybody took the place. Men and women anyone who could work to get things going. But it wasn't that bad. We didn't think about it. We just now a days when you have a little holiday you go to New Zealand or Florida or something and then we stayed at home and worked in the country and ourselves.

Hum how did you feel on Armistice Day?

Well, we all felt good. The bells rang and everybody telephoned to tell somebody else.

How did you feel about women's suffrage in 1944?

Well, it didn't bother me at all. I had a good home and I was comfortable and it didn't bother me. It was another generation that went in for that.

Hum I guess that's about it.

Well, did you get every information that was...

OH yes!