

Audio-taped Interviews

Clement Boijoili, John W. Mansfield, and Armand Alarie

November 21, 1986 The Winooski Senior Citizen Center

Two hours on two Supertape Gold 60 tapes, four sides, each thirty minutes. Recorded on a Sony stereo cassette-corder tcs-350.

Family History

Born in Winooski, mother born in Winooski, Grandmother from Canada. Came to Winooski by train. Parents met at the Winooski train station. They married in St. Francis Xavier Church. Father worked for the railroad. Parents from a farm family. Father originally planned to go back to Canada and farming. Father worked in the mills for 33 years. Their house had a barn detached from their house. Clement had eight brothers and sisters. Mother's father was an alcoholic.

Home Remedies

Story of baby brother given Brandy and water by the doctor. Baby later died. Doctors arrived on horseback to attend women giving birth at home.

Majority of people who grew up in Winooski stayed until World War II, and then with more schooling, cars available, people began to leave. Winooski not the tight knit community it once was. Community like a puzzle, with people fitting in like pieces. of

Side 2

Schooling at St. Louis Convent. Working at the mill was considered a custom in Winooski. French language used at home and at school.

John Mansfield

Came to Winooski in 1923. Father was an operator for Green Mountain Power for 40 years. Went to the public high school. Played baseball. Not friends with Clement when young but knew him. IN the old days everyone knew everyone else. Father was English, / mother was French-Canadian. They came to Winooski and found that their neighbors were all friendly and helpful. The neighbors were Syrians, Armenians, Russians, and Canadians. In the old days everyone in the community got along as a community.

Problems in the Community

The third Calvary was at the Fort Ethan Allen. On weekends the soldiers came to town. They walked to town and were commonly drunk. There was a lot of bootlegging in those days. Hobos rode the rails and came into Winooski. They would put a sign with chalk on steps of homes where they got handouts. At the Fort Ethan Allen they were allowed to built tar paper shacks and people would bring them food and clothing.

Celebrations

Large celebrations brought people from Canada.

Side 3

Armond Alarie

Born in 1918 in Winooski. His grandfather built his house in 1910. Father was the supertendent of E.A. Richards

company which later became Vermont Furniture Company. Winooski was a close community when he was young. People used to gather in the homes and play cards or music and drink home brewed wine. He was a member of the 1934 Winooski Dance Band.

#### Festivals

At Christmas people made blood sausage. Groups of people would go from farm to farm and help slaughter the animals to cut up the meat and blood for the sausage. Pork pies were also made. Gatherings of people of all ages at midnight mass. Groups would go to each others houses, especially farm houses with large kitchens and dance and have parties. These large gatherings of all sorts were great but not seen any more. We were all interdependent on each other.

#### American Woolen Mill Company Store

During the depression the mill paid in commodities rather than cash because cash not always available. This building just recently burned down.

#### Canning

There used to be a canning factory in Winooski. People would bring their meat or vegetables in wagons and wait in line to have their goods canned. People in Winooski always had enough to eat, but very little money.

#### Clothes

Made at home. Some stores allowed you to pay by the week for goods.

#### Trolley Cars

They went from Main Street to East Spring and there was one to Burlington and one to Essex Junction. After the 1927 flood buses came in. The last trolley to run was draped with a large cloth and symbolically burned in a public ceremony. The

trolleys that were left were turned into dinners.

#### Autos

Cars were used to travel to Montreal and as transportation for goods to sell,

#### Picnics

In the 1920's and 1930's picnics were popular. There were big family picnics.

#### Side 4

In the winter people wore heavy one piece wool underwear. It was a custom to store them in moth balls during the summer in a trunk. People also wore large sheepskin hats and heavy long wool coats and walked every where in the winter.

#### Entertainment

People played the card game "King Thirty". There was lots of cheating at cards for fun. Clement does not play this game today and does not remember how to play it. Other games were knife in the ground and marbles. Children made up their own games.

#### Table Rapping as a French-Canadian farm custom.

A mystic tradition. Everyone puts their hands on the table. One person asks questions of the table. The table answers the questions by moving up and down. The louder you talk the better the results. If someone present who does not want the table to "talk" then it will not "talk". Large gatherings of farmers would participate in this tradition in the past. Clement and his friends, when he was 16 or 18, made a table "talk". His father was upset because he asked it "in how many days would a particular baby be born" and the table answered. Clement said

the answer came true. His father did not want him to ask the table such personal questions. In the old days acceptable questions were "how many days until it snows" or questions about crops. Making the table "talk" was scary for Clement and his friends because it was moving rapidly all by itself !

#### Seventh Son Tradition

The seventh son of a family has the power of healing. They could stop nose bleeds. A story about a personal experience with a seventh son of a seventh son.