

[Page 6 - A Visit with Mary and Clarence Lashley](#)ISSUE : [Issue 18](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1977/12/1

but he could sing and dance and was very good. Now he has to be quiet. That just about kills him. Sometimes I watch him, you know, I remember him so lively • and it hurts. He was a hi-jacker. Now he's got to stay quiet. Clarence: I had a heart attack. Mary: Like I say, we had our days. We worked for years in Montreal. We couldn't get anything to do here. What are you going to do? We had a home. All right. You can't eat the shingles off the wall. I said, it looks like it's easier for a woman to get a job in Montreal than a man. So I got housework with a Jewish family, from the train. I had never left Cape Breton. I got a newspaper in the station and I read the want ads, and this Jewish woman wanted to go to the country for the summer. They got these wood stoves and these coal stoves and they didn't know how to handle them • so they wanted a Cape Bretoner or a Nova Scotian girl. Well, that was just for me, because I was scared to get in a rooming house alone. Work in a family home,* I'll have my room and board right there. I phoned her. Said, "Come right up, I'll pay the taxi." So from the station I went right to the job. And I found a cooking job for him. Then we came back. And we came back to Cape Breton from Montreal. Clarence: I worked in Montreal in a hospital till my time was up • I was 64 • they lay you off. Then I came home. We were living in a rooming house. This is Montreal. I used to do odd jobs now and again, if I could get it. But while we were working, me and the wife, we'd take it easy • used to smoke but didn't drink. And we managed to save \$2000. It took us about 7 years to raise this money. Then I said, "Mary, would you like to go to Barbados?" And she said, "Yes." Okay, we'll take a trip if nothing else. So we took a plane and we went. We stayed a month. My mother was gone. My father had died long before her. Barbados was all built up now, a million per cent different. (Did you think you would have liked to have spent your whole life there?) Oh yes, if it was possible. I had to get out. The wages was so small. You could only get 4 dollars a month and sometimes you didn't get it. Here was better because wages was better. All they was getting was 40 cents a ton for coal • but that was better than Barbados. Our thanks to Clarine Marshall Herbert, Mary: You know, Clarence and I tried to have a child and lost that • only lived 10 days. Then through sickness the doctor told me I wasn't to have any more. I was only in my twenties. Then my first child, Percy, died ~8 years old. That's the year the diphtheria was so bad ~1935. That's why I pick up everybody else's children, people who had too many. You know, you'd really like to forget. But I can't. Like I hear some people today say, you should not live in the past. But you're a young man now, tell us, try to tell us, what is in the future for us? If we don't think about the past and enjoy the fun we had in the past • what is there in the future for us? So I think it's silly to tell the people not to live in the past. That's all we've got to remember, the nice things in the life we've had. New Waterford, who first told us about 14 Yard and the early Black people to live there. This interview was carried out as part of an Exploration Program into "Lives on Cape Breton." a Canada Council project. J. W. Stephens c/o St. John's Centre BUILDERS SUPPLIES HARDWARE AND PAINTS WOODWORKERS AND MILL WORK Phone the Lumber Number 564-5554 Sydf#y.



low Scotia Local Distributors of Angelstone and Mason Windows A Full Line of Flooring and Insulation. OCEAN GLASS LTD. WINDSHIELDS INSTALLED ON THE SPOT Mobile Service 765 Grand Lake Road Sydney Call Collect 539-6140