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there's another one over here." You could keep going all the time. And then the girls that worked at housework there, the cooks and waitresses and one thing and another, they'd usually have a big basement --a big room, big as this house, and a tile floor. We'd have a party, invite fellows and girls and we'd dance and one thing and another. Whether the owners--who were away in Europe and so on--whether they knew or not, nobody gave a damn. But there were great get-together parties. It wouldn't even have to be a dance or music, just congregate Sunday afternoon in the house. Everybody was happy then, smiling and dancing and having a good time. I happened to have a car the second year I was here--working as a carpenter I was making pretty good money--and we used to go to parties as far away as Providence (Rhode Island). Gary Burrill: Did you start doing carpenter work as soon as you came to Boston? Billy: Well, see, my father was a mechanic. (Gary Burrill's note: He is using the word "mechanic" in its older, broader sense, as "craftsman,") We had a shop, and he was the carpenter. My brother and I, when we were 11 and 12 years old we worked with my father. We had a pretty good knowledge of the trade, my brothers and myself, and we applied it here. I got 75¢ an hour in 1925 when I started. My brother was working into Providence for a company, and he took me up there for three months. Then I came back here, and I went to work for a big company, in town. I was only 19 and I hired on as an apprentice. Usually, a big contractor would take you on, and you'd serve four years. You'd start off with so much and they'd keep giving you a little more every year, or every six months. In my case, I had no records where I had experience and one thing and another. They had to take my word for it. But after I worked a month, between the foreman and the superintendent, they gave me two and a half years' experience. And in a year and a half's time I was given the full money--that was \$1.10 an hour. I worked with them until the big crash came in 1929. It hit the fellows from the Maritimes pretty hard here during the Depression. I did anything. You'd get a little job here and there, enough to pay your board. And then people wanted their houses papered. I took up paper-hanging on the side, and painting, inside and out. That was the Nova Scotian way, you know, you'd grab anything to make a dollar. But even when the boom was on here, you weren't working the whole year round. You would get your lay-offs, and in the winter time the building trades would slow down. You would loaf. If you were lucky and hooked up with somebody, you'd probably get part of a winter in, but a lot of them would probably loaf all winter. When I was on outside construction, I only worked half a dozen winters all through. And there were a lot of Januarys and Februarys that there'd be no work, and you'd have to provide for that--there was no welfare or unemployment insurance. You'd have to save a little money to take you over the rough spots. I was single then. At that time, there was no help for the single people. So Roosevelt, when he went into office, he arranged to loan money to the railroads to bring them up to date, and it was people in my category who were eligible for this kind of work. So I got on the railroad, in 1934. And I worked with the New Haven-New York "For all your insurance



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