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the priest, Father Nicholson, in Waterford and he gave me a job around his house • he helped me out quite a bit • and then he got me a job in the mines. Number 15 colliery. I worked there a good while but I didn't like the mines, didn't agree with me. So I wouldn't work steady. I was scared of the mines, underground. I must have worked in all 10 or 15 years, different collieries. One closed and I'd go to another. Then they fired me because I wasn't a steady worker. So I came back to the priest and he gave me a job stumping the graveyard in New Waterford. Up on Chapel Hill. Cut down the trees, take up the stumps, stones, clean it up for a graveyard. He kept me when I was out of a job, the handiman around the glebe house. So anyway, I met Mary. She was living in Ik Yard. Mary: He knew my child before he knew me. My aunt used to sell a little bit of wine and play cards • and that's how he came to go there. He fell in love with my baby before he even saw me. Clarence: That's the truth. Mary had had a kid. So I love kids, you know. I went boarding with her aunt. I told her aunt, "Is it a boy or a girl?" If it was a girl I wouldn't take it, because when you raise a girl child, then you get to like them so much you hate to see them go - I don't care who they're married to. So I said, "I'll give you some money to go and get this kid." I didn't know Mary. "I'll pay you for it, for minding him." I had goats then. I said, "Feed him on goat's milk and barley water • make him good and strong. Bring him up." So she kept Percy. His name was Joseph Francis. I used to call him Percy. So I used to go and visit this kid often. Interviewer: That's a beautiful story. Mary: Yeah? If you've got to live it through, it's not so beautiful. It's beautiful to hear about it but it's not so beautiful to live it. Living it is not beautiful. See, when I first came in the Yard, there was 7 of them married to black men • 7 white women. They were all from France. I was the only Canadian that married a black man. So that made a little difference because France never was against the black man. They were always very friendly among the black and white in France • but the Canadians weren't the same thing. So all my people was against it. But -you see I had a white child and the father left me on the road • because of his mother • his father was dead and the mother had these boys, so they were all supposed to get part of the farm. But they had to marry like the mother wanted, and she didn't want to part with him • she'd have to hire somebody to put in his place • and she knew I'd never live with her. And that's where the cut-off came. So I had this child. My people didn't want me because I had this child. In 1928 it wasn't popular for a girl to have a baby. Aw, well, I'm talking straight. They would not give you a job; they would not talk to you. My child was born on Easter Sunday. My uncle took me two weeks after to make my Easter duties • and the women in the church took their long skirts like this and turned away. Clarence: They scorned her. Mary: And they thought I'd catch hell from the priest because he was a tough customer, but he already knew and didn't say anything but pray to the blessed Virgin it don't happen again. Well, I had to leave down there. People wouldn't speak to me, wouldn't give me any work, and my aunt already had 9 children. She couldn't keep me. Then I came to Waterford, to my aunt there. She took the child and I went working in Glace Bay. I worked for



Jewish people there. Three story house. My child only three weeks old. I had no place to stay anyhow. I had to sleep on a verandah. I worked there till I almost dropped dead. My aunt wanted me home to mind the child. So I left my job and came there and she went out and she'd take in all the coloured fellows' washing and I'd do the washing, and the ironing, and she wouldn't give me a cent of the money. Clar? ence: I was supporting the baby. Mary: Like I say, if you have to live it, it's not beautiful. But if you just hear it, well, it's okay. One day my aunt had me working so hard I passed out on the floor. Dr. Poirier said, "This child has nobody and she's working to death and she just had a child." He said, "She's got one cup of blood in her body." And I'm sick in bed. And that's when Clarence asked my father if he could marry me. And my father said yes, till his people, my people, got after him. He came back and tried to change it to no. So we had a heck of a time. But the priest, Cape Breton* s MagaLzine/3