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Published by Ronald Caplan on 1977/12/1

two of us woke. So I went out to the door and I opened the door and there was nobody there. You know, there was a little snow on' the ground and I couldn't see tracks or any? thing. So I came back to bed. And three weeks from that that same call came back a- gain. Called me right out of bed. And I said, "Yes, just a minute." I got up and I put my slippers on and a local man • he was there and said, "I want you to come down and make Frankie's coffin." At the same hour, right at 5 o'clock in the morning. The same time he called me the first time • right on the dot. That was a funny thing. (I often heard that people who did your work had different things happen to them. Their tools would light up.) Yes, yes. I've seen my tools moving. And I wasn't touching them. I've seen the plane on the bench • I've seen her fall over and I never touched her. And shortly after that you'd get word to make a coffin. Like a token. (You wouldn't have a dream?) No, no. There'd be something happen to your tools. Or when you're working or something • you'd get clued. There's an old man lived over here, he's dead years ago, used to make coffins • and he told me he never made one in his life but he always knew before hand. He'd get some kind of a clue or a token. Never never in his life but he always knew ahead. (You weren't afraid?) No, no, no. (It didn't trouble you?) Aw no, it never cost me a thought at all. It used to bother my wife. She used to be nervous about it, of? ten wanting me for to give it up. But you couldn't refuse a person. (Did you like do? ing it?) Well, yes. Just the same as my ordinary work. I liked to do it. I figured that I was doing a good deed. Make a coffin for a man • no pay or no charge or anything. (Then suddenly you weren't doing>it any more.) No. People now all buy their coffins. (But why? Yours were certainly cheaper.) Yes, and a hell of a lot better. The ones that I'd make, they'd last longer. Now you go over to the old graveyard and go around where they had old pine coffins • you don't see no graves fell in. Three or four years after you bury a person with these coffins you buy, first thing you see a big hollow. She just falls apart. They're only just glued, just stuck together • when they go in the ground they all pop apart. Yeah. More style than anything now. They pay 800 or 900 dollars for a coffin • it's a shame. (Where would the body be while you worked on the coffin?) Be laying on a bed in the house. (Not on boards?) No, no. And I'd help them put the body in the 'coffin. (Was there ever concern about touching someone like that?) No. (And what was done with the clothing?) If a person died with no bad disease or anything • their relatives would look after their belongings. They'd be dis? tributed. Maurice: The corpse would always be dressed in their best to bury them. Rob? inson: If they died with a bad disease, well everything would be burned. One family up here had a bad disease • well, everything ? M* • ?" iMBi'-': belonged to them was burned, even the old house. Maurice: They called it at that time, I don't know if it was the right name for it or not • the Galloping Consumption. It would clean out a whole family. Robinson: The whole family died with it. (Who would bury them then?) jya Maurice: Oh, the relatives. One man here, a giant of a man, lived right across here. When one of this family died, he went and he washed him and laid him out, set him up • a lot of people



were scared. And no one ever expected that he was going to catch that germ. Three years after, he was dead. Robinson: Yes. And a big able man, yes. Maurice: So the germ was pretty bad. Robinson: Nothing in them days. No treatment here. Maurice: They burned every? thing. And a family there at the shore. Robinson: Yeah, they didn't live no time. Just wiped them out. Maurice: And today you hardly hear tell of it. Robinson: There was one man here, three of his children died with some kind of fever. House was quarantined. Nobody allowed in there at all, or near the house. Well he • he nursed them and watched them till they died. Made their coffins himself, and bur? ied them himself. His own children. Maurice: That was called the scarlet fever. Robinson: Three children. Watched them die. Buried them himself. Robinson: They're mostly Catholic here. (Would they sing in the grave yard?) No, just prayers. The priest would recite the prayers. Other people would be there • they'd answer the prayers. The corpse was always taken in the church. They'd have mass in the church. And then the priest af? ter mass would do what he does around the coffin, some prayers said • then take it to the graveyard. Then there was a few more prayers said. Everybody would be there • friends and relatives. That was it. Go home.