

**MILL WORKERS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT:  
LEWISTON-AUBURN, MAINE**

**Madeleine Leblanc**  
(Interviewer: Andrea L'Hommedieu)

**MWOH #016**  
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**Andrea L'Hommedieu:** This is an interview for the Mill Workers Oral History project. The date is January 27th, 2006, and we're at the home of Madeleine Leblanc, and this is Andrea L'Hommedieu. Could you start just by giving me your date of birth and where you were born?

**Madeleine Leblanc:** I was born here in Lewiston, Maine, in *(name)* in fact, and my date of birth is June 28th, 1924, I'll be 82 years old come this June.

**AL:** And so you grew up in the Lewiston area.

**ML:** Yes, I did.

**AL:** What was Lewiston like at that time?

**ML:** From what I can remember, well, let's say I started going out when I was fifteen, sixteen, it was altogether different. I mean, Lisbon Street was, if you had seen the play, "Lewiston, A New Home For Me," they describe Lewiston, Lisbon Street to a, perfect. You know, there was Ward's Brothers, and Lamey Wellehan, and Lamey Wellehan at one time had me walk around with a pair of new high heel shoes, because they were an odd size. And it was great, it was great. And I did most of my shopping at Ward's at the time. Now it's WalMart and Kmart.

Yes, Lisbon Street was quite, quite different, quite different. People were friendly, you know, you'd walk on Lisbon Street and it seems that everyone knew everybody else, you know, they all knew one another.

**AL:** And there was a lot more walking and shopping right around?

**ML:** Oh yes, oh yes, there was a lot, a lot of shopping. Oh, yes. On, like you might say like on paydays, you know, it was, the streets were, the sidewalks were crowded. It was, they had all those dime stores, Woolworth, Kresge and Grant's, Grant's Store. I remember all those stores, I used to go to Grant's, we used to come in Grant's by Park Street and you could go out on Lisbon Street. Those were, oh, they were great stores. And then Grant moved I think where the Sear's is today.

**AL:** Now, did Grant's have a lunch counter?

**ML:** Kresge had, Kresge had a lunch counter. No, Grant's, I don't, no, Grant's didn't have a lunch counter.

**AL:** What sorts of things did your parents do when you were growing up for social activities, do you remember?

**ML:** Oh, yes, we'd go to my grandparents' house, gather around the piano and the whole family would sing, French songs of course. And my uncles were Rancourts, I mean the Rancourt brothers, and they sang quite a bit of English. They were in the group that you don't hear much about nowadays, *l'Orpheon*

they were. And I was, I think I was twelve years old and they took me along for one of their practices, and I was singing along with them. I really enjoyed singing, that's one of my favorite things. Reading, as you can see, and singing.

**AL:** And so, did you have a fairly large family living in the area?

**ML:** On my mother's side, yes, there were thirteen in my mother's family. But my father's side of the family was more scattered, you know, we didn't visit as much. I remember staying, while my mother had one of my brothers, in those days they didn't keep us around when the time came for delivery, you know, and I went to spend, my aunt, Blanche was here name, Maillot, she lived on Bates Street, and I stayed there for about three weeks, three or four weeks, and that was on my father's side. That was about it, you know. But on my mother's side it was a great aunt, and Mrs. Carpenter that used to live on Bartlett Street, right at -

And I used to go to the St. Dom's, the hockey games at St. Doms and (*name*) Beauvoir and all these people. And they were quite good, the hockey then, that was at St. Dom's, that is now gone I guess.

**AL:** And you mentioned your grandparents. Were they from Lewiston, or had they come from Canada?

**ML:** They came from Canada, but located here in Lewiston where the city dump is today, that used to be the Rancourt's farm. And then they sold to the city because the boys were not interested, my uncles were not interested in farming. But they had a big farm, they had a big farm. They used to sell their milk to Hood's. I remember the canisters of milk by the side of the road, and the truck would pick it up.

And I had a pet rooster, it followed me all over. When I see that commercial with all the chickens following the people, it reminds me of my pet rooster, he used to follow me, but in a friendly way.

**AL:** And did either of your parents work in the mill?

**ML:** My father. My father's the one who got me to work at the Androscoggin Mill, and I had over there my father, my Uncle Joe, my Uncle Ernest Morin. Then on my husband's side, that's where I met my husband, at the Androscoggin. His name was Ouellette, Emilien Ouelette. And his brother was second hand, they called it, or you'd say foreman today, on the third shift. And his uncle was foreman on the first shift. And Tony Martel was the superior, and Dean Quinton was the big over all manager you might call it. They called him the super.

**AL:** Did your father ever talk about working in the mill?

**ML:** Oh yes, yes, we, well I was living at home of course, and we used to go to, leave for work together and come back together. And one time at break time, you know, I'd go to my father, kiss him on the cheek, and we'd sit there and talk. And a woman came up to him one time, she said, aren't you ashamed having an affair with a young girl like that? My father laughed, you know, because she had no idea I was his daughter. They thought it was an old man flirting with a young girl, you know, it was cute.

And then my husband was a weaver at the time, well, we weren't married at the time, and I was what you call a battery hand. I used to fill up the shuttles with the bobbins and put them in the machine. And we got to talking, and one time he asked me, I had a friend there, Jeannette Routhier, she's from New Hampshire, she's now married and living, to a police officer, living in Connecticut, and we used to go out together quite a bit. And so my husband says, what do you and your girlfriend do on Saturday nights? We'd go to the, oh, it was the Acme Club on Lisbon Street, there was a dance there, there was an orchestra and we'd go out there and dance, you know, and come back home. It was a nice evening, you

know. Today if you go out two girls together, they think you're going out to pick up someone. It's changed, it's changed too much. It's sad because so many lives and, to me, good times are spoiled because of people's narrow minded thinking.

**AL:** So how old were you when you started at the Androscoggin Mill?

**ML:** Eighteen years old. And I, I started going out with my husband when I was maybe twenty, twenty years old. And my friend would date his brother, his brother was working there, too, and I'd go out with my husband. And I married him when I was twenty four, we got married when I was twenty four, we got married when I was twenty four. And I had my beautiful, Ann, when I was twenty five. We were married for eight years, and then he died, he was only thirty five and he had a heart attack, died. My little girl was six, and my son was three, Andre.

I was telling Mr. Silver yesterday, I said, I didn't forget your name, because I have a son named Marc. And I said, I won't forget the lady either, because I have a son named Andre. Your's is Andrea.

**AL:** So, did you stay in that position for about twelve years? Or you stayed at the Androscoggin Mill for twelve years, but did your position change?

**ML:** Oh yes, oh yes, I became a weaver, I was a weaver for quite a while, and then I became a room girl. In those days they'd post the jobs on the, you know, on a sheet of paper and post the jobs at both ends of the mill, and you wrote your name, you know, and then it went to the office. And they went by seniority, because the union was in, so they went by seniority.

But I remember during the war, there was two young girls working and, Pat (*name*) and, her name Ida, Ida Fox now, is her name. Their boyfriends were in the Army, and when they'd come in on, they were my battery hands, I was a weaver at the time, and they were my battery hands, see? And they'd tell me, oh, Eddie, or, is coming home and I have only three days to see him, and all this and that. I said, well I'll be real sick at 7:30, you go home, and I'd stop my looms and tell the boss, I have to go home, I'm sick, so the girls could go.

Those girls married the boys that they were going out with at the time. Pat was going out, Pat (*name*) was going out with Roger Dell and she married him, so it was like family doing for each other, you know?

**AL:** And did you mention that the union came into the mills right after you started working there, or was the union already involved when you began work?

**ML:** When I went in the mill?

**AL:** Was the union already established?

**ML:** No, it came in about, I'd say two weeks or two, three weeks after I was in. Oh yes, we had to sign up whether we agreed to have the union come in. My father was a, I forgot what they called it now. Anyways, he was working for the union, and he, oh, I forget what they called it. It's stupid. If there was an argument or something, you know, he'd say, well, she's got seniority over this one, she should get priority on a job or whatever.

**AL:** I think they called them agents.

**ML:** It wasn't quite the word, but it was more or less an agent.

**AL:** Or a representative, maybe.

**ML:** Yes, yeah, so he was one of that. I remember Mr. Jayburn coming to my house at 1 Knox Street, him and Mr. Cote, Mr. Dube, excuse me, not Mr. Cote, Mr. Dube, and two other men, I forgot their names, but they were all dressed in three-piece suits and, you know, quite impressive.

**AL:** And they were union people?

**ML:** They were union people, oh yes, Mr. Jayburn was the head of the CIO union.

**AL:** So did the mill workers, the majority of them think the union was a good thing?

**ML:** Oh yes, yes, they did, they. Well, their wages went up, you know, they had to pay us like the minimum wage, and that was that. And different jobs were different wages. So it was at the time quite an improvement in the mill.

**AL:** And you said you were a weaver for a while. Did you like that job, or were there many other women doing that, or was it -?

**ML:** Oh yes, oh yes, quite a few, quite a few, yes.

**AL:** Because I've heard of men weavers and I didn't know (*unintelligible word*) -

**ML:** No, the men, most, well yes, there were men weavers, my father was a weaver and so was my Uncle Ernest and Uncle Joe, they were weavers, too. We were weaving on rayon, and during the war we made parachutes, cloth for parachutes, and we got the Navy, or the Army E for excellent, for doing an excellent job. But then the mill started to work three shifts, you know, there were first, second and third shift. So I worked on all the three shifts.

When I went to be a room girl, that was another promotion, I worked on the third shift which was from twelve to seven, eleven to seven, and I worked that almost, well I worked at the Androscoggin for almost thirty years. Because, see, I went in, I was eighteen, and my husband died, I was thirty two and we were still at the Androscoggin.

**AL:** And did you move to the Hill mill for a while?

**ML:** Yes, I went, then when the Androscoggin start to close down, I was transferred, I was one of the lucky ones, I was transferred to the Bates mill, they asked me to go work on the Bates mill. What a difference, boy, did I sneeze over there.

**AL:** In the Bates mill? The air?

**ML:** Yes, it was cotton, so there was a lot of dust. And over there I worked on the Queen Elizabeth and the Martha Washington, and in no time at all I was a room girl over there, too. So that's what I had been hired for, as a room girl, but I had to go through, learn the basics of how, the machines were quite different. They run on the same principle, but where rayon was, they had like a chain going around for patterns, you know. Well, over there they called them cards, they started from the ceilings, just like your computer cards, there were all little holes in them and they, it was quite different, quite a difference between the rayon and the cotton. So I had to learn the basics, then I became a room girl and worked on the Martha Washingtons and the Queen Elizabeth. And there my second husband, Romeo Rivard, was working there. And when I was weaving he'd come over and give me a hand, explain to me. So it was quite helpful.

My husband had left me with an apartment on 51 Pierce, and the front door, I wanted a mail slot in the front door, so I asked Mr. Rivard if he could do that. So he came over one night and we had coffee and we started going out and ended up getting married. And I had two sons with him. I lost a little girl,

too, Delia. But I had Marc and Christien.

**AL:** So you have four grown children.

**ML:** Oh yes, yes, I'm a great grandmother four times.

**AL:** And how many grandchildren do you have?

**ML:** Seven, seven grandchildren.

**AL:** Now, when you were at the Androscoggin mill and you were using the rayon, did you also make coffin linings?

**ML:** Coffin linings, and we made, coffin linings and we made what they called the lino, it was a curtain stuff like this, to make, but it was more like a lace, you know, there was a solid stripe and a lacy stripe. But my hands were small, as you see, and that was great for me because the heddles were so close to one another you had to (*unintelligible phrase*), so my small hands came in handy.

And there was a Mrs. Dube, she was a, not fat but a rather husky person, and she had big hands, she had so much trouble with going through the heddle. And once in a while she'd say, can you come and give me a hand, and it was fun.

It was work, but you know, it seemed it wasn't as, oh, how can I explain it? It wasn't bearing down on you like, you know, like today if you're not precise and precise on the job, you've got to look on your shoulder most of the time to see the, it wasn't like that, you know? The foreman, or the super of the company, would walk around and talk to you like he was your brother rather than, you know, oh, you're not doing this right, you're not doing this right. You know, he'd say, if you'd do it this way it would be much easier for you and less complicated for us. And, you know, they'd be maybe better well mannered, or more courteous than today.

Oh, some of them are still, I'm not knocking everyone now, don't get me wrong. But today some of them are almost brutal, you know, they have no, I don't know if they got to where they are the hard way, or what made them like that. But -

**AL:** Were there also organized activities for the mill workers?

**ML:** We had a picnic once a year for all the mill workers provided, and there was a bowling team, we had a bowling team. And the men had different activities, and I guess some of the women were not that interested in those, you know.

**AL:** Did you bowl?

**ML:** Yes, I did, I did. The first time it was a loom fixer that asked me if I wouldn't go bowling a Saturday afternoon. It was on Middle Street. Oh my goodness, they're gone now, it was pin, candle pin, and they were amazed, the first time I bowled I was making strikes one after the other, and I didn't know what I was doing. It was so funny. I'd have a spare and I'd say, well what do I do now? It was fun, I gave them a good laugh anyway. But I did, it wasn't for me, you know, I didn't stay with the bowling team. I went four or five times and that was it. Singing was my ambition.

**AL:** Were you able to find things in the community to join for singing over the years?

**ML:** The church choir, the church choir.

**AL:** And which church did you go to?

**ML:** St. Peter's, the basilica today. I was in the basilica choir until about a month ago. I got involved in the play, "Lewiston, A New Home For Me," then I'm with the group, singing group, Just Us, so we have, you know, it's a practice once a week. And I don't like to go out too much during the winter nights, especially when it's stormy, so I haven't been going to practice. But I've got to go back.

**AL:** When it gets warmer.

**ML:** Well, the choir director asked me to, if I wouldn't sing the French Mass at 4:30 on Saturday afternoon, at 4:00, excuse me, on Saturday afternoon. And even though I've sung in public, like I had joined the Snowshoers, and at every installation, well most clubs with us, that I sing the National Anthem and the Canadian Anthem, and I really enjoy that. And I've sung in front of audience before, it doesn't bother me at all, you know. But my sister says, well, why can't you do it? I said, I don't feel worthy. There's something holding me back.

I know I know the Mass my heart, you know, and I know all the parts by heart, the Alleluia, the Gloria, you name it. But I don't know, something's holding me back. It isn't that I'm grateful, I'm very grateful to the Lord that I have a voice, but you know, it's, like the next, our next program coming up for the elderly is I'm going to be singing *Coeur de Mama*, it's a French song, you might have heard of it? You don't know. You speak French?

**AL:** Ah, just a little.

**ML:** Oh, just a little. And you have a French name.

**AL:** Yeah, by marriage, though.

**ML:** Oh, I see, I see.

**AL:** Yes, but I did study French. I just don't get to use it with family and friends, because no one else speaks it, so I lose it over time.

**ML:** My son Marc, who is in Arizona, speaks perfect English, no accent. Not like me. And I'll speak to him in French, and he'll answer in English. He understands every word I say in French. And in fact last week he called me up and he said, I spoke to him in French and I start to repeat in English, he said, you don't have to repeat, Mom, I understood every word you said.

**AL:** And is he in his forties?

**ML:** He's forty two, forty, he'll be forty four in April. Please. My daughter is fifty five. When we're done with the interview I'll show them all, the pictures in my rogue's gallery over there.

**AL:** And so when your kids were growing up you were still speaking French in the home?

**ML:** Yes, yes.

**AL:** And when you were a child growing up, was it just French in the home and you learned English at school?

**ML:** Oh, definitely, English at school, good old St. Peter's School, that's where I start to speak English. I went to Holy Cross School, we were living on River Road, well I was just a little girl then, and my father used to walk from, you know where Geiger Brother is on River Road? Well, we lived in the, they have a (*unintelligible phrase*) now, but we used to live on the house right there on the corner of River Road and

Cottage Road, and he used to walk down to the Androscoggin to go to work. And my mother used to walk from there to the shoe shop, you know, often, when she didn't get a ride.

**AL:** So your mom worked in the shoe shops?

**ML:** My mom worked in the shoe shop, and she was a fancy stitcher. And my father sometimes would bring scraps of cloth from the mill, I guess everybody did, and she'd make us clothes with it, nightgowns or something like that. That's what I told Mr. Silver yesterday, that when they'd measure so many yards and if maybe there was a quarter of a yard left, rather than just wrap it up they'd cut it off and throw it. Or when we started a new pattern, you know, we'd have to run about a couple of yards and make sure that everything was perfect, so we called that the scrap or whatever, we'd cut it off and throw it away. So if you were around you could pick it up out of the trash barrel.

**AL:** I was at the museum, L-A yesterday, looking at all the different patterns. It's beautiful, variety.

**ML:** I still have just a, I was telling Mr. Silver yesterday that I do have some remnants, but it's to locate them. I packed everything. I was living upstairs and I moved downstairs, so I had to change all boxes and everything else, and they're in a box somewhere. The background, we had what we called a double warp, and the upper one was multi color and the bottom one was black. So it was a black material with like a bright yellow, red, green, and it kept repeating, you know, red and green, and I have a swatch of that here, a little piece of it. And my father had bought some, my mother made cushions, covers for cushions, and it was beautiful, beautiful. So I want to dig that up and bring them to the center, to the Bates.

**AL:** What are, are there certain people, presidents of the mill that stand out in your mind that you recall, could describe?

**ML:** There was Mr., I can see him in my mind but I can't, there was Mr. Gravel that worked at the Bates, he was my boss at the mill. He was a very nice person, always gentle, never, you know, just smooth going, never a word higher than the other as you might say. And at the Androscoggin I remember almost every, Bob Basinger was my boss, then Tony Martel was the superior, Dean Quinton was the big honcho. And the second in charge was Joe Bussiere, he didn't, I don't know what happened to him, he left. And Tony Martel was one of them, yeah, I just said Tony Martel. And of course Gerard Ouellette who was my brother-in-law, and Gauthier that lives down the -

*(Telephone interruption.)*

**AL:** - some of the supervisor that you recall.

**ML:** The supervisors in the mill, yes. And I had a cousin, too, that worked in the carding room, but I never, do you know, as long as I've worked in the mill I never went upstairs to the carding room and the other rooms. I went to the finishing room, but. And when I worked at the Bates, I worked on the cutting room, in the cutting room, where you take the bedspread, pull it up, throw it on a big table, and there was two girls that would pull the sides until it was at the measurement, then we'd cut it. And those two girls would come back, fold it and put it on a rack and take it to the stitchers on the other side of the room.

And my daughter's mother-in-law used to work there, put the fringe around the, a Mrs. Fournier, and she worked there. At the time we never knew that we'd be, both be mother-in-laws, but she was working there.

**AL:** Do you recall any strikes that occurred during -?

**ML:** At the Bates, I recall. But I think, it's vague, seems to me it only lasted like two or three weeks at the most. But there, because there were still people going in. I don't think I ever did strike, we went back

in. I was one of the, what did they call us, the scab or something like that?

**AL:** Scabs, yeah.

**ML:** Yeah, but it wasn't, it wasn't a, like something profound, you know, it was something stupid that they were striking about. That's why I think that they lost, because it wasn't something major I should have said, it was more of a dispute than a strike.

**AL:** Do you know what decade that was in?

**ML:** Oh my God, that must have been in the, that must have been in the sixties.

**AL:** So there weren't a lot of strikes over the years that you recall?

**ML:** No, no, that was about the only time that I recall that people had walked out. Well, the day they had said that there was going to be a strike, I think the mill emptied, you know, everybody walked out then. I was wondering, I've never been a, in those days, I changed a little bit, in those days I wouldn't get in everybody's business or like a go-getter, you know. But today I want to know what's going on, what's this, what's that, what's this, what's that. And I walked out with the rest of them, and was wondering why, what was going on. And my loom fixer, the loom fixer at the time, Emile Roy, said, you know, this is stupid and this, we shouldn't do this, and this and that. So when my husband walked back in, he was my boyfriend at the time, when he walked back in I walked back in, too.

Oh, there was a Mr. Poussard at the Androscoggin, he was a foreman, too. And his sister-in-law was room girl with me. See, we were partners, room girls, because one has to work in the back. If you'd know what a warp is and how the cloth, the big is a big, big roll of thread, you know, huge, huge, and it goes through a, my goodness, I should have looked up my, before the interview, it goes through a, it's a little metal things that used to fall and when a thread broke it would fall and stop the loom. So what a room girl did, where there were over ten threads that were broken together, well one would stand in back and rethread those and hand them to the girl in front so she could put them through the heddles and then the reed, and then tie them up so she could start the loom again for the material.

And that's also how come you would get some scraps material, because sometimes a loom would keep going, there was just one thread broken, the loom would keep going and that thread would get tangled with the other, and then you'd have a break up. So the cloth that didn't have the, didn't pass inspection, you know, was. So after we had fixed everything, sometimes she'd put okay on it, you know, from wherever it would start to be okay. And when the cut boy would come and remove the cut, he'd have to throw what wasn't good, throw it in the trash.

And I remember one time, they had made a sample, they had about, it was black and white, a black and white stripe with a little ridge between each stripe. And we used to go in early and shampoo our hair and put it up in pincurls. I don't know how many girls did that. I was one of them. So Mr. Quinton and Mr. Martel and Bob Basinger came up to me and said, there was a sample on this loom, did you happen to see it? I said, no, I didn't see it. And all the time I had cut the piece off and made a turban with it. I was wearing it on my head, and they never saw it. Ooh, wow, did I shake, did I have the shakes. But then Tony Martel looked at me and he just smiled as though to say, I know where it is, but he never said a word, never said a word. So they had to weave another sample.

Another time a loom fixer, well, a room girl, you didn't get called on until there was a break or we had to change a warp, you know, when the warps run out the tying machine would tie them, then we'd have to pull them through and whatever thread broke when we pulled them through we had to fix those. And so when we had nothing to do, there was what they called, it was no bigger than here, about, we called the smoke room. Well, some of us would bring crocheting, some of us, and I would knit, I was



knitting my father a sweater, I remember that. So Nat Granville, a loom fixer, took, in the shuttle there was squirrel hair, squirrel fur, so that it would run smooth, the fur didn't mat. And he had taken a piece, and every once in a while you'd see a mouse, you know, in the mill, and most of us, we would scream when we'd see a mouse.

Well he had taken a piece of squirrel fur and put it in the sleeve of the sweater I was making, because he saw me try the sleeve on for the length every once in a while. And he had called the other loom fixers there, all in the smoke room, when they saw me leave. I saw him go like this, but everybody, all the guys were sitting there and I was sitting in front of them, and I put my hand through the sleeves and I feel that fur, I screamed my head off, threw my knitting right across the room. I thought it was a mouse.

Well, the guys were laughing their heads off, of course. Okay, payback. So, he had left his tool box next to a loom, with a strap, you know, they used to have a strap on their little tool box and carry them, just drag them from one place to the other when they fixed the looms. I take a big nail, spike, nail this box to the floor. Then I went down the other end of my loom, and put up the stick. You put up a red stick, meant that the loom was broken. If the stick was yellow, means it was a job for the room girl, even though they'd write them down.

Well, he grabs this strap and gives it a yank, and the strap stays in his hands. I was bent in two laughing. He says, you little, I'll get even, but he never did. And it was fun like that, that we had, playing. Like I said, it was more like a big family than, today it seems people aren't that friendly. Well, they are friendly, but I mean it's not the same thing.

**AL:** Great, thank you very much.

**ML:** Oh, we're over?

*End of Side A*

*Side B*

**AL:** We are now on Side B.

**ML:** Yeah, when I worked at the Bates there, I worked with a Mr. Dostie. I think, not Eddie Dostie, I'm not positive, but I think he's the one that has the Kennel Shop in Auburn now, and there's a lot of people, Turmenne, Carmen Turmenne, she lived, happened to live, years after I met her, she was living on Garcelon Street where I had moved with my second husband. I used to have an apartment on Pierce Street, and when I married Mr. Rivard, he built a house on Garcelon Street so I sold my apartment and lived on Garcelon Street. I was in Holy Family parish for twenty eight years, that I lived there on Garcelon Street.

And I lived in Massachusetts, Mr. Rivard was in the Army Reserve, and he went into like you might say active duty, he was stationed in Massachusetts for three years. That's when I came back from Massachusetts, I went to the Hill mill. My aunt got me, my aunt, Florence Rancourt was a room girl at the Hill mill and she got me a job over there. And I met a lot of people there that had worked at the Androscoggin, because the Androscoggin had closed. And at the Hill was Mr. Bouvier was my boss, and when my brother was at Marcotte Home, Mr. Bouvier was staying there at Marcotte Home, so I got to meet, so.

I've, well like I said, I've worked in the three mills, then when all the mills closed I went to the shoe shop as a fancy stitcher like my mother used to do. And I've known so many people from the shoe shops, it's unreal. We were kidding, my friend, the lady that lives upstairs here was saying, Madeleine, you know so many people, you should run for mayor, you'd win in a blink. I says, oh sure.

And after I came out of the shoe shops too, I took computer classes, I got my GED, I was sixty eight years old when I got my GED, and I worked at the Turner town office. And then after Mr., after we were married twenty three years, Mr. Rivard and I, then he left, and I remarried Mr. Bob Leblanc. He used to own Twin City Glass. So I had three husbands and they're all gone, I mean they're dead, so I had quite a life.

My mother told me once, asked me one time, she was, my mother lived to be a hundred, yes, yes, there's longevity on my mother's side. And she asked me once, she said, if anything happened to Bob, Mr. Leblanc, she says, what would you do? I said, Mom, I'd marry again. She said, are you crazy? You've been married three times. I says, Mom, I was only practicing. Practice makes perfect. So it was quite a laugh.

Yes, if I had my whole family I'd have nine children, but I lost five of them due to trauma. Well, my first husband died December 21st, I buried him December 24th, before Christmas, and at New Years I had a miscarriage. So the holidays, the first few years after he passed away, the holidays were hard to face. And to this day, at midnight Mass or at Christmas, he still comes to mind, and it's been over fifty years since he's gone.

**AL:** Is there anything else that you'd like to add?

**ML:** That's about it for my story. I lived in Massachusetts for three years because like I told you Mr. Rivard went to active duty, and then when I came back I worked at the Hill until they closed, then I worked three weeks at the Continental but I just couldn't, I just couldn't cope. It was altogether different than, I just couldn't put up with it, so I had quit.

**AL:** You had a lot of different jobs over the years in the mills.

**ML:** Over the years, yes, I was from a nurses aide, I worked for the nurses aide, I worked for the Red Cross, I worked in the Turner town office, I worked at the science library at St. Mary's, and I was a librarian at school for a while. I was a teacher's aide at school for a while, until they passed that law that you had to have a certificate to be able to be a teacher's aide and all this and that. And the odd thing about being a teacher's aide, maybe two months ago, two, three months ago I met, I was a teacher's aide in the fourth grade, and I met this person, a Mr. Murray was his name, he met me at Hannaford's and he says, aren't you Mrs. Rivard? I said, I was Mrs. Rivard. He says, you don't remember me, he says, you were a teacher's aide when I was in the fourth grade. He remembered me. My goodness.

And now I'm working, I'm still working, I'm an after school care giver at St. Peter's Sacred Heart School, so now I'm getting to know a lot more people.

**AL:** Younger ones.

**ML:** Younger ones. And one of them calls me grandmother, Grandma, oh Grandma, and the other children ask me, how come he's calling you Grandma? I says, because I'm always picking on him, when he doesn't do something right I have him write ten time, I will not do this, I will not do that. I says, because I'm picking on him like his grandmother would, so he calls me Grandma. So that's about the end of my story.

**AL:** Great, thank you very much.

*End of Interview  
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