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Date: Interview recorded in 2010 about events in the 1950s.

Description: Interview with Swans Islander Mike Holmes about July 4th events there.

Interview with Mike Holmes about Fourth of July on Swans Island, ca. 1950s

My name is Mike Holmes. I spent the first ten years of my life here on Swan's Island. My father's Robert W. Holmes and my mother was Velma Morse. They were both born and grew up right here, married here. My father loved this island, more than anything, and he always wanted to come back. And my mother too. So we came back every summer, this is where we spent our vacation. I remember the parades. The veterans used to dress up in their uniforms, they marched down, I'd call it Main Street, Main Street past the store and Lida and Tom Higgin's house. Then we used to have games. One particular Fourth of July they had games for money. If you won, whatever you won you got paid for, you got money. And I won almost everything. We had a bike race, and I borrowed Wesley Staples' bike, and we started in front of the store. And the only competition I had was Allen Clarke, and he had his bike, and we raced, and we started off and Allen and I were pretty neck and neck. There was a line drawn in the street, we were supposed to race to that line and then turn around. Well, I was a little bit ahead of Allen. I went to cross the line like I was supposed to, Allen stopped. About, probably twenty-five feet before the line. He turned around. In order for me to catch him I had to do a lot of pedaling, and I did. And when we crossed the finish line, we were tied. But that's what I remember about that, is that we tied. I caught up with him and we tied going across the finish line. But we used to have potato sack races and potato races with a spoon, you carry a potato to different spots, pick it up, carry it again. And then, oh, the pie eating contest, that was... blueberry pies. And it was everywhere. That was a lot of fun. And then the night before the Fourth, that was the good time, that was prank night. And you could expect to see about anything that night. There'd be outhouses moved; someone's outhouse would show up on somebody else's front lawn, and boats were taken from the wharf and put up in the Lilly Pond. Just pranks. But they weren't nasty pranks, they didn't really cause a lot of damage. That was fun. I wouldn't trade my time on Swan's Island for anything. Because I've been introduced to the city life and I spent most of my life away from the island, to come back would be just too much of a change. As much as I love Swan's Island, I could never come back. It's a different world. You have to be a special person to be able to live here year round.