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Date: Interview recorded in 2010 about events on Swans Island, ca. 1940

Description: Interview with Swans Islander Marion Stinson about a Swans Island band

Interview with Marion Stinson about playing in a band on Swans Island in the 1940s

Piano music play in the background throughout this audio)) My name is Marion Stinson. There was dances every Saturday night. The band always played and when I got old enough I played along with them. I'm the one in fact I'm the only one left that played in the band. My dad could play by ear and he could play by note. And he showed me the key of C and that's all he showed me. I was four years old. I went on from there and I played the piano at the Odd Fellows Hall, I was four years old and I sang, chime bells, and yodeled. Tah dah, you know. (Laugh) And I've gone on from that played dances, I played for all 'bout all the funerals and all the weddings and I took lessons for a year and a half and I still don't know what I took. I have no idea. I just know, I know the sound of every key.

There were these summer people. Her name was Marjorie Witted. Her and her Mom had a boarding house. It was just down from the Odd Fellows Hall and I lived with them all summer long and we sometimes there'd be so many people there we'd couple together (laugh) but it was fun right next to the dance hall, you know, and if the big yachts came in we'd always have a dance for them.

Sometimes we'd play two or three dances a week. And get five dollars a night. Now there was Myron Carter that played the guitar, and he had a big drum he thumped his foot with, you know then there was Bob Holmes and Dick Holmes. They were twins. One played the banjo and one played the fiddle but they both could play saxophone. And then there was Merrill Orcutt. He would play the piano and Dick Holmes wife, Maxine, use to play.

It was exciting and you know, you'd meet a lot of people too. There was a stage where we played and then there was the dance floor. I have seen it when there was two lines of contra dances, two lines and the place would be crowded. 'Course there was a little drinking but you didn't see it. But it was just a fun time! The first guy that come along that wanted to dance I, you know, I'd leave the piano and go down and another guy would play for me cause my hands get tired, of course, and somebody come along and want to dance and I'd jump the board and dance with them. I just liked it I liked everything about it I like everything about music. It was fun.

As I say my life was fun. There were times that I can look back and 'kinda' smile about things and sometimes I can frown, but I try to look at the good side of it. (Music) There! (Laughs)