

DEWARS - Barney's River

Tape by Maurice Young. Age 88.
Interviewed by Nancy Williams,
East Pictou Rural High School.

- Nancy: I am interviewing Mr. Maurice Young, a long-time resident of Barney's River Station. Good evening, Mr. Young. How long have you lived in Barney's River?
- Mr. Young: Well, 1914, till now. How long is that?
- Nancy: Our area was formerly called Dewar's Mills, wasn't it?
- Mr. Young: Yes, it was always Dewar's Mills.
- Nancy: Why was it called Dewar's Mills?
- Mr. Young: Because the Dewars settled the place.
- Nancy: Who was Dewar the first?
- Mr. Young: Well, that I can't tell you what his first name was. There was Angus Dewar was one, and John Dewar, Alexander Dewar, Hugh Dewar. They settled too at Addington Falls, up there when they come from Addington Falls (Forks?) here. You see here. Then they came over here. You see that ditch here with the spruce tree in, they used to drive logs down this river, then they drove 'em down the other river, then they put that ditch there; when the logs was out there they'd shut the gate at this dam down here and float 'em across the road into the other dam, and so on. It was a three storey building, bell-shaped and down below it was where all the planers was, you know, and the turning lathe. You seen that, didn't you? down below? was it tore out before you came?
- Nancy: Yeah, I've been down inside.
- Mr. Young: Well, the machine, the planer and the moulders and the turning lathe and that was all down below. Well then, upstairs was the sawmill - they sawed the logs up there, and then they had machines up there, and offices into it, it was, and then up above, it was the varnish room, where they put beds and chairs and everything together and varnished them and painted them springs.

Nancy: What kind of power was it run by?

Mr. Young: Water.

Nancy: Did they have a big water wheel?

Mr. Young: Well, it was called Laval. A Laval water wheel. It was a great big thing like that and the flume was about 8' square, and it was two wheels they hadYou see, two Laval wheels and that's what the power was. And then they had a big dry house that was for drying the hardwood lumber after it was sawed for makin'.the furniture, you see. Then it went back into the mill, you see, and it was planed and put in shape and cut up so they'd make beds, and turn legs for the chairs and stuff like that.

Nancy: They made all kinds of furniture?

Mr. Young: All kinds of furniture. Bureaus, dressers, and sinks and what-nots like that there, only that's only half of itI sawed it off.

Nancy: You have some furniture?

Mr. Young: Oh yes. There's a rocking chair there. And there's a bed, my bed. And a dry sink in there, and a bureau in there is one of 'em. You've seen that, didn't you?

Nancy: What...the dry sink ... out there on the porch?

Mr. Young: Take her in and show her.

Mrs. Young: They had no bathrooms, you see, and they had this. Come and I'll show you what it's like and you can describe it.

Nancy: O.K.

Mr. Young: Go in too, Joan, and see.

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There was a gas house in there, and there used to be a store where the men would buy their stuff and their feed.

Nancy: The mill right until the end, was it run by the Dewars?

- Mr. Young: All Dewars, Yes. It was run by the Dewars up 'til the Williams boys bought it.
- Nancy: And did they make furniture?
- Mr. Young: No, they didn't. ... Never done nothing like that.
- Nancy: They just bought it?
- Mr. Young: They just sawed lumber you see, and planed it. They got They didn't make anything.
- Nancy: What happened to the dam? Did it just wash out?
- Mr. Young: Well, it went rotten, and the Williams boys, they built a new dam, and that 'un went out, too. That one went out too. That 'un went out about (October?) seven or eight years ago, you know.
- Nancy: Was it used for hydro-electric power?
- Mr. Young: It was at one time. Joe had it, and he had a generator in. That was sometime in the twenties, oh, in the twenty or twenty-two year, but you had to go down every night and shut it off, before you went to bed and that wasn't very handy.
- Nancy: When the mill was working, about how many men would it employ?
- Mr. Young: At one time there was about 150 men workin' here that was in the woods, and the mill, and like that.
- Nancy: Sounds like a big thing around here then.
- Mr. Young: It was, yes.
- Mrs. Young: There is a great deal of their furniture all over Nova Scotia, especially Pictou County and Colchester and around there. It's been bought up now, you know, as antiques. We had quite a lot at home.
- Nancy: You've got quite a bit here.
- Mrs. Young: We have got quite a bit here. Now that was made - The Dewars were here 17 something, wasn't it?
- Mr. Young: 1750, or something like that.

Mrs. Young: And this is over 200 years. Now that table was what
..... that chair is probably 200 years old, and feel
how firm it is.

Mr. Young: Oh, you couldn't knock it to pieces.

Nancy: What is that, is that maple?

Mr. Young: That's all maple.

Nancy: Just the same as the dry sink was. Bird's eye maple.

Mr. Young: But the dry sink was bird's eye maple. Now that's
bird's eye maple, that stand there. You've seen bird's
eye maple, didn't you? Little dots into it. It was
up there in the house, some of it was, years ago.
Marshall built that. The front room had some of the
panelling.

Nancy: That wood in our front room, that was made at Dewar's
Mills?
That was when the Williams' had it.

Mr. Young: When Marshall built the house there. Then Marshall
fot married, and then he had no place to live. They
used to live in the big house up there, the one that
burnt down, you know, that was a big boardin' house
there. One house went this way, well that was the cook
house and boardin' house. The men slept upstairs.
Well, then, the other house came out that way, you see.
Well that was the Dewar's house, you see. They had a
woman cook in there and the men.

Nancy: Did the men have a boarding house, dit they? They stayed
down here?

Mr. Young: They stayed right there. The mill men you see, but
the woodsmen, they stayed in the woods, you know.
They had camps in the woods.

Nancy: The mill ran all year round?

Mr. Young: In the winter time, they didn't. The dam would freeze
up and there wouldn't be water enough, you know. And
then now, Lizzie's father, that's the first wife's
father ... he used to sell the beds. He'd load up
with a load of furniturea bed, a whole bedroom
set, you know. The bed, the dry sink and the bureau,
little table well, there's some of the tables out

thereand they'd go down to Guysboro, Pictou, New Glasgow, Pictou, all round. Stellarton, Westville, Antigonish and Sherbrooke, and sell a whole bedroom set with the bed, and the spring, you know and the bureau, and two chairs and the table for \$7.00.

Nancy: For everything?

Mr. Young: Seven dollars for everything. You've see
That's a picture of the old house.

Nancy: Your first wife was a Dewar, was she?

Mr. Young: She was born here a hundred years ago.

Mrs. Young: Robert, - no, Alex Dewar, was her father, wasn't he?
And he was the boss man.

Mr. Young: Yes, hea was the seventh son of the Dewars. Seven different families and Wilfred is the seventh son of a seventh son.

Mrs. Young: This is our house here, and this is where the Dewar ...
These are the Dewar people sitting right here on the mill. And is the men's boarding house. This was where Barbie's house is.

Nancy: Are there any descendants of the Dewars[■] around?

Mrs. Young: Jack Dewar was in Stellarton and had two daughters and Marion lives there now. She was a Dewar but she's a Harris now, and Jean is the Harris. Her name is Fabian.

Mr. Young: Bill Dewar has one son Alan, but he's up in Ontario someplace. Nobody knows where he is.

Mrs. Young: You know where Bill Dewar's place is?

Mr. Young: Up in Broadway, out there.

Mrs. Young: Way up on the hill, not far from John D. Fraser's.

Nancy: No, I don't think I remember.

Mrs. Young: No, you probably don't. But you would have seen the house, passin' that road. The house is still standing and the barn is standing.

Mr. Young: Six miles. And then there was John Dewar. That was Aunt Alice's father. And they had a mill where Stewart McCulloch lives now. He had a mill out there too.

Mr. Young: He was one of the same Dewars, you see. And that outfit is all dead and Wilfred is the only one left of the Dewars. Wilfred and Alan, but there are sons of the families here.

Mrs. Young: There may be something in that Atlas on the Dewar property, in that, but I can't see anymore. It might be in the front, you see, there is a little history of things here, and there might be something about the Dewars.

Mr. Young: They made the first hardwood flooring, I believe, in Nova Scotia. That was when it was sold to the Military Barracks, soldiers in Halifax.

Mrs. Young: And all this finishing was made in the Dewar Mills.

Nancy: All this finishing, in this book?

Mrs. Young: If you would like to look over those paragraphs, dear, and see if you see anything about furniture, or the Dewars. There might be something there, I don't know.

Nancy: So, the mill fell down in 1968. Did you say the mill went down?

Mrs. Young: The mill, dear, when it fell down since I came here. I saw it fall. The last part

Mr. Young: That wasn't the mill at all, you know. The Williams boys tore the old Dewar mill down.

Mrs. Young: You mean then the two buildings here were built by the Williams's. The two buildings. The one that fell first and then this last one.

Mr. Young: No, the one that fell down, that is the only one there was.

Mrs. Young: Who built the one that Elmer burned?

Mr. Young: That's the one.

Mrs. Young: That's what I thought. Well, the one I saw fall down was behind that.

Mr. Young: That was just the ell.

Mrs. Young: That was the ell the Dewars had built?

Mr. Young: No, No, No, No.

Mrs. Young: The Williamses built the two then.

Mr. Young: The Williams had three fires. The mill was burnt three times. It comes from the dry house, do you see? A spark from the dry house burnt it. But the Dewar's mills was three storey high.

Mrs. Young: It was the Dewars that had the three fires, wasn't it?

Mr. Young: They had 3 fires.

Mrs. Young: Yes, You said Williamses, you see, but that's wrong. It's the Dewars you mean.

Mr. Young: When Wilfred and I tore the old mill downoh, that was way back in the twentieth.. sometime.

Nancy: They never made any furniture like the Dewars after that.

Mr. Young: Oh, no, no furniture at all. They just sawed the logs, and if anybody had some planing to do, they'd plane, you see. And Fred, your grandfather, used to turn. There was a big turning lathe in there, and a big bandsaw, and they'd cut out some runners for the sleds for the woods, you know, and somebody 'ud come along and they'd wanted some sheathing planed, or clapboards, and the like of that. That was all. They mostly run the steam mills, you know, round whenever they'd set up in the summer time, then when there was nothin' to do in the winter months, if they why Joe would do some work around the mill, you know, Planin', might cut out sled runners and make peevee handles and stuff like that. But John Payne, he was the fireman there for about thirty years or more and he slept right into the dry house and then they had a sidin'. The siden' was up there. They used to take the train the train would take three cars and put in on the sidin' for loadin' stuff to ship it away.

Nancy: Dewar's Mills, where was that Place? what area did it include?

Mr. Young: Just Dewar's Mills, Pictou County.

Mrs. Young: No dear, but what area. It was from the bridge here, up to where, when they left the mail off here at Dewar's Mills, how many were included in that?

Mr. Young: Well, there was just us and Joe's had it for awhile, until the government stopped it.

Mrs. Young: Stopped what?

Mr. Young: Stopped the mail from firing it off.

Mrs. Young: Oh, ~~ix~~ and then it was the Avondale post office.

Nancy: The area was?

Mrs. Young: They had how many acres, Maurice?

Mr. Young: Oh, they had 800 acres up on Weavers Mountain, and they had 300 acres out here, back of Bruce's and they had 300 acres up at the head of " ".

Mrs. Young: All together, that would be how many acres?

Mr. Young: Well, that would be about 1400.

Mrs. Young: They had about 1400 acres altogether. That was woodland you see, in the area, but what they called Dewar's Mills

Mr. Young: "Just from here to Barney's River, that was all.

Nancy: So it wasn't that big of an area.

Mrs. Young: No, no. Well, it would be like Barney's River today, you know, excepting it would include John Payne's house, too.

Mr. Young: No, no. John Payne's house he was in Avondale district after it was settled.

Mrs. Young: It's Avondale when you cross the bridge there. Dewar's Mills would probably just run from

Mr. Young: It would run from here up over the land you see the land went up there pretty near to Barney's River Station...that there along the railway track

Nancy: Wellit's been nice talking to you.