

**Interviewees: Nancy Jardine and Vicki Froats**

**Interviewer: Bronwyn Lee**

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The following interview was conducted as part of the Nova Scotia LGBT Seniors' Archive's Lesbian Oral Histories Project.

*BL: Okay, so the first questions are just in terms of like, some slight demographic things. Some of the people that we are interviewing didn't spend their whole lives in Nova Scotia. It sounds like you, for instance, are one of them. So, if you can give me like a broad overview of like, when you were born, and significant places that you've lived throughout your life, so like when essentially you were in Nova Scotia throughout your life.*

VF: I was born in Leasburg, Ontario. 1954. Moved here when I was 19. Was, was a – worked with the telephone company and retired there.

*BL: Nice, okay, wow, so you worked at a telephone company since you were – [VF: '74] wow.*

VF: Since '74, yup. I was a telephone operator and then I went outside and worked as a technician.

*BL: Okay, my grandma was a telephone operator actually.*

VF: Yeah.

*BL: Cool. She moved to typing. She was a secretary after, but, she was watched a show recently that had telephone operators on it, but it was like a modern version of it. She thought it was spectacular [laughing]. 'Cause she could see her job glamourized like that. Right, and Nancy?*

NJ: I was born same year as Vicki. She's nine days older than me, 1954, and in Sydney Mines and I lived there off and on until I was, went for university. My father was in sales, so we, we actually spent part of my elementary school time in Bedford and Sackville and by the time I hit junior high, we were back to Sydney Mines. So, I was there 'til I graduated from high school and then from there went to Acadia, lived in New Glasgow for a bit of a stint for a job and then since about 1980 I've lived in the Halifax area.

*BL: Okay, awesome. And how long have you guys been in like Spryfield, Halifax region?*

NJ: This place, we have been here two years. We spent most of our 25 years together – when we got together, Vicki had a house in Lower Sackville, so that's where we spent most of our time together was out there.

*BL: And I know we already went over pronouns, but do you guys mind disclosing your sexual orientation to me?*

VF: *[Laughing]* Gay, I guess. Lesbian.

NJ: Yeah, strictly lesbian. I love it. I love women and I'm staying that way.

*BL: Alright.*

VF: We both dated men at first, but Nancy, Nancy knew the difference, but I didn't until later on in life.

*BL: Yeah.*

NJ: You were a slow learner.

VF: I was a slow learner. I still am actually.

*BL: You can, you can catch up eventually. Growth spurts hits everyone differently. [laughing]. So, you worked at the telephone company pretty much your whole life. What kind of employment history have you had?*

NJ: Recreation for the first number of years. When I went to Acadia I got a biology degree, then a recreation degree. So, I worked in the recreation field, as a recreation director for a period, and then with another, a charity, and then went with the federal government in 1990 with the Canada Revenue Agency working with GST and HST and I retired from there.

*BL: Okay. Sorry if it sounds naïve, but what is, like what is recreation mean?*

NJ: Municipal recreation director, you know, you're looking after the programs in the town. The, you know, make sure there's soccer fields and finance, hiring staff. Now here in Halifax or HRM there'd be a large staff at all the recreation facilities, the pools, the

rinks and so forth. If you have a degree in recreation management, you're overseeing that area.

*BL: Okay. That makes sense to me. Okay, so that's the end of the demographic, like we need certain answers for things. The next question are, is what were your experiences like interacting with the LGBTQ community in Nova Scotia? And so, in past interviews we talked about like organizations you've been a part of, community groups, any like personal or professional relationships with the queer community. Anything like that.*

NJ: In my case, I guess the only professional relationship would have been I was involved with our union when I was with CRA for a period. And we did have kind of a gay and lesbian group. But that would be the main probably, professional side. I mean my first number of years in my career as a recreation director was like being a teacher in a lot of ways back then, and I was working with kids a lot and now with the bias out there and the homophobia, I would have been chased out of town if they knew my lifestyle so, you know, it was kept hidden. We, again any formal groups, not really. I mean we went to functions certainly that were offered by the gay community, like the old Turret and we, with another couple actually did women's dances for a season to work up to have something to do on New Year's. So, you know professionally that would probably about it? Can you think of anything that – no. It's just more, you know, where are contacts were made through friends. We briefly went to the WOW meetings, but you know we didn't stay involved with it because that was after our accidents.

*BL: What is the WOW meetings like?*

NJ: Well, that was a group that was being started, would have been on water, to try and get to women better educated. We, when we got together, I owned a boat and Vicki decided to go sailing with me, so we still have a sailboat. And so, we were involved in this organization briefly.

*BL: And was that a woman led organization or a queer organization?*

NJ: Women led, basically queer though I would say

*BL: And I've heard similar things from the like dances and stuff like they were mostly women only, and they ended up kind of being mostly queer spaces, like when, is that accurate?*

NJ: Yeah, the, the Turret was for everybody. And both of us, my first visit to the Turret, which was down in the old Khyber building on Barrington St., would have been in the

late '70s. I think Vicki was there a little later, and that was for everybody. It was the only place that at that point in time you could go and feel safe. Be yourself. People would look around before going in and scurry through the door 'cause they didn't want to be seen in some cases, but it was very good outlet. Police raided us but, *[BL: Oh my gosh]* a few times.

VF: *[Can't have]* those gays taking over the world *[laughing]*.

*BL: I cannot even imagine that. Okay, so when, this was within 25 years [one year] not that you were going to the Turret and the dances...*

NJ: No, I was before that. I was in a fairly long-term relationship before Vicki for 19 years and we met through mutual friends when I was at Acadia. So, we got together when I was about 20 and stayed together, you know, 'til I was in the 40 range and it was through her that I began going to the Turret. My first trips to Provincetown were with her, and that's another great place back in the day because there was no place you could go, and – as you know – walk down the street, hold hands, dance together. I was there pre-AIDS when the place was just rocking and crazy and, yeah. So. Yeah, it was, the Turret was the place to go here and Provincetown when on vacation.

*BL: Yeah. Okay, sounds awesome. And Vicki was your experience similar like going to gay bars and stuff?*

VF: No gay bars. There was one gay bar.

*BL: Okay.*

NJ: Well, the Green Lantern was there, but I never, I think that was more a –

VF: Guess I didn't know. No there was just the one. Went into it, like Nancy said, raided often and smoky and hot, *[NJ: Poppers]*, it was wonderful. 'Cause it was a place we could go *[laughing]*. But like I mean, like Nancy said, you have to sneak up to the door, hope that nobody's seen you, and stuff like that. When I was going there, I think the whole time I was going there I was living in the Valley, in Kentville, so I didn't have to worry about too many people that knew me going in there unless they too were gay. Then that didn't matter. But friends, many, many friends of, of mine would just be holding things over their heads and all kinds of shit, so they wouldn't get seen going in *[BL: Right]*. And you had to sign in for whatever reason and nobody ever signed their name *[laughing]*.

*BL: Yeah, well, that seems like a counterintuitive –*

VF: Yeah really. It was silly, but the music was great, and it was always packed. And then when the Turret went down – what was the name of the place on Gottingen St.?

NJ: Well, they, they moved Reflections about – 'cause we did go to Reflections.

VF: Reflections was a theatre on College.

NJ: Yeah. And then when they moved back up to, in behind off of Barrington St. too. So, they were in a few locations, and we went some, but not as much as the Turret.

*BL: Yeah. And they just got rid of Reflections as well. A few years ago, I think. [VF: Yeah] 'Cause I was never old enough to go [laughing].*

VF: Yeah, now that you can go, they don't have anything.

*BL: Yeah, and now, they, Menz and Molly's just got new owners so it's no longer a queer space and Reflections got shut down. So, no queer bars in Halifax.*

NJ: Well, there's two guys, two guys though that are opening up a place 'cause they had a spot in their backyard in the summer.

VF: I think they're still there.

*BL: Yeah, the Queer Gardens.*

NJ: Yeah, so they're looking for some funding to get a permanent location.

*BL: That'd be awesome. Halifax definitely needs it. Were you guys ever like at the raidings of the Turret?*

VF: Yeah, oh yeah, [*BL: Good lord*] yeah. Oh, they could scoot their butt down into the alley –

NJ: I remember going down the fire escape –

VF: Yep, down the fire escape into the alley and whenever it was all clear, you could go back up, start up again, didn't even slow us down. Yeah, but it was scary though, especially the first time, but then after a while, it's just what they did.

NJ: It's like a fire alarm in apartment building. After a while you do what you have to do but you kind of ignore because you realize there's not gonna be any direct harm come to yourself.

VF: Yeah.

*BL: That's so very scary.*

VF: Did you ever see the movie, what was the name of that movie? This, *If This House Could Talk*, or *If These Walls Could Talk* –

VF: No, no, it was an older movie from way back where, it was a guy, but he was transgender or something, San Francisco, owned a big house, rented out spaces.

NJ: You talking *Tales of the City*?

VF: Yeah. *Tales of the City*. You ever see that?

*BL: No.*

VF: You should watch that movie. That is one cool movie and it, and they had police raiding all the time and stuff like that.

NJ: Well there was two versions, it was, Armistead Maupin I think wrote the series of books and they did do the TV series back in time and then there was a new one where [VF: She's older] yeah, and, I'm not sure if that one, if Ellen Paige – [Elliot Page] before Elliot, was in that one, or not.

VF: I think she was. [NJ: I think so, yeah] I think it was [NJ: Yeah], I can't say for sure. In any case there's two of them, older, like in the '40s, '50s and then newer, like 2000s. It's a good watch.

*BL: Yeah. That sounds cool. I love Elliot Page too. Good actor. So, the next one, do you guys have a coming out story and do you mind sharing it with me? Or like multiple coming out stories –*

VF: You should tell yours. That's pretty cool.

NJ: What do you mean, my mother?

VF: Yeah.

NJ: Yeah, well I would have been, I think probably first year university. And I had, my girlfriend and I were watching TV in the living room, my parents' bedroom was kind of two rooms over, and I never really had to tell my mother 'cause she come and caught me with my girlfriend at the time. Come to find out, it's a little funny. My mother when she was not very old, elementary age school was home with rheumatic fever. Now, my mother, if she was still alive, would be the same age as the queen, so 95. So we're back a few years and apparently she found, caught her mother with the nurse who was hired to look after my mother, who was sick. So, I come by it honestly. My grandmother was, seemed to be queer and here I am, you know.

*BL: Nature, nurture [laughing]. Was your mother like most significant person that you had to come out to?*

NJ: Yeah, I guess because my mother knew, I really didn't have to come out as per se. My father wasn't as accepting of it initially, because I was taking off at somewhere in the Christmas area and he just made some comment, well you better not be going down too, and this was my girlfriend at the time. And I was, but I mean, he came around and my ex and my brother opened up a business and my father lent them some money. So, he came around. It was fine and dandy after that, but as far as some of the coming out stories you hear where, you know, you tell parents and relatives and you know it's a sixteen-year-old, they kick you out. No, that was certainly not anything that I've ever experienced.

*BL: Well that's good to hear. And you talked a little bit about having to like were, you know, did you feel like you had to hide going to the Turret and places or were you kind of –*

NJ: I was, yeah, I was closeted at work up until, actually broke up with my ex and that would have been in what '96, or maybe it was a bit before that. But yeah, people at work didn't know about me because it, when you look now in the media, it's, it's everywhere. People talk about their husbands and wives. But even back then in the early '90s it was not something that you preached about. I think one or two, no, none of my coworkers really knew till, I guess going through the breakup I really, people knew that something was the matter with me and that's when things came out, and I worked with a guy who was, who was gay and he came out and that made it easier for me to come out, I guess, to my coworkers.

*BL: Yeah, that's really neat.*

VF: I never came out to my coworkers until we went to get married. And then I, my best buddy at work, I told him about it. He comes back and he says, okay, my wife wants to know what the colour schemes gonna be for the wedding. And I said, well, rainbows. Rainbows! Rainbows, what do you mean rainbows? I said, well it's a symbol of gay. No! Come on [*laughing*]!

*BL: Must be pulling my leg.*

NJ: Yeah, 'cause, we got together and '96 and in '98, because we couldn't legally get married, we have a commitment ceremony, and this is where the rainbows came.

VF: Yeah.

NJ: I'd have a bit more taste now if we were going to do something. Other than going rainbow colours.

*BL: Well, I mean at the time it was very exciting [NJ: Yeah!], yeah, I can imagine just wanting to plaster everything in rainbows at that time.*

NJ: And there was something in the Wayves magazine at the time about the first marriage ceremony, commitment ceremony held in a church. Well, we held our commitment ceremony in the Atlantic School of Theology back in '98. And Vicki's sister was in, studying to become a minister, and we had two Rev doctors so, women with PhD's in ministry who acted as the people who did our commitment ceremony for us. So, I think that's kinda neat.

*BL: Yeah, it's very*

VF: It was way better than our real marriage, written on paper marriage, our paper marriage we just went in the sunporch [NJ: In our house] with witnesses, because we wanted to get it done before they took it back away, you know. The legality of it, so.

*BL: And when did you guys like legally –*

NJ: 2005 because that's, I think, the year it became legal, so we figured that –

VF: Get 'er done before, before they take it away [*laughing*].



NJ: Because I think it's important from my, from a financial perspective if nothing else. The [movie] that was done a while back, "*If These Walls Could Talk*," I don't know if you've seen it, but it took one house and three different lesbian couples throughout time and the first couple was in, probably the '50s or '60s, and one of them died and the family came in and took everything away from the other woman. Who was –

VF: That happened to my uncle too in Toronto.

*BL: Oh my gosh.*

VF: Yeah, he was, he, he and his boyfriend, they lived in downtown Toronto, and the boyfriend was in Montreal for a business deal, and he died, in a car accident?

NJ: I forget.

VF: I can't remember how he died. In any case, family came in, took everything. Even all of [my uncle's] things. So, you know. And like you said, what could he say, [*BL: Yeah*] you know. You can't say well, a that stuff is mine in the bedroom same, same closet as your son, but. Anyway so. Yeah, things happen. He got raided a lot too, in Toronto, he said.

*BL: Yeah, with Toronto having such a big queer community, like even early, that happened a lot. I cannot image losing your partner and then also just losing* [VF: Everything, yeah] *all of your belongs.*

NJ: Yeah, yeah, 'cause the world either didn't know or wasn't accepting and, so yeah, that's why when you can do things legally, before we can get legally married, I don't know if they're still doing it, a domestic partnership agreement. We filled that in too. We just have it so that it was there, and even, I did a grievance through our union to trying and get, I don't know if that was Vicki at the time, or my ex, in on my health benefits and everything because, you know any other cohabitating straight couple wasn't a problem, they carry the benefits through, but it was at that point.

*BL: Did it end up going through, like, did Vicki get to your health –*

NJ: No, I lost a grievance because it was something, I worked for the federal government and they, they came back with the reasoning, well it was a provincial jurisdiction so, no. She's on it now and, I mean when we got legally married, I was able to take the week off that we were entitled to and that sort of thing because it was, was all legal then. Back in the day, it wasn't.

*BL: Well, I mean, it's good that you have it now. And Vicki, did you come out to –*

VF: To my family?

*BL: Yeah.*

VF: My father had passed by the time I came out to my mother, and she just, just didn't care, she didn't, other than my dad wouldn't have liked it [*BL: Right*]. But he had passed. My sister was the most traumatic one because, I'm really close with my sister and I was driving back from Toronto, we were visiting my brother, when I felt that I had to tell her. And the tears were just ripping out of my eyeballs. 'Cause I was afraid that she wouldn't be able to accept it, 'cause we never talked about that stuff, you know. But she, so who cares! So it was, all very, very good. It's too bad my dad didn't know, but he does now, so.

*BL: Yeah. Around what stage of your life was this that you came out to your family?*

VF: Oh, when did dad die, '84. So, my 30s.

*BL: Okay. The next one, what kind of experiences have you had as a result of your sexual orientation, and what were those experiences like for you? Very broad question, I know.*

NJ: One experience I can think of. This was before I was even out to anybody. I, I worked one summer at Kejimikujik National Park and my job was to supervise 16, 16-year-old girls. And I had one of my professors at Acadia warn me that, he didn't know my sexual orientation, but if I was, to really watch it because the woman who had had the job for the last couple of years had done things really weren't correct. She allowed the girls to sleep in her cottage with her and that kind of thing. So, I was totally paranoid that year when my partner at the time came to visit me. I wouldn't let her stay with me. She had asleep in the rain, in the tent, and so. I mean, that was one thing that kind of, in a normal straight relationship wouldn't have happened. Yeah.

VF: Only thing I can think of is whenever I became a telephone technician, I was first female in all of Canada to be an outside telephone technician, and I was interviewed by radio and TV and on the newspapers, and stuff like that, magazines and stuff, and couldn't say anything at the time. I was with a lady whom a child. And I couldn't say anything at all. My family here and – I wasn't even out until, until, like I said when I was

married to Nan. *[BL: Yeah]* So. That was a bit – you know, you couldn't include anything in your life, nope. Nothing in your life was related to what your real life was.

*BL: Yeah. Very, like compartmentalized.*

NJ: Yeah, I remember now graduating from Acadia. I mean there was, there was, I think it was a graduation dance or Christmas something or other, and I ended up with going with a friend's cousin who we hardly looked at each other, and I would have loved to have taken my girlfriend at the time, but I couldn't. So, so things like that I kind of forget about, but, that's kind of making me think. Yeah, I didn't realize that, yeah.

VF: Compartmentalize is a very nice word *[laughing]*.

*BL: A very bad feeling, but a nice word I imagine.*

NJ: Yeah, we haven't had some of the experiences like the people who were kicked out of the military for being gay and or fired or, or that kind of circumstances, but yeah, there's smaller issues along the way that certainly did influence. Yeah, you didn't talk from a work perspective, you know, what did you do on the weekend? Well, you can't say exactly what you did. You kind of make up generalities as to what you did. No specifics that would involve your partner.

VF: Yeah, well I, we used to go every year to Provincetown in October, and everybody would say well what'd you do; oh, just a family reunion *[laughing]*.

*BL: So, to your co-workers were you single? Had you made up like a male partner?*

NJ: Single.

VF: Just single, yeah.

*BL: Yeah, now it's fine to just say like, oop, partner and I did this and then no one asks questions.*

VF: Yes. It's quite miraculous how much has changed.

*BL: Yeah, this interview process has given me a lot of appreciation for what it's like to be queer now, 'cause it's just wildly different.*

NJ: Yeah, now it's mainstream media. Like I was thinking earlier, even, you know, sex is shown on TV all the time, but there were, there wasn't anything growing up. I guess it's kind of like the, the Black Lives Matters brought out now there's way more black people in TV shows and ads. back in the day, there was absolutely no queer characters – [VF: You couldn't even get a book!] yeah.

*BL: Yeah, like this summer, I was like, looking for a fluff book to read while I was at the cottage and I found one that was like a lesbian fluff book, and it was just like, you know, young adults like random book and there's two girls. I was like [laughing] –*

VF: We went to a, different story, getting off topic but I'll do it. We went to Cuba, and we had a lesbian book and then they have a little, you know those little box libraries, you put a book in, get a book out; we put our lesbian book [BL: Oh good!] and Nancy and I are sitting on the beach and you know –

NJ: There's a whole group of women traveling together –

VF: But they were obviously straight, in any case. She's opening the book, I said look Nancy, she's reading our book. She's reading through it, and before you know it before you know it, she didn't read on because you know, she finally realized what she was reading. [BL: Yeah] And later on we'd seen it in the library again [laughing].

*BL: Well, you know what, someone's going to pick it up and they're going to be so glad to find it.*

NJ: Yeah, but it was funny though.

*BL: That's very cool. Yeah, even like not being able to hold your partner's hand like walking down the street to the Turret and stuff, and like having that – I imagine that was pretty weird and tough. Okay, one of the last ones we had a couple of people who donated materials to the archive. If you two are those people we can chat about it, but if not we can just pass that question.*

NJ: We didn't donate anything, at least I didn't, so I dunno [inaudible] –

*BL: I don't think any of my interviewees have yet, but I just fit it in there in case, because I think a couple people have, it never really is the right word, but like documents and stuff that they wanted to put in the archives, so. Talked about that. That's really all the questions. Are there any other things that you guys want to chat about that we haven't*

*yet? Anything to do with like, being gay in Nova Scotia and what that experience has been like.*

NJ: I know different people have had different experiences, but when I was in the union, I met with some woman who had a chip on her shoulder for everything. When, the last maybe year or two I was working we had a presentation because there was a Pride week somebody came in, and there was a woman, I think she worked for D&D and who had a horrendous experience. And I stood up in the presentation and said, I'm sorry. I haven't had that experience at all. Now working within the organization, I was in at that point, it was open work and so, so often it's how you perceive things, and two people are in the same spot at the same time, but they both see things very, very differently. And even like the way Vicki talks about some of the men that she worked with compares to the mostly professional work with men I was working with, were usually guys who were more in the trades, and their attitudes were probably a bit different than some of the more professional ones. I don't know.

VF: I got one for you [*BL: Yeah!*] [*laughing*]. When I worked outside, we'd get, you'd get your orders in the morning and, I don't know how to tell the story. You'd get your orders in the morning and everybody's talking to everybody till we all tore off in our own trucks, right. And so, one of the guys got an order for the Turret, to fix the phones in the Turret. And he wasn't going to go. And that's all there was to it. So, I said why not go? He says, what if I bent over or, what if somebody touched me? And so, I leaned over and I touched his arm and I said, so if a gay person touches you, you become gay? Well yeah [*laughing*]! So, I just about died laughing at that. It was so funny. Good lord.

*BL: So, was that, like, you were talking about differences between the professionals like, trades that you had experiences but that generally like you had better experiences with the people that you were working with?*

NJ: Yeah. I think once, once people knew I never had an issue with it as far as that you know, being given different jobs or being held back or anything of that nature. I was put – I went to Ottawa for a short period to work, working for the federal government, you can do it. And unfortunately while we were there, we were hit by a car and had both of our knees broken and we were in the hospital and two of the people I worked with who were both at the managerial level at the time, were both gay, and they came in and entertained us and you know, and everything was good, so, yeah, I would say –

VF: That, even the hospital put us in the same room so we could be together.

*BL: That's good.*

VF: And my niece pushed our beds so that our beds were together [*laughing*] [*BL: Aw*] So it has improved immensely because you know, before that you'd, you would be where you are, [*BL: Yeah*] you know, and nobody would even bother. I mean why would you two friends want to be in the same room, you know?

*BL: Yeah. And when was this?*

NJ: About, close to 13 years ago I think at this point.

*BL: So, in the 2000s?*

NJ: Yeah. We were, we were married at the time 'cause they did ask us if that was the case, yeah.

*BL: Good at the very least, I suppose.*

NJ: I mean you do get some idiots. I remember there was a guy in a video store, who insisted that we had to be sisters and I was saying the next time somebody asked me that, I'm gonna give you a big smuck on the lips and say, or come up with and say, oh we're related by marriage and let it go at that.

*BL: Yeah.*

NJ: That's 'cause, you know there are people around and, well the young hockey player who got called the N-word in a hockey game. Like you can't change the bigots of the world, I guess. I mean for the most part people are pretty reasonable and open about things. Still, the bigots and the anti-vaxxers and whatever [*inaudible*].

*BL: Yeah, I think that's like, that even happened to my partner at the time, myself and, previously, no we are absolutely dating, thanks for asking [laughing] but obviously much easier to say now than it would have been [VF: Yeah, yeah]. And like the community building and everything is fine with ...*

VF: Well, we don't go around saying we're gay. But we know a couple from the yacht club that live upstairs and everybody at the yacht club, everybody is fine with it.

NJ: Which I was really surprised because there at the yacht club used to be known as more of a blue collar, working boys club and the other ones were, you know, have more money so they don't concern themselves working class, but it's been amazing there that

people have accepted us so I was kind of blown away a bit that , that we were okay, 'cause we joined there in 2005 I think, so you know, things were improving, but I'm still amazed that, you know –

VF: And off that topic and on to another, the Gay Pride, uh, parades. Nancy and I went to, our first one was probably their third one?

NJ: Yeah, I can't remember exactly, but –

VF: It was probably 20 of us, 20 or 30 of us –

NJ: I don't remember that so maybe you went with somebody else?

VF: No, I was with you. I wouldn't, I wasn't, I was – no no no [*laughing*]. Anyways, there was very few of us. I had asked one of her brothers if he thought that I should, if we should participate or not, and he said "Ah, I wouldn't." Oh yeah. [*BL: Okay*] And, anyway, we did. And there was about 30 of us. There's no parade, it wasn't a float, there wasn't anything, just, you know about 30 people walking down the street kind of thing. No flags, no nothing, and now, the last time we went to a gay parade, probably five six years ago now –

NJ: It's one of the better parades in the city... [VF: Yeah. Huge.] For sure. So certainly, come a long way from, from what it was. And even in the boating world, I mean, we're two women who own their boat and there aren't that many. I can think of two other lesbian couples who own boats in the area and that's about it. There was one other couple at the club, but she was military, and they got transferred.

*BL: The Pride parade, it's still something I haven't made it to, somehow. I work in the service industry so it's like, I always seem to be working which is so annoying. My straight friends have been more than I have [laughing].*

NJ: Yeah, and it's in the summer too and we find that we get more preoccupied, and the summer is short to be on our boat [*BL: Yeah*] than to go over to the Pride parade. We had a, had a friend who used to work at one of the banks, TD bank, and they were one of the sponsors, so we went along with her a couple of the years. She's straight, and just go with her.

*BL: And I never asked, how did you two meet?*

VF: Go ahead darlin' [*laughing*].

NJ: Vicki's partner at the time was looking for, her aunt was going to be visiting. There used to a –

VF: And she never met this person.

NJ: She never met her –

VF: But she knew that she was coming to Halifax –

NJ: And on Hall St. there used to be a bar, more of a pub, that was gay and myself and my partner were in for supper. Vicki and her partner at the time were, and her, Vicki's partner came over to us to ask if we were one of the aunts, were her aunt. We weren't, but from there on in we kind of kept in contact.

VF: Started hanging. And my ex and her ex got together, behind our backs, [*BL: Oh good*] and they have, they broke up, it wasn't very long. But we, we stuck –

NJ: Yeah, people we figured it would, you figured it would be a rebound thing, yet Vicki didn't really want long term and I, because I come from an almost 20-year relationship, I wasn't going to be going out running around dating. I should of. I could have sowed the oats, but [*laughing*] anyway, 25 years later we're still together.

*BL: Yeah. That's great. So, both of you left your partners and then, like for each other, or you left your partner, and it was all happenstance –*

NJ: We got dumped by the other two, so –

*BL: Oh, because they started dating.*

NJ: Yeah.

VF: Yeah.

*BL: Incredible.*

NJ: Because most of my, my friends, I guess my partner's my main friend, anyway, I was convinced to call, you said if I needed to talk to somebody to call, and I did and, I didn't even have a car at the time because I was living in town, yeah. I was living over



on the Bay Road and I had sold my car, so even to get around anywhere, so yeah you came in and picked me up –

VF: Yup and helped her move and stuff like that. Suddenly we said, hmm, think there's something going on here.

*BL: Yeah, maybe our partners had the right idea [laughing].*

VF: That's part of the reason why we ended up in this neighbourhood after selling our house 'cause my parents lived in the building there, and I rented one. When the split up was going on, kind of went the other way, and so we decided to sell our house. This was the neighbourhood I was familiar with so –

VF: It's a beautiful area you got the northwest arm right beside you, and Chocolate Lake across the street.

*BL: That's gorgeous. My boss just moved in a couple, like, blocks, couple blocks on the other side of the arm, armory. Rotary? That's the one [laughing]. Couple blocks on the other side of the Rotary. It's really lovely. He always goes down for walks just along the arm and everything and it's really, really nice.*

NJ: Yeah, places here, townhouses and condos and as soon as they go on the market they're, they're gone. Most of the townhouses are, the ones on the water are seven, eight hundred, nine hundred thousand and they're snapped right up [*BL: Yeah*]. So that's why we're living in one of these apartments 'cause it's a, it's a good deal.

*BL: Well, it's a, like it's a gigantic space it seems like.*

VF: Yeah, it is. It's a lot further walk to the bathroom than I'm used to in our little house. We just had a two-bedroom, kind of a den thing in our house. It was very small. So that's how I get my exercise. I go to the bathroom at least once or twice a day. [*laughing*].

*BL: Yeah, you know like even now the queer community in Halifax seems so small, like all of your ex's and dated everybody your dating [VF: Even now?] – even now, it's the worst. I can't go to a bar with my partner without seeing a least two of our exes. It's the worst [laughing]. Like there aren't any queer bars in Halifax that the local, it's like a space that a lot of the queer people my age would go to and like, yep, we cannot go there on the weekend without running into multiple of our exes.*

VF: Yeah. In Provincetown one time they did a competition to see how, how many exes that you had that you were still friends with [*BL: Okay*], and I, I won the competition [*laughing*].

*BL: Really? So, did you date much before Nancy?*

VF: [*Laughing*] Yeah.

*BL: Okay. Not seriously it sounds like.*

NJ: No, she was living with all of them for the most part.

*BL: Oh, okay.*

VF: Three to five years was my average.

*BL: Mine was six months until my current partner, so you two did much better than I [laughing]. And were they mostly like queer relationships? You said you dated men before.*

VF: I dated two different men before I decided that something was up. Yup. [*Inaudible*] have different opinion of myself now, and so started dating women, and never went back.

*BL: Why would you. [VF: Yeah, really]. At what age were you when you started dating women?*

VF: Twenty-three.

*BL: Okay. [Inaudible].*

VF: Yeah. I moved here when I was 19. I was 23 when I had enough of that men thing.

*BL: Super fair, I feel like that's more than enough of time [laughing].*

NJ: Yeah. All the way through high school I dated males – well mainly one boyfriend but a couple of other ones once we broke up, and then spent some time with a woman for two or three years and because there didn't seem to be available women, I dated a man one year in university, and then another woman, which I stuck with for 19 years.

*BL: Yeah, that's fair. Do you think, because you had two long term partners kind of like right back-to-back after university, do you think if you had been single you would have continued to date men? Or you kind of identify as a lesbian so you –*

NJ: Ah, no I probably certainly would have looked more for women. Like, to date a man I didn't really take it seriously, I guess. The emotional commitment just wasn't there. Whereas the whole emotions don't kick in at this stage, or didn't then, unless it was with a woman.

*BL: Yeah, okay. A lot of my friends, well yeah, date both and like men are sort of recreational I would say [laughing].*

VF: I like that.

NJ: So yeah, just the commitment wasn't there and yeah, I mean, the sex part is good, but then again, there's the emotions aren't attached. I don't think I've ever told you that before [laughing].

VF: I knew I would find something out [laughing]

*BL: We're all learning new things today [laughing]. Fun stories. I'm trying to think of anything else 'cause I feel like once, you know, something will spark something else...*

VF: Yeah.

NJ: Yeah, we were saying we should have a conversation before to come up with some of the things that we could throw out there, but we covered a bunch of them.

*BL: I have a lot of like interviews say ah, I'm gonna go and talk to my partner and they're going to remind me of all these things, like what I've talked about, so it's kind of nice having –*

VF: Well, that's why we wanted to do it together.

*BL: Yeah, just like remind each other, like, 'cause I can not imagine – talking about last week is challenging for me, let alone 40 years ago [laughing].*

VF: It gets worse by the way, when you get older.

*BL: My memory is already awful so I'm not excited.*

VF: I even took a memory course once. Didn't help. Couldn't remember where I put the book [*laughing*].

*BL: Yeah, couldn't remember which chapters you've already done, [inaudible].*

NJ: Yeah, I'm just racking my brain to see if I can think of anything new.

VF: You were saying about coming across a book when going up to a cottage, or something?

*BL: Yeah, there –*

VF: We're on the Kobo and we have multiple, multiple lesbian, a least a couple hundred, maybe more books.

NJ: That's what we do during well, the winter. It's harder in the summer to read on a tablet outside and with being on the boat it's bright, and then you have to charge them. We have a travel trailer that we just bought and the same thing. Sitting out in the sun, you know, you don't get to see it as well, but. Yeah, Kobo, I don't know how many books that we bought and threw at their, whole sections of, you know once you buy one lesbian book, then you get recommended all kinds of other ones. Everything thing from little fluff romances to more suspense ones and, so it's entertaining. Between that and the puzzles are free from the lounge downstairs. It passes the time in the winter.

*BL: Yeah, totally.*

VF: When she's doing a puzzle then she's quiet. Otherwise, it's, and I can't read my freakin' book [*laughing*]! There's a puzzle [*laughing*], play with the puzzle, play with it!

NJ: Maybe with things are you know, more and more, movies, just looking at the TV that are out there that help, I mean, you still got to go a long way, and TV shows now that are, are getting more lesbian characters and they're actually getting to live and have relationships rather than [VF: Yeah, all the time –] jumping off the roof and committing suicide.

VF: All the time we were growing up, if there was a lesbian in the, by the time the end of the show was done, she would be dead. In one form or another. The first one that didn't kill them both off was *Personal Best*. That was the first one.

*BL: Yeah, there's always like some, deadly illness or horrible mom or another family member who doesn't accept them being like, happy and gay was the worst. I think this book that I read was my first one, like not my first queer book, but my first like book that was centralizing to lesbians. Like the whole story was about them rather than it just being like I've got a gay friend [VF: Yeah] somewhere, not here though. So that was really, really cool. 'Cause it's still, yeah, like it's in media and stuff, but like I grew up reading what everybody else read, so it was always just like straight couples. My partner is the same way. I'm doing my, like going into my master's next year and I'd just very much need to like to put something in front of them, so I can like, work on my laptop [VF: Yeah] [laughing]. I love you; I don't want to talk [laughing].*

NJ: Particularly in the morning I don't try and talk much until she gets some coffee in her.

VF: She doesn't even try now. It takes twenty-five years, but she caught on [laughing].

*BL: You know what, it's all about learning the languages of your partner [laughing].*

VF: All those Kobo books are, if you look into that, they're all about the two women, the whole thing was about –

NJ: Probably Amazon will have the same thing too. I'm not an Amazon user. I don't, there are myriads of Amazon trucks out there. None of it is shopping local and I don't believe in ordering a pair of jeans and you don't know what size, order three pairs and send two back, which go to the landfill, so we shop local. That's the only online thing we really do is the books.

*BL: And it's handy 'cause it's all like, I have so many bookshelves already and just takes up too much room whereas you like probably have 200 books just on your old Kobo there.*

NJ: Yeah. And I did ask some of the authors when we were in Provincetown last time, they bring in women authors, if they do still get their royalties. And I guess they do or maybe it's not quite as much as a, a hard cover or paperback.

VF: Oh, I thought you had verified that they still get the same royalties.

NJ: I, they said they did there, but I did read that that is a little less somewhere else when I was reading something, but, they're still getting paid anyway.

*BL: They do that with musicians as well. Like, if you buy an album, they get like 90 per cent of it, but if they, you do it off Spotify or whatever else, they get like a smaller –*

NJ: Yeah, amount.

VF: Do you have any of those books out we bought in Provincetown from those authors?

NJ: Yeah.

VF: Would you like, well, have a book?

*BL: Oh I don't know when I would get it back to you, so.*

VF: I wouldn't worry about it. It's just sitting there.

NJ: I'll give you a couple just because they're sitting here. It's just I think a couple of them are five dollars down the Venus Envy that I bought to read on the boat.

VF: Yeah, we had to have paper books at the trailer, at the boat.

*BL: Yeah, I'm a big, I unfortunately I'm a huge paper reader, like I will try, I have one of the electronic books. I just love paper in my hands.*

NJ: Yeah. You know I get it.

VF: I just wouldn't have enough room in this stupid old apartment for anything.

NJ: This woman used to be a surgeon [*BL: Oh cool*] and she's written all kinds of books. That's just one example one and then there's this other one here. Yeah, those were five-dollar books from Venus Envy so, no need to return, just pass them on to somebody else.

*BL: Thank you so much. That's very exciting.*

NJ: And I don't know how, it's funny when you read a book that is written before cell phones and their getting out of their cars looking for pay phones and all this. I don't know how recent those ones are.

*BL: That's fine.*

NJ: And if they're historical and, it's fine, they don't miss the cell phones and they turn that to everyone

*BL: Yeah. It's kind of nice like reading – 'cause I grew up with pay phones and stuff. Like when I was a young child so I still remember that kind of thing. But it, yeah, I read, the one that I read recently everyone was like texting and using Instagram and it's just weird for some reason [laughing].*

VF: Yeah. I was, that's one of my, and for a year I was the only person fixing pay phones, and, in all of the valley. So, like from Annapolis Royale all the way up to just about Halifax.

NJ: We had fun at Acadia after the parties wasn't it.

VF: Acadia, they'd puke, all over the payphone [*BL: Eww*] and they'd steal the dial tone, you know the two lines and then you'd walk down the hall and there's a raw telephone wire going all the way up to their room from the payphone [*laughing*]. Nasty bunch in Acadia.

NJ: No, they weren't [*laughing*]! I got my ring. It's not like getting an X-ring and getting the viruses from COVID passed around, but –

*BL: I never asked. Did anyone ever end up going to the Turret to fix the phones? Did you end up going?*

VF: I don't think he did, but somebody else had to of.

NJ: You didn't volunteer [*laughing*]?

VF: No. Christ. I was [*BL: A little too obvious?*] deep undercover [*laughing*].

*BL: Their first woman fixing phones, "I'll over to the gay bar, don't worry about it. I've got it. I know them all by name, let's do this [laughing]"*

VF: Yeah, actually, I did [*laughing*]. I wasn't going to go there. It was, I wasn't even supposed to be in Halifax back when I was doing businesses, I was only supposed to be working in Dartmouth.

*BL: Right. And it was on Barrington you said?*

NJ: Yep, yeah, Khyber Building. That's still there. If you look up there's a turret up on the top of the building. It might be now, they were going – I don't know if it's part of Neptune, but there is part of Neptune [VF: Neptune is growing out towards it] that attaches out to it and there was, it was one of the arts groups that wanted it, but it required probably a few million to fix it up.

*BL: Yeah.*

NJ: But the building, it is definitely still there. I used to take the bus to and from work and stand in front of the Turret and think, yeah –

VF: Yeah, that was on, at the theatre, right?

NJ: Yeah, which is now the DaVinci School of, it's media arts [*inaudible crosstalk*] –

VF: Straight across the street –

*BL: Yeah, right on the, like Spring Garden is right there and kind of like –*

NJ: Yeah, just down from Spring Garden, yeah.

*BL: Very cool.*

VF: Yeah, it was a life changer.

*BL: I will turn off this guy –*