

Interviewee: Florence Horsford

Interviewer: David Webster

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Florence Horsford grew up on a farm on the Charlotte/Shelburne border and then became a teacher in the Shelburne school system for a great number of years.

Topics discussed: roads, bridges, winter in Shelburne, Tracy and Maeck store, World War I and II, the Depression, cars, going to Burlington

DW: What's your full name?

FH: Florence Poole Horsford.

DW: And you were born where?

FH: I was born in Charlotte.

DW: Where in Charlotte?

FH: Lime Kiln Road

DW: When were you born?

FH: 4/14/1909.

DW: Who were your parents?

FH: Aubrey and Frederika Poole.

DW: Where were you parents born?

FH: My mother was born in New York City and dad was born in Charlotte.

DW: What did they do for a living?

FH: Dad was a master carpenter...he worked on the Ticonderoga and the Webb houses, and the Bostwick house, worked on that one, rebuilding it. Mother was a farm wife raising four children and educating three of them at the University.

DW: Who were your brothers and sisters?

FH: My oldest sister was Joyce; she married and became a nurse in Massachusetts. My brother was Archibald Poole, well known as a carpenter throughout the area.¹ My sister Margaret was county agent for years here in Chittenden County 4-H, and I was the youngest. I became a teacher.

DW: Now we've established that you didn't live in Shelburne, but you lived very close. Perhaps you can describe this.

FH: The house was actually on the Charlotte line, but the farm itself was in Shelburne. It went down through the Thomas Road.

DW: What was life like at home growing up?

FH: I only have wonderful memories. We worked hard on the farm. I guess things I remember most of all were evenings, especially winter evenings when dad would read to us from Shakespeare, and all of the stories. And down in the cellar we always had apples to eat, we had popcorn that we popped and he had butternuts that he would crack for us and we would sit around at a beautiful cherry table and munch those while he was reading. I can remember the light. In fact I have it over there. The light that sat in the middle of the table with a beautiful red tablecloth and I have that too.

DW: Who were your closest neighbors? Were they in Shelburne or Charlotte?

FH: The neighborhood was very close. You had the Peterson family. She was my teacher, my very first teacher. You had the MacDonald family and all of them grew up and were old as mother and dad. Mary MacDonald taught in Shelburne for years, first four grades down in Shelburne. I remember them all very well.

DW: How did you heat your house?

FH: We had a great big tall stove in the front room and a middle fire stove in the dining room and a kitchen range in the kitchen, and no heat upstairs in the bedroom.

DW: Did you have registers?

FH: No. You dressed downstairs and you ran upstairs and jumped into cold sheets.

DW: How did you keep the house lit?

¹ Archibald Poole lived on Thomas Road between Shelburne Falls and Baptist Corners.

FH: Kerosene lamps which was always my job. I think from the time I probably was nine years old. Pick up the kerosene lamps and bring them downstairs from the bedrooms and fill them with kerosene. I hated it.

DW: Where did the family spend most of its time in the house?

FH: Between the kitchen and the living room.

DW: Did you have a living room and a parlor?

FH: No, we did not have the old fashioned parlor that a lot of houses had. Mother refused to have one because she said she was brought up in a house where there was one and she couldn't go into it. So she'd never have it.

DW: Where did the family eat its meals?

FH: Kitchen table.

DW: What kind of food was pretty normal at your household?

FH: Food that was raised on the farm. We had pork of course, we had beef of course, and we had chicken of course. Archie raised turkeys so we always had a turkey at Thanksgiving. We had our own potatoes our own apples, everything from the farm.

DW: Did you brighten things up in the wintertime with something that had been canned? Pickles or relishes?

FH: Mother had over a thousand quarts in the cellar and we always canned and canned and canned because that's what we lived on all winter. There was nothing in our stores to buy.

DW: How do you think that compares to today's food experiences for families?

FH: Now, everything is so commercial and so easy. I take advantage of all the stuff that is all ready for me and I don't feel a bit guilty about it.

DW: What did you do after dinner? I think you alluded to the fact that your father read to you.

FH: We always had family evenings. As I said, dad read everything to us. *The Hounds of the Baskerville* is one. I just still cringe over still hearing a hound. I hated it - I cried all way through it I didn't like it. I liked Shakespeare. So when I got into high school and college I had already done all that kind of work.

DW: Did you play cards or board games?

FH: Mother was very strict, raised as a Methodist. We weren't allowed to handle cards on Sundays. And we couldn't play any type of game that you had to even give somebody a toothpick. We weren't allowed to play those games at all. Otherwise, we had puzzles. We had all kinds of things that were legal, but not anything pertaining to unreligious things.

DW: How did you get your house ready for winter?

FH: One thing I know is that they cut wood during the summer. Dad had his own big saw, a circular saw, and a great big thing and so he got up the woodpile. Archie helped a lot. He went to Burlington and bought coal and I remember it coming down in bags. At that time you had to go someplace in Burlington to buy your coal. We had one coal stove that held over all night.

DW: What was your water supply?

FH: We had a cistern and a well. Drinking water from the front well that you pumped and a cistern that you pumped in the kitchen sink.

DW: And of course wash water. How about holidays? Christmas obviously? Thanksgiving?

FH: They were wonderful, mother did a great deal for all holidays. We decorated the entire housetop to bottom for Christmas. Thanksgiving we always had dad's sisters and uncles and aunts coming for Thanksgiving. Every birthday was a very important day. You had your own cake and everything you never had to share with the family.

DW: You mentioned the pigs and the cows. What outbuildings did you have on the property?

FH: We had a horse barn that had four stalls. We had beautiful Morgan horses; they were beautiful things. Then we had one Roting, what we called a Roter, she was a tender old horse. She'd let me ride her when I was four years old. I'd go out and she'd put her head way down and I'd get on and straddle her and would hold on her to ears and then she would put her head back like that I'd just slide down her back. I was queen of the whole ranch. We had a lot chickens. We had a Cornell hen house, I remember that dad built.

DW: What's a Cornell hen house?

FH: A pattern for the house from Cornell University. Its still there on the old farm.

DW: So did you have sheep?

FH: No sheep. We always kept two pigs and they were of course dressed in the fall. Dad did his own hams, I remember. We had to have hickory.

DW: Did you have a smokehouse?

FH: No we did it on a cement thing, a stone thing was out in back, and it had a sort of a tee-pee thing. And that's where they did it. You had to have hickory, I'm telling you, there was no other smoking thing but Hickory chips.

DW: Did you have hickory trees around?

FH: We had our own hickory trees around back and then on the farm. The kids were down pulling bark when it loosened up, a very precious thing, hickory.

DW: How many cows did you have?

FH: Not, too many because dad worked all the time. I think he kept about nine milkers and about fifteen cows. They were, the same herd, the same cows, generations lower than his father had.

DW: That would have been more than your family needed. Where did the rest of it go?

FH: We had a separator and made butter, and the butter was sold at the stores, what we couldn't use.

DW: Your family marketed to the stores or went through the creamery?

FH: I think...I can't think of the name. In Burlington they took most of the butter. We had a big apple orchard at that time and I remember individual people from Burlington coming down and picking up barrels of apples.

DW: What kind of apples did you have?

FH: We had so many. Do you want all those names? St. Lawrence...and Thomas Sweets....Banana Apples, Strawberry Apples. We had em all.

DW: In a day when you think of what we can get, Macintosh, Cortlands if your lucky, its amazing to me.

FH: Yeah, some of those strains Nick Cowles was very interested in it later when he grew up with the orchard.. He got some of the strains. Whether he kept them all, I think the St. Lawrence is still there, I'm not sure.

DW: Now, you mentioned your neighbors were close, what did kids do, did they hang out?

FH: No! We weren't allowed to. Never until I guess I was married, I never was allowed to sleep at anyone's house but my own. When we went to college, my sister and I had a

room that we shared at the University. My mother said “No, this is your house, this is your bed, you sleep in it”.

DW: You went to the University at age seventeen or eighteen....

FH: Seventeen.

DW: Did you go to Burlington much prior to that?

FH: No. We went to Burlington in as much as we went when the circus was in town. Dad took us all to that.

DW: Where did the circus perform?

FH: Right on Shelburne Road where now is some garage on the corner.

DW: Hyundai dealer maybe....Flynn Avenue?

FH: Yup. Mmm hmm.

DW: How about movies?

FH: When I went to Burlington High. Shelburne at that time had only two years of high school so then my next two years were in Burlington; I went up on the bus. Morning session, and at then 12:30 you were done, and so then you had the whole afternoon until 4:00. For a nickel you down to the Strong Theater and go up in heaven [laughter] and sit there and enjoy a movie for a nickel and not be hanging around, what was Haymarket then, that's where the bus is, right across diagonal. Then you would go and pick up your Shelburne bus and go home.



Picture 1 Strong Theater, Burlington

DW: Do you remember the first movie that you saw?

FH: No.

DW: So where did you go to school, starting in grade school?

FH: MacDonald School.

DW: Which was where?

FH: Right on Mount Philo Road, what is now the yellow house.

DW: Still standing. And that would have been only Charlotte kids?

FH: No, I think there were some from Shelburne. I know there were.

DW: Walked up from further down Mt. Philo Road? So from there you went where to high school?

FH: Down to Shelburne.

DW: So for two years at Shelburne.

FH: Two years in Shelburne, and that was all they had at that time.

DW: What percentage went on to high school in Burlington?

FH: The girls all went up to Saint Mary's, for Catholic girls. The boys, from Shelburne, all went to Saint Marks, which was in the high school, and they went there. The Protestant girls went to Burlington High.



Photo 1 St. Mary's Academy

DW: And the Protestant boys?

FH: I can't remember any boys going on. I think our town at that time was really, really had more Catholics. I was very active with the Catholic gang. Father Henry was the priest and he was a very nice gentleman, and he always had me over there to wait tables

and things like that at the big suppers. He and dad got along fine, because they were two Irishman. He'd go up to the farm and visit with dad even though dad was a protestant.

DW: Do you remember the other one-room schoolhouses in Shelburne?

FH: I remember the one that is now a house on Falls Corner, and I can't think of the teacher's name.

DW: I know the one you mean, but I don't know who the teacher was either.

FH: Then there was the Palmer School...farther out, but I just vaguely remember the position of the school.

DW: And then there was the little stone one up on Spear Street.

FH: That one that you are speaking of, my sister Peg started teaching in that one.

DW: Obviously you just walked to the school, but when you went to the high school how did you get there?

FH: Walked from your house which was 2 1/2 miles down to the village and you would get on your bus in front of what was Jack's Store at that time, what is now the Country Store. You got on your bus there and went into Burlington.

DW: Did you have a favorite subject or teacher at school?

FH: I look back at it, I guess probably my favorite subject was Miss Isham, that was English, and then I guess I liked art actually best of all.

DW: That was in Burlington.

FH: Mmm hmm.

DW: How about field trips? Did they take you on those?

FH: Never had anything.

DW: How about school dances?

FH: Yes, Friday nights. I don't remember who the professor was when we had it, we had a principal in Shelburne, but every Friday night he allowed a school dance, and that was a great treat. I can remember that. I was allowed to go down because Archie would take me.

DW: He stayed with you?

FH: He danced with the girls and a lot of the alumni would come back. As alumni you weren't but seventeen.

DW: Where did your family go to church?

FH: The Charlotte Congo Church

DW: What do you remember about the Shelburne Falls as opposed to Shelburne Village?

FH: I never knew Shelburne Village very well. I knew Tracy's Store. I was allowed in there from school. The Shelburne Hotel had ice cream, and that was a tremendous treat, of course for a nickel, but I was not allowed to step into the Shelburne Hotel because they sold liquor there. And so I could give my nickel to one of my friends and she could come out with two cones and so I'd have my cone, but I couldn't go and get it. I remember that place, and of course everybody just loved Jack Ockert.¹

DW: So he ran the store...

FH: Next to you. (The Village Pumphouse)

DW: Yup. This is after Mr. Deyette in the mid-twenties?

FH: I don't remember Mr. Deyette ever having that store, did he have it?

DW: Yeah, he did own it, he died in '22 I believe.

FH: I knew him and I knew his wife Molly.²

DW: You mentioned that a lot of the families were Catholic, Irish families?

FH: No they were French Catholics. You see we were right at the beginning of the World War I at that time, and Canada of course was under the British Queen, and the young men had to go to England to fight. So the farm families that could, left Canada and came to the United States and bought farms so that their young men would not have to go across to fight in England. We had Benedict Farm and that was bought by them (Canadians), and there were ever so many around in Shelburne and Charlotte.

DW: And they were all farming?

FH: They were all farming. They all had farm children. They had probably ten or twelve kids each.

¹ See Jack Ockert interview

² Irving and Mary Deyette owned a series of lots within the village. In 1946, when Mary Deyette died, the Deyette's cottage went to the Depeaux while Truman Webster received a house (The Village Pumphouse), Palmer's Store (The Vermont Country Store) and the Barber Shop.

DW: Was there a lot of social interaction between them and the people that were already there, or did they pretty much keep to themselves?

FH: Perhaps not the older people, I don't remember that, but my age group, my very best friends were the Catholic girls.

DW: Thinking about Shelburne who were the large families?

FH: We always had Thomas's, but they weren't French Catholic, they were Catholics. They've always lived there.

DW: The O'Briens came later.

FH: I was going to say the O'Briens, they had all those children. They were Irish.

DW: Do you remember who the Shelburne doctors were?

FH: Dr. Norton was the doctor when I was growing up.

DW: You went to Dr. Norton?

FH: Mmm hmm, and he came to you too.

DW: Made house calls, and his office was where?

FH: The brick house down before the bank. It turned into an apartment house and then later on he came to the house right beside the school, between the museum and the school.

DW: Is that house still there?

FH: Yes, that's what was her name? She just died and its got a for sale sign on it.

DW: Lull

FH: Lull, yeah. I don't know, I thought Jo was going to live in it. ¹

DW: You mentioned Macdonald. Who were some of the other teachers that you not only had, but might have worked with?

FH: Irish, she was my Home Economics teacher, and I loved her, she was so down to earth and good to us all. We all liked her. Of course Dot Taylor was one of my best friends and she was in your business house, she was one of my very best friends.

¹ Robert Delano and Catherine Durick Lull purchased their home from Robert and Margaret Alice Bacon in 1948.

DW: I think maybe if we go on to maybe your teaching career a little bit. You went to the University and you graduated, and you started teaching. Where did you start teaching?

FH: Down here at what we call the Mount Philo School, the Kingsland School. It is now the hotel.

DW: That was until?

FH: I taught there in 1928 for two years. I had thirty-one children, all eight grades, and I had them all.

DW: When did you first come to Shelburne to teach?

FH: 1943. They were down in the Town Hall that year, we were over crowded., the whole place was crowded. John McGee was our principal.¹

DW: You taught what?

FH: Second grade. I think I taught all four grades to start with. I was down in what was the dining hall, and then it became the library and now it's the basement.

DW: At some point you held an administrative position?

FH: Oh yeah. I guess I was the Assistant Principal for a long time and then I was appointed Principal, and I hated it because I wanted to go back down into the grades where I could be with the children. I remember, my first Christmas upstairs in the office, I sat there and bawled like a baby because everybody was having Christmas all around me and I was in the office away from all the kids and I hated that. I remember saying to John, will you get me out of this, get a man in here. I want to be down in the grades. I like kids, but I don't like dealing in that kind of crap.

DW: Now if you were there in '43, then you worked there during the war years, but what's your memory of the war years? The Second World War, in Shelburne? Did the kids do something for the war effort?

FH: I don't remember at all.

DW: How about your own experience in the First World War? Do you remember doing anything for the war effort?

FH: The only thing then, we all had gardens, I remember that. Victory Gardens, to raise food, and I remember winning first prize for my carrots and things like that.

¹ John McGee was principal from 1942-1960.

DW: Did you roll bandages or knit socks?

FH: Not then of course, but I did here, as a personal volunteer, I was very active in our Red Cross here.

DW: But not through school?

FH: Not at school, no. I can't remember, only weeping many many tears over the fact that Archie was over there, fighting on the front, my brother.

DW: Some of the other events. What do you remember of the flood of '27?

FH: I remember that I was declared dead! But it was Helen Haynes that died. She was up on the Clark Farm. She was drowned. Of course, we had very blurry radios in those days and it came out that a Shelburne girl had drowned, and they didn't know her name, but the description fit me so people were driving over to the farm. I remember one person came in. We were just sitting down to supper and they said, but you're dead, and he looked at me and I was at the table. I hadn't heard about Helen. She was just my age, you see.

DW: Do you have any memories of Prohibition?

FH: We had the rumrunners go by the house all time.

DW: You knew them when you saw them?

FH: Well, they drove like a bat out of you know what, and right behind them was the Sheriff. Then of course by that time, really, I was married to Fred. His dad, my father-in-law, who I loved dearly, he appreciated the rumrunners because he was one of their best customers. I never felt badly about the rumrunners, I just thought they must have an awful good time. No, I don't remember too much about them.

DW: The assassination of Kennedy. I was in your class.

FH: You remember don't you? I just couldn't believe it. Don¹ called me into his office and told me. What do you think we have to do? Should we tell the children? I can remember that awful feeling, and I said yes they have the right to remember too. He said well, you'll have to take care of a lot of them because they are going to be hysterical and all that. I said do we have the right to act along casually all day and not realize what had happened, and that's when he made the announcement. How did it effect you?

DW: I'll just always remember where I was. I remember Lynn Rozental was very very upset by it. She was the only one I truly remember being dissolved. I don't think I understood the gravity of it at the time, I mean that's my memory, is that it was an awful thing, I think I was probably very sullen, but not...I mean I wasn't dissolved, and I

¹ Don Jones

remember we got out a little early. The day was a little bit shortened, not by very much just a little. I remember going home a little early, going over to the library because my parents wouldn't be home yet.

FH: Do you feel like our decision was right?

DW: Oh absolutely, oh sure. You were there to comfort someone if they needed it.

FH: They needed it I remember that.

DW: What would you consider some of the important inventions made during your lifetime?

FH: The airplane. It may not have been made in my lifetime, but I can remember my first sight of the airplane, and certainly cars, improvements of cars, and trains. Transportation might cover it all! Education certainly.

DW: What year did you get electricity?

FH: At the farm? You'd be amazed at that, '42.

DW: '42!

FH: We had electricity on Mount Philo Road; we had electricity on Spear Street. Langfield was the connection between the two, and there were only two big farms and our farm, which was not big. Those were all two & three hundred-acre farms. Ours was only about close to 100, but they wouldn't put it in. It wasn't until after World War II had ended. Archie had been appointed to the Rural Electrification Board, and when he was appointed to that, then they had to connect our street. All those years, you see. They had it over at the farm which LaBarge owns now, they had it at the farm which is now developed, that whole row of new houses. I don't know whose they are. Mike, I know, works in the hardware there in Shelburne. I don't remember the name, three big houses, and that had electricity, and of course all of Mount Philo. I had it here and all, but mother and dad didn't.

DW: Do you have any other memories, besides the girl that who was mistaken as you, of the '27 flood?

FH: I was in college at that time. That was '27. I worked on that, collecting clothes. I remember when the Winooski Bridge went out. I was down there watching that from college. I remember working at the Strong and Majestic Theaters, standing outside with a group of girls, collecting money for the flood victims.

DW: Do you remember any other disasters or blizzards?

FH: No, I don't think so.

DW: Nothing out of the ordinary?

FH: No, I don't think so.

DW: We've established that your first job was in Shelburne in '42. Did you have two cars? Did you drive yourself?

FH: Hmm Hmm. My daughter went with me...part of my salary was her tuition to go to school.

DW: How many teachers were there at that point? Did the high school run through all the grades at that point?

FH: Yes. When I first began I think that most of the teachers had two grades at least, if not three, and then towards the end you had only had one grade, and you had four years of high school. Then at one time, there was only two years of high school.

DW: You mentioned that your father was a master carpenter and that he would work at the shipyard.

FH: He worked down at the Ticonderoga. And he worked on the houses of the Webbs and the Bostwicks when that burned.

DW: That was '51 or so I think. You wouldn't have gone do it probably, but it was more just hearing about that's what he was doing?

FH: Yup.

DW: Do you remember the Webb's family involvement in terms of Shelburne?

FH: Oh yes! Very much so.

DW: In what ways?

FH: Well, Mrs. Webb was more than generous because I was a 4-H leader for years and she always had my sister and myself over for tea in the afternoons.

DW: Which Mrs. Webb?

FH: At that time there was only one Mrs. Webb.

DW: Madame Webb?

FH: Madame Webb.

DW: So that's Lila Webb. So you would have gone to the big house?

FH: At the big house, had tea with her and went through the house with her. Then years later, she was a great gardener as you know she had the gardens at her home on the point and all, and she had me come over in the afternoons and we would walk through the gardens and talk. She actually sent many flowers down for my wedding at the church. She was a very gracious lady.

DW: Who took a real interest in the local people...

FH: She took a great interest. She did.

DW: What are your memories of the Depression?

FH: (She laughs) You shouldn't start me on that, because I remember it very much, we married in '31! Of course there was no money. Fred was a Norwich man, he had his Engineering from Norwich and all and he couldn't get a job, and I was getting \$500 a year for teaching, which gave me \$60/month. And we had to rent a house, we rented the yellow house over here. Fred found some work down in Vergennes and he moved to Vergennes, and I stayed up here with his folks some. You ate well because of mother and dad. They had a beautiful farm. We had our meat from the farm, we had all our vegetables, we had corn, we had everything. I canned a great deal of course. My dear neighbor that lived across the road, Maude Williams, said "Florence, I wish you would buy the house across the road from me," She said, "I am so tired of looking at that yard, those burdocks." At that time the burdocks were way over my head, you couldn't see the house. I said Mrs. Williams, "what would we buy with, I haven't a cent!" "You won't have to have a cent, you come up to the bank and sign with me now and the house is yours." I said "I'll have to talk to Fred." And Fred said "its up to you, it's a lot of work." And she said "you kids can have the house for ten dollars a month." It was hard to get that \$10, but we got it. She was wonderful.

DW: Ten dollars a month!

FH: Ten dollars a month and not a dollar down. I kept all the figures from the Howard Bank, in the booklets. They had to write it out that you paid \$10 and had so much for interest and so much for principal, year after year after year. I thought they were too precious to do anything with. You had to pay your own taxes.

DW: So you didn't have anything to spare, but you got by all right?

FH: We got along fine. We had a wonderful time. We loved every minute of it.

DW: How about seeing people around you?

FH: We had a marvelous gang. Wonderful friends. Bill and Helen Williams, Ted & Eleanor Kelvy, the Kennedy boys lived in that brick house over there, and Bill and Barbara lived down the road.

DW: So you would you say that as bad as the Depression was for some people, in maybe a community such as this, in Shelburne, it wasn't as bad as other places?

FH: Oh no, there were no suicides or anything like that! Pat Williams over there at the store said "now Mrs. Florence you have what you **need**." But I said "I can't cash a check, I've got probably twenty one dollars in the checkbook but I can't cash a check, you know, the banks are closed." He said "just get what you need, I'll put it on the book." So I could buy my gas in order to get to school and Fred could buy his cab fare. No, we had nothing but marvelous happy memories, I guess. We didn't have a stick of furniture. We had them all come over for supper and everybody was in the same boat. And we would fill our plates out there, and come in here and sit on the floor, back up against the wall. This room was empty. All sit here in here and just gab and have fun. There was no liquor because nobody had a dollar to buy it with, but we had a good time.

DW: When you were young did you do marketing in Shelburne or Charlotte?

FH: Tracy and Maeck.¹

DW: What would your mother have bought there and what would you have bought there?

FH: I wouldn't have bought anything because I didn't have a nickel.

DW: Did she make your clothing? Your dresses?

FH: Oh yes.

DW: Would you accompany her to pick out a piece of cloth?

FH: She would pick it out. Always the same idea, a navy shirt, always the same thing. I always had Peg's, Peg always had Joyce's and Joyce had the new one. One dress, you see, for school always. I always knew what I was going to wear because it was what Peg had that year, I was going to have that the next year. It didn't bother me.

DW: What was the store like?

¹ From c. 1851 through the 20th Century, the brick building at the corner of Route Seven and Harbor Road served as Shelburne's general store. In this period, the store was familiarly known as "Simonds", "Mead and Tracy", "Tracy and VanVliet", "Tracy and Maeck", "Doenges and Towle" and "Harringtons" (a ham and smoked meat store that is now located further south on Route Seven), with the Tracy family having the longest involvement with the store.

FH: Tracy's? They had everything. I can remember the implements, and then the horsewhips, all these big long horsewhips, and they had shovels, and hoes, and things hanging. They had meat down at the very end, and they had cloth, off to one side. It was a regular department store actually.

DW: Did they have any what you would consider luxury items?

FH: Once in a great blue moon there were oranges, and once in a while there were bananas, but I can't remember. I can remember the gum that we got was when the Raleigh man came around. He always left us a stick of gum. That was one stick of gum for the year. He had a covered wagon and he had all sorts of household things in it. He had vanilla and spices.

DW: So, he was a peddler?

FH: A peddler of patent medicines and things like that.

DW: And would he come right to the house?

FH: Everybody, all through the United States I guess that they had Raleigh men

DW: Really? So spices and?

FH: Patent medicines.

DW: Do you remember any other peddlers besides the Raleigh man.

FH: We had a lot of peddlers that came from Burlington. Wanting to buy chickens or hens and things like that.

DW: Would they trade you?

FH: No, I don't think so. I don't know. I remember that mother would go out there with them and point out a certain hen that hadn't been laying or something or two or three young roosters or something. We kids would have to run and catch them, and then they would take 'em home. So, we did have peddlers.

DW: How about shopping from catalogs, did you do that?

FH: No.

DW: And you canned at home. Were there any other things you did to put something up?

FH: We dried apples. You had to go get your own butternuts. You didn't have any nuts to buy anywhere. Every fall, that was always an outing on a Sunday afternoon, dad, mother and the four kids would go out butternutting.

DW: Looking for trees in the wild?

FH: Yup the place down here on the backside of Pease Mountain. What was her name? She owned it anyway. She'd say "Aubrey the butternuts are falling, come on down." Mother would pack a lunch and we would make an afternoon of it. It was a family activity. It was fun; I looked forward to it.

DW: What did you do with the butternuts?

FH: They went up in the attic at the farm, and dried out, then dad would crack 'em in the wintertime, and we would eat apples, popcorn and butternuts.

DW: You didn't make them into fudge?

FH: There wasn't sugar! You couldn't get sugar.

DW: Sugar was a luxury?

FH: You had to have a ticket to get sugar. You could only have so much you see.

DW: This was when, during the First World War? But in the twenties?

FH: Of course, in the twenties we were grown up. New stuff was coming into the stores, beginning then.

DW: This was something you did as a child.

FH: This was before you see.

DW: Is there anything you did outside the home for special occasions? You didn't go out to dinner, people didn't do that. Do you remember the first time you ate in a restaurant?

FH: Well yes I do remember, in as much as every, probably it was August, before school started that we went. We walked down to the station in Shelburne, got on the train, went to Burlington, walked up Main Street to (the doctors). Let's see now do you remember Who's Ice Cream was, before the city parking lot? I don't know what it turned into now, I guess a theater. Anyway (the doctor) was there and we all went in one by one to the dentist and then we walked down Main Street to what was called the Blue Triangle, which was a ladies'...

DW: Tea Room?

FH: Yeah. We stopped there and we could have one thing. I always had a piece of pie. I remember that, and I walked on down to the station, got on the train, went home, and walked home.

DW: So when you came into Burlington you came by train? How about when you were in college, did you take the train from Shelburne?

FH: No, I drove. I had my own car then.

DW: That would have been 1927.

FH: I graduated '30. I graduated from high school in '26.

DW: So '26-'30

FH: I didn't have a car. I came in on the bus.

DW: You took the bus from Shelburne. Were there any people that had cars that drove into high school?

FH: Mrs. Deyette had a car.

DW: She was the teacher. Speaking of cars do you remember the first person who had a car in town?

FH: Fenwicks had them and Peterson had them.

DW: Where did Fenwick live?

FH: On Old Route 7, up around where the garage is. Peterson...I don't remember his business, but I remember where he lived. The house, coming up from Shelburne, the house on the left before you hit the Road.

DW: The last one. When did your family get its first car?

FH: Probably about '23 or something like that.

DW: Do you remember what it was?

FH: Yes, it was a station wagon, a wooden Ford Station Wagon and had curtains that rolled up there. And down like this to close again, and had a seat up here. I suppose it was the food delivery wagon actually. And I know Fenwick sold it to dad. He got in the car down at Fenwick's garage and drove it home.

DW: He didn't have to be taught?

FH: No, he just drove it home.

DW: Now, how about telephone. When did you get telephone?

FH: That came through when I was quite young. And so we always had that and I remember the number, Number 2. Number 2 on that line. The McDonalds were Number 1, we were Number 2 and they were Number 3 next door. That's all the houses we had on the road.

DW: So you only three on your line.

FH: Yeah. When it rang, you answered two.

DW: Let's talk a little bit about transportation. What was your first car?

FH: My first car I had when I went to college. That would be '26. That was a Ford sedan.

DW: Did you buy it new or used

FH: Used

DW: And you had that through college?

FH: Not through college. Peg and I went together you see. She never drove. I had to do the driving and in the wintertime we had a room together there on Green Street. I was in high school and she was in college. We would come home Friday and get food and stuff to go back Sunday afternoon. Dad would take us back.

DW: What were the roads like?

FH: Well winter roads, I can tell you were nothing. There were days and days and days that you didn't get out of your yard. Any clearing of the snow that you dad was men shoveling. There were men over on that farm and there was dad and Archie on our farm and the three MacDonald boys up above and they all shoveled so we could go out through, but...

DW: Shoveled the actual road?

FH: They had to. There are pictures over there at the farm somewhere. I don't know where they are now, but I can remember the McDonald boys, well of course dad was 6 feet 2 and the McDonald boys were big tall young men too. And they were standing there holding the shovels up and the snow was above that. They (the photos) should be really looked up I suppose, preserved in Vermont life or something to show what it really was. Everything had to be shoveled by hand. There was no type of machinery.

DW: No Plows.

FH: No, and when the snow was that deep of course a horse couldn't go through it. I rode to Shelburne and so did George, many times on horseback. There was a livery stable down, somewhere in that area about where the Craft School is now. It was a livery stable in that area somewhere. And you put your house in there and then you would walk up to school. But you rode horseback because that's the way you'd get down. But then when the snow was too deep for a horse, then you stayed home.

DW: So during the winter that would have been fairly frequent that you would have to stay home?

FH: I don't remember it being very frequently because if we could get out we did. I can remember walking on crust many times. It rained enough that it could hold you up.

DW: Did you have snowshoes or anything like that?

FH: No...never.

DW: Do you remember any of the roads in Shelburne that don't exist anymore?

FH: Route Seven was nothing but a dirt road. We went into Burlington to get coal and stuff. There wasn't but two farms on the way from Shelburne all the way into Burlington. We saw nothing. It was completely dark, you see, if you came home at night or anything. I don't remember what year they did put that in. It must have been about '24. Do you know?

DW: When they paved it? You know I think it was '26 but I'm not sure

FH: '26? It could have been. I remember it as a dirt road and no farms at all except I think its Legging House. That was a farmhouse and I remember Farrell.

DW: There's a big family!

FH: It is. I suppose that's our biggest family. What was her name, Ada? She was in my class. And then Tommy.

DW: He was in my father's class.

FH: Yeah. A little older I think (older) than your father and I. I can't think her name, the oldest girl, she had a beautiful voice. My age. I was a year older than your dad I think.

DW: You started school a year early than too. You started at five.

FH: Five, right. Peterson was my teacher at that time. Carrie Ann. Oh, I loved her so.

DW: She was at the MacDonald School.

FH: Howard was the one that owned the garage up at the top of the hill. At the top of Webster Road. That was Howard Peterson's garage.

DW: Later it became Bovats.

FH: She just loved her husband.

DW: How about the side roads? Was it a long time before any of that was paved?

FH: I don't know. I remember being stuck in snow and mud many years coming in and out of the farm.

DW: Do you remember bridges?

FH: My dad repaired many of the covered bridges. Then of course Archie did them as long as he lived.

DW: Do you remember a covered bridge over the La Platte on Route 7?

FH: Yeah. Then I remember an iron one there. Then I remember them building the cement one.

DW: So you remember all three. Now there's a fourth one.

FH: What is the fourth one now?

DW: They replaced it with another cement one. But you remember the covered bridge?

FH: Mmm hmm.

DW: I wonder if that was taken out when they paved it?

FH: Didn't it get washed in the '27 flood?

DW: Probably, whatever had been there...now in the wintertime what did they have to do for the bridges?

FH: Nothing.

DW: They didn't put any snow on them?

FH: You mean for the sleighs to go through? I don't think we had too many then. I guess I wouldn't have known what a covered bridge was anyway. From our house down to church there was nothing. Not even one bridge. Only the one dad had built the culverts. I suppose that's what you would call them now. We had one at the pond and another one over....

DW: Now who maintained, prior to having a road crew, the roads?

FH: Everybody on the farm, if they had any time at all, they could go out and repair a road and get paid a dollar or a dollar and half an hour.

DW: Who would have maintained the culverts and things like that?

FH: A Road Commissioner. I think Charlie Binder. And he'd send word to dad either by letter or call up on the phone. Take care of such and such I hear it's washed out or something.

DW: Where was the first stoplight Shelburne? It wasn't too long ago.

FH: It wasn't too long ago, but it was very aggravating to all of us... I remember that. Do you remember your dad being aggravated too? We didn't need it.

DW: Obviously we know that the museum is a tourist draw now. You were teaching in Shelburne at that point, what do you remember about the coming of the museum? Well, you obviously remember the moving of the Ticonderoga.

FH: Every inch of it. From my classroom going up across to the museum. I took the kids down, once a week or so, to see how much it had progressed. We watched that. Of course, the great love of it was the fact that dad had helped build it. I remember as a kid in the church up here, once during the summer, we had a Sunday on the Ticonderoga, the whole church, we all went and I can remember the thrill I had. Maybe I was seven maybe I was five I don't remember, holding dad's big finger, walking around, and dad talking to the engineers and all... "This is where I worked, right here, and this is what I did"... all the way through. Don't go down in the engine room, of course you weren't supposed to go in there. Of course they could go. It was a thrill.

DW: Do you remember the moving of the store from the corner? Where the post office had been.

FH: I remember it, but it didn't impact me in any way.

DW: You'd seen buildings move before.

FH: Yeah.

DW: And certainly taking classes to the museum....

FH: Yes, that was wonderful. It was a quite a compliment, my classes were always welcome. Some of the classes were not welcome. The kids didn't behave, but I can remember mine always were. Well you probably remember that you couldn't misbehave with me

DW:I think there is a recollection, something about that. How about Shelburne Farms? Did classes ever go over to the Farm?

FH: Not until later, quite a bit later when they began farming so that you could go and see the milking barn and that type of thing. But as a kid...growing up...Mrs. Webb always let us use the Barn. It was wide open to us. It was wonderful and we would slide down the great long hill where the roads were. There would be a whole bunch of high school kids over there. She never questioned us. I think how much, if we had been smoking kids or drinking kids, what we could have done to those barns. I can't remember I think it was the Morissette's.

DW: Imelda?

FH: Imelda was older. I can't remember there was another farm. Alex?

DW: Morrison?

FH: Morrison, yeah. Their families were on there. And so we were all included, the gang that we all were, the gang that played together at school.

DW: So you would have to come over from your house. That was a hike just to come and play with them?

FH: Well yes, just to slide at night. Archie had a car then.

XB; So great sliding parties?

FH: Big sliding parties, yeah.

DW: Toboggans?

FH: Toboggans and mostly Travitts..

DW: What's that?

FH Two sleds or three, runners. Big long ones.

DW: You mentioned the Shelburne Inn where you didn't go in because they served liquor. Do you remember there being much local use of the place?

FH: My father was the best customer. .. I don't know. I don't know much about that.

DW: He worked at the shipyard, but did you go over to the shipyard as a child?

FH: Once we evidently took him over to work, I don't remember, my mother must have taken him early. We evidently needed the horse and buggy team, and I remember going over to get him, that's all.

DW: Do you remember activities at the shipyard during the Second World War?

FH: Yes, because Peg's husband Mack was a welder, and Bill Horsford worked at the shipyards on building the PT Boats.

DW: So that was their wartime work that they did?

FH: Yeah.

DW: Did the Askes own it then?

FH: Jerry and Wendell. I had two of the Askes at school.

DW: Jerry and Wendell's daughter. It was Wendell and Eleanor and Jerry and Virge

FH: Virge worked at the museum and Eleanor..... Did Eleanor work at the museum?

DW:I don't know. I don't remember Eleanor.

FH: Virge is very friendly.

DW: I know that the Gadhues had some rooms that they let out. Were there any other guesthouses or things you can think of?

FH: No, I remember when that home was Dr. Ranks. And that comes right around back to you. He married Fanny Webster.

DW: Right. Do you remember when they were married? That was before your time, because Hildreth is older than you.

FH: I do remember Milo Webster and your dad both being... Archie and Henry were the best of pals, and Ruth married Maurice Palmer.

DW: What do you think is the biggest change in Shelburne over the years?

FH: Should I say Marsett Meadows? I think the houses on Marsett farm is one that hit my age group. We had the whole meadow to ourselves, for skating and things.

DW: There were ponds down below that I even skated on.

FH: This probably what I miss, the openness of Shelburne and all our farms becoming cluster houses. Half-acre lots? I don't know what you want to call them.

DW: How about the mix of people? Do you think that has changed?

FH: Yes, I would say so, but I lost track of all the people. You see when I started the parents of all the kids I began teaching, the parents were all the people I had gone to high school with. Then of course, these children grew up and then I had their children, and then I had the next generation of children. I don't know of any teacher that could have a better relationship with parents. I enjoyed them all. I can't tell you anything about the ones after I stopped teaching.

DW: Do you think because it was a farming community it was more homogenous than it is now?

FH: I don't know. I can't say anything about the families now. But it used, to me, one big family because we were all good friends. The kids I went to school with.

DW: Do you remember the Green Mountain Parkway Proposal?

FH: I certainly do.

DW: What was your impression of that?

FH: Absolutely disgusted that it didn't go through. We couldn't believe it. The town voted that we wanted it and our representatives went up and voted against it. I can remember that caused one uproar in Charlotte. They had done beginning a parkway and knew what a beautiful thing it was to be able to drive along through mountains, and how much tourism would be coming in and all this and all that. And I remember that very much.

DW: Was that the early fifties? Late forties?

FH: Late forties certainly. We had still had tourist houses you see, tourist places and that was the trouble. Our lady, she had a tourist home. She voted for herself and not for her town. We were just about mad enough to lynch her.

DW: What do you know of the Shelburne Falls ?

FH: I remember Woodsmen Hall because they had dances there. Mother always went down with us and allowed us to dance with certain people, but we had to stay up on the dancehall we couldn't go down where the food was or stuff like that. I knew some of the Woodmen. And the Noonan's and the Mackenzie's I remember being there. Very

kind. Edwin actually taught me to waltz. I didn't know how to waltz and he taught me how to waltz.

DW: Now what would they have for music?

FH: I only remember that there was an orchestra there, but I don't know who was in it. Mother was there with us girls and we would go home. I do remember that. I remember Bacon's store I think it was. That's where the store is now. Then I think it turned to Palmer's store. Lauren Palmer and Archie were the same age. At that time they went on to Burlington High together the two of them. And then I think Lawrence Palmer and Joyce, my oldest sister were the same age, and they went on, and they were both up at the University at the same time. I can't think of too much. There was an active mill in Shelburne...down on the river. For World War I, I remember, at the farm we raised wheat and oats and corn. That was all, and you took that down in bags and have it ground up and that became our flour and cereal for the wintertime, and that was at the Grist Mill. I don't know who was running the mill. There was a creamery of course. That was before the creamery was built over in the village, the co-op. That's now the doctor's office and all. That was a creamery. I remember driving in coming down and around and back home again.

DW: Progressives, do you know who the Shelburne Falls Progressives were?

FH: I have no idea

DW: You were more acquainted with the people in the Falls than you were in the village?

FH: No. I don't think so. Tracy and Maeck's Store and the library....I remember going to that a lot.

DW: Besides the Webb family who did you think of as big landowners in Shelburne?

FH: The Clark Family was very active.¹

DW: John Clark.

FH: Before that all of that belonged to one, Tupper. That was a big farm.²

DW: Do you remember the Fletcher's before the Bostwicks bought it?

FH: Yes, I remember the Fletchers because he had a lobster bake every fall, and that was a big thing, for all the landlubbers you know, nobody knew what they were. Corn rolls and lobster together. That was an open house.

¹ See Sally Martel Interview

² David and Delphina Tupper owned at least 100 acres of farm in 1853

DW: At the stone house?

FH: Yes, at the stone house. Carl Fletcher was his name.¹ There was a big farm up on the top where the O'Briens bought up in there. I remember thinking what a beautiful home it was, unbelievable.

DW: Some of the houses, which are gone, but the one's that are remaining like the...where the Meilleur's live.²

FH: Governor Barstow, that was his home. That's why it is called Governor's Street.

DW: Where Lucy Stewart lives, up in there

FH: There is another family up there, the Atwoods.³ That was a big family.

DW: Did you ever go to Queneska Island for anything?

FH: I don't remember, probably did. We had a boat, Fred and I, a big speedboat. I remember Mott's Bay down here. We would drive out to the house. That's all washed out now. Is that the same island we are talking about?

DW: No, this one is up at Shelburne Point.

DW: Cuban Missile Crisis. Do you remember as far as having a classroom during that time? Sending kids home for the drill or practicing getting under the desks, or any of that sort of thing. Actually I was in your class then, I remember we had to practice going home. We got out of school early and we had to practice going home and going into our bomb shelters or whatever. Did you remember, you weren't living in Shelburne, but do you remember anything about the Shelburne 150th Anniversary Celebration in 1938? I don't know why that would be the date, which is kind of confusing.

FH: I don't remember. I was married in '31, and I was very pregnant in '38 with Patty and I wasn't teaching. I don't remember anything.

DW: Did you teach Shelburne history in your class?

FH: Mmm Hmm

¹ Carl Chittenden Fletcher owned 600 acres before his death in 1927.

² The farmhouse now belongs to Edward and Joanne Precourt who purchased the brick Greek Revival Spear Street home in 1999 from Rita Claire Kelly Meilleur who married Victor Albert Meilleur on November 24, 1956. Ms. Meilleur received the land from her mother, Evalina Kelly in 1996. The Kelly's purchased the farm, which was once the 130-acre "Johnson Farm", in 1930. The land belonged The Kellys originally bought the 130-acre "Johnson Farm" in 1930. Parts of the Kelly's land were eventually sold for the Hullcrest and Westview subdivisions in the 1980s.

³ Frank and Cora Atwood sold their 140-acre farm on Barstow Road to George and Helen O'Brien in 1955. The Atwoods had been on the land since 1917.

DW: So you taught about Moses Pierson?¹

FH: Yeah.

DW: What was considered the grade to teach Shelburne history?

FH: Local history was supposed to be in Grade 4. We often brought up stuff locally if we could. I can remember our 200th when Lord Shelburne came from England. I remember that

DW: And the parade? That was '63

FH: '63

DW: All the parties and there was the parade and there was much activity.

FH: Big big celebration.

DW: There was a barbecue I remember out on the parade ground across from the churches there.

FH: Don't they still have that on the 4th of July every year?

DW: The Methodist Church has that barbecue.

FH: Archie and Peg never missed it, and I never went.

DW: You mentioned the flourmill. Baldwin and White, was the refrigerator company in the Falls, do you remember them?

FH: I don't remember that.

DW: I think I'm going to stop it. Thank you.

¹ Moses Pierson settled in the southwestern part of Shelburne in 1769. In 1778, Pierson and his family were attacked by a raiding party of British troops and Indian in what has become known as "The Siege of the Shelburne Blockhouse". Although fleeing Shelburne after the raid, the Pierson family returned in 1803 and the family remained part of the community for many years. James Pierson, a descendent of Moses Pierson, made a bequest gift of \$38,000 to help establish the Pierson Library.