

**Interviewee: Sally Clark Martel**  
**Interviewer: David Webster**  
**March 11, 2002**

For years, Sally's family farmed both sides of Route 7 on what was once Shelburne's largest dairy farm. Although her family no longer farms, she maintains a presence in the area through her own motel.

**Topic discussed: Farming, Bostwicks, Webbs, Marsett Farm, Shelburne Museum, Shelburne Falls, Shopping, Leisure activities, Clark Family, gardening & canning, Basin Harbor Club, Episcopal Church, Tracy & Maeck/ Doenges & Towle Stores, Reverend Lynwood Smith, Shelburne Craft School, Vermont politicians, World War II, 1963 Bicentennial**

DW: What is your full name?

SM: Sally Clark Martel

DW: How long have you lived in Shelburne?

SM: Sixty-three years now.

DW: Where were you born?

SM: I was born in Burlington – Mary Fletcher (Hospital).



**Picture 1 Mary Fletcher Hospital, Burlington**

DW: Who were your parents?

SM: Martha and John Clark. My mother maiden name was Hicks.

DW: Where were your parents from?

SM: My father was from Waltham, Vermont and my mother was from St. Louis, Missouri and she was born in Arkansas.

DW: What did your parents do for a living?

SM: Farmed on the Clark Farm.

DW: What year did your parents come to Shelburne?

SM: They came in 1935 and I believe, they were probably married that year. I can't remember what year they were married...my brother was born in 1937.

DW: Did they buy the farm at that point?

SM: Yes. Actually, my grandfather bought the farm and he sold it to my father. My grandfather was wealthy and he used to buy farms.

DW: How big was the farm?

SM: 425 acres.

DW: Did your father ever add to the farm?

SM: No. It was just the 425.<sup>1</sup>

DW: How many brothers and sisters do you have?

SM: I had five brothers and sisters. Two brothers and three sisters and two of my sisters have passed away.

DW: Were you a close family?

SM: Yes. Except for my brother John...he always used to pick on us. [laughter} He is really sorry today that he did it.

DW: Where do you live now?

SM: I still live in Shelburne. I live on the farm...we built a house on an acre that my father had given up when we got married.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Clarks lived in a c. 1830 farmhouse that once belonged Ziba Pierson who was the son of Moses Pierson, one of Shelburne's first settlers. The farm then was transferred to the Meech family and then to Colonel LeGrand Cannon and then ultimately, the Clark family. Cannon, a civil war veteran, who was the president of the Champlain Transportation Company and stockholder in a large horse breeding association, also owned the 60-acre Overlake estate in Burlington.

DW: Was this your first home in Shelburne or did you live somewhere else?

SM: We lived in Burlington for a year and then we rented from my parents for four years in one of the tenant houses that burned down.

DW: Were there other tenant houses on the farm?

SM: There were two others. Actually, at one time, there were four but one burned down. It was a duplex and one half burned. I did go to College for a little while too.

DW: Where was that?

SM: It was in Newton, Massachusetts, a school called Mount Ida.

DW: Who were you closest neighbors when you were growing up?

SM: The Marsetts and the LaFlammes were closest farm neighbors.

DW: The Marsetts lived on the corner of Marsett and Route Seven?

SM: Yes.

DW: Where did the Laflammes live?

SM: They lived in a house that is not there anymore...right across the street.

DW: Was that the Harmon House – the brick house that Mr. Bostwick took down?

SM: Yes.

DW: Did the LaFlammes own that farm?

SM: Yes they did. Then there were the Bostwicks on the other side. Their daughters were friends of my sisters and I. We used to see each in the summertime. When they were here, we would play together.

DW: Which one was your age?

SM: Dundeen

DW: How was your house divided up?

SM: There was a kitchen...a big family kitchen that my mother modernized while I was growing up. Before that, it was rather old fashioned. Henry Dubois came in and built her cabinets that were made out of pine. We ate in the kitchen most of the time.

Then there was the dining room. At night, we spent most of our time in the Living Room listening to the Lone Ranger. We had homework to do as well of course.

DW: Do you remember when you first had television?

SM: I think it was about 1956 when I was in high school.

DW: I think that was about the year my parents got one too.

SM: My grandfather had one before that so we always used to think that was the cat's meow.

DW: Where did he live?

SM: He and my grandmother lived in Vergennes on Main Street after he retired. He had a big Victorian house down there. My sister and I used to go and stay overnight with them...when they wanted us.

DW: Since you had hired help on the farm, did you mother feed the hired man too?

SM: No. They had their own families.

DW: What was a typical meal?

SM: My mother was not a Yankee. She did not serve Yankee food with a lot of gravy. She used to serve good meals with baked potatoes...she always had a salad and a vegetable. If we did not eat the vegetable, which often we didn't, she would make us drink V-8. We usually had a dessert and she would prepare the meals. When we girls were old enough would clean up the kitchen and wash the dishes.

DW: Where did your mother get the ingredients for her salad?

SM: She grew it. She had a garden. She loved gardening especially flower gardening. She grew tomatoes and beets and beans and all kind of things.

DW: Did she can?

SM: Yes she did

DW: Where did she keep it?

SM: In the cellar. We also had a great big grape garden and she would always make grape juice and grape jelly every year.

DW: How was your house heated?

SM: They had an oil furnace put in when they moved in there.

DW: Besides the dishes, what kind of chores did you have?

SM: In the summertime, we would go out and help my father bring the cows in from the field. We would have to go up in the field and bring the cows down. Once in awhile, we would drive the tractor while they put the bales of hay on the wagon. We girls did not do too much on the farm but my brothers always did. My mother sad she did not want her daughters working on the farm. For whatever good reason, I know she had good reasons. [laughter]

DW: Besides home, where there any places that kids hung out?

SM: We always went on weekends to a place my grandfather owned down on Basin Harbor. It was a great. Like I said my grandfather was a wealthy guy and he bought about 212 acres of property on the lake. This place was sort of like a mansion. Before you get to Basin Harbor, you take a right. He bought it for investment. He turned around and started selling it off but he kept the big place because all his grandchildren enjoyed it so much. We would go down there every weekend and Patty Horsford, who was always the seventh child in the family, she would always go with us. She was an only child and she was my best friend. My mother, on weekends, would cook something like fried chicken. We would eat it out on the picnic table and then we go boating. We were really lucky to have that. It was pretty nice. We grew up enjoying our summers like that.

DW: Would you go to the movies very much?

SM: Yes, we would go to the movies once in great while. On a Friday night, my sister and I would go after my father was done milking cows. He took us to the movies. He usually said yes and took us to the movies. After he took us to the movies, we would all stop at Howard Johnsons and get an ice cream. That was it. We did not go out to eat for dinner...we always ate at home but an ice cream was a special treat.

DW: Where did you go to school?

SM: I went to school in Shelburne from first grade all the way high school. All in the same building.

DW: How did you get to school?

SM: By a van driven by Russ Little in the beginning. Then they got a couple of busses.

DW: Did you have a favorite teacher?

SM: Mrs. Martin – she taught third grade and I like my first grade teacher, Miss Cole.

DW: How about high school? How many kids in your class?

SM: Eleven graduating. I think when we went into school, I think it was about twenty freshman. Nineteen or twenty. We lost that many. They either moved away or dropped out.

DW: Boys or girls?

SM: It was both, mostly boys. They would get in a fight in the yard, get kicked out and wouldn't come back.

DW: How about social activities. Were there dances?

SM: Yes. They were dances and there was a Prom. Basketball. We always played basketball. We were always part of all the sports...softball.

DW: If a couple of you said no, you probably would have difficulty fielding a team.

SM: Yes. The whole school was 68 kids so from the whole school, you could make up a team.

DW: What kind of sports did the boys play?

SM: Basketball, baseball and soccer later.

DW: Because of the size of the school, were there some classes that you did not get?

SM: We probably did not get typing but I got typing. I went to Champlain College and got typing. We had English, Math, Home Economics, Latin...usually, we only had four classes. There was also Algebra, chemistry, Geometry Physics...those basic things. I think we were all required to take Home Economics.

DW: How about church? I know you went to the Episcopal Church.



**Photo 1 Episcopal Church**

SM: Yes. I was baptized at the Episcopal Church and sang in the choir for many years. The choir was always made up of third graders through high school, so we all sang in the choir together. As soon as we supposedly knew how to read, we went into the choir. Mrs. Hedges was always the organist. Mrs. Ockert was the choir mother. Mildred Ockert would sit in the front row in church and make sure we did not look down into the congregation. If we got giggling, she would take care of us afterwards.

DW: There was probably not too much giggling?

SM: There was quite a bit [laughter] but we used to catch it from her.

DW: And Mrs. Hedges taught at the school too?

SM: Yes she did. She was the music teacher.

DW: Were there other church social activities?

SM: There was summer bible school, parish dinners where the kids had a movie on the big reel. Mr. Bostwick would let us use his. We did not have one in the church. We did not have VCRs.

DW: Growing up, was there was an separation between the Falls and the Village?

SM: No

DW: Was there any business activity in the Falls at the point?

SM: Just the store. There was store there – Galipeau.

DW: Was the granary still in operation?



**Photo 2 Shelburne Gristmill, Late 1880s**

SM: Yes it was. I don't think there was much else – it was all residences

DW: Where did you shop?

SM: We shopped at the IGA Store on Route 7 mostly. You would go up to steps – it was on the corner by the light there. You would go in and the counter would be right there with either Mr. Tracy or Mr. Maeck...or later on Doenges and Towle. You would go to the back of the store, and there would be the butcher who fixed your meat. It wasn't all prepackages. There were wooden floors up and down the aisle. Maybe there were carts. They also had boots and gloves for the farmers. A variety of things. The phones were in the right corner. <sup>1</sup>



**Photo 3 Tracy and Maeck Store**

DW: Where did you do your clothes shopping?

SM: We went uptown to Pennys and Sears Roebuck...on Church Street. My mother did use to shop at the Grand Union on Cherry Street. She would go up there and do

---

<sup>1</sup> From c. 1851 through the 20<sup>th</sup> 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", with the Tracy family having the longest involvement with the store.



most of her shopping there and just run down, like we do now, to the Shelburne store when she needed something. She would head to town once a week and bring back piles of groceries.



**Picture 2 Church Street, Burlington**

DW: Going back to the church...what are your memories of Reverend Lynwood Smith?

SM: We called him Mr. Smith and he was the minister. I believe there were two services and we would go to the eleven o' clock one because that is when we had the choir at that church. I remember sitting over on the choir pew and he would always be standing up at the Lecturne which nobody uses anymore, because it is higher than everyone and they want it to be level. He would always have his hands behind him...folded behind him and together. He fingernails were always kind of long like they were well manicured. He spent quite of his time over at the craft school because he was a craftsman. He used to build furniture..he taught woodworking the school kids. All the boys took woodworking and the girls took weaving and pottery.

DW: Who was the weaving teacher?

SM: Doris Holzinger and then Betty Atwood.

DW: The Clark Family was pretty large. Who were some of the other large families in town?

SM: There were the Fisher family, the Colemans. There were families that came in and left like the Dell family. O'Brien. They did not go to school with me. They were a little bit younger. The Louzon family. They lived right by where the Sirloin Saloon is. They had a big families. There were other families that were not quite so large that I went to school with like the Danyows. Oh, the Thomas family and the Derbys.

DW: How did the Protestants and Catholics get along?

SM: When we were in school, they were was certainly a definition between Protestants and Catholics. You were either a Protestant or a Catholic. Maybe there were some people who did not go to church. There was some disagreement between them. If you were to marry a Catholic – I was a Protestant - we were told that they would go to hell if they married a Protestant. I don't think it mattered too much to us, but there was a difference.

DW: Who were some of the community leaders?

SM: There was Eutie Thomas. There were the O'Briens. Bill Deming. Tom Haddock. I believe that Dunbar Bostwick was a selectman at one time. My mother was on the school board. So was Gail Cole and Eutie Thomas.

DW: Who was your doctor?

SM: My first doctor was Doctor Goodrich from Vergennes because he my father's brother was related to Doctor Goodrich through marriage. He did not deliver me. He was just our doctor. After Doctor Goodrich, we went to doctor Wainer over in Hinesburg.

DW: Did Doctor Wainer make house calls?

SM: Yes he did for a long time and then he quit. Doctor Goodrich did. We also went to Doctor Norton.

DW: Who were some of the past Postmasters?

SM: I remember Al Bacon and Mr. Sevee.

DW: How about librarians?

SM: Oh yes, I remember Marjorie Marsett.

DW: Who is your oldest Shelburne friend?

SM: It was probably Janet Laforce (Oakes). She was my other best friend. They moved to Swanton and bought a farm up there in the 1970s.

DW: The laForces lived on Falls Road?

SM: That was her brother, Maitland. He died of a brain tumor when he was quite young.

DW: Do you remember when Dick Snelling came to town?

SM: Yes I do. He came to town and he was quite vocal in politics and local politics. He ran for Representative probably three time before he won. He was probably one of the best governors we ever had.

DW: Do you remember any other politicians like Consuelo Bailey?

SM: Yes I remember her. In fact, when I was a senior in high school or junior in high school, we were selling magazine subscriptions and we stopped there to sell her some and she bought them.

DW: Do you remember Governor Johnson?

SM: Yes, I remember him because his daughter was a neighbor. He had a camp down at Basin Harbor which was right near my grandfathers so I knew who he was and his daughters.

DW: What do you remember of World War II?

SM: The only thing that I remember about World War II was that my uncle was a prisoner of war in the Philippines. My uncle Tom, he was my mother's brother. He was not a serviceman in the military. He was a businessman who had been captured in the Philippines. He was there for two years. I remember when the war was over how my grandmother...she used to live with us...grandmother Hicks....my mother's mother.. and the day the war was over and how it was such a big deal for her and my mother because it meant my Uncle would be coming home. And he did.

DW: You mentioned your mother living with you. Do you think there were more multigenerational families than there are now?

SM: Oh yes. Absolutely. When you got older, you went and stayed with your children.. Usually the homes were big enough. It was not always easy for everybody but you mentioned. Personalities clashed between in-laws. My grandmother had her idea of what her daughter's husband should be doing for and he didn't have the time to do those things.

DW: For instance

SM: Maybe my mom should not be out working gardening and that was a man's job. My mother acclimated pretty easily. My grandmother felt that she was above that kind of thing. She was the one that always taught us table manners at the dinner table and made sure we kept our elbows off the table and made sure that the knife at the top of the plate.

DW: So when you went to the Bostwicks for lunch, you knew how to do it right. [laughter]. I know your father's barn burned.

SM: I wasn't here at the time. That was the big barn. I was at Camp Hochelaga. That was the year that I got out of high school which as 1958 or 1959. I was a counselor and teaching swimming at Camp Hochewega. Patty and I were up there.<sup>1</sup> They called us and told us what happened...my family did. Patty had a car up there and she drove me back home that night so I could be with my family. They did not lose any cattle but they were milking at the time. They lost the milk. They got all the calves out and later rebuilt it. It was a big beautiful old barn. Probably one of the biggest dairy barns at that time. It had stanchions and over on one side, it had the pen for the calves and one for a bull. Up in hay loft, they had all the hay. They had all these fork that went across the top of the ceiling that would come down. They would drive the wagon under the hay mow and the forks would come and pitch the forks into the hay and haul it up and drop it in the barn. Later on, they baled the hay.

DW: Did you have any other animals on the farm?

SM: Once in awhile we had a horse. We had chickens. We had a chicken house...that is where we got our eggs. The horse....My father would get it because we all wanted a horse every once in awhile. Then he had to get rid of it because we just did not how to control the horses. They were always running away. We always had different horses but we were not good horsemen. We did have dogs of course and cats. We did have pigs early on. We did have farm horses too for the manure. That was earlier when I was younger. Work horse.

DW: Do you remember anything about the Bicentennial Celebration?

SM: Yes I do. That was the first year Kelly was born. I got married the year before and then a year later, I had Jenny. I can remember my mother having everybody up for lunch including the Earl and all the town dignitaries for lunch.

---

<sup>1</sup> Patty Horsford



**Photo 4 The Earl of Shelburne Speaks**

DW: Your father was a selectman...actually the chairman.

SM: Yes. Then we had a Parade in the village. It was a big thing. I think that it was probably one of the biggest things that Shelburne ever did.

DW: My memories is that Shelburne is not a “parade community”. We have not had that many celebrations. Do you remember any?

SM: I don’t remember many that we had.

DW: What are your memories of the Museum?

SM: I remember when I was in High School in the eight grade when they were bringing the Ticonderoga across. I remember watching them from the school as they moved the tracks to the front. They moved it something like 20 feet that day. I remember the museum starting up because my grandfather found the little schoolhouse for Mrs. Webb. That was down in Panton, I believe, and their tearing that down, bringing it up and building it. When I got older, after high school, I worked in the snack bar down there. I remember them having different things over the years. I remember them taking the train station and removing that and putting that over. The old Post office and removing that.

DW: Do you remember Mr. and Mrs. Webb?

SM: Definitely. Mrs. Webb...I knew her before museum because when I used to go to Dundeen Bostwicks, we would go over to the “Brick House” and have dinner. It was her grandfather and grandmother. Sometimes they would have other guests there. I remember Kate and Harry Webb because they lived on the other end of the

building before they built their own house. I remember Mrs. Webb when she used to come into the Museum when I worked there. The minute she was on the grounds, everybody knew it "Mrs. Webb is here! Mrs. Webb is here!" Sterling was always trailing behind her. She would come in and have a real authoritative voice, quite loud. She would bark orders to Sterling or somebody else and giving her greetings to everybody. She had a very dominant personality. She was also very gracious...polite...very nice.

DW: Did you have a boat in town?

SM: We kept it down by the beach. It was a speedboat. It was named JoSaCaBeToNa. It stood for John, Sally, Cathy, Betty, Tommy, Nancy. We took the first two letters of each of our names. That was my idea.

DW: Did you belong to the yacht club?

SM: No. I don't think we belonged to the yacht club

DW: What was your first job in Shelburne?

SM: Actually, it was at the Museum. And then Camp Hochelaga as a counselor. I went there as a kid for three or four years. I got married when I was twenty-two and then I didn't work. Only in the summer at the museum and then I had Kelly a year later

DW: When did you open the motel?

SM: The motel we bought in 1972. Paul Handy had built it. The property at the time there was about a half of an acre that had been sold by my father to John Beckworth who was a cabinetmaker. He sold it to somebody else – an insurance guy. He went bankrupt and the bank had it. Paul Handy bought it from the bank. He did not know what he was going to do with the property. The only thing the town would let him do was put a motel.. he wanted to put a restaurant and they wouldn't let him do it. So he put a motel there. We were living right next door so we asked him when he put it up for sale if he would work with us to buy it.<sup>1</sup>

DW: How has the tourist business changed?

SM: In the beginning, we were really very, very busy. Through the summers and into the fall. Today, it changed in that it starts earlier. It starts in May or the end of April and now it goes right into the end of October. Before that, it would start close to July and end in mid October when the Museum closed. We would never had an overnigher during the off-season which was from November through June. We

---

<sup>1</sup> Countryside Motel on Route Seven

would just have our weekly business which we do just a little bit of now. We have a lot of overnighters now because of Wake Robin and all the people who have been here in the past always come back. We keep real busy. Like tomorrow night we are going to be booked because there is a funeral for somebody at Wake Robin. We only do four or five weekly people.

DW: Was Shelburne Industries part of your farm or the Marsett farm?

SM: The Marsett Farm

DW: What has become of your father's farm?

SM: Back in 1976, my father sold it to a developer, who sold it to a developer, who sold it to another developer. The last developer developed it and that was Peter Holmberg. He built homes up on the hill on the west side of Route 7 ...probably thirty high range homes. Over on the East side, the Vermont Teddy Bear company. Some of the land has been put into a trust...about 150 acres will never be developed. A lot of it is still open except for the houses on top of the hill which is pretty much clustered because they have water and sewer. We have our house and we also bought one of the tenant houses between the motel and our house. That was one of the four tenant houses. We own almost five acres right here. It is all subdivided...it is not all one lot.

DW: How many cows did you have?

SM: I think my dad had, at most one time, about 150 which was one of the biggest herds in the state at the time. It was even bigger than the Webbs.

DW: How did he keep current with new technology?

SM: He kept modernizing. When they lost the barn they built a state of the art hay barn. Although I liked the old barn better. The barn is still there but it is not used. The Teddy Bear Company owns it.

DW: Although you always stayed at home to eat, where were there places to eat?

SM: I can't remember if the Hideaway was there in the 1940s and 1950s.

DW: It started as a hog dog stand

SM: Then there was the Shelburne Inn.



**Figure 1 Shelburne Inn, 1950s**

DW: Did the locals eat there?

SM: I don't think any of the farm people did. I do not know where they came from...probably the people staying there at the inn. It was only the Inn...they did not have the motel there..

DW: When did Shelburne cease to be a farming community?

SM: It probably all started in the early 1970s

DW: When did your father stop farming?

SM: He sold the farm in 1976. Then he worked managing the place for the person he sold it to. He probably stopped in 1979

DW: How did you manage have land on both sides of a busy road?

SM: It was difficult as far as hauling hay back and forth across the road. We used to drive the cattle underneath Route 7 because we had a culvert. When they changed the road...they straightened the road...they were building the road and they were just going to put a little culvert under the road and they were not going to build a big one so that the cows could go under. I remember my father going to them and telling them "Now you either need to build a big culvert so I can drive my cows under there or else we are going to be stopping traffic twice a day." So they did.

DW: What do you think is the biggest change?

SM: The biggest change that there are so many more people here that I don't know. There was a time when I knew everybody in town and where they lived. You knew them because you would see them. You just knew them because they were around. You did everything together. You would go to Town Meetings together and go to church together and go to school. You just knew everybody. I guess that is the biggest thing is that you don't now everybody. I go into Shelburne Supermarket and I



might now maybe one or two people and the rest of them I don't have any idea who they are or even if they are from Shelburne. There does not seem to be much interest with the people living here now in getting to be a community.