

During 1975, a committee met to discuss possible ways for Shelburne to celebrate the nation's Bicentennial in 1976. One idea explored was the writing/presentation of a pageant.

At the time, two long-time active ladies, Hannah Maeck and Charlotte Tracy, who were in their nineties, agreed to be interviewed on tape about their memories of growing up in Shelburne in the 1880s-1920s.

Sheara Billado and Jeanne LaClair interviewed them. Among their recollections are the starting of the Library, going to school in the village, skating get-togethers, the building of Shelburne Farms and the mills on the LaPlatte.

Although the committee elected to use its grant on photographs, the interviews are a delight.

**When were you born, Mrs. Maeck? Can you hear me, ok?**

HM: I was born 1886. The tenth child of my father and mother.

**And how many children did they have?**

HM: Thirteen. Isn't that something?

**That really is. What was it like growing up in Shelburne?**

HM: Well, of course, I remember my youth on the farm as nothing but pleasant things. It was a beautiful life – family, we had a big orchard; it was south of the house. I could go out, sit in the apple trees, pick apples, throw the cores away, dream, you know. It was quite lovely.

And then you went a little farther and you had the little ledge, right opposite of where the industries, you know, are. The industries out there.

**Shelburne Industries.**

HM: That little ledge – we used to spend a great deal of time there. Across the street were three girls and we were four girls in our family. And then south of us were the Ray girls and there were four girls there, so right in that little space there were twelve girls and we played together, the different ages. And one family would have a girl for one age and another and along like that. We used to play on the edge. And then you go along a little farther right by the hoop span now. There's a big ledge there.

**Gecewicz's.**

That was the big ledge. The other one was the little ledge. And then we had the little pond and the big pond. And those things on the farm were beautiful, you know. A perfectly lovely life, I think. We had very little money, but we never knew it. We had everything.

**You had everything that you needed. What kind of games did you play with those girls?**

HM: Oh, house, usually. You have a house. Almost always on the ledge, it would be playing house, you know. We did that a great deal. I don't know why, we had time then to play house. I don't think today they would think of such a thing, would they?

**Oh, little girls play house.**

HM: They do. They play house. Well, that's what we did. And we, of course, in the winter, we had the two ponds to skate on. And the young people from the village would come up. That's 20 would come up in the evening and they would walk up to the pond, the big pond.

**We still skate there.**

HM: Yeah. And skate. And then I remember coming down to the house and they'd come in. I remember my brother rolled in a barrel of apples and I was – it was off somewhere where he could roll it into the kitchen from the sitting room – and I was so embarrassed to think that he would roll in a barrel of apples. Today, it would be funny. (laughs) Isn't that funny? And of course, with all these apples... that was so simple, it's simple fun compared to... well, I don't know much about what the young people do today, but it was a lovely life.

**Did you have a lot of chores to do? On the farm?**

HM: We had boys on the farm and mother always said that the girls didn't have to go to the barn. We always did the work in the house.

**The housework.**

HM: We did the housework and, of course, in those days when you had a farm, you had men living there and we always had what we called a hired girl, which we paid a dollar a week and she lived quite near us and she would come in everyday and help with the work until we got where we girls were big enough to take over. And it's interesting, you know, that house was a new house. My grandfather – we lived over on Sullivan Farms, I don't know if you know that yellow house that was the \_\_\_\_\_ house before the \_\_\_\_\_ and still stands there and when my mother was married, it was kind of interesting, I think. I don't want to bore you.

**You aren't. You aren't at all.**



HM: My mother was the daughter of a Methodist minister and in those days, a Methodist minister could stay but two years and then he had to leave. But, he could come back in another two years if they sent him back, so my grandfather was a stern man, but a minister. He heard the call. He was a painter and he heard the call to go into the ministry.

And my grandmother said, "I never heard the call." (laughs) But he was a good man, a very stern man. I used to be afraid of him because he would ask me something about my schoolwork or ask me to do a problem or something, which I didn't like very well.

Now, he was very influential in getting all the stones for the Methodist church - came from across the Lake and they came by boat, some sort of boat - on the grounds where the Methodist church is now and he had that all on the ground, ready to build and then he had to leave, you know, for another two years. And when he came back, the church was built. Isn't it a beautiful church?

**Yeah. It's a lovely church.**

HM: I think it cost \$75,000. Well, now can you imagine building that building today?

**No, we wouldn't be able to afford it.**

HM: It's a beautiful church. It's rather interesting. My mother's brother, son of the Methodist minister, was an architect and they had \$500 salary in those days. Of course, they had their home. They had it all kept up and lots of donations, but they only got about \$500 and they had two boys and a girl. My mother had two brothers. All educated. Mother went to college and had piano and played music, was very musical and had very good teachers.

My Uncle Charles was an architect and designed the church and he also designed the \_\_\_\_\_ house because my grandfather's architect. And Uncle Silas, the other brother... it was during the Civil War and he was 16 - he wasn't quite 16, so he couldn't get into the Army - I think he lied about his age and said that he was 16 and he went into the Army and he led a company of Black men and he lost his arm and then he went into the ministry after he got out of the service. And, he was an awful nice man, a very smart man, just like Mark Twain. I have some pictures I could show you. And so, he went into the ministry and they had two sons and they were the only two cousins that we had. The only cousins from thirteen in our family and the only cousins that we had were two men and they both are dead now, of course. We are the last ones.

**One of the things that so of interests me is what the buildings were in Shelburne at that point. What is there now?**

HM: Across from our house

**Which is the toy chest building**

HM: was a beautiful farmhouse. I never could understand why Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ took it down. It was one of those old brick buildings. Every room had a big fireplace in it. It was a gorgeous house. Now there were three girls over there, right across the way, you see. So, we had a perfectly beautiful time. But the house... oh, it was awful... I don't understand how he happened to do it. He was afraid when he came from his farm, coming around the front of it, it was kind of dangerous, but when you think of Webb putting up the museum, he could have moved the house because he moved houses from way off, you know, But, that was an awful blow to have that beautiful, beautiful house taken down. One of the most beautiful farms in Shelburne.

And then we came down to the village. And all those houses on Hillside Acres was a beautiful meadow. And the town was made up of farmers, many beautiful farms. And that was a beautiful meadow. And then, across the way, as you come down, you know, on the other side of the road, is all developed into houses, that was a beautiful meadow. And then you went down, you went across the river. The first school I went to... we went through the house. We had to walk down through the pasture, under the railroad tracks, under what they called the culvert. And we'd go through that culvert and then there was a little cottage, which was the schoolhouse and that is where I began school.

**Is that cottage still standing?**

HM: I don't know whether it's there or not, But you know, there are cottages over at the Webbs and I can't tell you whether that was used now as a house or not.

**Was that a public school or a private?**

HM: It was public. It was all district schools then, you know. And that was the district. And my brother Silas taught there for a little while and he got \$5 a week. That was his salary. It was quite lot of money then. You have no idea, the difference in the value. You can't compare them one bit. A loaf of bread was five cents; a quart of milk was five cents. You see, there's no comparison because...

**Things have changed so much.**

HM: And he taught there a little while. I went there to school for a little while and then I came to the village. We came to the village school and the village school was where the school stands now. But it was one building and it housed all the grades up to the high school. The high school was on the second floor. And one teacher taught everything in the high school. If you took Latin – I did take Latin – and mathematics, anything. And then there was a teacher for the intermediate school. We had no grammar school, so I was 16 when I graduated from high school, not because I was smart, but because there was no middle school. And at 16, you graduated from high school. Can you imagine?

**No, it's quite a lot of responsibility.**



HM: and after that, they put in what was called the grammar school, which is the middle school now, which was much better.

**How many grades were there?**

HM: Primary, intermediate and high. That's what you had.

**So, it wasn't broken up into first grade, second grade, third grade...**

HM: Well, I guess there were, but it was primary school. I guess there were two classes in the primary school. In the intermediate, it would be, well...

**Like fifth or sixth grade?**

HM: Well, yeah.

**How many years did you attend the primary school?**

HM: Two years, I think. I think you went in when you were six years old and then you went into intermediate when you were eight years old and then you must have gone into the high when you were twelve. I think I was there four years and I graduated at 16. So, twelve. I went into the high school at twelve.

And, it was a good school.

**You spoke of your Uncle Silas teaching?**

HM: My brother Silas. He didn't teach there very long. He taught there for a little while.

**What were the qualifications for a teacher? Did he have to go to a teacher's college to be a teacher?**

HM: No, he didn't. I think he was filling in for a while. But I don't think you had to even have a college education to teach the kind of ... it was a graded school and that probably wouldn't have been more than four grades. Then you'd come to the village to go to the village school.

**You just had to have done it yourself and done fairly well.?**

HM: Huh?

**You'd just have to have gone through...**

HM: Yes. Yes. And then I came to the village school. I remember going to the village school and going to the high school.

**One of the things that young people always ask is, when you had your lunch hour or your recess, what games did you play?**

HM: Well, we played ball and I don't know what. We had a recess of 15 minutes. And then noon, we always brought our lunch. And, well \_\_\_\_\_. There were a lot of lovely young people – probably sixteen girls that were close friends of mine. I remember \_\_\_\_\_ and I went down to the store from the school. And we let our hair down. We had it braided, you see, and we let it loose. When we got back to the schoolhouse, we were reprimanded and never could do that again. Let our hair down. (laughs) Isn't that ridiculous?

**Were there other things that some of the boys used to get in trouble with at school? Do you remember them being reprimanded? You were reprimanded for letting your hair down. Can you remember things that today would seem silly that the boys were reprimanded for?**

HM: \_\_\_\_\_ was quite rough. I don't remember much about that. No.

**What about courting? When you were growing up and starting to be interested in young men?**

HM: I remember we didn't go out much. My mother always wanted to sit home. We knew boys, but we weren't much interested in them. But there was a young man at a friend of mine – Mattie, her name was, she just died, the last of our group to die – and there was a young man, he was a doctor and he always had a young boy living there to bring his horse up to the door when he went out. And there was a young man there and, oh, he was kind of interesting and I liked him. But, I had nothing to do. I mean I went out with him.

But I remember one time, we had a man get off a train – they went right through here, several a day – and he had smallpox. And, of course, the town was petrified and they didn't know what they would do. And we thought – this was the year I graduated – and I thought that, oh we wouldn't have graduation, which was the greatest event of the town. I'll tell you more about it. And he, I remember I was in the school and I was feeling so bad and he was in my class and he kissed me. (sighs) And that was something.

**What did you do?**

HM: Well, I liked it. (laughs)

**Now there's a thing that hasn't changed.**

HM: But, he lived with my dearest friend's parents. But, we did have the graduation. They put this man who had smallpox in a little house down by the Bostwick Road, where John \_\_\_\_\_ had his garden, and had a man take care of him and then we went on. Of



course, the fear of smallpox was an awful thing in those days. Now, we hardly think of it because of the vaccination. I remember that. Oh, I was so relieved.

And, I wrote everybody when they graduated. There were six in our class – ten was a very large class. And he was one of my classmates. Everybody wrote an essay and delivered it. Graduation was perfectly beautiful. It was over at the Methodist Church. We all went and got flowers and decorated it. It was perfectly beautiful, really. And then the ladies of the Methodist church always served ice cream upstairs in the church parlor. For sale, of course, make a little money.

**Was it homemade? Was it homemade ice cream?**

HM: Of course, it was homemade. We didn't have the other kind. Homemade cookies or cakes.

I wrote an essay, The Town We Live In, which I want you to see, but I left it with somebody else. It's called The Town We Live In and it's really quite a nice little history of the town from the very beginning, which you might be interested in. I'm sorry I haven't it because I let the minister take it for some boy scouts who are looking up some things and I haven't gotten it back yet. Then, the boy came in yesterday – Stevens boy – and he was writing up things and I didn't have it for him. But, I hope they'll bring it back. But I think you'll be interested. It's really a good little history of Shelburne from the very beginning. Mrs. Moses Pierson, from the same family that the library was named after. It's really interesting. I'll try and get it. Are you in an awful hurry? I can try and get it for you, but I want it back, you see. I think that she'll get it back for me. I wished I had it.

**It might be convenient to photostat it and then you'd have the original copy and you wouldn't have to worry about it.**

HM: Yes, that's right. Everybody had an essay. My husband was four years ahead of me and his was on The Philippines. It was very interesting, you know. You wrote a nice little essay and then you got up and delivered it.

(She pulls out an album.)

My mother made this beautiful dress. This was me when I was graduating, for my graduation. It's a hard picture, but it shows me, at 16, and here's the dress. It's a beautiful maid's hook or something, nice cotton material, all those tucks. Mother made everything.

That is the difference today. Graduation was the greatest event of the year. Everybody came. The church was packed with people for the high school graduation. It was just a lovely thing, really, that high school graduation, you think back on as being a lovely event.

**What did the boys wear?**

HM: They wore good shoes.

**Did they wear the high collars?**

HM: An ordinary shirt with a tie and their best shoes. They didn't wear these clodhopper shoes. \_\_\_\_\_ said that at graduation some of these boys up at the college, she said that there was one boy barefooted in his robe.

The Stevens boy, who was here the other day, I don't like the long hair on boys. It's all right, but I like a clean cut. And why they want the long hair, the boys, and why the girls wear overalls. In our day, overalls were for the hired man, you see, and it's a hard thing to take. You have to come along with it, of course, you do. But you still don't have to, you see... a pretty girl in a nice little skirt and blouse is pretty, but...

**One of the things I was wondering about is, how is it different to be a young wife nowadays than it was when you were first [married]?**

HM: of course, when I was married, and I still feel the same way, I wasn't crazy to get married, but I was a year before I married the man I married. I married an awfully nice man and he was from home, you see. I married a man from home, with the same background. When I got married, I expected to stay with the man I married. Nothing else entered my head. And I think that's a great difference. I think some of the young people now realize that if they don't along, they can get a divorce. I have one son who's divorced. A perfectly lovely son, but they couldn't live together. There was no other woman or any other man. It's sad, but every family has it.

But with me, of course, well I don't see how they can live. I don't see how a man can leave of family of children that are his, but who am I to say? I said to one woman one time about young people living together, I said to a friend of mine, we were kind of discussing it and I like to discuss it because I find out that I don't know that I'm right. I said to a friend of mine, I said, do you ever see in the Bible a write-up of Adam and Eve – married?

It's true. And then you never knew, Joseph and Mary, you never knew that there's a thing in the Bible about their being married, is there? Now can you understand these young people, if you read the Bible, how you would have known? Is there something to that? That think it's all right? And if they think it's all right, who am I to say? I don't believe in it. I couldn't do it, but I'm not condemning anybody. I know some lovely young people...

(break for phone call)

**One of the things I wanted to know, Mrs. Maeck, is how keeping house has changed?**



(Mrs. Maeck has to get up to close the door because of the traffic noise. She talks about how much the traffic has increase and describes it as "terrible.")

**I was wondering about the differences in keeping house. We have so many machines now that do our work.**

HM: I would love to tell you about keeping house. When we lived on the farm, we had no water supply, only a cistern. There were eave troughs on the roofs and it ran into a pipe that took it down into a big cistern that was built in the cellar and that was our water supply and, of course, if it didn't rain, we had to draw water. But, we didn't use water. We didn't have a bath every morning and a shower. We had a bath Saturday night and we had no bathroom for a long time. Everybody used to take a washtub and you'd have it in the kitchen and you'd heat your water.

First, you'd pump your water. You'd carry it to a boiler on the stove – a stove that you had to keep the fire going with wood or coal – and you heated a big boiler, which they use for woodboxes nowadays. They're really antiques and they like them. Mrs. Tracy has one, I think, over there. Then you carried the water to the boiler. You heated the water. Then you got a bench out. You got two big washtubs on the bench - sudsing and rinsing. Then you had a washing machine that you washed like this. I never knew the kind when you scrubbed, but we had a washing machine. We always had a boy, one in the family, who did that.

**You turned a crank like, are you saying?**

HM: We rang. We had a ringer. We did it by hand.

**I'm having trouble understanding. You put your clothes into the machine?**

HM: Yes. You put your clothes... you put water into a machine, then you put your clothes into the machine and washed them. You did it by hand. Then you rang out the clothes and put it in the sudsing tub. Then you had the rinsing tub. You always had blue-ing, that would make the water blue. Then you rang it from the sudsing into the rinsing, then into a basket on the floor, a big basket, and then you carried it as far as from here to the shack and hung them out on four big clotheslines strung from post to post. Then, you'd watch for the weather. If it rained, you had to take them down, bring them in, wait until it dried off and put them out again and dry them all. Then, at night, you sprinkled them; all these clothes were dried, you sprinkled them up and put them in a basket. Then, the next day, if everything worked well, you got them dry, you put them in the basket. You got five irons (she got one out.) Lift it.

**It's very heavy. That must have been tiring, too.**

HM: We didn't think anything of it. It was the way we did things.

**And that was put on top of the stove to heat.**

HM: On top of the stove. You had a good, hot fire and you'd keep these going. You'd put your ironing board up and then you went to the stove and you took it in your hand like this... and you always found out if it was hot enough. You'd do this. Then, you took it over and you did your ironing and when it got a little cooler, you put it back and you got another. They'd be usually five in a set of these irons.

**How old were you before you started doing that? As a child, did you iron?**

HM: I suppose we all did. Mother did; the hired girl – we always had what we called the hired girl. We had everything, but we were \_\_\_\_ for money.

**You did have permanent press clothing that you could get away without ironing.**

HM: And we wore petticoats. We would have sometimes a petticoat, cotton petticoat with a flounce that deep on the petticoat.

**Were they starched?**

HM: Starched. And sometimes you'd wear two of them if you wanted to look very nice and have your dress stick out. They were beautiful. They were beautiful petticoats. Lace on the bottom of them. Of course, call made by machine at home. We never bought a thing. I don't as I ever had anything made, only... we always made everything.

Well, then you ironed these which took all morning long. We had linen tablecloths that had to be ironed and you'd have at least three a week to keep them fairly clean. And napkins with a silver napkin ring and everybody had a napkin linen, rolled up everyday. You had about three tables a week with the napkins. And, it meant an awful lot of work, but there were four of us girls and my mother and we always had a hired girl. We didn't think anything about it.

Now, we had milk cans for the cows. They put the milk in a milk can. It wasn't sterilized milk in those days. You put it in a can and, in the very hot weather, they had a trough that they put water in - and water was scarce, too - to keep it cool enough to take to the creamery the next morning and sometimes it would lobber.

**You had no ice? You didn't have ice?**

HM: Ice house. The milk couldn't all be put in the ice house because it was put in these tubs of water and I washed the milk cans. To wash them, you carried the water from the sink to the porch where I used to wash them. You washed them first with cold water. Then soap suds and then you sterilized them; heat them with boiling water, pour it over them. Can you imagine that? Just think of it.



Sometimes you'd take them to the creamer, which was just down in Shelburne Falls; from our farm, drive with a horse to the milk factory. And sometimes you'd bring back a can of lobbered milk because overnight it lobbered.

**Lobbered is soured?**

HM: Soured.

**Curdled.**

HM: And my mother would put it on the stove and make the most delicious cottage cheese. We had great big balls of cottage cheese. So, sometimes we didn't feel badly when the milk lobbered.

(end of side)

**That's why, as a wife you didn't go out and rake hay? When you were a young married woman, this wasn't part of your chores.**

HM: Not in my married life. I was married and I had a wedding, a lovely church wedding. Mother made all the clothes. I had a beautiful dress that my uncle gave me. A beautiful dress, which was made by a dressmaker. And I had a beautiful suit, going away suit, that my brother, who was a dentist, gave me. And we went to the Methodist church and we went around and invited all the people by word of mouth, my husband and I, and I thought it was a lovely wedding. My sisters were bridesmaids, very simple.

The town decorated the church. It was just a beautiful thing. The whole thing was so sweet, you know. In those days, when there wasn't so much going on. And, I'd go down to the church. My husband had a carriage from Burlington, where the horses go, what do you call them... a beautiful carriage with two horses. My brother and I drove down to the church and he gave me away. Then (laughs) we had the reception where I was going to live.

And then, we came out of the church and the carriage brought us down to the house over here. My husband had a car. He bought the first of anybody in town – he loved mechanics and everything. And we had what was called a surrey with low doors and a front seat and back seat. But he put some on, so we took our honeymoon in a car. Think of it! Sixty-three years ago. It was quite different than today. It was quite something. The car could go 38 miles per hour for speed. It took us four days to get to Maine - Christmas Cove, where we were going with my brother. Four days to get there.

**Where did you stay in the meantime? Were there motels?**

HM: We drove to Waterbury. There was a beautiful old hotel there. There was a beautiful old hotel in Waterbury. We stayed there the first night. Then we went to Bretton Woods in the White Mountains – the Bretton Woods Hotel. We stayed there one night. Then we

went to Old Man in the Mountains. You know where that is? And we stayed there one night. And then we went to Portland (laughs). We stayed there one night. And then we went to Christmas Cove. It was about 60 miles from Portland. And that was the honeymoon.

We put our car on the boat and we went to Boston on the water. Then we'd go home. We had two weeks honeymoon. And I was an innocent little girl and enjoyed every bit of it.

**It was interesting.**

HM: I'm telling you this because of the difference in the times, you know. Now my daughter was married over here in the Episcopal Church. There was no big wedding at all. She was right out of college and she got a job near Boston in Massachusetts and she taught music and English. And she met a man; he was one of the teachers. And they came home. This was in September. She brought him home one time and we thought he was a nice man. And then she brought him back again and he said he wanted to marry her. She was our only daughter and he wanted to marry her. And we didn't know anything about him. My husband and I sat down and we said, he's an intelligent man. He seems like a very nice man. So, what will you do? They had the wedding at the church and they were married.

Well, he turned out to be the loveliest man you can imagine. He's in the embassy now. He has a job in the Foreign Service at the embassy, what you call a coach la passé and they travel around and then... this year, he has to retire because he is 68 years old and you can't be in the Foreign Service after that. So, they'll come home, which I'm looking forward to. It will be nice to have them home a little while.

**Well, you certainly look healthy.**

HM: That was kind of interesting. You have to take what comes, and it turns out he's a delightful man, very bright and always nice. A fine man, a very fine man. And they have had a very happy life in the foreign countries.

But, that is just for us. Don't tell anybody that because you asked me the difference in how we lived.

**You married someone that you'd known from a family that you'd known all your life, whereas nowadays, society is so mobile, we do. We bring home young men or women.**

HM: Yes. Now my second son - we had John, the doctor. Now my second son, Bill, he is one of the loveliest men - tall, good looking, bright and he married a girl of his own background, a very lovely girl.

(interruption in the tape)



I'll ask them and I find they talk a lot. You get an idea. It isn't fair for one generation to think their generation is the only generation. Now I was brought up, we had to look at playing cards – my grandfather was a Methodist minister – we had to look at playing cards as something evil. So, we never had playing cards in the house. And, of course, my mother... we never were disciplined and we took it for granted and we had a lovely home life. The only thing that I ever remember being disciplined was a friend of mine, who wanted me to stay over night with her and her mother wanted her to come home at night. So, this girl came up and asked mother if I could come to the village and stay all night and mother said she didn't want me to stay all night. This girl and I went out from the sitting room and slammed the door. So this is the kind of discipline we got. Mother came to the door and she said, Ma'am come back and close the door. Now you wouldn't believe it if I told you that I felt terrible that I had done such a thing as to slam that door on my mother.

**That does seem quite amazing to me. Why have things changed?**

HM: I don't know that it's for the better. I'm just telling you because you asked me what things were like. Now that was the discipline. We just took it for granted. We had wonderful parents. I think my mother... her picture is up there. She's the one who helped them out with the library, you see. And she was a marvelous person. We had no money. Not anything extra.

But she was intelligent and she was educated. She had thirteen children. Eleven grew up. My oldest sister died - an infant who died. And she had another daughter. Lee and Kim were twins, then Adelaide. And Adelaide had typhoid fever. Now we don't have typhoid fever anymore. Today, things have been cured. Of course, that was an awful blow.

It was a wonderful life, I think.

Of course I had time to think of it now – more than I did before.

**I was very interested. I know that you were involved in the library. Mrs. Tracy mentioned the Old Maids Convention. She said you might like to tell us about it.**

HM: (laughs) You see, we had the library in the store.

**Harrington's.**

HM: That was what we had. That's where we made our money. We lived with it. We owned the store.

**What store was this? Was this where Harrington's is now?**

HM: We ran the business and the library had a corner room over the store, which was rented to the library. I was librarian there for two of three years. And I got a salary for it, the only money I ever earned. I got \$4 a month for three hours in the morning – three

hours in the afternoon and two hours in the evening twice a week, which was maybe fifty cents a day. For the month, you got \$4.

**How old were you when you were a librarian?**

HM: I must have been in my twenties because I had graduated from high school. I walked down from my home and spent three hours in the library in the afternoon. It was a nice little library. Then the young people, we started a library building club and one of the things to come out of it was the Old Maids Convention. All the young people were in it and we put on several different entertainment nights. I sang a song, "Why don't the men..." (she sings some of it and laughs). And it was funny. And there were other things like that. We put on other things just like that.

We were very poor, you know. They were very poor shows, but they brought in the money. And Mrs. Webb helped us a lot with the library. She used to give \$50 a year for books and my mother was one of the trustees and she chose all the books. Every book that was in that library was read before it was put in. Can you imagine doing that today?

**Ah! She'd be overwhelmed.**

(laughter)

**\$50 in those days must have bought a lot of books.**

HM: Well, \$50 a year was pretty good and mother was pretty conscientious about it and she had books from other libraries sometimes and so that \$50 was spent. And so, that was a very fine library we had. Very fine. But, I was thinking about Mother reading the books today. I think she would have come along.

We don't know our time was the best, you know. It was very lovely for us, but everybody wasn't...

**It might have been very confining for someone else.**

**If you were born in '86.**

HM: '86. I'm 88 years old right now – almost 90.

**That's not very far away.**

**You must have been 14 then at the turn of the century happened. Do you remember the celebration?**

HM: I'd have to think about it a little bit.

**Well, maybe there wasn't a big one. I just wondered.**



HM: I don't know that there was. I'll ask Charlotte. She'd got a memory for things like that, better than I have.

**What about when Admiral Dewey came?**

HM: I remember. I remember Dewey, but I don't remember the details. Charlotte can tell you more than I can. I'll ask her.

**When you were of marrying age, did women have dowries?**

HM: No. They didn't.

**But they had hope chests and things that they brought into the marriage.**

HM: Oh, my husband gave me a hope chest as soon as we were getting married – a great, big hope beautiful chest. And that was fun. We were engaged for about a year. So we had fun getting new linen and things like together.

**Did you embroider all the linens?**

HM: Yeah. Everything like that. And, it was too big. S, we had it in here for a long time, but when we moved into this house I think we got rid of the chest because we had so many cupboards and things in the house, that we didn't need it, but it was a very nice one.

My husband was a very unsophisticated man. He had a great respect for women. I always had the loveliest feeling of protection. I wonder if they have that today. You just felt that you would be protected. He was the kind of man – brought up on the farm, but this was our life. He was the kind of man that would want to always open the car door for you, which in itself that doesn't mean much, but it's not that way so much today. It's a lovely feeling. I think it's a lovely feeling. That's the way he was and he wanted to, when you were in a store or anything, he wanted to go down the aisle first and stand and let you go in and he always had it. And it was nice for me. You'd like that, wouldn't you?

See, nowadays men and women have equality. I think for some things, but I don't believe that at all because I think we were made to be different and a man is a man and a woman is a woman and you be this way. I think I'm right, girls, but I may be absolutely wrong about it. But there is something absolutely lovely about it.

The woman had a beautiful life of having children and keeping your house and doing that. And if you didn't have to go out, today, of course, that wouldn't satisfy the young people today and I don't know that things are better. I don't know if this is better. But, this is the way I came up.

**I think your home life is different today, too.**

HM: Home life is very different and woman have a much more, important outside world than we did.

**Did woman work at all? For money then?**

HM: Well, teachers. My sister was a teacher.

**After she was married?**

HM: No, she wasn't married. My only sister was a teacher. Right from college. She went to New York and she was 50 years in the same school - a very lovely person and a very fine teacher. My sister, Ruth, who lives there now with me was a teacher, too, but she got married. And Margaret was having \_\_\_\_\_ marriage, but she had to work. She was head of that teachers' retirement home in Burlington - Ruggles. But, she ran that for years - very well. But, of course, I am different. I was lucky. Really lucky. Lucky or something. I don't know what, but my life is kind of charmed. I had four children; they are nice to me. I don't have to live with them; they don't have to live with me. Isn't it wonderful? It is. It's a wonderful thing. I have enough money - income enough to live on. It would be poverty and welfare if I had a family, but I own the house and I can live here all I want. Just pay the taxes. It pays for all expenses.

**You've lived in this house for many years?**

HM: Sixty years. We built it in 1915. That was 60 years.

**You were a Tracy before you were a Maeck.**

HM: Yes, I was a Tracy.

**And it says Tracy was a Maeck before she**

HM: We married brother and sister and lived side by side for all these years until they moved over. We each had four children and double cousins and they're all related to each other.

Really, it was a very nice life. I know I'm a great talker, but I'm reminiscing, you see. (laughs) That's what we want to do, when we get older, of the happy times.

**I think that's lovely.**

HM: Well, it was a lovely life.

**It's nice to hear someone be able to say, what a lovely life I had.**



HM: Yes. And I wish so many... it's a beautiful world, you know. And the trouble... What is the trouble with the world now? I don't know what it is, but I think we have to go back to some of this, you know.

**Some of the important things?**

HM: Some of the things that I... all the things. Look at this television and the records. I don't what I'd do without it.

**You get very used to those things, don't you?**

HM: We didn't have any of those things when we were young. We had a telephone, but we didn't have this. But what would I do? I have these beautiful records. I can hear the most beautiful music in the world. Play it over again, if I want to. I haven't had that only three or four years, but my other son in California that I just have to mention a record – and I have some beautiful ones there. Chopin is my favorite. Are you musical, girls?

**I love Chopin.**

**I play the piano some.**

HM: You play the piano?

**Yes. We enjoy it. We have just acquired an old upright in mint condition. We've enjoyed it enormously.**

HM: Tell me if I bore you. I had a wonderful uncle – Uncle Charles. He was a music teacher in New York for 50 years – a marvelous teacher. He lived in the brick house. His grandparents lived over where Cal and Tracy live. And he was a music teacher – a thoroughly fine one. He loved to teach and he played, of course. Then, he got ready to retire. He built this studio, that I want you girls to see, onto our house. He was going to board with me and live in the studio, which was there for him to retire into. And, it's a beautiful room that he built and he was going back to New York once a month to give lessons to some of the pupils who wanted them. And he was finished and he was here, and the house was finished. He had lived in Carnegie Hall for 50 years – his furniture and his piano. He had a big grand – a concert grand Steinway. And then he had the little piano. You always had two pianos, if you were a music teacher. So, he came up and every New Year's, when he came up, and I'll never forget going down. He was pretty old. He said, Ma'am, it's gorgeous. And his furniture hadn't come yet. And he went back to New York and he was taken ill and he died. And he never got into the little studio. Now, all his furniture came up here – the grand piano, this great big Steinway, concert grand piano and the little one. And I had this studio – we had it – and they all took music lessons from a pupil of his, who came up to Shelburne and I boarded her for teaching the children.

**Isn't that something!**

HM: It's quite interesting, I think. And Helen took piano lesson and she didn't like this woman at all. None of us liked her very well, but she was a marvelous teacher. And Helen knew it and had to practice. Sometimes, she'd practice five hours a day at the studio.

**She must be quite an accomplished pianist.**

HM: She an accomplished pianist. I think when she comes back, she'll give piano lessons. She never did give them until she was in practice band and then somebody had to go away and a teacher asked her to take over her pupils. And now she loves it.

He never lived in that beautiful place, but I kept it for a while when the children were all out of college and then I couldn't do it. I couldn't afford to do it. So, we began to rent it. And we rented it to two or three different people. And then, Margaret \_\_\_\_\_ – you know her at all?

Lovely person, wonderful. She'd been through the war, you know – had everything taken away from them in Austria. And her daughter came and saw Helen and Dick were there for a little while and she took over the studio. And she lived for 16 years, but the piano had to be moved out, you see, the two pianos and the furniture. So, nobody would want two pianos when they are renting a place to live. So, we had to sell the piano – the big Steinway. Now we know where it is and the kids may get it back again. I don't know.

**That would be lovely.**

HM: It would be lovely – sentimental, you know.

**You know what I wanted to ask you, do you remember when electricity came into Shelburne?**

HM: We had no electricity when we built this house. We had a coal range in the kitchen and no electricity for washing things. So, we had a boy to do. We had set tubs in the laundry. I'll show you the house, if you want me to. I think it is nice. And, three years after, we had electricity. And we had an oil stove. We got rid of the coal range. Then, we had an oil stove – that was the next thing. And then we had electricity, so we had an electric stove. But three years, we didn't have it. And, of course, we had cisterns here. We didn't have the water system.

You know, there were no flush toilets.

**That's right.**

HM: When we were up on the farm. (laughs) When I think back, it's awful funny. We were four sisters and my oldest sister would take a lantern before we went to bed – there was always a chamber, what we used to call a pot under the bed and you had a washstand



with the washbowl and the pitcher and you used to carry water and slop jar. And that used to be taken care of everyday and the pots had to be washed out, you know, and taken out to the back house. My sister would take us all out there – three seats – before we went to bed. In the cold, we'd put on our coats. Now think of it. No flush toilets or anything.

Now that, I guess until I was married, was the way it was. We didn't have electricity. We had lamps that had to be done every morning. The lamps had to be filled. We had six of eight lamps.

**That was quite a job. Mrs. Tracy was telling us about that.**

HM: You didn't think of it that way. Everybody was doing it and we weren't doing the other things you young people are doing. There were no cars. We were at home. We'd get our work done and go and change our dress and go and sit on the lawn and enjoy it. It was a really beautiful life.

**What did you have for breakfast? What time did you have to get up in the morning?**

HM: You see the milking had to be done. So, they did that. They probably got up ... Well I don't know. I guess that we got up at half past five, the men. But we had breakfast and we always had oatmeal, usually – hot oatmeal, bread and butter – we never had toast. Then, if we had working men, hired men, we'd always have salt pork and potatoes and coffee and doughnuts, usually, doughnuts. And that was the breakfast as I remember it.

**Not egg. No eggs.**

HM: Well, I don't remember that we had eggs. We might, sometimes, have fried eggs, something like that. Once in a while, griddlecakes and we'd have griddlecakes on our range and it used to make me so mad. I would stay out and cook the griddlecakes and they would eat so many, they'd never get through. You'd take a plate in and you'd take the other plate out and fill them. I remember that quite clearly. (laughs) And they were hungry and they were good, you know. That's what we had.

Sometimes we had butter and sugar on them. We had maple syrup, of course, and brown sugar syrup. (laughs) Oh, I used to get so mad. I thought they'd never stop eating.

**So, you ate breakfast very early. What time did you have... was your main meal at noon?**

HM: At noon and we always had meat and potatoes and vegetables, if we happened to. And always pie. So, you made two or three pies everyday. And for supper, you had warmed over potatoes and sauce. It would need to be applesauce or something that you had canned. Always a cake, bread and butter – we didn't toast. God, you couldn't toast for all those people on the stove, you see. But, always a fresh cake everyday. It was a big family. Those were the desserts – sometimes rice pudding, but no salads or anything like that. That we had.

That was in my day. You girls are talking to a person, who – it doesn't seem possible does it! Salads and things like that, the things you have today.

**It is a different way of eating.**

HM: Applesauce because we had apples. We always kept barrels of apples in the cellar.

**I bet you had rhubarb sauce.**

HM: Rhubarb. Yes. Oh, nothing better.

**Nothing better.**

HM: I wish I could make one. I haven't made one, but of course, I have to watch sugar. I have diabetes. And so I can't, but oh, the rhubarb. Do you have rhubarb?

**I don't have rhubarb, but I plan to put it in and I'm going to this year.**

**I got my first rhubarb this year.**

HM: Do you like rhubarb?

**Oh yes, we love it.**

HM: Let me go out and get some. I'm not using it this year because I don't use it. But, oh, you can have rhubarb. You can any of the flowers that you want. You can take back the lilacs. They only last the day.

**They're worth it though for that day.**

HM: When you girls go, walk around there and take some.

**Thank you.**

HM: And I've got lots of \_\_\_\_\_. I had a man here yesterday who is trying to get my asparagus bed fixed up.

**We just put our asparagus in.**

**I'm putting some in, too. I've never them.**

HM: Oh, put it in.

**It's so enjoyable.**



HM: My daughter and her husband will have it sometimes two months in the summer. Last summer they were here and the summer before and Dick knew everything. They had built a house with their own hands down on the Charlotte Road. Do you know Charlotte?

You know the Orchard Road? Well, you know where John Maeck lives, the doctor? You know where the orchard is? You go right past the orchard and keep going and my son lives down there on the Lake. He built a house there. You go farther on and on the left-hand side, you'll see this house that Dick and Helen, too, built with their own hands. Lovely fun. And there's a red barn before you get to it. They wanted a place to come to when they had to – when they came back to live. But they may not be that long.

It was fun – they built this house. They put in electricity. They put in everything. It's a darling little house. The living room's on the top floor, so they've got the most beautiful view of all around there. Perfectly lovely.

**Did you tell me what your husband did for work?**

HM: We ran the store. He was a merchant.

**How was running a store different then? Stores today are automated.**

**They're automated, a lot of them. You must have had to do a lot of the store stockroom type of work yourself at that time.**

**What did the day consist of for him?**

HM: For him? You were clerk in the country store. There was gasoline and there was meat. We had a meat market in the store. We had everything, practically, that you could want. And they kept busy and, of course, lots of times I used to go with them to hotels places, when they brought certain things. That was a pretty full day.

**Do you any feelings about the secret of your very good health?**

HM: No, I think I came from a very healthy family and I don't know. People live longer, you know.

END OF TAPE.