

Interviewee: Ken Albert
Interviewer: Cathy Townsend
Date: March 8th, 2002
Location: Town Hall

Ken Albert arrived in Shelburne in the early 1970s when he was transferred to IBM. In his thirty years in the town, he has dutifully served the Shelburne community as both a member of the Planning Commission and the Select board.

Topics discussed: Planning Commission, Town Meetings, Select board, Thomas Haddock, Eustace Thomas, Ice Storm, Shelburne Farms, Tourism, Development and Change

Cathy Townsend: What is your full name?

Ken Albert: Kenneth Albert.

CT: How long have you lived in Shelburne?

KA: Since 1971.

CT: When and where were you born?

KA: I was born in New York City in 1938.

CT: Do you have a first memory of Shelburne?

KA: I don't recall exactly one memory of Shelburne. My first sort of introduction to Shelburne was when I was transferred up here with IBM when they were transferring in the late 1960s.¹ I arrived here in 1969 and at that point in time, my boss, who moved up here six months before, said "You have to look for a house in Shelburne. That's the best place to live." So, that is my first memory of Shelburne. That was Bob Crook. I believe he is still living in town.²

CT: Have you always lived in the same place in Shelburne?

¹ IBM first arrived in Essex Junction and occupied a 10,000 square floor building with 400 employees. Over the years, the facility grew at an incredible rate and by the 21st Century, 7,000 employees occupied over 3 million square feet of building space.

² Bob and Mary Crook bought their home on Woodbine Road in the Hullcrest Acres development in 1968.

KA: Yes. We first arrived in Burlington and stayed in an apartment for a couple of years. We bought a lot and had a house built on it in Shelburne.

CT: Do you think the school system in Shelburne has changed?

KA: The school system in Shelburne, K-8, has essentially the same spirit to it that it always had. It always been a parent involved schools system – I think it still is. I don't think that it is all that different. Obviously, it is larger and it is a different school building. Still, I like to think that it is not all that different in spirit.

CT: Did your children go to the school?

KA: Yes. Two children. Two daughters.

CT: Do you think Shelburne Point has changed since you have been here?

KA: When we first came into town, they were developing Harborwood Shores, which was the open land on the point. So that was basically open land when we came here. In fact, we considered buying a lot but we decided that it was too far out on the point. So the point is built up, but even then, it was very obvious that it was being suburbanized.

CT: Do you think there was a feeling between Shelburne Point and the rest of Shelburne?

KA: I don't know. At the time, we did not have that sense. It is just far away.

CT: What types of organizations and groups have you belonged to in Shelburne?

KA: The first organization that I joined in Shelburne was the Planning Commission. I applied, I guess, in early 1973. I was on the Planning Commission for ten years. Since then, I have been on the Select board for sixteen years. I haven't belonged to any other non-governmental organizations in Shelburne.

CT: Who have been the key Shelburne community leaders or decision makers?

KA: The first person that influenced me as a community leader was Thomas Haddock. Tom was the chairman of the Select Board when I came to the town. I remember attending a lot of meetings as a newcomer. I remember listening to the Select board and remember being impressed with the decorum and orderliness and politeness that he conducted meetings. Actually, I think he had a big influence on me since I been on the select board. I remember him always saying that no matter what the dispute was, the select board had to restrain itself and not act like a bunch of moronic people. I think he set the tone in town....maybe it was set before, but at least for me, he was the first leader in town that set the tone in town for Shelburne government. I think we are a little different than the governments of other towns. We have a lot of squabbles, but we seem

to resolve them in a reasonable way. When you lose, you lose and when you win, you win.¹

CT: Who have been some of the memorable personalities that I have lived in Shelburne?

KA: The most memorable personality was Jack Stevens. He lived on Falls Road and he had irrepressible personality. He died about seven years ago. He was quite the personality. He attended every town meeting and everybody look forward to hearing Jack Steven's complaints. I also remember Eutie Thomas, who was in his 90s, would come to Town Meeting and give us a little slice of history. He was a former farmer and former selectman.²

CT: What are some of the most beautiful natural areas in Shelburne?

KA: There are so many of them. You could look at Shelburne Farms and say that is the most beautiful natural area but it also not really natural anymore. It is designed as a park one hundred years ago. That is obviously beautiful. One of the most beautiful things that I can recall was doing some cross-country skiing out in the fields between Spear and Dorset Street.

CT: Where do you think the best views in Shelburne are?

KA: I think one of the best views is from the street that I live on...not that the part where my house is on...we have no view but if you continue south on Pierson Drive, which is in my subdivision, there is the most sensational view of the Champlain Valley. You can see a 180-degree view from southern Lake Champlain to all the way beyond Burlington.

CT: Where do you think is the best place to go for a walk?

KA: I think Shelburne Farms.

CT: During your time in Shelburne, have there been any major disasters – Hurricanes, Floods, Fires?

KA: No hurricanes. We had some rain. We had one flood that affected our driveway. All this water came down one July and basically washed our driveway out. It was not a disaster for the town but it was a disaster for us. Probably the biggest disaster was that

¹ Thomas and Lois Haddock bought their house and land on the south side of Webster Road in 1971. The land used to be part of the Roberts Family Farm who had been living and farming in Shelburne since the 1880s. The Roberts family also had homes in the Village and the Falls.

² Eustace Thomas came to Shelburne with his parents in 1901. He went to high school at Saint Michaels in Winooski. Eustace served the community in a multitude of ways. Eustace Thomas served on the school board from 1929 to 1961 and he also served as Shelburne's Town Representative in 1961. He and his wife, Lena, ran a farm (the former Andrews Farm) near the junction of Spear Street and Thomas Road. Over the years, the farm grew to over 550 acres and it had over 400 apple trees.

ice storm a few years ago. We were lucky that we had a wood stove then – we cooked soup. Fires? I think the most sensational fire that I recall was at the Jelly Mill, which is now where the Gailer School is.¹ One of the buildings went up and it was absolutely spectacular. You could see it hundreds of feet in the air.

CT: What were Shelburne Town Meetings like?

KA: The Town Meeting when I first came to town attracted between 2 and 3 hundred people. And maybe even more than because you voted everything in town meeting... even the budget. That changed not too long after I moved to town. Maybe eight years or so after I moved to town. It changed to Australian Ballot and then town meeting became less important to many people.² The attendance has been below 200 people most years. People vote the next day.³

CT: Do you remember any major decisions that were brought forward at town meetings?

KA: The major decisions at Town Meeting were basically the budget.

CT: What do you think drives tourism in Shelburne?

KA: I think it its location on the way to the Burlington area makes it very important. Its access from Burlington and to Burlington makes tourism here. Shelburne is the first place, when your are going south on Route Seven, that looks like you are re-entering Vermont. I think it is a natural place for tourism to happen. I think also the hotels like the Heart of the Village Inn⁴ and the Inn at Shelburne Farms⁵ create tourism as well. It helps that the Farms and the Museum are here.

CT: Do you think tourism in Shelburne has grown?

KA: Definitely. Shelburne Farms is becoming a major tourist attraction.

CT: How do you think tourism has affected tourism?

KA: It is surprisingly gradual. That is not the thing that has changed Shelburne. I think what had changed Shelburne has been the valuation of all these homes that are built

¹ The Jelly Mill complex opened to the public in 1984 and the Gailer School was founded in 1990 with eight students.

² The State of Vermont first converted to the Australian Ballot system in 1890. This type of voting involves government-printed ballots that listed all qualifying candidates rather than town meeting voting or handwritten voting.

³ In a 1985 oral interview found in the Town Vault, Eustace Thomas, who Ken Albert described early as a Town meeting regular, said the following about Town Meetings and the Australian Ballot: "You know it's sour grapes to me, the Australian ballot. I don't know if you do any better with a big population."

⁴ The Heart of the Village In is located in the 1885 Cyrus Van Vliet home on Route 7. When the house was first built, a 9 x 6 copper-lined room was installed in the second floor to collect water.

⁵ The Inn at Shelburne Farms opened to the public in 1987

close to the lake or right on the lake. Shelburne changed, obviously, not just to a suburban community but to a suburban community with a mix of average homes and some very high-end homes.

CT: What do you think serves as Shelburne's community center?

KA: I think it is a contest between the Shelburne Supermarket and the Town Hall. Probably the Shelburne Supermarket is number one.

CT: Do you have a favorite house in Shelburne?

KA: I think the house...I think it is owned by one the Precourts right now...it was owned by the Millers. It is at the intersection of Spear Street and Barstow Road. There is a brick house...I think it is Greek revival...it is absolutely beautiful.¹

CT: How has Shelburne changed over the years?

KA: It has been a gradual change. Shelburne, when I arrived in town, was already pretty much full with a lot of newcomers like me...suburbanized. People working at IBM and in the Burlington/Essex area. Its dulled the population or close to it. We still have a few farms and obviously farming has become less and less important. I remember many more working farms when I cam to town. Shelburne understood then that it was going to be a desirable bedroom community for the rest of Chittenden County. So, from that point of view, it has not changed. It has just gotten more so. I think we have tried to do it carefully so that we retain some of the hints of what Shelburne used to be. Maybe a little better than some of the other towns.

CT: Do you think your neighborhood has changed?

KA: No. It was established before I was there. I was one of the last homes. Except, it has gone through some cycles. When we arrived, it was mainly families with small children, including mine. Then they grew up and the neighborhood seemed to have an absence of small children. Now, it seems like a lot of older people are moving out and more small children are coming in...generational shifts.

CT: How has Shelburne not changed?

KA: There always been in Shelburne a commitment to trying to keep the character of Shelburne. I think we retained, not to a 100% extent but to a pretty large extent, the character of the town the way it was before we arrived.

CT: What does Shelburne have that other communities don't?

¹ Edward and Joanne Precourt purchased their brick Greek Revival Spear Street home in 1999 from Rita Claire Meilleur. 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.

KA: I think what it has that kind of a conscious commitment to try to contain that character.

Interviewee: Richmond Barr
Interviewer: Joan Madison
Date: February 6, 2002
Location: Broadmeadow Farm, 475 Pond Road

Richmond Barr came to Shelburne from Ferrisburgh following World War II and has called his farm on Pond Road home ever since.

Topics discussed: local farms, farm helpers, Claflin family, roads, Pond Road, Shelburne doctors, Shelburne Bicentennial, Planning Commission

Joan Madison: Richmond, can you tell me your full name, where you were born and your early life?

Richmond Barr: My full name is Richmond Cushman Barr. I was born in Ferrisburgh, August 15, 1910. That was my mother's home. My father was from Worcester, Massachusetts and we shortly moved down there, a little bit closer for the rest of my growing up. I went to high school in Worcester, and then I went to Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the Massachusetts State College. They call it the University of Massachusetts now. When I went there it was just the State Agricultural College and immediately after. I moved to Vermont to live where I had always wanted to be. After several years I became a DHIA¹ tester in Addison County, just before the World War II. I joined the army in 1943, and was in the Air Force for three years. Then of course, I always wanted to be a farmer and have my own farm, but money was always a problem, but the government guaranteed any loan up to \$4000, I believe it was at that time, that we had and so I started looking for property. A friend of mine from Ferrisburgh, who worked for the state, said there was a nice farm up in Shelburne that was for sale. So I came to Shelburne within a few days to see the farm, and this is the one. When we came here there were just three farms on the road. This one and two others beyond us...east of us....and their fields are still there, but not as farms. The street was known then as...I don't know what it was known as then...it was just a road. It was so narrow that we drove by the end of it the first time and we didn't realize it was anything more than a driveway, and not a very good one at that.

JM: What year is this Richmond?

RB: 1946. The road was so narrow that in order to pass another car you had to go in the ditch on one side to the other side to get by. The farm was empty as far as any cows or machinery was concerned, but it had this beautiful house. I think the house is what took my eye the first time. The house was built in 1909, and had only been lived in by one family, the ones that built it, who were the Palmers. ²The road went from the village up

¹ National Dairy Herd Improvement Association, Inc.

² George and Frances received the 140 acres of land from B. Harris Maeck and Frances Palmer deeded the land to the Barrs in 1946. Today, the farm consists of c. 1909 Shingle and Foursquare style house,

over the Hill, which is now Irish Hill Road, it was of course unpaved and at times it was almost impossible to get over the last hitch before we came over the hill there to Spear Street. As a matter of fact two or three times I go turn around and go back to Thompson Road, and come up that way because I couldn't get over that last hitch into Shelburne. When we first came here to look in the farm we came in a very expensive car, which belonged to my father-in-law, but the road was so rough we had to shift into second because of so many potholes. That gives you an idea of what Shelburne itself was, at the time, how it's changed since then. Of course, the main road, U.S. 7, had just been paved a few years before that. Our milk went to the Shelburne Creamery.

JM: So you made it a dairy farm?

RB: Oh yes, that's all I ever wanted. The Creamery building is still standing, but it hasn't been used for a milk plant since the late fifties I believe.

JM: How many cows did you have?

RB: At the beginning we had about 25....28. I bought a herd from a family right across the meadow from the farm. They were going out of business, they wanted to sell the whole dairy so I bought it, and I bought two pieces of machinery along with it. So theoretically I was a farmer in Vermont.

JM: Do you remember what it cost for the farm, the machinery or the cows?

RB: I paid \$8,900 for the farm. I think around \$1,200 for the cows. My brother-in-law and I drove them right through their pasture into our pasture and right up to our barn. So that was a very easy journey.

JM: Did you have any help?

RB: In the summer time in those days up until maybe 1975 or so, the college used to put all the Youth Corps...and they would elicit youth from all over New England and as far as New York State and New York City, and we would apply for a boy who would come in the summertime and live with us. We had, oh, probably 6 or 8 or more boys during the years that we had them. They were very good boys. They liked to farm and they liked the outdoors. Of course they lived with us and were a part of our family, actually.

JM: Tell me more about your family. Now you were already married when you bought the farm?

RB: Yes we were married, in the army, in Detroit in 1943.

JM: Where had you met Elizabeth?

RB: We had been together for ten years before we got married.

JM: Oh my goodness!

RB: We used to go to a really good dance over in Bristol, Japanese Cotton they called it at the time. They had dances usually on Saturday night. That was before TV so we would depend on that for entertainment.

JM: This was before World War II?

RB: Oh yes, dancing and movies were our big source of entertainment. My father was from Massachusetts originally, from Worcester, and my mother of course from Ferrisburg. My father's father was born in Maine and at the end of a few years of school he needed to earn his living so he went to Boston as a very young man, probably in his teens. And he went to work for a man by the name of Ed Richmond, who was a ship fitter. And he was so good to my grandfather that when my father was born he named him Edwin Richmond Barr for the Ed Richmond who had taken him in. My mother's family had seven children in it, five girls and two boys. I think I am the only one of the nephews and nieces that were born, at that time, left alive. I don't know of any other relatives that I have. I was the only one in my father's family. I had no brothers or sisters. My mother's family is all gone too. I have a half-niece out in Vergennes. I guess you would call her a half-niece, my cousin's child's child.

JM: Tell me more about your wife, Elizabeth, and where she was from and how you met.

RB: Elizabeth was from Charlotte and they lived on a large farm right on the main road, which has been developed. She was a Claflin, and her father was from Boston. He went to Harvard for one year and then he decided he wanted to do something else, so he came up and went to some college in the middle of Vermont. I don't think it is still exists, but anyway he went there and somewhere or other met my mother in law, Lela Van Vliet. Her folks were on the Mayflower. When I first came to Shelburne, I think there were only 400 on the checklist for the voting list. In those days we couldn't vote unless we were 21 and we had to be accepted by a Selectman as being residents of Shelburne. You could not vote if you were not residents of Shelburne. I think the original town hall which has been torn down or maybe moved up to the Museum. And this new one, which isn't new anymore, but was new then of course, probably in the fifties as a town hall.

JM: You were on the Planning Commission back in the 1960s. What kinds of things you were planning back then? Do you remember any of the activities?

RB: I know one big thing that I remember very well... the people who owned this big store, the central store at the time which was the big stone building still standing on the corner of U.S. 7 and Harbor Road. They thought, as business increased, the size of the town increased, the people just didn't have enough room to park and they wanted to buy a the building in back and tear it down and build a large store there. At the time the land

where the shopping center is now was a farm and the person that owned it had decided to give it up and sell the parcels of land off it. One of our good members of the Planning Commission influenced the Claytons, to look that over and perhaps buy the land and build the supermarket over there. So we were one of the first ones to have a shopping center and it worked out very well because the traffic was well organized and there was room for everybody to build. So that was one of the big achievements of the Planning Commission.¹

JM: Tell me more about your family. You had how many children?

RB: I had two girls and a boy. The oldest girl went to Castleton State and was a nurse. She was in Boston for seven years at the Children's Hospital, and then she moved back to Burlington and became a member of Mary Fletcher....at that time it was Mary Fletcher. She married her husband and had one child. She passed away in 1995. My second child was a boy, and all he's ever wanted to do was farm so he is the farmer on the farm today. He went to Randolph Agricultural School. That's all he's ever wanted to do. And my youngest girl lives in Keene, NH with one boy.²



Picture 1 Mary Fletcher Hospital, Burlington

JM: Has life changed for you son, Wayne, who is running the farm? Do you have more cows? Is the day shorter for him than when you were milking?

RB: Longer, by about three hours.

JM: Why is that?

RB: Because it's his life; that's all he wants to do.

JM: Has he had to update all the machinery?

¹ The Shelburne Shopping Plaza opened to the public with a Vermont Liquor Store, City Drug store, Chittenden Trust and the Shelburne IGA in 1968.

² Cynthia Elizabeth Barr, Gail Lee Barr and Wayne R. Barr

RB: Oh yes, but not tremendously so. We had a good supply when he took the farm over. His uncle was a farmer for a good many years and he still misses it and he comes up and buys him machinery and helps him out in the summertime a little bit.

JM: How many cows does he have now?

RB: Average around thirty or thirty-three. One thing that he did do that had never done was board his Heifers. As soon as they were two months old he sold them to a boarding farm in New Haven, and they won't come back until they are ready to calve. So he doesn't have to worry about livestock.

JM: When did you lose your wife?

RB: She liked to go into the barn. Her heart wasn't the best. She fainted just as she was going into the barn and broke her ankle. Her sister at the time was theoretically on her deathbed and we were taking care of her. We didn't operate immediately on her ankle until after her sister passed away which was in a day or two from the time she broke the ankle. About a week later they operated on her ankle and for some reason or other her heart just couldn't take it and she passed away in the hospital.

JM: You've been carrying on since? Tell me about your life now.

RB: Well there ain't much to tell Joan. I try to keep the house warm which is a big chore.

JM: How do you heat it?

RB: With a portable hot air furnace. Originally we had a big wood furnace in the cellar. They called them pipeless furnaces at the time because that is what they were. They were just one big three foot round ventilator at the top of the furnace. That was supposed to keep the heat. Of course we have a wood stove in the kitchen. We shut off quite a few of the rooms and the stairway. We just had this room, that hall, and the kitchen. We had the upstairs draped down so the heat wouldn't go up there. I think I miss the kitchen stove as much as anything. That was a great source of heat. We don't have those anymore.

JM: Who does the cooking and shopping and things?

RB: I am the cook and I am the shopper and I do most of the errand running for my son.

JM: He lives here on the farm, but not in the big house with you?

RB: Yes...and as a pastime...we used to pick up antiques. I dealt particularly with clocks. I bought one and it didn't run and I decided I would make it run, and finally I did, but I had quite a lot of learning to do before I did. And I went on from that and became a fairly decent clock repairer and collector of clocks, which I sold.

JM: You still have a lot of clocks?

RB: Well, not many compared to what I did

JM: And, was it glassware that Elizabeth collected?

RB: Yes. We used to do antique shows inside of Mary Zais' on North Avenue. That was the first show at the time. We went there probably four or five years and then she decided to go somewheres (sic) else because there wasn't enough room in the church to satisfy all the people that came. So she rented the fairgrounds' buildings and put the show on there for several years. Mary passed away twenty years ago I imagine.

JM: But you continued going to the shows?

RB: Just for a while, but not very much longer. Things started to, as far as I was concerned, seemed to deteriorate. People didn't seem to like the type of things that we had considered antique so we just stopped.... stopped our buying and selling

JM: Do you remember any other special things about Shelburne from the early days as compared with now? Where did you go to the doctor or did the doctor come to you?

RB: The doctor came to us, definitely!

JM: Do you remember any of the early doctors in Shelburne?

RB: No, we went to Charlotte... Dr.Never grow old, that's one thing about age you start to lose your memory. No, we tried to maintain the farm as it was and hope it will be. We have seen a tremendous amount of farms taken over and all these buildings and developments and so forth. The lakeshore at the time was owned mostly by the Webbs. Derrick Webb was a pretty good a friend of mine. He was the last full farmer down there. He was a man that really lived for the farm. He was on the many Boards with us.¹ There was a time...I think there are pretty close 3000 voters in town now compared to what, 406 when I came here. Of course there are a few of them that. The town has maintained itself very well I believe. It's still a very attractive place. This street...Pond Road... I think it had three families on it and now I think there are nineteen.

JM: And you have Shelburne Pond which is...

RB: We were responsible for naming it Pond Road because, at that time, people wanted streets named, and I thought as long as it went right by the pond, Pond would be a good name for the road. Another thing we accomplished was putting in a four way stop at the corner of Pond Road and Dorset Street. Cars were coming down Dorset Street and

¹ Derick Webb held many positions in town: Justice of the Peace, Town Representative (1955-1959), Library Trustee, School Director, Fence Viewer and Planning Board

if you were going across and going down Pond Road they would almost wipe you out. So I asked the Selectman if they wouldn't put in a four way stop which they weren't planning on doing. That was quite a few years ago. Do you remember that?

JM: I know it's been there for as long as I can remember, a long time. Yes.

RB: When we first came here there was a schoolhouse just above us on Irish Hill Road.

JM: Is that where your children went to school?

RB: No, my children never went there. The school closed two years I think after we moved there.. It was just the second and third and fourth grades I think that still stayed there for a while, and then it closed and everybody went to Shelburne because they had transportation.

JM: Were there school busses for the children?

RB: No, not buses, just automobiles full of kids

JM: So you carpooled the children?

RB: Yes, carpooled. I don't remember, sometime in the fifties the first school buses came but eventually I drove one for a couple of years. The school was built in town to accommodate the increased population. Then CVU was built. My son was the first class at CVU and the boy that we had living here was the first class to graduate from CVU in '64.

JM: Do you remember any other major events in Shelburne? Do you remember the Bicentennial at all?

RB: I remember it, but not very well. I think we took a tractor and a hay wagon down and drove it through the parade but I am not sure.

JM: Any particular people stand out in Shelburne history, you mentioned that Derrick Webb was good friend of yours, any other community leaders?

RB: The Maecks owned the farm that's called the Maeck Farm. They have been there for as near as I can understand 150 years. The one that we knew that never married. He gave his nephews their education. Their father was one of the owners of the general store at that time was Tracy and Maeck.¹ Tracy was the brother-in-law. They lived very close to each other on US 7 across from the Trinity Church. As the population increased the farms started breaking up. The farm that I remember most about was the

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", with the Tracy family having the longest involvement with the store.

big farm at the corner of US 7 and Bostwick Road. That was a beautiful big farm with a brick house. I think it belonged at one time to the McGees, but I am not sure.¹

JM: Is the house there anymore?



Photo 1 Construction of the Shelburne Museum

RB: Oh no! It's the museum. The museum owns it all.²

JM: The museum was just getting going about the time you bought this farm...

RB: Oh no...

JM: No....1946?

RB: No, the museum didn't start until the fifties... '55 or '56. There was no talk of museums at that time. A big wind storm....we had a cyclone one year.³

JM: When was that?

RB: I think it was in 1955. It blew down lots of buildings.

JM: Did you have damage?

RB: We had some, but not particularly. My brother-in-law had a farm in Charlotte on the top of the hill above Ferrisburg Hollow. And it blew his barn sideways so one row of cows were crushed by it.

¹ Edward and Jennie McGee owned land north of Marsett Road.

² The museum purchased the corner farm from the Lamson family in 1954. The farmhouse, on the north side of Bostwick Road, was demolished in the 1950s due to excessive deterioration. Two of the farm's barns which were on the south side of the road was purchased by the Mann family in the 1960s and converted into a residence and artists studio/retail space.

³ Shelburne Museum opened to the public in 1947. One of the many displays was the impressive carriage collection donated by the Webbs of Shelburne Farms.

JM: What was his name?

RB: Sidney Claflin. My sister was very good at going around and helping people out when they were in trouble at the time, and doing what she could to help them, and straighten things out the best she could. She and these other ladies that I don't remember. She would get the church to help people

JM: This was back in 1955?

RB: In 1954, 1955. It was a hurricane came up from Montpelier, it just blew everything apart. At the time of course, there weren't any houses that were noticeable on Pond Road. I remember the farm between mine and the corner which is now owned by four or five people.

JM: I'm sure your getting tired. Have we missed anything that you wanted to tell me about?

RB: I have been asked several times to marry people and we would marry them here in house, or I would go to various places on to marry them. I married one couple at Dr Maeck's down on the lake. I married another couple on Mt. Philo and another couple in a trailer down in the village. I don't know how they turned out, but I do hope that everything turned out very well for all of them. I think I married twelve or fifteen people in length of time that I was able to and I enjoyed it very much.

JM: That's wonderful, thank you very much.

Interviewee: Jean and Donald Bean

Interviewer: Dorothea Penar

Date: February 20th, 2002

Location: Bean Residence, Shelburne

The Beans moved to Shelburne Falls in the 1950s to come work for the Shelburne Museum and the two have witnessed quite a bit of change in their little corner of Shelburne.

Topics discussed: Shelburne Museum, the Ticonderoga, Shelburne Falls homes and families, Methodist Church, Shelburne Roads and Bridges, Schools, teachers, social groups, Shelburne Falls sawmill, The Webbs, Shelburne Village School, Shelburne doctors, Bicentennial Celebration, town beach

Dorothea Penar: Were you born in Shelburne?

Donald Bean: Nearby. I was born in Burlington. In 1924.

Jean Bean: I was born in Hinesburg.

DP: What was your maiden name?

JB: Frazier. We moved here on account of his employment at the Museum. It just made sense to not travel – winter roads, and stress and traffic – and live near work. We have been here since 1958.

DP: You moved to right to Falls Road?

JB: Yes. Going on 44 years...will be in May.

DP: Donald, what did you do at the museum?

DB: When I started there, I started when they moved the "Ti". I worked for the man that moved that "Ti" – I ran the dozer for them. Then after the "Ti" was up here I went to work with the museum with the equipment – the tractor. When that was through, the museum hired me out themselves.

DP: How many buildings were at the museum when the Ti arrived?

DB: At that time, there were quite a few buildings. Actually, I think the only buildings built after that was the Havemeyer building and the Pleissner Gallery. We moved the Country Store – that used to be over by the bridge, over in that area...the covered bridge where you go into the museum. The horseshoe barn – I don't think that was

quite completed when I started working there. I think they were still working on it. But most of them were there.

DP: What kind of assistance did you provide during the moving of the "Ti"?

DB: I ran the tractor with a bucket on it. We moved the equipment from one of the end of the "Ti" to the other on skids. I ran that.

JB: It was winter because they had to do it when the ground was frozen.



Photo 1 Moving of the "Ti".

Photo courtesy of UVM Special Collections

DP: What was the toughest part of it?

DB: The cold. It was really cold that winter. It was really something. Everybody was down there to see it. But they weren't there early in the morning when we started going and it was so cold.



Photo 2 Moving of the "Ti".

Photo courtesy of UVM Special Collections

DP: How far did you get everyday?

DB: I think we had 200 feet of track and we moved it one length, it was about 100 feet. Sometimes we moved it a little more because we had to move it 100 feet and then you had to pick up the track and put it ahead of it and move the boat again. A lot of times, it was just so cold and you could not get around in quick time. We would do good if we got to move 100 feet. In order to even get it even moving, they had a lot of trucks with winches on it and then I would get in back of it with a tractor and bucket and I would tap it a little bit. Get it going.

DP: Did the schoolchildren come out to watch?

DB: Yes, they would come down and stand on the banks. There was a kind of a road made up through there. Right now where the school is down there – that is where the road was made for the "Ti". The worst part of it was that just beyond that road that goes down where farms where we crossed it. It rained that night and the "Ti" began sinking and we were really scared that we were going to have to leave it there. They cut the road let the water out of it and we were able to save it. We got it so that the next morning, there was just enough blocks to get it out.

DP: Did you meet any of the Webbs?

DB: Oh yeah. I knew Mrs. Webb a lot. Mr. Webb - he come every once in a while. In the summer time, they were there about every day.

DP: Did they have a lot of contact with the people who worked there?

DB: Oh yeah. She would come and get a bunch of us and we had to move stuff around the way she liked it until we finally got it the way she wanted it. We were always around doing that.

DP: In the garden?

DB: No, the furniture in all the houses. A lot of it was in the Stagecoach Inn. The moment I remember the most was at the Stagecoach Inn – there was a big eagle. We moved that stuff around – I don't know how many times. We just got sick of it but we couldn't say nothing.

JB: You were getting paid to do it.

DB: It was heavy work. "Move it over here a little bit...just a little, little bit." She had a little dog she would bring with her all the time.

DP: What were some of your favorite events at the Museum?

DB: Jim Mullin, he was head of the plumbing and heating part of it – he went on his own.¹ So I went to work in that department, taking care of the plumbing and heating. Most of the events - we didn't have much to do with them. We sometimes would get a few things ready. Actually, we spent most of the weekends working on guard duty. They were always short of the guards and always short of money. We would work on guard duty and work extra to help out.

JB: They had guards around the clock.

DB: They kept growing all the time but money was always a problem there.

DP: How long ago did you retire?

DB: Oh geez

JB: In the 1980s, 1985....something like that.



Picture 1 Shelburne Museum

DB: I don't know. I know it was a long time. I drove a school bus after for five years.

DP: Did you have any children?

JB: Yes.

DP: Do they still live in the area?

JB: One has passed away. A daughter lives in Richmond and a son in Hinesburg.

DP: Did they go to school in Shelburne?

JB: They all went to school here.

¹ Jim Mullin lived on land that was located north of Shelburne Village on the east side of Route 7. Mullin sold the Bisonettes their land for the Dutch Mill. He lived on Hullcrest Road

DP: At the Village School?

JB: Yes. The daughter did go to the Middle School one or two years.

DP: Are you affiliated with a church in school?

JB: Yes. I used to teach Sunday school at the Methodist Church and go to the WSCS¹ when that was an active society. They had a bible school in the summer and we would usually go. The boys would talk "Yeah, she dragged us down there." I would say "You had fun." They did! There were crafts and games and a little bible study.

DP: Which ministers were you involved with?

JB: Byers. Reverend Byers. There have been quite a few since Reverend Lambert now has been here. There have been short terms of office here after Byers.²

DP: I here Reverend Lambert is retiring?

JB: Oh no. He is so liked.

DP: Your home is on the east side of the bridge. Did they replace the bridge?

JB: I think it was 1988. The road was completely closed. The bridge was out entirely.

DB: We hated to see it end. It was so peaceful – no traffic. The cars all went the other way. They had to go down to Spear Street. Even we had to live gladly to have the peace and the freedom from the traffic. It opened October 21st, 1988. They finished it that summer. It think it went out in June and they worked all summer and finally got it ready.

DP: What was the older bridge like?

JB: Not much different. This one is a little wider.

DB: This is quite a bit wider. The other one was a problem. The other one was too narrow. You come down that hill into a narrow bridge.

JB: It was more of a steep curve. It is more gradual now. I was at one of the meetings and they were talking about traffic – I guess – some people raised questions about traffic. This lady said: "When are they going to do something about that bridge?" The old timers thought: "That is a new bridge!" We had to go up the hill either to Webster Road and down or go Spear Street to Lime Kiln Road and Mount Philo Road.

¹ Woman's Society of Christian Service

² Reverend Carl Byers served the Shelburne community from 1956-1961. During his time, the Methodist Church ended its affiliation with the Winooski Methodist Church which allowed for Byers to focus more on the Shelburne community.

DP: When you first moved to Falls Road, how many houses were there?

JB: There were four residences. There was another house unoccupied where Peggy lives.
¹That was there but nobody was in it. There was just the Colemans on the South side.²
On the North side was the mill – lumber mill. Then the Whites and then us. And then
it was Thompson Road. But at the time, the Town Dump was up there

DB: There were no houses up there

JB: and it was called the Dump Road. Until recently, it is called Thompson Road.

DB: We always called it the Dump Road.

JB: Yeah, the Town Dump was there at the end of the road. There was farm up there –
Jennings Farm. And the Gaudettes lived there. One of the boys still lives there. That
was it on the road.³

DB: The house we live in – that was a farm. The house across the road was another
farm. Eutie Thomas bought all of them up.⁴

JB: There were a lot of farms.

DB: When was your home built?

JB: 1822.

DP: Do you know the original owner?

JB: I think it is in the records. There was an old barn on the property there. We burned
wood. We had to tear down the barn. The roof was gone, so we tore it down. We
burned a lot of it. A lot of it was really rotted. There were a few things in the barn like
old wagon wheels and axles. My boys and I guess one of the neighbors boy – maybe

¹ Peggy Coutu

² See Edward Coleman interview. Edward “Tut” and Janice Coleman purchased their Shelburne Falls home in 1954. In addition to their land on the south side of Fall Road, the Colemans own the land on the north side of the road along the east bank of the LaPlatte River.

³ In 1950, Ervin and Beatrice Jennings purchased 127 acres from Margaret Thompson, the widow of Clement Thompson. The Thompsons had farmed the land since 1904. Lily Gaudette lives in a house that she purchased in 1952 on Thompson Road. Her house is adjacent to the Jennings Farms. In 1960, Charles and Oda Hubbard bought the Jennings Farm.

⁴ See Colleen Haag interview. Eustace Thomas came to Shelburne with his parents in 1901. He went to high school at Saint Michaels in Winooski. Eustace served the community in a multitude of ways. Eustace Thomas served on the school board from 1929 to 1961 and he also served as Shelburne’s Town Representative in 1961. He and his wife, Lena, ran a farm (the former Andrews Farm) near the junction of Spear Street and Thomas Road. Over the years, the farm grew to over 550 acres and it had over 400 apple trees.

Freddy Morrow– they would got to the top intersection with Spear (Street).¹ They would get on the axle with the two wheels and right down the road on them. Can't imagine doing that today. That's the way life was back then.

DB: No traffic back then.

DP: There was probably great sledding there too.

JB: They used to close Spear Street from the corner to the Thomas Farm where the O'Brien Farm is now. They closed that in the winter and the kids could sled there - down that road. Spear Street extension. It was closed all winter

DP: How long was that saw mill working?

JB: Well, he was an elderly man. It was all one-stroke engine and it made quite a bit of noise. It had a certain noises like: "Boom.....Boom....Boom." He eventually had to go to a nursing home and Colemans bought the property across from where they live.² They live on the south side near a bridge. A museum in New York – Scotia, New York – bought the old engine and it is on display there – in Scotia, New York.

DP: The building is no longer there?

JB: It burned. It was quite a nice house in its days. It burned and he put up kind of a temporary house on the spot there.

DP: When was this?

JB: Probably, late 1960s. He had one old horse. In the middle of the night sometimes, you could hear the horse "thump...thump...thump" all across our back yard near our bedroom window. (Laughter) He used to run around the neighborhood.

DB: Our boys used to go down there and visit him. They loved to visit him.

DP: How much contact did you have on the other side of the bridge?

JB: Well, the population was a lot more stable. People would live their lifetime in their homes basically.

DB: You knew about everybody.

JB: Yeah. It was like this book Hillary Clinton wrote, *It Takes A Village*. Actually that's the way life was back then in all towns. The whole town looked out for your children.

¹ Frederick Rufus Morrow, the son of Frederick and Ruth Ann Irish Morrow. See Ruth Morrow interview.

² The man was Walter Ball who sold the land to the Colemans in 1966. He had owned the land since 1928.

'They knew them and supported their sales when they had cookies and stuff. 'They didn't fear going door to door but today, you wouldn't let your child go door to door alone. Everybody knew one another. It was different. It was better, definitely, better.

DP: Who are some of the folks who lived up there? 'The Noonans?¹

JB: Yes.

DB: The fellow next the store – what was his name?

JB: Tompkins.² Well, before him was the Dederers.³ Mary Hamilton⁴. Forrest and Janet Carpenter.⁵ And the Bacons, Elkins.⁶ The Moultons lived – now it is owned by Ernie Goodrich⁷ – the Moultons lived there. That was a nice family. Ernie Goodrich's parents bought it – they ran kind of day care there for a few years. Sandra lived there, near Gallipeau's store. The Ockerts lived in the house near the Woodman Home that is being worked on. At one time, a person proposed tearing down that Ockert house.⁸ The floor had sunk into the basement – it was bad. The town wouldn't let them – the historical society. The town wouldn't let them tear down the house so this guy has been working on it over the years. I don't know if he will ever get it finished. But today, they tear down buildings with abandon and cart them off to dump. It is any wonder that we are running out of space.

DP: So, there was a big gap between the village and the falls?

JB: In our area, it went from four people to nine people. It doubled. This vacant house across the road – the Fleischmann Farm.⁹ Eventually, Jim Moulton who lived up the hill on Irish Hill bought it and remodeled it. He had his own plumbing business so he converted the barn into his workshop. Then he just moved on to North Ferrisburgh/Charlotte to build. It is now a duplex. He subdivided the back part where Peggy is. There is a duplex on one lot and Peggy on the other. So, there is three new ones. Then the front house on the project there was built. Twitchell. A Twitchell built it. Paul

¹ See Robert Noonan interview

² Enoch and Marie Tompkins

³ Herman and Charlotte Dederer. Charlotte died in 1965 and Herman remarried to Leora. Herman Dederer served the Shelburne community as Overseer of the Poor and Grand Juror during the 1950s and 1960s.

⁴ Marie Bacon Hamilton married Hobart Lee Hamilton in 1939. She was the daughter of Fred and Alice Bacon who owned a few lots on the north side of Shelburne Falls.

⁵ Forrest and Janet Carpenter owned a 1-½ story home and a barn on the north side of Falls Road.

⁶ William and Ruby Elkins

⁷ Ernie and Dorcas Goodrich

⁸ See Jack Ockert interview

⁹ Abe Fleischmann owned quite a bit of land in the Shelburne Falls area. In 1957, he deeded 75 acres on the north side of Falls Road to Charles and Oda Hubbard; 105 acres ("The Sun King Farm", which Abe received in 1932) to Eustace Thomas; and 75 acres ("The Goggins Farm", which Abe received in 1945) to Eustace Thomas. The latter two properties were located on the south side of Irish Hill Road between Spear Street extension and Thomas Road.

Twitchell.¹ Then the Charbonneau's bought it from him after he moved. Then, where the mill was, the Colemans put in two mobile homes.

DP: Was there any kind of social division between the Village and the Falls?

JB: The children were friends with children across the bridge and up the hill and in outlying areas. To get to together was more just the area. To be close neighbors was that neighborhood. The Colemans would come. We would have a cookout and play croquet. Maybe two or three times a week.² We could use our front porches back then. I can't now. It is too noisy. You can't visit or anything. We could sit on the porch or cross the street. We would all just congregate. Summer. Winter not so much. On a cardboard box. (Laughter) The Mattisons did the fix house across the road. They had two boys and two girls. One of them stopped by last summer and said: "the best time of our whole life was living there." She said that all the rest of them agreed – the kids. The parents are both gone now. She said that was the happiest time of her life – living in Shelburne Falls.

DP: Who were the doctors in Shelburne?

JB: There wasn't any for a while then this Doctor Holden came to town. It was in the vicinity where they there now. Was the Creamery open then?

DB: I don't think so. Didn't we used to go to Charlotte a lot. There was a doctor there on the Old Road in Charlotte.

JB: Dr. Crane.³ And Doctor Bernstein.⁴ Now the building is owned by Dr. Crane's daughter. She lives there. They moved it over into homes.

DP: Did you go Burlington often?

JB Yep. We paid the bills. Green Mountain Power was down there at the foot of Main Street.....

DB:We didn't used to mind going to Burlington.

JB:...make our house payments to the bank. We would trade there.

DB: You could park where you want to. Now we only go there once or twice a year.

JB: You used to be able to find a parking place.

¹ Paul Twitchell bough the land from Eustace and Herlene Thomas in 1959.

² Edward and Janice Coleman who lived across Irish Hill Road.

³ Dr. Edward B. Crane. Although from Charlotte, Dr. Crane was the doctor for many of Shelburne's citizens. In 1942, Dr. Crane served as the Town's Health Officer.

⁴ Dr. Bernstein also lived in Charlotte.

DP: Did you have any part of the Bicentennial Celebration?

JB: It stands out in my memory as a nice celebration. The boys were in 4H...and my daughter too. They had a float. They worked on that putting together at Colemans. It was then moved up the road to where it was the Bacon property. They had more room there I am not sure who lives there. It was the second house on the north up from the bridge. There was a big yard there. There is another house built in there now.

DB: They filled up every little space.

JB: Then they had a barbecue in the evening. They closed off church street and had a street dance. Everybody turned out I think.

DB: I guess even we went to that dance. You weren't happy with the way I was dancing I think. (Laughter)

DP: Were there any other organizations you were involved with?

JB: Eventually Helen O'Brien incorporated "Home Dem".¹ We called it "Home Dem" – it was an extension of Homemakers. It was mostly a group of people that lived not so much in the village as outlying areas. Helen and Alice Morrill² and myself and Lois Cox³ – we were all charter members. That sort of disbanded – many of them have passed away or moved away. Elizabeth Barr was involved.⁴ Kathleen Pillsbury was involved a little bit.⁵ Doris Bushey.⁶ We had an active group. We learned a lot of crafts and went to meetings. We had a nice group.

DP: Besides 4H, what groups were you children involved with?

JB: Scouting. Swim lessons.

DP: Where would they go for swim lessons?

JB: The beach. The parents more or less were it as far as instructors. Then there were some Red Cross instructors who would have to pass for Junior Lifesaving. But for the

¹ See James and Pauline O'Brien interview

² Alice and Russell Morill were married in 1949 and lived on the west side of Shelburne Road in the village.

³ Lois Cox lived on the west side of Falls Road.

⁴ See Richmond Barr interview

⁵ Kathleen and Ralph Pillsbury owned over 200 acres that they purchased in 1952. The Pillsburys ran a farm that included a dairy operation, orchards and hay growing. The land bordered Shelburne Pond. Some of this land was given to the Nature Conservancy in 1980. Today the property is owned by Robert and Althea Platt and it consists of a c. 1800 farmhouse, c.1840 horse barn and a c. 1880 pump house. The Dairy Barn was removed in the 1970s.

⁶ Tom and Doris Bushey owned 351 acres that consisted of two separate the farms. There was a 202 acre farms and homestead on the south side of Pond Road and a 110 acre Dairy barn and farm on the northeast side of the Shelburne Hinesburg Road that the Busheys purchased from John Senesac.

littler groups, parents were it. There was a lot more participation. Parents today don't participate that much, I don't think, with groups and their own children. I mean they take their children out of town for lessons like gymnastics. Everything, skating, whatever. This was more of a community affair. The parents were involved.

DP: This was before there was a Rec Department which organized these thing?

JB: Yes.

DP: How old are your children?

JB: The one that passed away was born in 1947. Douglas was born in 1949 and Patty was born in 1954. So, you will have to figure it out. So we are grandparents now.

DP: Does your family live around here still?

JB: Yes, Hinesburg and Richmond

DP: Did you know Barbara Snelling?

JB: Pretty much. Not intimately. I know one time she was definitely working for CVU and she came to our house. I was taking care of some children there. We were making some cookies. She got a big kick out of the way the kids were clustered around there making the cookies. You know, a "hello basis."

DP: That was the way it was. When you went to Town Meeting, you probably knew everyone that was there?

JB: I knew every car that went by practically just by the sound of the vehicle back then.

DB: She was from Hinesburg, which wasn't that far away. When I was just a kid, we moved to Charlotte. My father bought a farm. We lived in this area all of our life.

JB: We didn't move very far.

DB: We knew all the people all around. Because they all stayed. Every person in the area that you knew had been there for years. You knew everybody.

DP: Was there connections between the Shelburne and other towns?

JB: Sort of.

DB: Sometimes it wasn't so good.

JB: There was a rivalry over dumps. Charlotte bought some property on Carpenter road in East Charlotte. They were never able to use it. People in Charlotte took ire of

Shelburne putting trash in their town. Shelburne thought they owned the land for a long time. I think they resolved it now.

DB: They did not Shelburne junk over in their land.

DP: Was the Union school a popular idea?

JB: I think there are still different opinions about smaller schools and having it your town. This Union could offer a lot more courses than any individual town could. That was the main advantage, certainly not the bussing. The CVU district, I think, has the largest mileage of any Union in the state. It is also a lot of time on the bus. And is costly too.

DP: Were people sad about the closing of Shelburne High School?

JB: A lot of the diehards would like to get it back here and think it was a wrong move. You have to weigh a better education or more varied education with less courses. Over there, you don't know who your children's friends are that much when they are in a big school like that because they come from 4 or 5 towns. There are a lot pros and cons. They thought it would be a cheaper to unionize, now it is going back with Williston pulling out. That is the way life is – always changing.

DP: The town had many one-room schoolhouses.....

JB: I think children as far as getting a basic education learned more in those one-room schoolhouses then they do today. There is so much material out there that they have to know. They kind of overlooked the basics. You need the basics no matter what else you do. They got a real good education in one room school because they had to prepare the lunch. They had to keep the fire going. They had a lot of things just to do just to exist in that school. Most of the kids walked to school. It is ridiculous people living so near a school being bussed. The rule, when I went, if you lived with in a mile, you got there on your own. We walked or rode bikes. In the winter, my father would build a fire under the car when it froze up and take us in the car. I went to the old school in Hinesburg, which is now used a school again.

DP: Were there any teachers that your children remember fondly?

JB: Dot Cole. Florence Horsford.¹ Don Jones, who was the principal before Gus.² There might have been another one in between there. Yeah, I don't know, some of the teachers were good and some weren't so good. There was one, I won't mention a name, he would get talking telling stories instead of sticking to the subject.

DP: The kids probably liked that but they didn't learn

¹ See Florence Horsford and Dot Cole interviews

² See Gus Mercaldo Interview. Don Jones was the school principal from 1958 to 1964.

JB: That's it. (laughter)

DP: Earlier we were talking about the Bicentennial Celebration. What do you remember of the Earl of Shelburne coming to Shelburne?

JB: He came here. He was a young man. Nice looking. I think he stayed with Ode Hubbard. No entirely. There was the parade, the Barbecue and the street dance. Everybody turned out to participate. I think there was some exhibits too.

DP: What else were you involved with?

JB : He was in the Fire Department

DP: For how long?

DB: I don't remember but it was handy because I was working at the Museum and I could get down there real quick.

DP: How were you contacted when there was a fire?

JB: Every fireman had one of them in their home. When the alarm went off it would make a hideous noise. They would call them a squawk box. One night around dinner time it went off and I was kind of perturbed because I just had supper ready to go the table and I said "Well, aren't you going to eat your supper?" (laughter) Well the captain and Jim Moulton kind of good-naturedly yelled at me about that.

DP: Where was the Fire Station?

DB: The same place. It is just so enlarged. We had our first new engine the year I joined.

Donald and Jean Bean

February 20, 2002

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**Interviewee: Dorothy Cole
Interviewer: David Webster
Date: March 2002
Location: Cole Residence, Shelburne Road**

After graduating from the University of Vermont during World War II, Dot Cole spent the next 60 years in Shelburne working as both an elementary school teacher and traveling musician.

Topics discussed: school, World War 2, JFK Assassination, the Depression, Burlington, UVM, music, Shelburne Museum, Ticonderoga, UVM, Methodist Church, Noonan Family, Thomas Family, Cuban Missile Crisis, Shelburne Shipyard, Snelling Family, entertainment & games, Grange, Vermont Politicians, transportation, churches

David Webster: What is your full name?

Dorothy Cole: Dorothy Viola Franklin Cole

DW: How long have you lived in Shelburne?

DC: Since 1943.

DW: When and where were you born?

DC: I was born September 28, 1922 in Woodsville, New Hampshire in the Cottage Hospital.

DW: Who were your parents?

DC: Ira Marion Anderson Franklin and Rupert George Asher Franklin.

DW: Did you have any brothers or sisters?

DC: One sister - Marian Patricia Franklin Roland.

DW: So you were the first generation, from your side of the family, to live in Shelburne. How about your husband?

DC: He came here about ten years before I did. His mother came from Charlotte.

DW: What was her name?

DC: Josephine Elsie Colt Cole.

DW: Where do you live now?

DC: 3807 Shelburne Road in good old Shelburne.

DW: Where do you live before coming to Shelburne? In East Ryegate?

DC: Well, my home was there but I was at the University.

DW: So you came here directly after University?

DC: Well, after the summer.

DW: What prompted you to move to Shelburne?

DC: That is where I got my first teaching job.

DW: What is your first memory of Shelburne?

DC: Oh my. There were three of us who came down. Evie from Middlebury College and Gladys and I from UVM. We lived upstairs at the Methodist parsonage. I remember coming into town – nobody had cars – we had to take the Rutland Rattler to go anywhere. I remember coming into that house...it was big upstairs, we had the whole upstairs and we looked right out the window to the school, which was great. I think my first impression was the Methodist parsonage.

DW: There was a long room in the back...

DC: That was the kitchen. We had a big bedroom in the front, a parlor, a small bedroom, big bathroom and a kitchen /dining area. In the back, the backstairs and where we kept the icebox.

DW: Who were your closest neighbors?

DC: Helen Gadhue.

DW: And the Roberts next door...

DC: We did not see much of Fred.¹

DW: How long until you got married?

DC: Al was playing in the band for the teacher's reception. My first year, my first dance. He was up on the stage in the old gym in the old school – he was so handsome. My, he was good looking. He told the violin player "I am going to marry her."

¹ Fred and Ruth Roberts bought their Shelburne Village home in 1926. The land originally belonged to George Roberts, who ran the Roberts Farm on Webster Road.

DW: This was before you met.

DC: Before we even met. So, two years later, we were married.

DW: Tell me a little about the band?

DC: Al had a band in high school. A couple of the boys in his band, by the way, were on the death march in Bataan. That was the time- we were in World War Two.¹ So he had the band. Cliff, his brother, played in it. I played piano. When we first started, we played for the Older World Youth at Lincoln Hall in Essex Junction.² We just had piano, trumpet, sax and guitar because Eddie played guitar. We tried that and we kept adding and adding and go to playing all over the place.

DW: What did Mr. Cole play?

DC: Trumpet. He could play that trumpet. This is no exaggeration. Harry James was the big trumpet player at that time. Harry James was sloppy in comparison. This is the truth – cross my heart...which I did. He played a beautiful trumpet. The others were good but Al was outstanding.³

DW: What did you call the group?

DC: The Al Cole Orchestra.

DW: For how many years did the Al Cole Orchestra play?

DC: We started in 1944 and played until Al's lungs went bad which was about 1957.

DW: What kind of venues did you play in?

DC: We went north as far as the border. South as far as Rutland. East as far as Montpelier and West as far as "Bullwaga". We played every prom, I think, in any high school in that area. Proms were deadly. They were too prim and proper.

DW: What would have been a not so deadly event?

DC: Barn and square dances primarily. The most fun we ever had was up at Underhill at the Hen House. It was huge. It is now an apartment building but it used to be a big hen house...commercial hen house. They bought it, fixed it all over and put a good floor in it. We played up there for the whole time – every Saturday night. New Years

¹ April 1943

² Lincoln Hall was built in the early 1800s and was used as a tavern/restaurant/dance hall. It is now occupied by Essex Junction municipal services.

³ Harry James (1916-1983) was best remembered for his trumpet work with Benny Goodman and his starlet wife, Betty Grable.

eve was a foregone conclusion. We always went. That was one...we had a lot of fun with that. Bill Atkins. His wife came down to the funeral. She read it in the paper, god bless her, and came down. I have not seen her....

DW: What was Mr. Cole's other job at the time?

DC: He was working at the Buick garage then. He was a factory-trained mechanic.

DW: Besides loving to do it, the band must have been a nice income boost too.

DC: We got fifty bucks a night for the whole band. Comparatively speaking.

DW: Compared to what you were making as a teacher....

DC: I made 800 dollars a year.

DW: That ten dollars a night made a major contribution.

DC: It helped. It helped.

DW: When you were married, where did you live then?

DC: We got married at All Saints which was then by the rotary. It is the Greek Orthodox Church now.¹ When Al was seven years old, he served on the altar up there. It is Episcopal and Lynn Smith married us. He got dispensation from the Bishop to marry out of his district. I had an apartment at 226 ½ Pearl Street in the back of Doctor Humphrey's office. I had the apartment when I first came and we stayed there for the first year until we could find a house. Then we found this place and been here ever since.

DW: You bought this in....

DC: 1947. I think it was '47. It might have been '48. When we bought it, there was four acres of land according to the deed. Now it's two. The state went from sixty-six feet wide on the road to ninety-nine feet and they claimed it. Nobody ever told us about it but it happened.

DW: When you lived at the Methodist Parsonage, all you had to do was walk to school. But when you lived in Burlington, you must have had a car?

DC: I would leave Al off at work and drive down. I would stay at Park Kent's mothers – because they lived across from the bridge then. You know, the Cole house – it's on

¹ The All Saints Episcopal Church is now located at the corner of Swift Street and Spear Street in South Burlington. The old site is now occupied by the Greek Orthodox Church Dormition of the Mother of God

the sign now. Then I would walk over to school from there. Go back after school, go pick up Al had go back to Pearl Street.

DW: This was your routine until your boys came along...

DC: Until Frank came along.

DW: Did you continue teaching the whole time you had children?

DC: No. I took ten years off. When Dan went into the second grade, I went back teaching again. I took ten years in there so I could be home with them. I have not regretted one minute of it.

DW: That would have been from...

DC: 1945 to 1955, I think.

DW: Who were your neighbors here?

DC: Next door were Harvey and Marianne Kaigle. They were French. They had a little farm – they had a horse and cow. This was the war and food was scarce. She made her own butter. We had fresh butter every week – a dollar a pound. She couldn't do much English and she didn't know how to read. She said "I don't read the words but I make the change." I had to teach her how to write her name when Harvey died. She took care of the boys when we went to play the dances. Two or three nights a week. She knew my health better than I did. Wonderful woman. People thought she was my mother. She had her little granddaughter with her for a while. Taught her all of her prayers in French because she did not know them in English.¹ I never worried about those boys. If anything had happened, she would have gotten them out of there. Every Saturday, we would come home from the dance, that house would reek of Lifebuoy Soap. The whole family. They did not have a bathroom so they would come over and take a bath, and then she would make a tea. They would play cards and eat until we came home. I can think of Lifebuoy Soap today.²

DW: So Saturday night was bathing night at the Coles?

DC: Well, for them. It sure was. I never begrudged it. Across the road was Andy Morrill. Andy was an awfully good neighbor.... they were good to us and we enjoyed them tremendously. Edith (Andy's wife). They had Russell and Henry and Leo. And then she had a couple of miscarriages. They lived in the house kitty corner to us. He brought her down to our house as a bride at age 16. When Russell was born, he was born in the house they turned around onto Maple Leaf Lane – it is at the end. She said she could look up at the stars because the house was not done. She wanted to be in her

¹ Harvey and Mary Ann Kaigle purchased their 17 acres in 1946.

² Lifebuoy Soap was created by an English Company, Lever Brothers, in 1895. The company is still in existence today.

own house – not with the in-laws. Then they bought the one right across from us and built it. And they built over here at #21. Then they started building down Maple Leaf Lane

DW: And Don Jones, the principal, lived there...

DC: He lived in the middle one for a while. That came a lot later. Then of course, we had the Farrells too. They were wonderful to us.¹

DW: Could you see the bay from where you live?

DC: Yes. When the trees dropped their leaves...from the second floor, we got a good view.

DW: Is that still the case?

DC: I can't from here.

DW: My father said that when he was boy from their living room on Webster Road he could see the bay. Everything was clear from there to the bay. You mentioned Lynn Smith, who was the rector here. What other religious figures can you remember in the town?

DC: I remember Father Cain. There was an imposing figure. Oh what a smart man he was. I was scared to death of him. I played organ at the Methodist Church for, I think, three years. I used to go over and practice. Of course, I lived right upstairs. He would be out on his porch doing his prayers. Walking back and forth and back and forth. One time he asked if I had to play quite so loud. (laughter) I had to practice the hymns and everything. I liked him.

DW: There was another father, I can't remember his name, and he drove a red convertible?

DC: That's right. It was a Buick because Al said all the priests used to come to the Buick garage. Also, we had Reverend Frank Bremen at the Methodist Church. He was downstairs under us. He was kind of fresh...out of school...starting in. He thought that he ought to marry one of us girls. He really thought we ought to. He would come up frequently and we would be sitting around the big table and Gladys would be doing her fingernails and her toenails. We would be correcting papers and everything. He would come up and talk and talk. He thought Gladys was pretty good. Remember Gladys Baker? She is on the school board now. He thought he ought to marry one of us but we were not interested.

¹ Minum and Wilbert Farrell owned a 183-acre farm on the east side of Route 7. The couple bought the land and buildings in 1914. The Farrell's daughters – Amelia Coffey, Catherine Farrell and Evelyn Farrell – continued to farm the land after their parents.

DW: It is unusual to have a minister who does not already have a family...

DC: That place downstairs was so squalid. The only clean place was the bathtub because we had a fifteen-gallon hot water heater down in that huge cellar. He would take every bit of it for a bath. He always wore his clerical collar.

DW: This was during the war?

DC: Yes

DW: What else do you remember of the war years?

DC: Before I got married when I was still at college...I better not say this, but I am going anyway....I had a ball. I was writing probably to a dozen different serviceman. The Air Force was at the University and they would march by...cadence count. We would sit in the classroom. I had a date morning, noon and night. It was wonderful...I never had a such a time in my life. But then, things began to happen. I think I must have been engaged to two or three of them but they did not take. One of them was hurt in the Battle of Bulge and he was evacuated to Northern Scotland. That was not pleasant. The Fort¹ was going full tilt and I was one of the lucky fifty girls who were chosen from the University to be USO.²

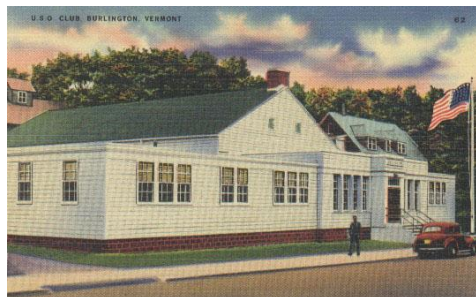


Figure 1 USO Building, Burlington

I had a lot of fun with USO. I love to dance. I would have rather danced then eaten. They had a lot of dances. I was an airplane spotter. You know the Old Mill, up on campus, the tower on the very top. That is where we had it all rigged up. Red phone and everything. We had to walk the stairs because there was no elevator. But I was an air raid spotter and I had access to all the different...Milton, the Islands, Albany. We had outlines of all the different planes and big charts. We saw anything that looked suspicious, we could call one of the others and have them check it. If it was still suspicious, then we would call on the red telephone. I loved it.

¹ Fort Ethan Allen, Colchester, Vermont

² United Service Organizations



Figure 2 Fort Ethan Allen

DW: You were busy..

DC: I was. And in town, I was also student teaching.

DW: What do you remember about rationing?

DC: That was terrible. My father had a store at home and when I was home, I was working, during vacation, at the store with dad. We had red things and the blue things. We also had gasoline and you had to have the things for that. It was an awful headache for the people who had to do it. And then you had to be sure you had your ration book. If it came to the end of the month, and you had no stamps left, you did not have whatever it was. Sugar was hard to get. We used to make cakes with honey. Coffee. We had ersatz coffee – chicory. Meat was not plentiful. Nobody ever complained because it was going to the boys overseas.

DW: What about material? Stockings?

DC: I worked one summer at Penney's. When they had a shipment of irregular nylons, the word would get out and there would be a queue lined all the way up. They kept them upstairs so you would have to go through and see all the other good stuff. That was something. They did not last very well because they were seconds. My wedding dress was parachute silk. It was very common. And cars they didn't make during that time. I think '41 was the last year they made cars until '46. You had to make due. Al was working at the Buick garage and he could repair things with a wad of chewing gum or a rubber band. He learned how. All the farmers would come in because they had all their equipment and everything. Al knew how to take one from a John Deere and work it on a Ford. He knew how to do it.

DW: Was that McGreevey who ran the Buick store?

DC: Before... it was P.K. Donovan. When he died, Leo McGreevey got it. The gas was rationed. We were able to get it for the dances because we were supposed to be doing something to keep up the spirits on the home front so we could get so much gas. Other than that, there was not much traveling about. We used to take the old Rutland Rattler and go into town and back. Get off down here at the station...the three of us girls...no

streetlights...and walk across by Tony Mears' place and come up on the main road. It was scary. The best times was when one of the Webb cars was on the siding and somebody would be there.



Figure 3 Shelburne Rail Station

DW: Who were some of the big families when you arrived?

DC: The O'Briens. Man, all kinds of O'Briens. Wonderful. We played for George and Helen's wedding reception. We had only been married six months or something like that. We were still in Burlington. They came to see about playing for that which we did. We played in Jim O'Brien's barn. We used to play dances there.¹ Then, of course, there were all the Thomases, Thompsons, Noonans. You didn't dare say anything. John McGee said "Don't ever say anything about anyone because there is so much inter-marriage." Eutie's folks and all the Thompsons. An Eutie was on the school board when I first came.

DW: Was there a lot of social interaction in the town?

DC: They had card parties. There were dances practically every week at school. And the churches all had things – wonderful suppers. There was plenty going on in town. Mrs. Byington had bridge parties. She asked if I could play bridge. Well, I didn't play very well. Mother and Dad used to have them all the time at home. I never did join.

DW: Who did you consider to be the community leaders?

DC: John McGee, of course. My headmaster in high school was McGaw and first my first principal was McGee. I looked up to him. Eustace, of course, he was on the school board.² Lester Thompson was on the school board.³ The members of the clergy. The Webbs did not figure too prominently in my mind because the school did not have

¹ See James and Pauline O'Brien Interview

² Eustace Thomas came to Shelburne with his parents in 1901. He went to high school at Saint Michaels in Winooski. Eustace served the community in a multitude of ways. Eustace Thomas served on the school board from 1929 to 1961 and he also served as Shelburne's Town Representative in 1961. He and his wife, Lena, ran a farm (the former Andrews Farm) near the junction of Spear Street and Thomas Road. Over the years, the farm grew to over 550 acres and it had over 400 apple trees.

³ Lester Thompson (1885-1964) owned farmland near Shelburne Bay on Bay Road. Lester served the community for a long time as a cemetery commissioner and lister.

anything to do with it. But the people were so loyal. They worshipped at the shrine. Apparently, the Webbs were very good to the people who worked for them but I never had much contact with them at all. Jake (Everett) and Marion Rice. Then of course Tracy and Maeck. The Tracys and the Maecks. When we went up to give blood... Mr. Maeck was a big man...you put a needle in his arm and you had to work and work and work. It was there but it just did not want to come out. Genevieve Harvey was the town nurse at that time and she would get a whole carload of us. Up we go to the hospital and they would have to wait for me. I got it. Also L.H. Palmers.

DW: Where did you shop?

DC: Mostly at Tracy and Maeck. We were told also we had to be careful about that so we always got something's over at L.H. Palmers.

DW: Just so that you didn't appear to be favoring one over the other

DC: Oh, we had to be careful.

DW: Can you imagine telling that to a schoolteacher today?

DC: When I signed my first contract, I had to state that I didn't drink, smoke or play cards. I didn't drink, I didn't smoke, I didn't swear either but I did play cards.

DW: Who were the doctors in town?

DC: Doctor Norton lived right next to my in-laws. Julia was the town clerk. His wife was the town clerk. He always had ties with whatever he eaten for the last month all down the front of it and everything. He called my mother in law Jo because her real name was Josephine and everyone called her Nina. He called her Jo so I called her Jo because it fit. I could not call her mother so she was Jo.¹

DW: Doctor Norton lived where?

DC: Right behind the Methodist Church in the first house and my in-laws in the next house.

DW: Which is now the museum offices and your in-laws lived in the next house, which is also the museum offices.

DC: Yes. Directly across from the bridge. When Mrs. Webb had that bridge brought in, my mother-in-law was furious. She made big noises to the point when Mrs. Webb offered to buy the house and she couldn't very well back out of it. So she sold the house and bought a house on Saint Paul Street in Burlington.

¹ Doctor James and Julia Norton lived in a house in the village that they purchased in 1946. Julia (1884-1949) served as the Town Clerk from 1935-1948 and James (1865-1950) was the Town Moderator from 1929-1950.

DW: For a lot of years, I thought she lived in Shelburne Falls.

DC: She was miserable up there – she wanted to back in Shelburne, with Marie Hamilton. They bought the place in the Falls.

DW: The Museum office building is called the Cole House.

DC: On the sign outside they got “Cole House” at the bottom of it.

DW: What do you remember of the shipyard?

DC: Lynn Smith brought us – the three of us teachers – to the harbor and saw them a launch a sub chaser. It went sideways. It didn’t go down like you expected it. They launched it sideways. Oh, what a thrill. Those sub chasers were all over the Pacific. I remember Lucy Lowe in the captain’s house over there and she sang. She always had a chiffon hanker chief and she would hold it. She would sing. She liked to sing with our band and Edna would take the controls and turn her down considerably. Your father and mother were there. I love Selina’s name – a moon goddess from way back.

DW: Who were some of the memorable personalities?

DC: Tony Mears. He used to come and visit the first and second grade room. I had an old victrola that was in that room when I came. I had a few records. If it was nasty outside because teachers had to do gym and everything – if it was too nasty to go out, we would turn on one of the records. Big old LPs. We would play the 78s and march up and down the aisles, choose somebody to lead and everybody would march around everything. It was great fun and Tony loved that. I taught him how to print his name Clifford and then we had some people who did not wanting him hanging around young people.¹

DW: Somebody mentioned John Tracy?

DC: John Tracy! I loved him. He was always spouting Latin phrases at me and coming down to school to play the piano. We would go over to the garden and he would have all the boys working over there for 10 cents or 25 cents.

DW: Its funny that you mention him playing piano because I had not thought about that. When I was in fifth grade, we had it upstairs in the Methodist Church. John would come in occasionally and play the organ at church.

DC: He was a smart man. Helen Gadhue was unique. Betty Nowacienski² said one time that she was “Shelburne’s Treasure” because she could remember so much. I remembers some things about her too [laughter] Eustace was unique. I loved him. He

¹ Tony Mears lived on Railroad Lane

² Beatrice Nowacienski lived on Mount Philo Road with her husband, Stanley.

was the nicest guy. When his wife died, Mae was in the first grade and I can remember that little round face of hers and just crumpled up in tears. It was sad...really sad. And of course he married again later. Everybody in the Falls had their caps set on him. Kitty Noonan wanted him in the worst way...so did Marie Hamilton. They all were after Eutie. He married Herlene instead.

DW: How about Rita Mom¹?

DC: Rita Mom was a dear. She came to everything we ever had at school. We had a rhythm band and she came to that. One time, we bought Peter and Wolf – the whole thing. I said John “the whole school ought to hear it.” So John said “OK Bring your old Victrola.” We went up on the stage on the old school and I played it. Charged a nickel a piece and all the high school kids came and all the rest of the school kids came and they listened to Peter and the Wolf. Rita Mom came and she sat right in the front. If anything funny happened, you could hear her laughing all over the place. She was something else?

DW: She did teach too?

DC: Not for me. She may have but never in my room. When I taught music in the high school, they had Amelia Rose. They lived in a little house on the other side of the Farrells.

DW: It is gone now.

DC: Yes. She used to come down from the High School and I would have things planned out to do while I went up and taught music.

DW: So you taught music also?

DC: Yes. I had the kids for the music fest in Burlington.

DW: So when you first taught in Shelburne, you taught first and second grade. And then you took a hiatus and then you came back. What did you teach then?

DC: Seventh (grade) and eighth (grade) and then just eighth (grade). I had English and Social Studies.

DW: Did you ever teach high school?

DC: Yes I did...part time. During that ten years, I did substitute work. The first substitute job I had, John McGee called and wanted me to take his math class. I had no idea. But I was there...a presence in the class. Carl Lozon...I can remember being there. Johnny Clark...Glen Little. I can remember a lot of those kids.

¹ Rita Ann Noonan Thomas. Her husband, Frederick Thomas, went by the name of “Daddy Fred.” See Colleen Haag and Robert Noonan interviews.

DW: Do you remember kids from your 1 and 2 grade classes?

DC: Oh yes. Somewhere, I have pictures of them. I had Woody Smith and Jimmy St. George¹ and Raymond Lawrence. Do you remember the Bicknells?

DW: I remember Eraldine.

DC: You remember Eraldine!

DW: I know the name.

DC: I had her. When she was in first grade, she slid through a barbed wire fence at Christmas time. She had big scar on her cheek where that happened.² Coleman, Boudah (Bernice) and McDonald Yvonne St. Peter. Fishers. I had Bub. I didn't have Roger – he was in the third and fourth grade room. Driving tricks then – they put wooden blocks in there so his feet could reach it.

DW: He was driving trucks way back then!

DC: In the third and fourth grade.

DW: He was a natural.

DC: Oh, I guess. The Thomases. Mae Thomas. And Walter Fenwick.³

DW: Do you remember any celebrations like the Bicentennial?

DC: Oh yes. The march with the cub scouts. Frank was in the Babe Ruth league and Dan was a Cubbie and they both marched.

DW: What do you remember about the JFK assassination?

DC: Oh, I remember that well. I was at school. I had come down to Don's office for something or another – that was the old Home Economics place. I came down and he told me about it and it as if the bottom had dropped out of everything. I couldn't believe it. The whole school heard within a very short time –absolute quiet. Girls were crying and everybody turned white. I do remember that. I remember December 7, 1941. I was at University – it was a Sunday afternoon. My roommate and I were studying and we had the radio on. It came over the radio. I remember it so well.

¹ See Jim St. George Interview

² Eraldine Ann Bicknell (b. 1937) was the daughter of Wentworth and Florence Bicknell who lived on the south side of Harbor Road adjacent to the Webb Estate. This land, which once belonged to the John Roberts family, was eventually bought by Dunbar Bostwick in 1967.

³ Walter and Yvonne Fenwick owned the "restaurant" immediately south of the Cole House on Route 7.

DW: How about the Cuban Missile Crisis?

DC: I was scared to death because Frank was in the Air Guard and he had to have his shots. I didn't like that very well.

DW: Do remember sending us home from school?

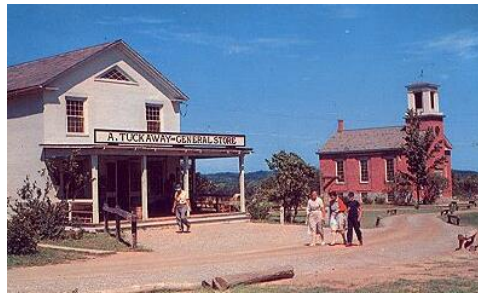
DC: Do you remember when we had to have air raid plans laid out? I was supposed to go out in the middle of the street and stop traffic to let kids runs across the road. Theoretically, cars were going to be going everywhere and I was supposed to be brave enough to go out and stop the traffic and let the kids across. Al was in Burlington and we were here. We had to make plans on where we could meet. Where we could go in the building – where we could be safe, getting under the desks. We had quite a contingency plan.

DW: I remember being sent home early one day. I remember we had to practice getting home and to our safe place. I think I was in first or second grade. What do you remember about the museum?



Figure 4 The Moving of the "Ti"

DC: When they brought the "Ti" across. Ricky Norcross was in something like the fifth grade. One year I taught the fifth grade because Don was mad at me for something and I got punished. {laughter} Well it happened. Remember Ricky Norcross and the Nashfull Ramblers? He was in the fifth grade and a whole bunch of the kids were always around. The picture of the moving of the "Ti" at the museum – you will find him and that group of boys. We watched that come across and when they brought the big silo over, with that big great helicopter that they got from Oregon. Everybody was taking pictures. I remember once it got under way, every year we would walk over to the museum with our kids and take the tour. The favorite place was the lunch bar. They liked the smith shop where the guy would make little horseshoes. They liked that because of fire and noise and everything. They liked the circus and the railroad cars. Some of the houses, they were not that interested in.



Picture 1 Shelburne Museum

DW: You mentioned going over to the shipyard? What else do you remember?

DC: It was a very busy place. Very busy. They were building boats, they were fixing boats up.



Figure 5 Shelburne Shipyard

DW: What do you remember of the Snellings?

DC: They lived over in the brown apartment. We used to have Republican Committee meetings over there. Of course, all the kids were in school. My lilac bushes out here. Jackie asked me would I like some lilac bushes because they had some over there and I said "sure". So she brought me three or four little twigs, which were the granddaddies of my lilac bushes.¹ Right out of their yard. I liked Barbara very much. Good kids. Smart kids.

DW: Who were the big farming families? Guilmettes?

DC: Yes. The Sinclairs had one over on 116 and Pauline did her practice teaching in Home Economics at Shelburne High. So that is why I knew them. Of course, the Wrights. His wife worked at Van Gelder's jewelry shop in Burlington. I remember her for that.

DW: Shelburne was definitely a farming community?

DC: Oh yes. Town meetings were in the daytime. The farmers came.

¹ Jacqueline T. Snelling, the daughter of Richard and Barbara Snelling.

DW: When do you think that started to change?

DC: When the development came in and they wanted land and they swallowed it. The farmers were not getting much for the effort. Farm prices were down and if they wanted to make a living, sell the land.

DW: How do you think it has changed?

DC: I hate it. I am sorry. I had some kids in the 8th grade who came here from New Jersey or wherever. They built their nice big house and then they wanted to close the doors. I can remember talking about it in class and they would say "Don't let anymore buildings occur. No more. We are here. Now the rest of the world stay out." I felt that way a long time ago. I hate to see the pace of a nice little town change. Look what it has done to Charlotte. Right down the middle. They don't have what we have up here. They have more millionaires. Somebody said that something like 57% of Charlotte is millionaires. I have met some awful nice people, love the kids and all that but I hate to see the green disappear.

DW: How do you think it has changed the social structure of the town?

DC: We are not content with the same nice little things we used to have. We want things on big scale, a grand scale. We've got to work out at the gym. We got to go play tennis with our little white skirts on. We've got to do things like that. I'm sorry, I liked it better when we played bridge.

DW: In your lifetime, what do you think have been some of the best inventions?

DC: Pantyhose. {laughter} I don't know if we had stuff like scotch tape and paper clips and things like that before, but I couldn't live without those. Inventions? Television. And then all the computer deals. I don't have a computer and I don't have one. Microwaves...things to make housework easier. Still have a washing machine that theoretically works the same way. They just souped up the appearance. But labor saving devices have been great. They really have.

DW: When you were married, did you have a washing machine right off?

DC: Yes I did. It was an old ringer washer. An old Maytag. We washed once week.

DW: Saturdays?

DC: Yes. I had to. There was nothing else I could do.

DW: Then you hung out to dry?

DC: I had wonderful spot up here. I had a great big tree and a clothesline would go through there. The wind would whip through there – oh, it would smell so good.

DW: You also had a big garden?

DC: Yes. We are on it now. I loved to can.

DW: What sort of things did you can?

DC: To begin with, string beans. There is nothing that tastes as good as string beans out your garden can. I would do sixty quarts. Tomatoes, tomato juice. I had a grape vine – we did grape juice and made grape jelly. We had cherry trees, we made cherry jelly, cherry custard. I never canned carrots because we could always put those down in the cellar – the root cellar. And beets. Squash we never did. We tried corn and peas. I loved it. There was something very satisfying about it.

DW: Cherry trees too?

DC: Maraschino cherries. The trouble is that you had to cover it with some kind of paper or cheesecloth. The birds loved those cherries. It was a fight to who was going to get them. We always had enough. In fact, our first dog was buried underneath them. He loved to go out there to the cherry trees.

DW: What did during your time off/vacations?

DC: We didn't care about going anywhere. Most everybody picked off and went to visit relatives. All mine down in New York came up here. "Oh lets go visit Dotty and Al. They are up in the country. It is quiet and nice up there." I remember with some horror, the year that my father had his operation, that summer, every relative we ever had came. All I did that summer was peel potatoes and wash sheets. I was glad because it was nice for dad. Summer vacation, I had to go to summer school. The boys would love it. Back and forth. Al would go one with Babe Ruth and I would go the other way with Little League. In between, we would meet at all hours and so forth. Al and I liked to take day trips. When the boys were old enough to leave home, we would just go somewhere where we could go for a day and come back. I loved to go around the lake – that was one of our favorites.

DW: What did you remember of the depression?

DC: It didn't do a thing for us. It honestly didn't. Mother and Dad would talk and we were not supposed to hear it. They were concerned about it. Everybody in town was in the same boat. When it came time that I had a chance to go to college, I promised to teach in the state the same number of years that they paid for my tuition. I worked summers, waiting on tables, to pay for my books and my clothes. I got scholarships and I waited on a table in one of the dorms up here for my meals. I didn't have to spend much – I worked.

DW: Was there an exodus of teachers from the state?

DC: No. Surprisingly not. When I took some of the courses, we had teachers from New York come up. "What do you want to teach here for when you can't get any money out of it or anything. "There is a lot of pluses besides money." Inner city schools? Forget it. But the depression was not bad. One thing I regret – I had starting taking music lessons. I loved music lessons. And it got to the point where my mother could not afford to have me keep on taking lessons. I would have given anything to have been able to not give it up. Priscilla kept me on for one whole summer because I would go and play at her recitals. That is the thing I regret the most.

DW: Besides the band, what did you do for amusement? This was the pre-television days.

DC: There was a radio and it was big. We had a lot fun listening to stuff on the radio. At home, every Saturday night, when I was growing up, mom and dad would have a couple of couples come in and play cards. Marian and I would ease our way down the stairs so we could see all that was going on. We had things going on at church. We had things going on at school. My mother and I used to embroider every evening. She taught me how to embroider and I love to embroider. We would sit there and do that and have the radio on. My sister was younger, so she would have to go to bed earlier. Mother would play the piano and we would sing. Sometimes she and I would play duets. We sang duets in church. I was church organist when I was 12. It was a small town.

DW: What did kids in Shelburne do?

DC: There was the skating rink in the wintertime. We lived up here so we were not in the village so all the Farrell boys used to come over. And Bruce Hammond. Lilly's nephew would come over. And when Mrs. Kaigle had all her kids there, the grandchildren would come over. We always had a bunch. Nicky Farrell would come knock on the door "Can Mrs. Cole come out and play". With my apron on, I would go out and play baseball with them. You made your own fun. The kids used to get together and play ball. The skating rink was always fun.

DW: Did you have one up here or did you go to one in the village?

DC: We went out back. You have to go out back and on the way towards Johnny Farrell. It was a pond that formed up there. They used to have another one that was right at the base of the heights there that Mr. Farrell had for the cows and so forth. It was so polluted that they opened it up. We would take the dog, clean it off and play hockey.

DW: We used to go to a pond up behind the Marsett Farm

DC: Nice pond up there. There used to be strawberries up there.

DW: You mentioned the Republican committee. What other groups were there?

DC: And the Democrats too. They had their own little groups.

DW: Ralph Marsett?

DC: Yes. Helen Gadhue. Doc White. When we had the first Fire District up here, Eleanor White was the clerk. She gave me the notes and then I took over. The notes were on backs of envelopes and stray pieces of papers. I had to get those shaped up. The first thing we did – we got streetlights up here. That was pretty good. It was blacker than the haze of.....

DW: When was that?

DC: It had to be no more than '50. It could have been early 1950s.

DW: We forget what it was like before...

DC: When we first came down here after living on Pearl Street in the city and then coming down here. Come home from dances, it was so black. I remember coming into the yard a couple of times and there was a skunk in the yard. We didn't have the fence there then. So we would back out and the skunk would come this way and we would back up and the skunk would come this way and then we would try to ease in. And Mrs. Morrill, when we first came here, thought musicians were drunks. She figured we were drunk, backing in and out of the yard like that. Andy came over to see what was going on the next morning and they found out about it then. When Mrs. Kaigle and Mr. Kaigle had their horse, we let them keep their horse out here. Al came home one night – I hadn't played that night – and he had the 50 dollars which was a lot. He started up from the garage up to the house and he heard footprints coming after him. He got faster. He leaped over onto the porch and into the house. He said "Somebody's out there. Somebody's out there." He didn't know the horse was out there. We would go down in the cellar together. Neither of us would go down alone.

DW: Were there any grange activities?

DC: Oh, yes. That is right. I forgot all about that. Al and I went through 6 Degrees of Grange. Eutie was big in that and Rose Hurley and Ruth Palmer¹...Kitty Noonan. Quite a few from the Falls area. Ben Bates was master for a while. It was fun. We would meet regularly and join with the other granges around. We took our 6 Degree, which was is the State Grange. Harold Arthur was the governor at the time because he signed the membership papers.

DW: Where was the Grange Hall?

DC: We did not have Grange Hall in Shelburne. We went to Hinesburg and down to Charlotte.

¹ Ruth Webster Palmer was married to Maurice Palmer. She was the daughter of Milo and Lillian Webster who ran a 190-acre farm on the Shelburne/Charlotte border on Spear Street extension. Along with her brother, Henry Webster, Ruth inherited this land in 1938 and sold it in 1968.

DW: What did the Woodsmen do?

DC: Insurance as far as I know. The Modern Woodmen of America. My dad had insurance with them, pop had insurance with them.¹

DW: Was the Poor Farm still in operation?

DC: I know they had one in Charlotte. I don't remember one.

DW: How did people get help?

DC: At home, my father was overseer of the poor. He had a store and at that time, there were a lot tramps who walked the tracks. The Canadian Pacific went right by dad's store. He was authorized by the town to give a loaf of bread and a can of beans. Once in a while, he would say "Don't ever make fun of them. They are down on their luck. Could be you, could be me."

DW: Shelburne also had an overseer of the poor too?

DC: Tommy Thompson I think

DW: Who are some politicians that you remember?

DC: Consuelo Northrup Bailey. She was a sorority sister of mine. He sister Frederica was the head librarian at UVM.² Uncle Homer – Homer Saint Francis. There is a political figure that sticks out in mind. He was fighting for a lost cause and his daughter is doing it too. Thanks heavens, they are getting back to the roots now which helps a little bit. I remember the election between FDR and Thomas Dewey. At one time, they used to say: "As Maine goes, so does the nation." Because Maine had earlier elections like New Hampshire today. In that one, it was two states – "As Maine goes, so does Vermont." I can remember, way back, mostly because my father used to talk about it when Al Smith was running for president. He was Catholic and there were two Catholic families in East Ryegate. They burned a fiery cross up in the clay bank. Nobody knew who did it or nobody said anything. I remember that and I remember that Jack Roberts and Joe Devins did not vote.

¹ Modern Woodmen of America is a fraternal life insurance organization that was founded in 1883 by Joseph Cullen Root in Lyons, Iowa. Root envisioned a self-governing society whose members came from local camps (lodges) across America. The lodge system, which remains in effect today, nurtures community spirit by bringing families together for wholesome, social, recreational and service activities. (source: www.modern-woodmen.org)

² Consuelo Northrup Bailey (1889-1976) was the first woman admitted to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court; one of the first women in the nation to be elected a prosecutor; the first and only woman to serve as speaker of the Vermont House; and the first woman in the nation to be elected lieutenant governor. Bailey lived in Shelburne Village near the Episcopal Church. The land and building once belonged to Truman Webster and before him, the Deyette Family.

DW: Was there mixing between the Catholics and the Protestants in Shelburne?

DC: No. The Catholics were not allowed in our churches. The fence between the Catholic cemetery and the old cemetery – they have been wanting to take that down for years. Al and Phil had talked about it. No sir. It wasn't just the Catholics. It was some of our good Protestants. We were right in the middle of it because Pop was catholic. Al was baptized in the Catholic Church but when his grandmother was divorced from Florence Horsford's uncle, the Catholic Church excommunicated her. Mamie was a person who needed church. There was a deaconess at St. Pauls who took her under her wings and she became Episcopal. My mother in law became an Episcopal and the boys became an Episcopal. It was tough because sometimes my mother in law wouldn't cook fish on Fridays for my father-in-law. She would get mad at him and she would cook meat and Pop didn't eat it. There was a lot of fuss in not being allowed in each other's churches.

DW: I heard for a while that the Catholic kids did not join the scouts?

DC: For a while, they didn't. And then we have the Jehovah's Witnesses too. Dotty Sauls. That was tough because those kids did not observe Christmas, did not salute the flag – this sort of thing. You had to make allowances and even way back when, all I asked is that you had to stand. You don't have to salute the flag if that is against your religion. Just stand....that's all. You couldn't have birthday parties and presents, you could not have Christmas and presents. There has been a lot of antipathy towards religion. Unfortunately, some of it carried over.

DW: Would you say that it abated more these days then in the 1940s?

DC: Oh Yes. Mikey and Mindy Precourt lived next to us and Mikey is wonderful to me. So when they were going to have Scott baptized down at Saint Catherine's, Mikey said "We would like to have you come. We knew you were religious so we thought you might want to come." We were religious because we went to church every Sunday. Of course we went, we were glad to.

DW: That wouldn't have happened 25 years ago?

DC: No. They would not have asked us, but we would have gone. There was a lot of feeling...a lot of feeling. Even my dear father, who was one of the nicest men who ever lived...one time my sister brought home a high school boy who happened to be Catholic. The only thing that I ever remember dad saying that was a least bit biased was "Don't you know any good Protestant boys?"

DW: You mentioned that one of the biggest changes in Shelburne was the development. Can you think of any other tangible changes?

DC: Water and sewer. We used to have it just in the village. When it came across the river and up through here, we never thought that it could happen but we have water and we have sewer. It is on the heights...it is out to the point. Look at Charlotte, they have

no water and sewer and look at the problems they have. Clay. Sulphur. Dan was lucky, he had Bob White....remember when he did dousing...he went down and told him where to drill.

DW: Bob White did dousing. I did not know that. The same Bob White from the Falls?

DC: Yes. He did Frank too. Frank has an underground river – did you ever hear of that? It is almost free flowing. He has a beautiful well. Dan has something like five gallons in Charlotte. Good water. Well we had street lighting! That was biggest thing for here (north Shelburne). But the amount of building...it is everywhere. When Bob Vogel first came, he built his A frame up there and now the whole of Hullcrest – unbelievable. Now look out behind the school. When we first had the school, some of the Bostwicks' cows used to come and visit.

DW: I remember the cows used to stick their head in the windows.

DC: And trying very hard. Some of the boys almost got one in the back door one time. Look how it's grown. Look down at the harbor. The harbor and the captain's house. Nothing there at all.

DW: How about the school. You taught at it when it was just the one building. And then there was a 1948 addition, a 1961 addition and then you moved to anew building. Do you have an affinity to a particular building?

DC: Upstairs....southeast corner...7th and 8th grade room. I loved that room. It looked out on the road. Looked across to the Methodist Church where the skating rink was. Take the windows down from the top and up from the bottom. When the fire alarms went off, we shut the things in the back, where you hung the coats, because the noise was deadly...right over the top of our heads. Everything stopped and we all would go to the window whether it rang 3, 6, 9 or 12 times.



Figure 6 Old Fire House

DW: What would those tell you?

DC: Three was village and north. Six was south. Nine was west and 12 was east.

DW: That was supposed to tell the volunteers which direction to head in?

DC: Apparently so. We always knew where it was going. If it was three, I was nervous. I love that building. I loved the windows. At the middle school, you opened them out a little bit and then we had some people come and say "You can't do that. Kids will be running around and they will run smack right into a window." Anyway, the circulation....not good. You opened the end door and there was a little breeze through there. I would bring down the fan in the summer time and in the winter....flat roof in Vermont? Stupid. Absolutely stupid. They would go up there with snow blowers in the middle of the day and blow the snow off the roof.

DW: I could sum it up by saying that you enjoyed the village school more....

DC: It was much better. I never minded the openness over there. It didn't bother me at all. A lot of people did not like it because they did not have four walls. I only had two walls and a divider. It never bothered me at all. We had people coming from over to see that....new concept.¹

DW: How do you think the roads have changed?

DC: It wasn't paved when Al came. The roads are so much better. I can remember when we were going together, Al had a little Austin. You could pick it right up and move it. We were going over to the Harbor one time. We were on a hill and we got stuck and we could not get up it. One time they were fixing the sidewalks in the Falls and they put a whole layer of gravel in. Our little car could not make it through. The town has done beautiful job on the roads.

DW: Were there any other paved roads when you came to Shelburne in the 1940s?

DC: Spear and Dorset were not. I don't think there were any.

DW: So mud season was truly mud season?

DC: It was. We would go down to the farm – Mamie's farm in East Charlotte in the Spring like that – you didn't go. It just oozed out of the road. It was just awful. Of course, the tires were higher then. They had to be. Paul (Goodrich) does keep up the roads very, very well.

¹ See Gus Mercaldo interview

Interviewee: Janis & Tut Coleman

Interviewer: Bruce Beekin

Date: April 5, 2002

Location: Falls Road

Topics Discussed: Post Office, Falls Road, Shelburne Farms, Tink Strong, Lapham Family, Eutie Thomas, Water & Sewage, LaPlatte River. John Tracy, Tracy & Maeck store, fishing, hunting and trapping, World War Two, Shelburne Shinvard. train station. roads

BB: Janis we were talking about the post office and you said there used to be a post office on Bay Road.

JC: That was on the corner where the gas station is now. They moved that to the museum years ago. And they built the newer post office across the road where the children's shop is. The post office was downstairs and he lived upstairs. And then you go to the country store, which is the Country Store, now, used to be the Barbershop. They had a big pot-bellied stove in there and chairs and a chess board so when you went to get your haircut the men would sit and talk and play chess. Then the house next door, Howard Miller lived there, and he ran the bus from Shelburne to Burlington, two or three times a day, because that's the only service some people had. They had a little place on Maple Street where you took the bus to get back to Shelburne, Howard Miller. Bill Dunce lived, he was director of Shelburne Museum, lived in the house that the Webb's still own, the little white house right on Falls Road.

BB: Now I am not sure which house that is.

JC: The one next to Patterson's... I believe. Patterson's Oil Company the brick house was owned by Tink Strong, and everything where the Shopping Center is now was the Truck Garden.

BB: Who ran the Truck Garden?

JC: Tink Strong.

BB: Do you know where the produce was trucked too that was grown there?

JC: Basically he sold it locally. I don't think he ever trucked it because he had his big gardens out back, and it was basically vegetables. The house where the frame shop is was owned by Doctor Ranks, he was the doctor in town. They kept that house and bought the Gadhue's house across from the town hall, which they bought it from Van Vliets, (who) used to own that.¹

¹ The Ranks family stayed in the house until 1917 and then they sold it to Helen and Rene Gadhue. The Gadhues opened an antique store across from the Town Hall in 1939. Cyrus Van Vliet originally

BB: Orient us in time; is this before World War II?

JC: Oh yeah!

BB: Is this before World War I?

JC: I'm not sure.

BB: Is it Depression years?

JC: Yeah, it could have been. Then there was old Doc Norton was the doctor in town. I shouldn't say this, but he drank quite a bit, so he got some of the people's names mixed up. Like Tut we just found out, his first name is not Edward, its John on the Town Records, his name is really John Coleman.

BB: When Tut was born which house did his mother and father live in? Which house were you born in Tut?

TC: 'The next one up from Sandra Lewis'. The second one up from Galipeau's Store. That old house where you see the old guy in there. ¹

BB: Second one towards Route 7 from Gallipeau's?

TC: Yeah. The one nobody lives in.

BB: I know that house! You were born in that house?

TC: Yeah

BB: In what year?

JC: 1925

BB: So Dr. Norton came over to the house and delivered Tut, delivered John.

TC: Gladys could have helped him; he was the one she was telling you about.²

BB: Yeah, but she would have only been a few old then wouldn't she have been?

TC: Well she used to help him. She used to help deliver kids.

built the house in 1885. Van Vliet ran the country store at the corner of Harbor Road and Route 7 as well as an apple evaporator company near the railroad depot.

¹ Falls Road

² See Gladys Morrill interview

JC: He's in his seventies, and she is going to be ninety.

BB: Is there a fifteen-year difference between you and Gladys?

TC: I'm seventy-five and she's ninety.

JC: She's ninety in June

TC: She helped that doctor all the time

BB: She was telling me that today.

JC: We checked to get his birth certificate for something and Colleen looked it up, got the birth certificate.¹ All these years he's been going by Edward John because that's what his folks named him, but Doc Norton only put on John Coleman. He never knew it until two years ago.

TC: Before Tink Strong bought that farm it belonged to Clayton. Clayton bought it, I forgot who owned it before Clayton, but he only had it about three or four years.²

BB: Would that have been a relative of Earl Clays who ran the sawmill over in Hinesburg?

TC: No I don't think so. He's got one of my saw blades. He came down one time, I still got the note around here. He owes for me for that saw blade.

BB: Your going to have a hard time getting that one paid up, he's been gone for three or four years. You know I used to tail that mill for him

TC: Well you were running one of my saws.

BB: An old Lane?

TC: Yeah. He left me a note here, and I called him back, alright you can use it.

BB: Was this a Lane sawmill?

TC: Yeah.

BB: And you showed me a picture of the engine.

JC: That went to Goshen, NY to an Engine Museum

TC: 40 horsepower.

¹ See Colleen Haag interview

² Harry Clayton

JC: And then we sold an old truck, I mean old, that the Guilmettes bought. He wanted that truck. It's way old.

TC: I sold him a planer.

JC: Eutie owned the brick house where the Beans lived. He ran the waterline from up the top of the hill across the river. Eutie put it in himself, and then the town took it over. They had also an irrigation ditch at the bridge here, the La Platte bridge, up over the hill to irrigate gardens everything in the Falls.

BB: The truck farm that was owned by Tink, was that irrigated?

JC: I'm not sure. It could have been. I'm not positive.

BB: So before water became a town utility, people developed these town pipelines, did they sell the water?

JC: Sewage lines the same way. Back in 1966 we didn't have sewage over here, all septic tanks for four houses. We had Munson dig the line, we paid for it ourselves, put the line in. We paid a cut in of \$600 for each house. Then we paid for running into our house separate. That was in '66 Otherwise we all had septic tanks. There was an old house next to us. I don't know who owned it.

TC: One of the Coleman's bought it. Well, Eutie lived here for a year. We used to lug our water from the spring down here. It was beautiful. A little spring.

BB: Coming off the La Platte River?

TC: No it's coming off that bank there. We used to go down there and get drinking water in buckets or milk cans, you know.

BB: Is that when you lived in this house?

TC: Yeah, when we first bought it.

BB: Cistern in the basement?

JC: Yeah

BB: But your garden was never on this side of the street?

JC: No they had, what did they have a pig farm here? In the garage, where the garage is. That was all a pig farm, they raised pigs

TC: No, two or three pigs that was it.

JC: But over by the bridge was deep enough so that back when our children were small, we'd take them over swimming, over here. Now it's all dried up. And they would also canoe from Charlotte to the bridge, pick up the canoe, and then take it down river over here. UVM comes down all the time because it's one of the best glacier stone in the river and also some very old trees over there.

BB: Beneath the ledges?

JC: Yeah

BB: Now there was a lot of fishing that went on in that part of La Platte River.

JC: Right here.

TC: That hole right behind the dam.

JC: Right down below the dam they stocked it every year with trout, everything.

BB: The state did this?

JC: The state.

TC: Except for the last few years. There was a dozen guys down there looking for suckers.

BB: Gladys told me about this, fishing with arrows or spears and there was a light involved.

TC: Well, one guy would be carrying a torch, a big burlap bag put it around a pole, and wire one bag on and wire the next bag on top of that and wire the next bag on top of that and soak it in Kerosene. So one guy is walking down the middle of the river with that. There would be about a half of dozen guys spearing, throwing the fish on the banks. And I'm telling you that we put a fence up one time and a big one came through took the fence right down. Ed Field was down there supervising to make sure we weren't spearing bass.

BB: You were after Mullet?

TC: Mullet, suckers, we used to pickle them. They put em in a brine. I don't know how they did it. You just washed them off and put them in a big trough. With a stone and water on the top.

BB: Did Gladys tell me that those fish were then put in jars and then buried in the ground?

TC: You probably could of. I don't know what that brine was. They dissolved the bones in so they were soft.

BB: Big sardines? So you would eat those in the wintertime?

TC: Yup, anytime you wanted.

JC: They also used to shoot fish at Shelburne Pond.

BB: So Gladys was saying earlier about how she used to sell the fish, sell smelt in her old truck. When was that? Was that after the war or before?

TC: After. Back in the sixties probably.

BB: 1960s?

JC: They probably had 52 pounds of smelt one day. We dressed them out and sold them to the IGA Store, which used to be Doenges and Towle on the corner.¹

TC: What was the old one? Tracy and Maeck.

JC: Tracy and Maeck.



Photo 1 Tracy & Maeck Store

TC: They owned where the doctor's office was and all that side of that road, two or three houses. From Dr. Norton's down, they owned two in there.

JC: Dr. Norton was where the Shelburne Museum office was.

TC: He was down there too...

JC: The creamery.

¹ At the corner of Harbor Road and Route 7

TC: But Tracy & Maeck owned a couple of houses in there because I used to help the old guy.

JC: John Tracy used to have a big garden down across the tracks and to the left

TC: It's the railroad station now.

JC: He grew everything from the melons to everything. He graduated from UVM one of the top students at UVM. Then he went into gardening.

TC: Imagine that! That guy could speak English, Japanese, Chinese, about five different languages, and he loved that garden.

BB: Yes I can imagine that. So when he grew those vegetables did he put those vegetables on the train to be taken to other markets?

TC: Not that I know of.

BB: Was it grown just for himself?

TC: No. No. The store.

BB: So you did sell the smelt. Did you sell any other fish that you caught?

TC: No, well maybe perch, but mainly smelt

BB: And that was winter time that you would do that?

TC: Oh yeah. I had this one guy Bacon; he was the one who did all the digging for the sewer. He'd take a whole god-darn bucket, thirty, thirty five pounds.

BB: When you could get it?

TC: Yeah he would take the whole bucket, and Besette would too.

JC: Perry Mitchell, Jimmy Collette,

TC: Jimmy Collette I'd go in his kitchen get a gallon bucket and dump it right in the sink. Happy as hell.

BB: What about other game? You're a pretty well known hunter?

JC: Rabbits...

BB: You don't sell that. That's just something you have for yourself and you give to your family and friends.

JC: We used to eat rabbits and coon, pigeons.

TC: You know that barn right there, the picture of the barn?

BB: Couldn't get up that high?

TC: If they were safe they would get up that high, wouldn't even break a window. No they used to have that big golf course over on the farm that was the only one around here.

JC: Harry Webb was one of the best left-handed polo players there was around.

BB: Did you ever see polo played in that barn?

TC: No, I never did.

JC: No, not there. Over the mountain we did... Waitsfield. Harry was noted for being one of the best left-handed polo players. They made most of their money, Webbs, from sugar, every bit of sugar you used. Dunbar Bostwick was Singer Sewing Machines back then.

BB: You were telling me... was it you Tut that was telling me about the foxhunts?

TC: Oh Yeah!

BB: What did they used to wear?

TC: I can't. I'm pretty young, but they used to go by blowing their bugles, eight or ten of them, and they had their herds all over the place, and they would ask the farmers if they could come on their land with a big pack of dogs, twenty dogs maybe! They used to go right through town with them.

BB: Somebody was telling me they wore yellow coats. What about this motorcycle, Tut? Was this one that Gladys, this is before Gladys set up in business?

TC: No, she was in business down there then.

BB: Did you get this from her?

TC: Well, I lived with them down there for quite a few years.

BB: So who's motorcycle was this?

TC: It was mine.

BB: You were just up from Boston, were you in Boston?

TC: No, they came up every weekend.

BB: Your talking about George Lafollette?

TC: He was in the air force. He was a gunner on a B-24. I was in the Navy. Nobody thinks I went anywhere. I was gone 21 days and went cross the Atlantic and back.

BB: So you when you came back would you pull into the Chelsea Naval Yard in Boston

TC: I've been in there a lot. New York City.

BB: So when you lived...

TC: I didn't live with them; I spent a week with them before I went in the service in Boston. They weren't there after I was pulling back in from overseas, they weren't living in Boston.

BB: They were back here now?

TC: Yeah, they were back here then.

BB: So this is probably one of the first Harley Davidsons that was sold in the State of Vermont?

TC: No. I say not, but it was the first overhead valve to come out. They brought it to the racetrack and it was fast. I got marks to prove it.

BB: So then where would you stay when you were coming back from the Navy?

TC: I stayed down with Gladys'.

BB: And Gladys lived down on Bay Road?

TC: Yup.

BB: So when you came out of the Service is that when you went into carpentry and building? You were down at the shipyard before the service.

TC: Yup.

BB: But then Flynn Avenue, when did you go down to Flynn Avenue?

TC: Lyman Avenue. I worked the Shipyard when I got back, a welder.

JC: A little bit at the shipyard.

TC: Because the government.... they had a program now...anybody that had come back, they had to let you have your old job back. But I was working there and I was working at the Woolen Mill in Winooski during the war, before I went. I come back and I went down to the Shipyard as a welder. The government they paid so much money towards me learning, you know? I worked on some tugboats down there.

JC: The war years, I was a kid back then in '45, well basically.

BB: What year were you born Janis?

JC: '32.

TC: She's a young kid!

JC: Well, I'll be 70. During the war my grandfather was District Superintendent of the Green Mountain Power so he couldn't go in the Service. Everybody else went. My mother worked at the phone company, so during the war they would give me a grand sack and I filled it with milkweed pods. The white stuff, they used that that to make parachutes, and 50 cents a bag. Do you know how long it took me to pick a bag? So then I would have to go to the Post Office, I bought them every week or so I got my fifty cents, a lot of money back then for a kid. I would go down to the post office and buy three Savings Stamps until you got \$18.75 and I kept the other twenty cents for myself. It was \$18.75 when you filled the book. You kept it and you got \$25.00 after five or seven years, Savings Stamps. During the war we had rationing. Everybody had money, you couldn't buy a thing. No nylons, I didn't wear them but my mother did. You couldn't buy your food. You'd go to the grocery store. Everything was in a coupon book. You had coupon books. You would go in the store. You had money to buy it but you couldn't because you had meat coupons, food coupons. Well, we shopped at the A&P or one of those. They had market stubs on almonds, butter, and all those things. You would get home and you had a paper bag, but you never knew what was in it. If you were a regular customer. Two pairs of shoes a year. Two! And we all put cleats on our shoes because you only got two pairs a year. You couldn't get sugar, five pounds a month or something. Well, my grandfather working at Green Mountain Power. There were single men there. So they would give us extra sugar. But the biggest treat was butternut fudge at Christmas because we had extra sugar. You couldn't buy anything but two pair of shoes a year, no nylons for the women, nothing in nylon at all because it all went to the war. What else was rationed?

BB: Chocolate of course, tobacco? Could you buy cigarettes?

JC: You rolled your own. I got paid for rolling my mother's because she smoked. I didn't cause I was young. They had a little rolling machine. You'd put paper in, put

tobacco in, and you rolled them. I got paid like a dime to roll all her cigarettes for her. Back then they had meat wagons that go around to your house. And they also had ice wagons. We had a refrigerator and an electric stove, but back then they had meat wagons that would go by your house and you would run out and buy meat off the wagon, ice wagons with chunks of ice they would cut out of the River.

BB: Now you are talking about Montpelier, where you grew up, not Shelburne.

JC: Montpelier.

BB: So the river you are talking about is the Winooski River that they cut they ice from

JC: Yup. My uncle couldn't go in the service because he had heart trouble. My Aunt Arlene, my mother's sister and my Uncle Charlie went to Hartford, Connecticut. She worked as Rosie the Riveter, that's what they called them back then until the war was over. I used to go down and visit them down there.

BB: I can imagine that when the war was on, a town like Shelburne was probably a very different place, no young men. There were no men in town I suspect.

JC: I wouldn't think so.

BB: So then when the war ended were there a lot of changes in a town like Shelburne? What were some of those changes, do you remember?

JC: Well it took a period of time for things to change. It just wasn't boom boom, overnight.

BB: Were there new businesses?

JC: Yup. 'Cause a lot of people went back to their old jobs. I know my mother was on Phone Company. She worked; in fact I used to go with her, on the ambulance crew. At night when we had blackouts you had to have black out curtains, they blew those sirens for air raids, everything went black! No street lights, no lights in the houses, and the ambulance crews had to go out. And people had to learn first aid. I knew all my first aid then because I'd go with her because she couldn't leave me alone. School, we had drills. The siren blew; we had to go under our table, all kinds of different things like that.

BB: When did you actually come to Shelburne, Janis?

JC: '53-'54.

BB: Why did you come to Shelburne?

JC: I was married to Bob for like seven years. Tut and I have been married forty-one.

BB: So which house did you live in?

JC: The big house.

BB: The Gadhues? Where Mrs. Gadhue lived.

JC: Yup. Although she did put in the clock in for above the Town Hall for the town although it didn't work for quite a few years. She kept that going.

TC: Then if they wanted to trim a tree down in front of Town Hall, she'd pay for it but she wanted it done her way.

JC: They also had the train station down where the new one is now. That went to the Museum. That old train station is at the Museum, the old one. Don Lubey worked as stationmaster there. They had freight trains come through. They'd side track 'em and they brought things in. And most of the inside of the boxcars were done in sheet rock for certain items. So if you wanted free sheet rock you could go over and strip it out of the boxcars for your house, which was a lot of savings for some of them. Don Lubey he married one of the Salters twins that lived where the frame shop is now, and he was station master back then.

BB: Would people come to the sidetrack with trucks to pick up the goods that came off those cars?

JC: Yup, like lumber. They transported everything by train back then.

BB: What else came off of that train?

JC: Everything.

TC: Coal. I shoveled a lot of it.

BB: How did they get the coal down to the big house at Shelburne Farms? I heard they burned a carload of coal everyday down there during the winter.

TC: Well, like I said, the old dump truck we got across the road over there, old Diamond Dave. We used to go down there and unload them. The old guy could hire kids. We'd all come back looking blacker than hell, but we were allowed to get some of it. We had shoes too. A lot of it you had to handle pretty near by hand.

BB: How did the truck get loaded from the boxcar? Hand shovel.

TC: I was down there and a guy asked me "what you digging in there for boy?" I said \$17.50 a week! "Think your digging for gold?" \$17.50 a week.

JC: My mother worked for the Phone Company, she got \$7.50/week for working and then during the depression she took in washings to supplement the income.

TC: She had three washing machines, and sometimes she melted the snow to make water.

BB: Did you work on the roads after the war too, Tut?

TC: Before the war.

BB: Just before as a kid. Was there a lot of new road building going on then?

TC: Mainly I did a lot of work tarring. A tar Mack would come along, put gravel down and then and shoot it with tar, and then mix it with a bulldozer and then put a rowler over it.

BB: Which roads were blacktopped back then?

JC: Very few.

TC: I did a lot of work up there by the islands, Chimney Corners, up through there.

BB: Do you remember which roads in Shelburne were paved, just before the war? Route 7, was that paved?

TC: This one here wasn't, till way after I bought it.

BB: When did you buy this house Tut?

TC: Jesus Christ I don't know. I need to get my books out. I think my taxes were \$17.50. I think it was \$17.50 a year.

BB: When did they pave Mt. Philo Road?

TC: I don't know.

BB: Was it paved when Gladys moved up there?

TC: Probably wasn't when she first moved up there. I don't know.

JC: I think it was Tut.

TC: She lived in that trailer at Bostwick's for a while.

JC: All the roads around here, Pond Road. They lost the Pond Road one year. It sank and never came back.

TC: They went to the dance and they come back and there was no road there.

JC: It went down.

BB: What time of year was that?

JC: Spring. It went down and never came back.

BB: So the Pond floods right across there connecting that marsh on the right to the main pond.

TC: Do you know that sharp corner up there? Hell of a corner they all roll over up there.

BB: On 116?

TC: Yup. Just before you get there, you look down and see the tree where the old road used to go.

BB: The Pond Road as we now know it that ties into 116 there, that was never there?

TC: No the other one came in from Dubois'. Just this side of Dubois'.

BB: It ran on the east side of Shelburne Pond?

TC: Gladys knew about it because they went to the dance one night and came back and there was no road there. Mimi could tell you more about that.

BB: What is Woodsmen's Hall?

TC: That is a creamery and everything out there.

JC: That little house down here on the corner was schoolhouse.

TC: Woodsmen's Hall is about four or five houses up from Gallipeaus on the right hand side. They used to have dances upstairs there. Then the Creamery across the road used to be a grain mill, where the architect is.

JC: McGee's corner, the little house next door, that cute little house, that was an old schoolhouse.

BB: Is that where Tut went to school?

TC: No. Gladys and Mimi went to it. My brother went to it. I went to the other one. The other one was built in 1925.

JC: I've got a Town Report here somewhere from 1925. They listed all the workman's hours, you know, that worked in town. You see a whole list of all the people that did work in town. We've got the 1925 School Report.

BB: I've heard that there was a little pond right outside the old library. They used to freeze over and they would skate there in the wintertime. I think Gladys told me that. Do you know what I am talking about?

TC: The skating rink? Do you know where they had their cookouts and stuff right in front of the Catholic Church? We used to flood that for skating. We had a skating hut we would put up there.

BB: Where Marcotte's now sets up skating.

TC: No, I don't think so. Right across from the Catholic Church.

JC: Methodist Church!

TC: Yeah. We used to put timbers up and flood it with a hydrant. Didn't we have some ball games? We used to go down with our own lawn mowers and mow the whole goddamn field.

BB: That's where you played baseball in that field?

JC: Behind the school.

TC: The school they just did over. When I was in the fire department we used to go out with our hand mowers and mow it for the kids to play. And the town wouldn't let us use their riding lawn mower. You don't know how to run it. I say we got the guy that runs it all the time for nothing. They still wouldn't let us use it.

JC: He helped build the beach house down at Shelburne Beach. We used to go down Jean Bean and I, swimming right at the beach. You could moor you boats down there, take them out, down the hill and out.¹

BB: This was when Lee was a boy?

BB: Tell me about this bridge. What did this bridge used to look like?

TC: Well it was a covered bridge that's one thing.

BB: Do you remember it as a covered bridge?

TC: No. That's the third one I knew of. The other one was built in 1925.

¹ See Don and Jean Bean interview

BB: Did that use wood timbers?

TC: No.

BB: Steel and concrete.

TC: Yup. I don't remember the other one. The other one before this one was built in 1925, but I heard a lot and I seen pictures of it.

JC: They used to slide down this hill and also skateboard down through here.

TC: I could go from the top of this hill up here I could go clear up to the Catholic Church. It would be slow, but...on one of those flyers you know?

BB: Flexible Flyer, steel runners.

TC: Yeah, I'd go around the corner. The old guy used to whip at me from the horse and buggy. I would grab on to back and he would take his whip and try to knock me off. "The horses are getting tired the hoses are getting tired". He tried and hit me with a bullwhip.

JC: What do they call those skates now with just two wheels?

TC: Roller blades.

JC: Yeah. All the UVM kids would take their ski poles and go up here and go down Spear and back to UVM. But Eric and Beth Hayden both did it.

BB: What did your father do?

TC: He was teamster for Shelburne Farms. He was there forty some odd years. Then he worked for Structural Steel during the war.

BB: Vermont Structural Steel right in Burlington, down on Flynn Avenue?

TC: Yeah.

JC: Another thing during the war too. We had gas rationing. You had tickets. You could only get so much gas. Then later on when they had the gas shortage in town, when Rufus owned the gas station down here on the corner, we'd have to line up by our plate number. We were lined up all the way down Harbor Road, 6:30 in the morning with our coffee and our newspaper. I went Monday, Wednesday and Friday for my gas and you'd have to line up and if they ran out, well too bad. But you had to go by your plate number, and that wasn't too many years ago and then you might get Wednesday, Friday

and Saturday when you could go, but you couldn't go on the days I had unless you had the right ticket.

BB: Tell me about the village itself. There were farms right in the village originally. For example, all by Marsett Road was that farm?

JC: No Marsett Road, there weren't farms back when Barry was a youngster.

BB: Who's Barry?

JC: My son. He is going to be 50 next year. They built an apartment house over there and the girl that lived there babysat while I worked. That whole meadow, up where hillside is, all that was all meadow, all fields.

BB: Was it grazed?

JC: No, they used it for hay. There wasn't one house in there. Up Route 7 from the Museum up, there weren't any houses.

TC: That big farm there on the corner, that was a big farm there.

BB: On the corner of Route 7 and Marsett Road?

TC: Yeah, there was a big farm up there. Strong Farm they had a lot of cattle down there. I can't think of who had it before.

BB: Which farm are we talking about now?

TC: That was Lapham's, up there on the corner where the horses are now, the Morgan horses. That was Laphams.

BB: So it was a different owner on the West side of Route 7 or was it one farm?

TC: I don't know. The only one I really knew was the Laphams right there.

BB: What about the house that we live in, that was a farm at one time.

TC: I never knew they had many cattle back there or nothing.

BB: There was a barn back there. You told me about that.

TC: The next house over from the dance hall. He used to have cows and sell milk door to door and he used somebody else's land. Back then they didn't care.

BB: So he ran cows on somebody else's land. All he needed was his barn.

TC: The barn to milk them in and he sold milk house to house, right there on the corner there, Thomas Farm. Right up here. You know that first sharp turn? The barn burnt quite a few years ago, but he used to. That was Sunny Brook. I used to help him a lot, bottle milk, Sunny Brook Farm. He had bottles that said Sunny Brook. I might have a bottle somewhere around here. I bottled a lot of milk for them when I was a kid.

BB: When did they change, the bulk tanks came in you know they had to change

TC: I don't know.

BB: But these farms didn't have bulk tanks?

TC: I didn't know if they had tanks. Down on the Bay Road he was a Thompson, wasn't he, Ernest?

JC: No, Ernest lived down cross from the cemetery.

BB: So that farm down by the bay that was a dairy farm?

TC: Yup.

BB: Was anyone using oxen or workhorses on those farms or was it pretty much all tractors?

JC: When I was a kid, growing up we had a team of horses come in and plow our gardens....A lot of people used horses to do their gardens. We raised chickens and the people next door had pigs and beef and we used to swap them back and forth. When I was in school we didn't have pasteurized milk we had raw milk.

TC: I love it.

BB: So what Shelburne Farms was doing with their mule teams that were unusual?

TC: My father was strictly horses.

BB: He would take care of the horses that pulled the carriages?

TC: Hay wagons. Maybe 20. Each teamster had his own team.

BB: That was unusual? Other farms were using tractors. Then they got into tractors. Steam. I tried to make a hill with it and I blew a cylinder. It got going backwards

BB: Is it still back there?

TC: No. I had a Packard back there with lots of bullet holes. It was a bootleggers car.

BB: How did that end up back there?

TC: It had thirteen spark plugs

BB: When did prohibition end? Was it part of your life?

JC: That was way back in the 30's, '29. As Selena Webster about the little car they called the Mayflower. They drove it quite a bit, an old model A. They would drive it to UVM and back. Ask her. I don't know if they still have it.

TC: Carey Wood's motorcycle. I ended up with that. I run it for a couple of years and sold it.

BB: What was it, a Harley?

TC: Yeah a Harley. I bought it off Mimi's husband. He had that Harley. He laughed like hell. I think they bought it off him for a hundred and a half for it. I wish I had it now. He bought it for \$75.

JC: David (Webster) lived in the farm over here on Webster Road.

BB: So that farm, those were all hay fields back in there?

TC: Some were and some weren't.

BB: And there was a fox, didn't they used to keep hounds or something?

TC: The fox farm I think was across the road.

BB: But they raised foxes there?

JC: Fox and mink?

TC: He had pheasants. David did.

JC: They had a mink farm too, across the road up where Bisonettes now live. That was a mink farm.

TC: They used to raise them for the hides. They used to take two boards and squeeze 'em to death so it didn't hurt the pelt.

JC: The little Cheeseman house has been there quiet a while, up across from Webster House.

BB: Because of the people who live there?

JC: I think so.

BB: Where were there other schoolhouses? Where were there other schools?

TC: Right up here. Just up over the hill.

JC: Past Deavitts, up on the left where you go on that flat to go to Dorset Street.

BB: Across the street from the farm where the guy where the guy was bringing milk and whipped you when you tried to hoof a ride up the hill on your sled.

TC: No the school is up a little further than that. You got to look at the windows. There is another one too.

BB: On Spear Street? How far along?

TC: You know where Koerner moved his house back? It's almost across the road. Left on Spear Street.

BB: That's the corner of Dorset Street.

TC: On the corner of Pond Road.

BB: So there were two schoolhouses right on that road.

JC: This land across the River over here was all leased land from the Church of England. Then the Trinity Church threw it up and it was sold, but it was originally they paid a dollar a year for the lease to the Church of England. So that was all leased land over here.

BB: And they call it Church Woods, and the church owned it, and that's why?

TC: Yeah!! Church of England. That's Church Lane right in there. You can drive right up through there.

BB: A lot of deer up in there. A lot of old oak trees. They cut down a big oak tree back there that went back to the Revolutionary War.

TC: The deer wander out right there.

JC: With all the building around here we have two bobcats across the road, we have pheasant we have loads of deer, everything...rabbits, bluebirds.

BB: You have otter, I know you have otter.

TC: The otter they like that bank, the clay bank. They slide on their bellies.

BB: I think I know where you mean.

TC: Below the Route 7 Bridge. On the left hand side there. I haven't been there in years but I used to sit there and watch them. They would catch something and put it down, that's their dinner table right there.

JC: There is beaver down there too. A beaver dam...cause the town wanted to take 'em out but its state law that you can't remove them.

BB: So what about trappers were there trappers in town?

JC: Barry used to trap down here when he was in boy scouts.

BB: What was he after?

TC: Muskrats mainly

JC: He did it for a boy scout badge, but you had to check your traps twice a day.

TC: We used to have bags of them, muskrat traps.

BB: You used to trap too Tut? All down at the La Platte?

TC: No, some times when I went deer hunting I would put traps down for foxes, bobcat.

BB: What would you do with a bobcat pelt?

TC: Back then all they wanted was the ears. You would get about \$35

JC: We found a dead one in our garage once, a bobcat. We have all sorts of bats around here. You take off your shutters and there is bats behind there.

TC: I made quite a bit of money in bobcat.

BB: When was that?

TC: Twenty or thirty years ago

BB: Not that long ago.

Edward "Tut" and Janice Coleman

April 5, 2002

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Interviewee: Colleen Haag
Interviewer: Fritz Horton
Date: February 2002

Colleen Haag was born in Shelburne and spent her youth on the Thomas farm. She was educated in the Shelburne and CVU school systems and has served as Shelburne's town clerk since 1982.

Topics discussed: farming, town meeting, Village school, CVU, PTO, Korny Kapers, St. Catherine's Church, town residents, Shelburne Museum, Ticonderoga, Shelburne Museum, JFK assassination, Noonan Family, Thomas Family

Fritz Horton: How long have you lived in Shelburne?

Colleen Haag: Practically all my life, which is 52 years.

FH: Were you born here?

CH: I was born in Burlington, actually, but we lived in Shelburne at the time.

FH: Who were you parents?

CH: My parents were Jerrold and Ruth Thomas.

FH: They are not living?

CH: They are not living

FH: Where were they born and where did they go to school?

CH: My father was born in Charlotte and cam to Shelburne when he was a baby. He went through the Shelburne schools. He went to high school in Burlington and then attended the University of Vermont before going into the service before World War II. My mother was born in Jericho – her maiden name is Packard. She was born in Jericho center and married my father in 1946 – after the war.

FH: What did you your father and mother do?

CH: My mother worked in Burlington, during the war, in an office. My father was a navigator on bombers during World War II. He served in the South Pacific

FH: Your family had a farm?

CH: We had a large farm on Thomas Road. There were two farms. My great grandfather moved here in 1900. The original farm was for my uncle Eustace, actually. He bought the farm from my great grandfather – from his father. That is still on Spear Street extension. My grandfather – Eustace's brother – bought the adjoining the farm. That farm adjoined his on Thomas Road and it took up most of Mount Philo Road on the east side of the road all the way to Charlotte.

FH: What was life like in your house?

CH: It was very busy. We had meals with sometimes twenty people – fifteen to twenty people - anyone who showed up. We ate with hired hands...sometimes neighbors down the street stopped by...in the summertime, a lot of the older school kids that we employed for the haying season. It was mass confusion at times and at other times, it was great...mostly great.

FH: Did you have milk from the cows?

CH: We had milk, we had meat and we had a huge vegetable garden that my grandfather was in charge of and my grandmother. We had a root cellar and we put out lots of canned vegetables. We had potatoes and squash and all those veggies. I remember going down into the basement to get all that stuff to get through the winter months.

FH: How did you prepare the house for the winter?

CH: Our house was pretty warm except we did not have heat upstairs. We had vents in the floor and we had a huge furnace that would heat most of the house. It had a vent or register on the floor that came up from the cellar. At one point, I guess when I was a small child, they had wood. When I was growing up, they used coal in the furnace. They would have to put plastic on some of the windows...they did not have storm windows, per se.

FH: What kind of duties did you have to do?

CH: The girls did not get as much as the farm work. My two sisters were not that interested. I was more interested in money at an early age and having a little allowance. I had a job at a very young age. I would go out in the barn where they had pales of milk. I would bring the milk to the bulk tank. I think I probably got 20 cents a night. It seemed like a big deal back then. It really taught me a work ethic that I always kept.

FH: When you were growing up, where did the children hang out?

CH: We did not have a community center like we do know. A lot of our community events or "get togethers" revolved around school and church. If we took part in sports, it was here in our school. Our parents would come after us...or cousin or some relative would come after us. Within the church, we belonged to the youth organization. We went on trips or we would gather that way...we would projects through the church.

FH: Where did you go to High School?

CH: I went two years in this building ¹...two years at Shelburne High School and two years at CVU.

FH: Where was your homeroom?

CH: My homeroom was downstairs where the Police are now on the northeast side of the building.

FH: What was like High School like? Did you have field trips? What were athletics/academics like?

CH: It is interesting because had two years here and two years at CVU. So the two years here at the high school...it was a neat place because everyone knew each other. All the families basically knew each other and everyone knew each other. Even the older kids...we all went to school in this one building...from first grade to twelve grade. The kids all watched out for each other. There were a lot of families who had children who were in high school and then they had second and third graders. There was this interconnection that is kind of missing now. I remember one French class...we only had twelve people in. We had small classes, knew the teachers. For the most part, if we wanted to be some sort of play or athletic sport, we could because there was such a small group of people. That changed when we went to CVU. I played two years on the basketball team...I wasn't that great because I was short. But when I went there, there was so many children, that you could not compete on that level. I ended up taking field hockey over at CVU. But it was that kind of thing where you really did not compete on your athletic ability...it was just to have a good time and enjoy each other's company. There wasn't the competitiveness that there is now.

FH: The sense of getting a grade was different, I am sure.

CH: We had some very very good teachers here and they were pretty strict.

FH: Who do you remember?

CH: I remember Mrs. McDonald...she was a French teacher. Mrs. Morriveau. She ended up marrying Mr. Blanchard – he taught for years at Essex. She was my English teacher. At CVU, I had a great History teacher, Mr. LaFreniere, whom I really enjoyed thoroughly.

FH: What were your favorite subjects?

CH: Latin, English and History.

¹ Village High School. The present day town offices.

FH: What were the school dances like? This was what year?

CH: It would have been in the early 1960s. I graduated High School in 1966. So it would have been 1962, 1964. When we were here, it was more like a community event because we had more people that knew each other and it was closer. It was difficult when we went to CVU because we had people we did not know. We had to very quickly try to mold into a class. Some of us did, some of us didn't do so well with that.

FH: What were some of the pranks that happened while you were at school?

CH: Probably, some of the things that happened during Halloween.... Cabbage night. Somebody drove an old car up on the Shelburne Inn's steps...I was not with them. Basically, it was just things like spraying windows. It was nothing malicious. We always used to throw pumpkins out on the road and stop traffic. It was nothing major. We used to go out...there was a whole group of us...a lot of the kids were from my church group. Of course, we never told our parents that. [laughter]

FH: What Church did you belong to?

CH: Saint Catherine's. When I was very small, we had Father Cain. Who had been there for a very long, long time.¹ After him, when I was involved with the youth groups, Father McDonough was the priest here. He was a priest here for a long time. He was from Stowe and he knew the Von Trapp family very, very well. He used to take kids on all kinds of trips and treks. Especially the altars boys. He used to - I don't know if it was red - have a convertible and he used to drive around. So we remember that. After that, there was Father Murtaugh...oh Monsignor Fradet was here. He was a great guy. He was actually here for a while and they went to Charlotte. He had two Parishes and went on to become a Monsignor. He had Christ the King until he died. He was a great family friend of ours and he actually married us and buried us all. In my grandmother's and grandfather's day. He was an interesting man.



¹ Father Cain served at Saint Catherine's Church in Shelburne from 1934-1953.

Figure 1 Saint Catherine's Church

FH: What did you do after Church?

CH: They had breakfast or get togethers after church. We got drafted by my grandmother who, I think, probably organized just about every dinner and event in town for a lot of the church functions. We used to have a lot of dinners – potluck dinners.

FH: What was her name?

CH: Her name was Rita. She actually taught school and she organized the PTO. She drove the school bus and was in a lot of different things. She was an organizer.

FH: Where did your father stand with these type of activities?

CH: The men did not do a whole lot outside the farm. The women certainly did.

FH: What were some of the events that brought the community together?

CH: The PTO used to be very, very active in putting on a lot of dinners. The church groups. We used to have dinners for town meeting. I trying to remember what events they were but several of us gals in my age group got drafted and we used to wait on tables and serve food in the old Town Hall. Downstairs, they had a great kitchen there. They used t hold a lot of the big dinners down there – the same with the church. One of the things that people will tell you, not just me...one of the things that was very social was the Korny Kapers as a kid.

FH: What was your involvement?

CH: As a child...I never played a starring role or anything...if they used school children for singing or different events, we participated in that.

FH: For those of us who doesn't know what Korny Kapers was, could you please tell us?

CH: It was an event, where mostly adults and using some children, got together on a yearly basis to put on a performance and the money went to the schools. Gus Mercaldo¹ was one of the first. He was very, very active in it. Anyone in that age group from of the late 1960s and 1970s will tell you that they all participated in the Korny Kapers. The Askes...the Picards...Gus...Ruth Morrow. There was a whole crew of people who took part in it. In the early days, it was held at Town Hall. That was always fun, because the kids got to go upstairs in the balcony and that was a big deal. It did get moved to the gymnasium because theatre it got so popular.

¹ See interview with Gus Mercaldo

FH: I remember some rather innovative lighting techniques. I remember a man suspended on the tip of a basketball backboard used as a lighting frame up there. You wondered who was up there and you did not want to sit under him. It was pretty scary.

CH: It was a big event for the school.

FH: Do you remember any big productions?

CH: It is funny, I don't remember one particular production. I do remember a group of men who were dressed up as women. They danced and did a skit. It was a hoot. Gus would be able to tell you. They kind of melded in. You remember the performances but you don't remember any particular one.

FH: You are the Town Clerk. You know everything that goes on in the town?

CH: There is a saying that the Town Clerk know where all the dead bodies are buried...it can be live bodies too.

FH: What did you find interesting about the job?

CH: There are a lot of interesting things... First, I guess, I was brought up...my grandmother was a schoolteacher and she instilled a great sense of history. That was one of my favorite subjects. Stories...the stories we used to here. Not only if my grandmother but I had a grandfather on my mother's side who had a very interesting background. We had a real sense of history and politics from him. I guess it is the fact that I am the custodian of some very important records. They are entrusted to me for a short time. That is a very, very important aspect of the job. The other part is that I enjoy the people...the contact. I enjoy dealing with people. The many challenges...organizing the elections. Trying to keep track of everything. This is very diverse job. You just don't come in and sit and do one thing day after day. On any one-day, there could be all kinds of things happening. There are so such great stories and different people who come in. It is just amazing. I probably have kept a journal because I could have written a good book when I retired.

FH: Tell us about your grandmother on your mother's side.

CH: She was from Shelburne. She was a Noonan. They were brought up in Shelburne Falls. They were an Irish family. They were here in the 1840s. My great grandfather owned a store and was a butcher in the old house, where you come down the bridge...on the right hand side. She taught school from the time she got out of school. She taught us...we did not have Kindergarten in those days...but she instilled a great a love of learning to us because she had a regimen where we would have to come in from playing for an hour every day. She would either read to us or ask us questions or give us projects to do. We had some good some background when we ended going to school in first grade. I went when I was five, I actually went a year younger than the most of

the children. We had a very solid background—especially phonics and reading. I owe that to here.

FH: She lived in the house on the east side or west side of the Bridge?

CH: She lived on the south side to the west of the bridge. Just before you come down to the falls. There is an old house there.

FH: You lived in another house?

CH: She lived with us. That is where she grew up. If you go up on to Thomas Road there is a curve where there is a large red farmhouse. It used to be called the Sunny Bend farm. My mother's father was an interesting man. He led, for twenty-four years, the Vermont Farm Bureau. In those days, it was a very politically active group of people. He was responsible for getting electricity out to the farmers, providing them with insurance. He did a lot of interesting projects. He traveled to Washington a lot. Some of the stories he used to tell of the people that he knew...I am reading the biography of President Truman...David McCullough. A lot of those names in there are a lot of the names are the names that my grandfather used to work with. The Aikens. George Aiken was a good friend of his. We used to go up there sometimes and he would be there.¹ Warren Austin who was the ambassador to the UN. Just people who were very neat people.

FH: What were some of the other significant families that you remember from growing up?

CH: The O'Briens. They were another farming family.² Most of the families that we knew were farming families. We grew up with them. Even our families – my father and mother, my grandparents – used to interact with them. The LaMothes – Father LaMothe that runs the Parish at Saint Catherine's. You can just go up and down the road. The Guilmettes were still here. The Barrs are still farming. The Bovats who had the garage that just had a fire on Webster Road.³ That is where we used to get our mechanical problems done. We grew up with the Snellings. They came to town and went to school with them. I went to school with the Webbs. Marshall Webb and I were in the same class and Kate Harris Webb.⁴ There were a number of people that we grew up with. That is just a small group of people.

FH: What do you remember of the Shelburne Museum?

CH: That started, I believe around 1948..1949..1950. We used to go on field trips there and that was a very big deal to be able to go to Shelburne Museum.

¹ George Aiken was the Lieutenant Governor from 1933-1937, Governor of Vermont from 1937-1941 and U.S. Senator from 1941 to 1975.

² See James and Pauline O'Brien interview

³ The garage, now owned by Larry Williams, burnt in January 2002

⁴ Marshall Webb is the great grandson of Seward and Lila Webb.

FH: Did they let you out of school when the Ti was brought to the museum?

CH: I was in third grade. I was with Mrs. DeCourval. I was one the West side of the building so every day we watched the boat come a little bit closer and closer. It was neat because we followed it the whole school year as to how far it was coming up through on the tracks. That was a pretty big thing. One of the nicest memories that a lot of people my age would remember was that we all went ice-skating underneath the bridge. They had a large pond there and that is where we would ice skate. The bridge by the museum. They would let us skate there.

FH: Do you remember when JFK was shot?

CH: I was in high school sitting in a civics class when they acme in and told us that.

FH: What happened then?

CH: We all started talking about it. People were crying. They were was a lot going on. We had a great teacher and he tried to derive a civics lesson f out of all that. What is going to happen next? What do you think is going to happen to our country?

FH: What were some of the major disasters that occurred in Shelburne?

CH: There was the hurricane in I believe 1957 and it did quite a bit of damage.

FH: What happened to your house?

CH: We lost the electricity and back then, it was really tough to get it back right away. Of course, with the farm, it was really tough because you had t have electricity for milking the cows. I remember that we had to take turns during those days because it was so difficult to manage without electricity.

FH: How many cows did you have?

CH: I think about 65. Back in those days, that was a lot.

FH: What were town meetings like? Especially when your grandfather arrived.

CH: That was my grandfather in Jericho but he was very active in Town affairs too. He served as the Town representative from Jericho for a couple of sessions in the legislature. My grandfather served as a Lister and an overseer of the poor during his time here. We used to go to Town Meeting as kids and help out with dinner. They were more like lunches.

FH: Where did they hold them?

CH: At the town hall. They had an open meeting which is a lot different then they are now. People would get up...the budgets were much easier to process...it was easier to manipulate them. Someone would get up and say "I don't think we need to have X amount of money for roads" and somebody else would say, "Well yeah, I think we need more money than what the budget bares." They would have these great kinds of conversations or discussions on the floor, which we are lacking now.

FH: And from that, policy would happen right then?

CH: Yes. And they would vote people in. If you were running for office, that was how you would run. There would not be a lot of politicking prior to that. You could stand up and say "I would nominate so an so" and somebody would say "I would nominate so and so for the same." And then there would be discussion and then they would take a vote.

FH: Would people stand up and defend their nomination?

CH: I remember being with my grandmother and somebody said "Don't nominate me...I don't want that damn job anyway." Sometimes people would get elected without really wanting it.. I think, for most part, people did want to run for office. They did have overseer of the poor, fence viewers, and weigher of the coals – all of these obscure, abstract jobs.

FH: What does a fence viewer a do?

CH: Stan resigned and they are picking somebody else. ¹ They go and mediate boundary disputes. The last one that Stan did that was quite interesting was the one down on Spear Street. The people up on Martindale had a problem with the farmer who had the farm next to the cemetery up on Spear Street. The largest and most interesting one that he dealt with.

FH: So Town meeting went all day?

CH: Sometimes. Basically, it was during the day... Ruth Morrow could tell you some great stories about Town Meetings. ²

FH: Do you know of any Shelburne ghost stories?

¹ Stan Wilbur was Shelburne's Fence Viewer from 1983-2001. He lives at Harbor Crossing.

² Ruth Irish Morrow's family has lived in the same brick house at the corner of Falls Road and Spear Street since 1852. The family first moved to Shelburne c. 1811. Truman Webster said of the family "There really isn't another family in town who has lived in the same spot, day in and day out, for as long as the Irish family" (Shelburne News, August 13, 1991)

CH: I don't but some people have told me about them. I do know that the brick house that Moe Harvey owns now and was Harry Claytons, was a stop on the Underground Railroad.¹

We talk about community now but community then was much different. You basically knew most of the families that were here. There was this sense of caring and obligation to help people out. Whether it came from the churches... yes maybe you helped out people in your congregation or your faith...but it transcended that because you were helping out people from all faiths. I think one of the unique examples of that if there was a death in the family. Back then, they held these wakes for the most part. People who died when I was a child or in high school...they held these huge Irish wakes. They were people that would come and everyone would bring a dish. You never have worry about food. Honestly, It was almost a social event. It was this whole sense of community, closeness and caring and consideration for other people. It is present some times. Like the father the doctor just had at Beaver Creek – he was talking about the caring and the community. It happens when there is an event like that. It was really evident every day. There was something that really brought people together. The fireman used to have a banquet or a ball or a dance. The whole community would come out to involve themselves instead of just writing a check, they would all come and participate in it. The participation was so important because you go to know your neighbors. Even new people who moved to town. I remember when the Snellings moved to town and other people. There was this sense of wanting to know who your neighbors were and wanting to get them involved...being a good neighbor...which is not evident as much now. I think that, in essence, was the important thing about living during those times.

FH: Were there Dutch elms in Shelburne?

CH: Yes. If you look at some old pictures of Shelburne along Route 7, you see those magnificent trees. They were all over – especially in the village area. It was pretty barren after they were cut down.



Figure 2 John Tracy

¹ Moe Harvey owns the brick home that is next to Gillian's Restaurant.

There were some really interesting characters around. John Tracy. John Tracy was the Tracy/Maeck family. He was a great old guy. A lot of the village kids were employed by him...he had a large garden out by where the Village Vale is. A lot of the kids worked for him. He was a wonderful old guy. He used to come up to the school and tell us stories. He was kind of our.... to a small child, he was an old man but he was the sense of history to the community.¹ There was a Walter Ball. He was an interesting old guy. He had the sawmill down by the bridge across the road from Ed "Tut" Coleman.² He had great stories too. He lived alone in this shack and sawed wood. My grandmother used to invite him for dinner...once he came, he would tell us stories. He would ask him "Why are you next to the river with the sawmill? How do you get the logs? Why are doing that?" He used to give us the whole scenario of how the logs are cut and how they have to be planed. It was interesting. A lot of those were real life lessons to use as we went on in life. And they were told, not because we needed the information, it was conversation during a meal or conversation from juts visiting. There were some characters then.

¹ John Jay Tracy (1884-1974). He was the son of Julius and Hannah Tracy. John Tracy was also the brother of Hannah Edgerton Tracy who married Benjamin Harris Maeck. Benjamin Harris Maeck was a member of the Cemetery Commission (1929-1937; 1944-1947); Captain, Shelburne Volunteer Fire Department (1940s-1950s); Town Representative (1925-1927) and Town Notary.

² Walter Ball owned his 4-½ acres of land from 1928 to 1966. In 1966, Edward and Janice Coleman purchased the land.

Interviewee: Florence Horsford

Interviewer: David Webster

Date: March 4, 2002

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 to 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.

Interviewee: Barbara Kent
Interviewer: Answers were written by Barbara Kent
Date: March 2002

Barbara Kent arrived in Shelburne with her family in the 1920s when her father came to work for Shelburne Farms

Topics Discussed: Shelburne Farms, Schools, Roads, Life at home, Shelburne Museum, Flood of 1927, Town Meetings, Farms, Shopping, Post Office

Q: What is your full name?

A: Barbara Jean Adams Kent

Q: How long have you lived in Shelburne?

A: I have lived in Shelburne from 1927 to the present, the exception of a short time in Charlotte.

Q: When and where were you born?

A: I was born at home in a brick farmhouse on Bixby Hill (named for my mother's family) in Essex Center, Vermont on April 6, 1923.

Q: Who were your parents? Where were your parents born? Where did your parents go to school? What did your parents do for a living?

A: My father was born at home on the family farm in Westford, Vermont, on August 12, 1894. He attended a one-room schoolhouse thru the 8th grade, then remained at home to help on the farm. Before entering WWI in 1917, he worked at many jobs, reforestation, roadwork, farming. Upon returning home in 1919, he did pretty much the same things, until he became employed by Shelburne Farms in 1927. When physically he needed a change, he worked for a short time at Gardenside Nurseries in Shelburne, then became employed at Bell Aircraft and then General Electric until his retirement in 1960s.



Picture 1 Ring Barn, Shelburne Farms

My mother was born at home on the family farm in Essex Center, Vermont on June 3, 1900. She attended one—room schoolhouses and Essex Classical Institute, and then became a teacher. On June 9, 1920, she married my father and became a homemaker.

Q: Did you have any brothers or sisters? How many? How did you get along? Where do/did they live?

A: I had an older sister, a brother and a younger sister, all of us born at home in Essex, Vermont, with the exception of my younger sister. We were not close as children but we did get along well. We all graduated from Shelburne High School and some of us attended college. We were all married and lived mostly in Vermont, with the exception of our brother. When he returned from WWII, he continued his education, was married and moved to New York. He was employed by Eastman Kodak, where he remained until his retirement to Florida.

Q: How many generations of your family have lived in Shelburne? Where do you live now?

A: Up to the present, four generations of my family have lived in Shelburne. My father and mother are both deceased. I still live here, as do three of my children and two grandchildren. I live at 1101 Falls Road on property that once belonged to Ira Allen, in a 1794-year-old house.

Q: Where were you before arriving in Shelburne? What prompted you to move to Shelburne? What is your first memory of Shelburne?

A: I lived in Essex Center from 1923 until we moved to Shelburne in 1927. We came here because of father's employment. We moved into a small tenant cottage, with no electricity or indoor bathroom. My recollections at four years of age are few. My most vivid one being the walk to the end of a short lane for the mail, carried by rural delivery, and seeing a bear a few hundred feet away. We were both surprised and I ran home as fast as I could.

Q: What was life like at home?

A: Perhaps our one real luxury during those depression years was a car. It was a black and gray Chevrolet, seldom used for pleasure. My mother used a wooden, hand operated washing machine, heated many containers of water, and made many meals on a black iron wood—burning stove, also used for heat. We children were pretty much free to play, indoors or out, with little watching from our mother, as we were far removed from traffic and animals. I do recall a wonderful red wagon (possible Radio Flyer) wood and wooden wheel barrel. And always we wore rubber boots out to play until well into summer! It was about a mile into town and school. My older sister began first grade. She and others in the neighborhood of three other cottages walked to school, very little traffic to contend with. My father crossed over the stile on the back fence and walked up the hill to the dairy barn where he worked.

Q: Where else did you live in Shelburne?

A: Shortly, we moved up the hill into a larger version of the cottage, with more heat, electricity and hot water. And there began a rather idyllic everyday life, my father being the only actual participant in the life of the farm, we basically only left home to go to school. We had a pony to ride and pull that same red wooden wagon, a beach for swimming, woods to play in, an abundance of wild flowers to pick, and fruit trees to eat from. Also, many small hills and ponds for winter sports. We had two pairs of skis, one small and one large. Also, a great toboggan which in later years became a sled for my father's ice fishing equipment.

Q: What kind of household chores did you have to perform?

A: We had few small household or out door chores to perform, with four children, the burden on any one was minimal. There was care for your own room, weekend dusting of family rooms, but worst of all, doing the dishes! Older sister and I were two short for the high kitchen sink, so our father made stools for us.

Q: Where were your closest neighbors?

A: Mostly neighbors were within walking distance and all Farm employees, actually pretty secluded.

Q: How are holidays celebrated in your family? What holidays are most important--national, religious, or family?

A: Christmas was a most important holiday. Father searched the woods for the perfect tree. We had real candles on it some years, with a bucket of water standing by. I still have one of our oldest tree bulbs. Presents were very special, as they were maybe the only ones we would receive. Some years we went all the way to Essex Center to my grandparents for the day, however, our father would have to be back at the Farms by two o'clock to prepare for last days' milking. It would be a large family gathering, with many aunts, uncles and cousins. And always songs around the piano, many family members being especially musical. Fourth of July was also special. We each had our own private stock of sparklers; firecrackers and snakes, then went to the neighbors who had rockets to shoot into the air. Memorial Day at school we would walk across Rte. 7 from school to the cemetery and put lilacs on soldier's graves. In much later days, there is a more elaborate service on the village green in front of the two churches, with a canon salute from the cemetery. Prominent speakers.

Q: What kind of meals did you eat at home?

A: Father trapped muskrat and fished both summer and winter. Fish, potatoes and garden vegetables were our staples for meals. Mother made bread every other day, we still have our grandmother's bread making pail. Jell-O was new to us, as was margarine. We had a huge, handsome oak icebox which father filled from the icehouse on the Farms, a large building layered with saw dust and huge cakes of ice.

Q: What was your kitchen like?

A: We had a pantry, a long narrow room off the kitchen, with shelves along both sides. Good for storing seldom used dishes, out-dated magazines, canning jars, cooling food on the windowsill, etc. Also, mother used a long narrow hall from the woodshed to the kitchen as a summer kitchen, with a kerosene stove instead of wood heat. And there was a wonderful cellar, full of mother's canned fruit, vegetables, meat, eggs in water glass and a huge bin full of potatoes, which needed to be "de-rooted" from time to time. Our father also had a large metal tub full of minnows for fishing, in water, of course. Also, kept a plentiful supply of worms for fishing and fed them coffee grounds.

Q: Where did you go to school?

A: My sisters, brother and I just missed the one-room schoolhouses. In 1926 a large brick school was built in town on Route 7 after fire destroyed the previous building. We attended all twelve grades in the same building. It is now the Town Center, having been added onto these many past years.

Q: How did you get to school?

A: We traveled to school by way of vans or station wagons, funded by town money, I believe, until high school. Then we car-pooled or financed our own transportation, as well as textbooks. Basketball, School Dances.

Q: Did you take any field trips?

A: In the early grades, I remember trips to the Pierson Library on the village green. We walked down the sidewalk, a teacher to help us across Rte. 7. A short recess in the morning meant a real rush to put on roller skates and ride down the walk next to the road in front of the school.

And at year's end, the big picnic trip to Ethan Allen Park to roller skate the day away in the Pavilion, with time out for the great over-sized slide, swings hanging high from giant trees and a climb to the look-out Tower. And a very fitting celebration to end twelve years of school and graduation, a ride on the Ticonderoga!

Q: What did children do for fun?

A: A good part of Shelburne town, village and falls was made up of farms. Young people often had little time for "hanging out". They were needed at home on the farms. However, there were long snowy back roads for riding traverses, toboggans and jack jumpers. Also, a big country kitchen was great for dancing, sometimes called a kitchen trunk. Almost always there was some body in the family to play the fiddle, with piano accompaniment.

Q: Did you ever go to Burlington?

A: It was possible to travel by train to Burlington where one could find many and varied stores and four movie houses. Also, at one time and for many years, Howard Miller, a local citizen, ran a jitney several times a day to Burlington, a great boon for shoppers and workers alike. Cost, 35 cents!

Q: Was there a feeling of separation between the Falls and Village?

A: There was a feeling of separateness between the Falls and the village, not unkindly, just almost like two different villages. Supposedly, the town began in the Falls because industry began with the waterpower from the Falls. And later, when the railroad came, a lot of that changed in order to be closer for the transportation of goods.

Q: How has Shelburne Point changed over the years?

A: I know very little about Shelburne Point. Except when I was a child we only know it as a long, dusty dirt road, five miles to the end. Eventually, as everything improved, use of cars, better jobs and more money, the property became more populated and valuable.

Q: Who were some of the large families in Shelburne?

A: There were many large families, as was the custom in days gone by, presumably to work on the farm as they grew older, also, farmers such as the Irish, Thomas, Marsett, etc. were probably the largest land owners with many acres under cultivation and livestock room to graze. Others ran and sometimes owned the black smith shop, local grocery stores and later on small service and gas stations

Q: Who were the biggest landowners in Shelburne?

A: The largest landowners were members of the Webb family. They were very cordial towards the town people, financially generous and employed many of the town folks. My family's years spent on Shelburne Farms were always pleasant and productive, and my father was most happy to have job security in a period of depression.

Q: Who were the doctors in Shelburne?

A: The first doctor that I remember in Shelburne and the one who saw us all thru childhood diseases and my sister thru pneumonia was Dr. James Norton. When your household contracted measles or other communicable diseases (there were no preventative shots back then) he came and placed a sign on your door. This meant that you didn't venture out among others for two weeks or when he came back and removed the sign. His former home in Shelburne now belongs to the Museum and contains offices.

Q: What do you remember of the early post offices?

A: The first post office that I remember stood on the corner in town and was replaced by a gas station. The building is now on Shelburne Museum grounds where I can still find our family name on the box. When we children went to school, we given written permission to

collect our mail during the school noon hour. Miss Neary and Marie Hamilton were two of the early Postmistresses.

Q: Who were some Shelburne's earlier librarians?

A: Earliest remembered and one of longest standing librarian was Marjorie Marsett. Molly Deyette and James Berry were school principals. My earliest teachers were Miss Fox (she had red hair), Mrs.

Hugh McKenzie, Theresa Dillon Muzzy and John McGee. Mary Noonan, another teacher of long standing, as was her brother Edward as custodian. Most of them lived in Shelburne.

Q: Who were some of Shelburne's memorable personalities?

A: Two memorable personalities in Shelburne were John Tracy and Walter Maeck, related by marriage. John ran a large garden bordering the railroad tracks on the west side and provided many of the village children with their first paying job. Wage scale was five to thirty-five cents an hour, depending upon age and skill. Walter owned and ran a farm on Spear for many years and helped John on occasion.

In accordance with typical small-town behavior, shop keepers, librarians, etc. were always cordial, mostly knew you by name and were happy to pass the time of day.

Q: What makes Shelburne so appealing?

A: The town of Shelburne was and still is a most desirable place in which to live. It's appealing to the eye in every direction and still not overpopulated yet. It borders on an abundance of river and lakeshores, has several parks and fishing areas and many walking trails. There are places to eat and a number of overnight accommodations.

Q: Have there been any disasters in Shelburne?

A: In 1938 a hurricane traveled thru flow England, once again it was while we lived on Shelburne Farms. It was so fierce that we couldn't see out the windows. My mother remembered a treetop broke off by our house and went up over our roof. And to this day there is a faint path thru the small woods made by the hurricane.

Snow always seem to be extra deep. I remember a lesser-traveled road down hack of our house that often did not get plowed till spring. And we came up hill from time to time in a horse or tractor drawn farm wagon because the ice did not lend itself to travel by car. Chains for cars were a necessity.

Q: How did you celebrate holidays in Shelburne?

A: In my very early childhood days, the major holidays were celebrated pretty much family style, each in his own way. Sometimes picnics and ball games, fishing trips to the local river and most always mentioned in church. However, there were Firemen's dances, church bazaars, etc., these celebrations all became more elaborate in years to come.

Q: Did Shelburne ever celebrate its own birthday?

A: In 1938, our town celebrated its 175th birthday with a grand costume ball held at the Town Hall, with many in attendance. Town citizens, schoolteachers, children all came, many of them in costume. If there were other activities, I do not know. And another 25 years later, a very special 200th Bicentennial celebration was held, featuring a guest from England, the Earl of Shelburne, for whose family our town was named.

Q: How has Shelburne changed?

A: Very gradually, as the owners of farms grew older and couldn't continue working and perhaps did not have children who wished to, began to sell them. The change was pretty apparent as Shelburne village still contained several large farms. Also, village homes gradually became places of business. A new home was built by the postmaster to hold the post office down stairs and his family up stairs. It was the 4th such move for the post office in 50 years, each time the town out grew it in size.

And eventually the village became the hub of activity instead of life home on the farm. Business and services became diversified and eliminated trips to more distant places.

Q: What were Shelburne Town Meetings like?

A: Town meetings were very special and entertaining. I believe they started at ten o'clock, broke at noon for a hearty dinner cooked by the town ladies at the town hall on an extra large black iron stove. The meeting then came to order and continued on thru the afternoon until the business at hand was finished. There was much discussion and all items were given importance. School was not in session and we students occupied the balcony. James Norton was a long time moderator, as well as doctor. B. H. Maeck also was moderator for a number of years.

Q: What have been some major decisions made at Town Meeting?

A: People pretty much managed their property as they saw fit, then one year zoning was voted into place and things were different ever after.

Q: What is the biggest event that you lived through?

A: The first important event in history that I lived thru was the 1927 Flood. I was 4 years old, living on Shelburne Farms and so quite removed from actual danger. My one direct contact was crossing the Winooski River on a pontoon bridge made of small boats tied together and covered over with a flat surface. The Great Depression was something we were all in together. We had little variety in clothing but always enough food and heat. World War II was something else. My brother, two brothers-in-law and my husband all enlisted and were gone for several years. It was a terribly anxious time and the only way thru it was to keep busy. I took over my husband's job at Shelburne Cooperative Creamery. There were special church services and we helped with "Bundles for Britain", knitting and sewing for citizens and servicemen, held over at Shelburne House on the Farms. Also contributed blood.

Q: What have been some of the important inventions that you have witnessed?

A: Important inventions over the years were the fantastic improvements and kinds of airplane. Just the difference between what the Air Force flew in WWII and now is unbelievable. The advances in drugs and medicine are also unbelievable. Life span when I was young could have been 40 to 45 years for my parents. And computers. Even the simplest seems beyond comprehension at times, also cell phones. It seems as though no one just sits quietly any more.

Q: What kind of stories have been passed down through your family?

A: Family history was recorded in my mother's diaries, in which she continued to write from her early teens. Her's was a large and close-knit family. There was much socializing, either on family farms, attending Grange, baseball games, sometimes to movies in Essex Junction to see "The Perils of Pauline", a long running serial. And always there was a baby sitter handy in the form of a family member. However, life pretty much changed when we moved to Shelburne Farms. Father had a steady job, requiring much energy and mother began caring for a home and four children, also an all-consuming task. It seemed pretty much removed, with 15 miles from Essex Center and with not much time for travel, even though we had a car. All of this began in 1927.

Later, in June of 1943, our family was to make another move from the Farms into Shelburne Village. Father purchased a large, older home next to the Craft School from Henry and Charlotte Tracy. It was built in the late 1800's by John Duduc, a local blacksmith and built from farmhouses purchased by William Webb, who no longer wished to keep them standing. It was continuously in the family until June 1994 when my sister sold it, and now continues to rent from the current owner.

Q: What was your first job in Shelburne?

A: My first job in Shelburne was in the summer of 1941 at Gardenside Nurseries, money saved for college. Later I held my husband's job at Shelburne Cooperative Creamery until his return from WWII. I worked a short time at Champlain Container located in Shelburne. In late years, I worked 10 years at Shelburne Country Store, then 15 years at Shelburne Museum.

Q: What church did you belong to?

A: I am a 66-year member of Shelburne Methodist Church, having joined when I was 13. Oftentimes, ministers spent their early years with us, then went on to larger parishes, became superintendents, etc. Also, sometimes it was necessary to serve two small churches at the same time, as it was still depression and budgets were tight. Mostly, church was a place for church meetings and church activities: Sunday school, Bible school, Summer Vacation Bible school, suppers, rummage sales, hymn sings, all in the back parlors. We were fortunate enough to have grand pipe organ and almost always a church choir. Church was not always heated through the week, and held instead in a small back room, to save on fuel in the coldest part of the winter. Mostly, folks went home to Sunday dinner after church. Sometimes, there was a picnic outside on the lawn. The town was somewhat divided in numbers between Catholic and Protestant. However, thru the years we became to be comfortable with each other.

Q: Are there any Shelburne Ghost Stories?

A: And like many small towns, we have several resident ghosts. At Shelburne Inn on the Farms where the cars are parked in the back lot, a servant in livery is sometimes seen. And upstairs in the playroom a ghostly nanny sometimes turns lights on and off and adjusts window shades. The Shelburne Museum ghost haunts Dutton House which came from Cavendish, Vermont and brought the ghost with it. Upstairs flashes of lights and noises are seen and heard. And sometimes a cold wind is felt thru the rooms, and a bed is disturbed, evidence of occupancy in the night. Pierson Library's prankster moves heavy bags of books about on the worktable and heavy boxes across the floor. Also, heavy windows are moved up, closed and locked, seemingly by themselves.

Q: What were the roads like?

A: In early years, roads were not paved, however, they were kept in reasonable repair. There were instances when roads might become impassable in the spring, such as bay road on the Eastern end of the bridge, something that required a major effort to correct in years to come. At such times, travel continued by detour onto the next available road. Mostly, farmers could be pretty independent on the farm in winter, as necessary, with the exception of getting milk to the creamer. Hopefully, if roads were not passable, milk could be refrigerated on the farm. Usually, farmers had their own means of plowing and any roads not really necessary were not always plowed. There were large wooden rollers used to pack the snow down sometimes. Mostly, big old editions of modern day plows were used. Some times traffic was not possible to Shelburne Point for school children, etc. but roads were opened as soon as possible.

Q: What Roads have closed?

A: In late years, a very short road in front of Pierson Library to Rte. 7 was closed off to eliminate a traffic hazard. Old- rural route Limerick Road located off Depot St. is still in use but only marginally. The road to the brick house on the Farms was not always plowed, as sometimes no one lived there in the winter. Also, the Farms had their own style of speed bumps two slender pieces of wood ran parallel across the road, with a narrow channel between. This done to accommodate slow moving farm machinery.

Q: What do you think are Shelburne's landmarks?

A: The following are what I consider to be the landmarks in Shelburne: the Catholic, Episcopal and Methodist churches, Pierson Library, Marsett farm house, Strong farm house (also site of underground railroad in Shelburne) Limerick cottages, Cemetery, Sycamore tree in the Falls, the Town Hall and the Route 7 school house, now the town center.

Q: What is your favorite historic building?

A: My favorite historic building is the Pierson Library, having served as the Pierson home, Methodist parsonage and then as the town library. It's lovely, timeless exterior, many winding shelves of books, ending in surprises or quiet corners, pleases me. The beginning of the library in Shelburne is credited to Hannah Egerton Tracy. She gathered about 40 books from a shelf in the post office and thru much interest and effort brought about the small beginnings of a library. And thru continued effort thru the years, it became the foundation of the present library.

Q: Where did your family buy clothes?

A: In earlier days, my mother did most of our family shopping in Burlington on Church Street, including a Skinner satin wedding dress, floor length with train, at Abernath's \$21.95, Kresges, Sears Roebuck, Kinney Shoe store. By mail order to L.L. Bean, my father bought his hunting and fishing equipment and great Maine hunting boots which the company still sells today. My mother and grandmother sewed most of my sisters' and my clothes. Also, it was still possible to make small things from sugar and grain bags.

Q: How did you get your news?

A: We got our news from the Burlington Free Press and the six o'clock evening news on the radio. Local news came word of mouth, also possible to have paid announcements included in the Free Press. And years later, Shelburne was privileged to have its own small town newsletter, which, has continued with some interruption thru the years.

Q: Where did your family buy its provisions?

A: Early days in Shelburne, it was possible to provide a family with food, children with jeans, sneakers, boots, small toys and lightweight hardware for family repairs, all at the local grocery store on the corner. Gradually, Route 7 became lined on both sides to Burlington with hardware store, building supplies, and later; cars and places to eat. Over the years, there appeared in Shelburne Falls and outskirts of town what came to be called Mom and Pop stores, selling bread, ice cream, some meat, tobacco, etc.

Q: What was the first paved road?

A: First paved road in Shelburne was Route 7 going thru town, sometime after 1929. My father's car was stuck in the muddy road on his way to Mary Fletcher Hospital for the birth of my younger sister!

Q: When was the first traffic light installed?

A: First traffic light was installed in the Mid 1960s in the center of town, after at least one bad accident. And sometime in the early 1950's the road in front of the Bostwick home was rerouted. Shelburne's problem of a main road thru town is still not solved, after years of painstaking study. Almost no dirt roads left in Shelburne. Folks building homes in the country object to dusty roads. Just as a matter of curiosity, there are at least four cross roads on the road between Route 7 and Hinesburg: Route 7 to Marsett Road, to Shelburne Falls, across Spear Street then over Dorset onto Pond Road. Spear Street experienced most accidents.

Q: How has tourism in Shelburne evolved?

A: I don't recall early tourism, we were pretty much a picture perfect New England town, good to look at but no real drawing card. Our good school attracted families to move here.

Q: What do remember of the Shelburne Museum?

A: That was to change in later years. I remember the big open field on rte. 7 with only one small building out behind a brick house that was to become the Shelburne Museum. And then watched the old post office, blacksmith shop, and various other buildings being dismantled and brought to the grounds, most of them traveling down rte. 7. And the days the Ticonderoga traveled 9000 feet over land to the spot on which it now rests. It afforded some of the best entertainment Shelburne had to offer, as it moved along on railroad ties thru fields, across roads, small farms and streams. That route is now a walking trail.

Q: Do you remember the Webbs?

A: My family and I had casual acquaintance with J. Watson and Electra Webb from our years of living on Shelburne Farms. We found them both gracious, interested in employees. And I believe this carried over into their relationship with the Museum.

Q: What were some of the big events held at the Museum?

A: There were numerous events celebrated thru the years at the Museum. One of the first and most memorable celebrated the 30th anniversary. J. Watson Webb, Jr. managed this one in fine style. With his connections in Hollywood, he made it a most festive affair. Celebrities arrived and made their way around the Museum, Shelburne and Burlington for several days, with great newspaper coverage. And the Museum looked its very best. Several times over the years the Ticonderoga was refurbished, with each occasion for celebration. Ralph Nading Hill and the McClures always in attendance, as they were most interested, having donated money and offered much encouragement. We were most fortunate to watch the growth and development of the Museum from its earliest years to the present. It was awesome and entertaining to watch, a one of a kind experience. And it continues to grow each year.

Q: What happened to "western Shelburne"?

A: To the best of my knowledge, "western" Shelburne was a group of farms individually owned, some bordering on Lake Champlain, which were bought by William Seward and Lila Vanderbilt Webb and became known as Shelburne Farms in the late 1890's.

Q: How did Lone Tree Hill get its name?

A: Lone Tree Hill, so called because it was the highest point on the Farms and had one tree on top. The tree is gone, instead there is a handsome stone monument to Derrick Webb facing Lake Champlain.

Q: Where was Bay Road?

A: Bay Road was the location of the Red Iron Bridge.

Q: Where was the Union Poor Farm?

A: Location of the Union Poor Farm was the hollow on Bostwick Road.

Q: What can you tell us about the history of Shelburne Point?

A: Shelburne Point so named by the Indians, was Quineska-Took which meant “long point” as the Indians thought the land extending into Lake Champlain looked like a man’s forearm.

Q: What do you remember of the Shelburne Cooperative Creamery?

A: Shelburne Cooperative Creamery in the 40s was a noisy and exciting place thru the mornings, as farmer after farmer pulled up to the door of the unloading dock and proceeded to send their cans of milk thru into the creamery building, later to be picked up by one of the larger milk companies, Hoods, perhaps. Also, there was a cottage cheese company upstairs. And a small company store, separate from the creamery building, which sold grain, tobacco, etc. ~

Q: What do you remember of the Dutch Wind Mill?

A: The Dutch Wind Mill on the edge of town was another busy and going concern. It contained about a dozen tourist cabins in a half circle, with the windmill, actually blowing in the wind, in the center. It was operated by a family and another woman friend, this woman also interested in antiques.

Q: How has Shelburne changed?

A: Shelburne has changed in many ways over the years, from a town of many farms to almost none, to limited industry, a wide mix of people, all expecting more services for the same money, perhaps.

One of the nicer changes came about many years ago when the “Ever-Ready Circle of the Kings Daughters” a group encompassing the women of all churches, were first with the idea of improving the town. They gave approximately \$60.00 as a starter fund, which encouraged others and the end result was sidewalks and streetlights in the village. Several generations of a family lived in the same house at once, especially on farms. And later when farms were not being worked, the homes were passed down from generation to generation, still maintaining the nice large lots. Very few buildings were torn down, maybe just used in a different way, also disappeared from deterioration. Also, town cemeteries are still intact, and possible family plots on the farms.

Q: How has the landscape changed?

A: Basically the landscape in Shelburne changed thru housing development. Woods only partially reclaimed the fields as each of the farms ceased to exist. Often time children built their homes on the family farmland. Just as a guess, I would say that there are more than a dozen developments in Shelburne.

Q: How has Shelburne not changed?

A: There are very few ways in which Shelburne has not changed in recent years. I believe we could live with it if we could stay “as is” for a while, with no more radical change for a time. The things I miss most about Shelburne is the unity, also the tranquility, there wasn’t always a constant feeling of upheaval. There are a large number of attractions in Shelburne which make it unique: Museums, antique shops, orchards, specialty shops, overnight accommodations, library, Craft School, art galleries, Shelburne Farms tours, to name a few.

Q: What are Shelburne's green spaces?

A: Shelburne is most fortunate to have a number of parks and greens in and around town. Townspeople seem always to be willing to put aside necessary funds to make this possible. The sizeable green in front of two churches on land donated to the town by the Harrington family is the scene of skating in the winter and selling of Christmas trees. In spring and summer, the location of the Memorial Day service, later ball games, picnics, etc. and a gathering place at Halloween for the parade assembling. There is a small green in front of the Pierson Library which creates a pretty and fitting entrance to the center of town.

Q: What are Shelburne's recreation opportunities?

A: There are several parks, all of which are well used. Davis Park down by the Community School has tennis courts, ice rinks in winter, picnic tables. Another in Hullcrest, used in the same ways, I believe. LaPlatte Nature Park along the LaPlatte River, walking trail, picnics, fishing. And Shelburne Bay Park, along Lake Champlain, with fishing, boat access, walking trail, lots of available shore, fire works on 4th July, picnics.

Q: What kind of Wildlife can you see in Shelburne?

A: There is the usual variety of small wild life to be seen but not as close to home, they have taken to the woods pretty much by choice, as their habitat became crowded; skunks, variety of birds, turkeys, deer, possum, coons, partridge and squirrels.

Interviewee: Claude LaPierre
Interviewer: Pamela Daly
Date: March 13, 2002
Location: LaPierre Home, Route 116, Shelburne

The LaPierre family came to the eastern edge of Shelburne in 1912. Although the LaPierre Farm has suffered recent setbacks, with a fire in 2002, but the family intends to remain on the land.

Topics discussed: Winooski, schools, farms, farming, roads and transportation, the Depression, Burlington woolen mills, Quebec, Co-ops, Route 116, World War II

Pamela Daly: To repeat what you earlier said: were you born in Shelburne?

Claude LaPierre: Yes.

PD: Were you born in this house?

CL: Yes.

PD: Which part of your family was the first to live in this house?

CL: That was my father's family – my father's parents. They bought this farm in 1912.

PD: What brought your father's family to this area?

CL: They were from Canada. They were farmers in Canada. They came from a very poor part of Canada and they came to the Woolen Mills. Either the Woolen Mill or Cotton Mill at Lakeside, where General Electric was. They lived there for three or four years and then they moved over here.

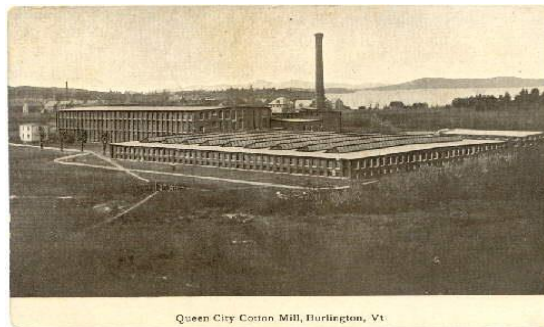


Figure 1 Queen City Cotton Mill, Burlington

PD: So they decided to go from the mill industry and back into...

CL: Back into farming.

PD: Was it dairy farming that they were interested in?

CL: Yes.

PD: Did your father have any stories of how it was to travel around this area?

CL: In fact, then, it was just horses and buggies and sleds in the wintertime. Then, cars came in the mid to late teens. There were stories about going through a swamp up here. The road used to go...instead of circling around this way...the road used to go through the swamp.

PD: Would they be isolated in the springtime when the swamp rose?

CL: When there were horses and sleighs, traveling was all right but when cars came, you would get stuck. You would have to go to a nearby farm, get a team of horses and pull them out.

PD: How many acres did they have here at the farm?

CL: The same acres that it has today.

PD: How many is that?

CL: 192.

PD: Do you still have relatives in Canada?

CL: Oh yes. Distant cousins.

PD: Did your father grow up on this farm?

CL: Yes. He was three and a half when his folks bought this farm.

PD: Where did he go to school?

CL: Actually, he went to school at a little schoolhouse down here about half a mile.

PD: South on 116?

CL: Yes. He went there only a few years. My father was the 11th in a family of 13. My father was the first in his family to be born in the states. His ten brothers and sisters before him were born in Canada and after that there was another brother and another girl who were born. In fact, my father's youngest sister was born here also. They went to school in Winooski and they stayed there as boarders.

PD: How old was he when he went to school?

CL: He was maybe about 7 or 8 years old.

PD: That must have been tough?

CL: It was tough. I remember him talking how lonely he was. They would bring him into the boarders school there in early September and they would go get him for Christmas. His brother was there also.

PD: Was it a religious, catholic school?

CL: Yes. That is where I went to school too. I never was a boarder there though. I traveled back and forth.

PD: Was the road paved when you first started going to school?

CL: It was paved during the ...in the 1940s. I always remember seeing it paved. Yes, in the 1940s.

PD: When you started farming, you increased the size of your herd. What was your father's herd size and what was yours?

CL: My father's herd size was probably 30 milking cows. I went to high as 110. That is just milking cows – not including heifers. I had another 80 heifers.

PD: Have you been leasing land in addition to your 192 acres?

CL: I rented the farms on both sides of me for 40 years. My father was renting them back then and I continued on. Doctor (Stokes) Gentry just north of me here and what used to be the Carse property just south of me.

PD: What were the other farms along this road?

CL: From South Burlington to Hinesburg, it was all dairy farms.

PD: Was there a cooperative for dairy farmers?

CL: There were cooperatives. AGWIK was one. Milk co-ops. There were several milk co-ops years ago. You would have three or four farmers belong to this co-op and another three or four farmers belong to another co-op. It was out of choice. You went where you wanted to go. .

PD: Did you or your parents have any dealing with the Creamery on Falls Road?

CL: You mean the Shelburne Creamery?

PD: Yes

CL: A long time ago. Back in the '30s.

PD: You would take your milk there?

CL: Yes. In fact, I still have a couple of milk cans from the Shelburne Creamery. There was a place in Starksboro also. There were quite a few creameries. I remember going to Robinson, I guess that is the name of the place, in Starksboro. There was one over here in Hinesburg.

PD: You had the cows and you grew hay to sustain them. Did you have any other crops on the farm?

CL: Corn silage.

PD: Did you have working horses here?

CL: Before tractors, yes.

PD: How many horses did you have?

CL: Two teams.

PD: The school that you went to down the road – is there anything left of it?

CL: No. Do you see there past my hedgerow? That is where it was.

PD: Do you know who owns that property?

CL: Guillemettes.

PD: Did you go to the school in Winooski until high school?

CL: Yes.

PD: Did you start farming after high school?

CL: Yes. That was in 1964.

PD: What was it like traveling? Did you parents ever go to Montreal to visit?

CL: They went to Montreal to visit but not too often. The family was more from Saint Highesan – about 40 miles east of Montreal. They went to Montreal once every three or four years.

PD: How did they travel north?

CL: My folks drove.

PD: How did the depression affect life around here?

CL: Back in the late '20s and early '30s, they farmed. They were probably debt free and they basically existed – they were not getting ahead. They weren't saving money – they just existed. They had enough to put food on the table and that was it. But they managed to keep the farm.

PD: How many children in your family?

CL: There were five. I am the fourth one.

PD: What do you remember of World War Two?

CL: Milk prices had gone up. After the war –late '40s and early '50s – the milk prices went down. All throughout the '50s, it was hard.

PD: When did the farms around here start to close?

CL: Early '60s.

PD: Was that because of the milk prices or changing generations?

CL: Milk prices probably had a factor in it but more people with money started coming out here and buying the farms for the privacy.

PD: Do you know anything about the families that lived in the house before you?

CL: I assume that they were all farmers. The original developer of this farm was a family called Higbees. From what I understood, the Higbees...the elderly Higbee...I think his name is Nathaniel...he bought the Gentry property and he built that house for the

Gentrys. That is an old colonial house just like this one. Then he had a son and he bought this land over here for probably a few bucks per acre and he built this house for one of his sons. He then bought some more land which was the Carse Farm. He built that house for his other son. These three houses – they all look alike. They were all built by the same man. In the early 1800s.

PD: Did the Carse farm build the little camps on the pond?

CL: Those camps were there back in the '20s.

PD: Does your farm have access to the pond?

CL: Yes.

PD: Did you ever have any wintertime activities on the pond?

CL: No

PD: I know that you are at a crossroads with your farm. Are you thinking of selling your farm for development, like what is happening at the Sutton property?

CL: The Sutton property, to my understanding, was left to their niece. She is developing it – she has no interest in farming. I think the Sutton boys were like the 7th or 8th generation on that farm. Of course, they never married or had any kids. Their older sister, Margaret, lived in Maine and she had kids. And those kids had kids. I almost think that it is a great niece that has the property now. The Mailles had use of it.

PD: Will you develop, if you decide not to rebuild the farm?

CL: No. We are not developing. It has been the family farm for 90 years. It is tough for me to decide what to do. I would hate to leave it. I am too young to call it quits and I want to continue farming. I have two boys. My older one is in college. My younger son is nineteen. They both have interest. They both like farm work. I really want them to commit themselves to something. They are too young. If I built something, I want to build something with them in mind. I always said at 66, I am calling it quits. My grandfather helped my father until the day he died and my father helped me until the day he died. So, I will do the same thing for the boys. Both of them want to farm and it will give me something to do. If you keep busy, it is a ticket to good health. That is why farmers live so old because they keep busy.

PD: Did your barn that burned date back to the original house?

CL: The house is older. This house here is built on hand-hewn beams. That barn over there was post and beam but they were sawed beams. I guessed that it was about the 1880s.

PD: And you added onto it over the years?

CL: Yes. The original barn was probably 1880 and we added three different sections. One of them was in '61, one on '68 and '71.

Interviewee: Doris Maeck
Interviewer: Oda Hubbard
Date: February 2002

Doris Maeck is a link between two one of Shelburne's oldest families – the Maecks and the Tracys. The Maeck and Tracy families have produced countless community activists, war veterans from the Revolutionary War to World War II and some of Shelburne's finest personalities.

Topics discussed: Maeck Family, Tracy Family, Webb Family

Doris Ruth Wehrle Maeck was born in Lynn, MA in 1915. Doris spent most of her life in a Spear Street House and Farm that was built in 1801 or 1805. The Maecks are one of the first families that settled in Shelburne. They watched the Battle of Plattsburgh from barn roof. Doris Maeck has a post and beam from that barn incorporated in her home, South Forty, in Shelburne.

Frederick Maeck was a young boy at the time of the battle of Ticonderoga. He was with his father who was a physician in Burgoyne's army. They later moved to Williamstown, MA where the father built a house which is still standing. Frederick Maeck then moved to Shelburne and built the house on Spear Street.

Doris married John Van Sicklen Maeck in 1939. They lived at Fort Dix, later in Burlington. In the 1960s, they moved to Shelburne. John never worked on the family farm. He "loved the land, had some sheep and now the tree farm business." John V.S. Maeck went to Edmunds High School. He boarded in town. He then went to the UVM School of Medicine and practiced in Burlington.

John's Parents were B. Harris Maeck and Hannah Tracy (Hannah Edgerton Tracy). They built their home on Route 7 in 1915. They married in 1912. Hannah was the only child in 13 of her parents who did not go to college. B. Harris Maeck was in World War One but he was not abroad during the conflict. While he lived in Shelburne, he ran a grocery business in the village. Charlotte, the sister of B. Harris Maeck, married Henry Warren Tracy. John Maeck, brother B.H. Maeck, went to live in Battle Creek Michigan. Doris' family was annoyed that she voted Democrat during WW II.



Figure 1 The Tracy and Maeck Family Go To War

Hannah Edgerton Tracy's parents, Julius C. and Mary Edgerton Tracy, lived in the Tracy home at the corner of Marsett Road and Rout 7. Julius's father, Lee, built the house. Julius C. and Mary Edgerton Tracy met a meeting in a Revival meeting tent near the Methodist Church where she played the piano. Julius was the minister.

Hannah Tracy Maeck's brother, Charles Lee Tracy, was a musician in NYC. He lived at Carnegie Hall and studied in NYC. He came every summer to Shelburne bringing many musicians and dancers who stayed at the Tracy house. Among others, the pianist, Kenneth Haig and his daughter in law, the ballerina Marina Svetlova. During the summer, he led the UVM's music department. Hannah Maeck had a studio built at the back of the house for him to retire to. He did not live to use it.

John Jay Tracy, another brother, was a great reader and gardener. He never married. He lived with his sister after her husband's death. He had a vegetable business where it is now Tracy Lane.

The Maecks and the Tracys in the early part of the 20th Century socialized with several of the other well-to-do farm families in Shelburne – Stoddard and Fletcher. Not with the Webbs or Burlington families. The Methodist Church was important to these two families – as was local politics. The town was dry and alcohol was frowned upon. There was little connection between the Tracy family and the Webb family. The Webbs were laughed at by the townspeople for their ideas on farming and building "English Style" cottages for their farm help. Not until after WWII, with the generation of Elizabeth and Derrick Webb and John and Doris Maeck was there a real friendship and socializing.

Walter Maeck ran the Spear Street farm until his retirement in 1963. "Walter let the place run down". He was a "loner". He "had a rather large amount of cash on hand". He did not do that much investing though he always talked about it. He was "stingy". He was a beekeeper. The farm had been successful. The farmhouse was modernized in c. 1870. The family owned a Steinway piano.

The family has never been able to trace the origin of the Maeck's family name.

Interviewee: Norm and Rita Marcotte

Interviewer: Dorothea Penar

Date: February 21, 2002

Location: Marcotte Residence, Shelburne Village

Norm and Rita Marcotte have been supplying with people of Shelburne with both home appliances and farm equipment for years. With these two essential product lines, the Marcottes pretty much know everyone in town.

Topics discussed: farms, Shelburne farming families, Saint Catherine's Church, Marsett Family, Father Lamothe, Shelburne doctors, St. John the Baptist Hall, Ticonderoga, Shelburne buildings, moved buildings, school families, Shelburne Farms

Dorothea Penar: When and where were you born? Just give us some of your early history.

Norman Marcotte: I was born in East Charlotte, July 2, 1931. Born and brought up there for twenty years, moved to Shelburne after that.

DP: When about after that?

NM: Well we moved in Shelburne August 25, 1951. At that time we built the house right across from the Shelburne Museum, and that whole piece of ground at that time was completely farmland, no other buildings on that.

DP: After you got married, you moved?

NM: I built the house before we got married, started building in March and we moved in after we were married.

DP: Now where was Rita from?

NM: Rita was from Winooski and she was born on June 2, 1930. She went to the Winooski Schools, eight grades, and I went to eight grades in the Charlotte school.

DP: Now how did you meet?

NM: At St. John the Baptist Hall, years ago, you know on weekends, people went dancing, and this where we went and that's where we met. St. John the Baptist in Winooski.¹

¹ Dancing was on Saturdays from 8:00 to 12:00 PM

DP: Tell me a little bit about when you were a boy in Charlotte. Did you have connections with people in Shelburne? Was there a kind of mutual community?

NM: No, when I had my heart set on Shelburne it wasn't because I knew anyone in Shelburne, I just figured I wanted to build a house, and it came to mind that Shelburne was probably where I wanted to build. So I stopped in and visited with the farmer that owned that land and he agreed to sell me a lot for \$500. That was the beginning.

DP: Who was it that owned that land?

NM: Ralph Marsett, well his father Bert Marsett.¹

DP: So that is basically where the Hillside neighborhood is now?

NM: At the intersection of Marsett Road and Route 7, where the big white house is, that's their farmhouse, and there was a barn just east of that. So I stopped and visited with him on the farm and he agreed to sell me a lot. I was kind of surprised.

DP: So up to this point you were doing farming with your family?

NM: Farming and I was doing a little handy work for the neighbors. If people had a problem I would go help them out either carpentry or even some electrical work.

DP: Was the school you went to a one-room schoolhouse?

NM: A one-room schoolhouse. It had eight grades, about twelve children in that one school.

DP: And Shelburne seemed like a big community to move to, relative to that?

NM: Yes it was, but it was fairly quiet in Shelburne at that time. Of course we drove around to different places, you know, Spear Street, places like that. Naturally everybody wants to build up on Spear Street, but it didn't fit our budget so we didn't. I'm kind of glad that we made the move we did.

DP: Now were you part of the parish of the Catholic Church in Charlotte, up to that point, and then when you moved here you became a member of St. Catherine's?

NM: Yes, by the way, I was baptized in St. Catherine's because at that time Charlotte was a mission of Shelburne. I think it was Father Cain who was here then, but yes I was baptized in Shelburne.²

¹ Norman Marcotte bought the land from Bert and Mary Marsett in 1951. Bert Marsett (1875-1952) served the Shelburne community as auditor (1906-1912), School Director (1908-1935), Town Representative (1915, 1941, 1943), County Senator (1946) and Selectman (1942-1952).

² Father Cain served at Saint Catherine's Church in Shelburne from 1934-1953.

DP: Now where did you get married, which church?

NM: St. Francis Xavier in Winooski.

DP: In March of 1951, you started to build the house. What were you doing for a profession at that point?

NM: I started selling barn cleaners actually even before I was married. So it was maybe a year or so before. I started selling them for a dealer in Burlington where Friendly's is now on Williston Road. He used to sell (barn) cleaners and I worked for two years just part time, selling and installing. Then when I was twenty-one I became a dealer. I'm still with the same company.

DP: When did you sort of blossom into the whole appliance business?

NM: Appliances we started in 1952.

DP: Where did you deal with that, did you have a store?

NM: No just from that little house across from the Shelburne Museum. Finally we got pretty crowded...

DP: When did you move into the house that you are in now?

NM: We moved here in December of 1959.

DP: This was just open field back here too?

NM: No that building was there at the time. Of course all the buildings were the same except for the barn out back. All these other houses were built back there. Now before we bought this place here we were looking, in fact we had a deed drawn up for our business, which would have been where the Christmas loft is. We had bought that land and they had the deed drawn up, and I chickened out of it, I decided well, maybe that's too big of a move. So then we heard about this place and the also the one where Harrington's Antiques is, and came awful close to buying that one, but then somebody told us about this one, so we stopped in here and we decided to buy this house.

DP: Who did you buy this house from?

NM: We bought it from James Byrnes, who lives up on Spear Street.

DP: Now how long did he own this property?

NM: He bought from the Chittenden Bank and he probably only owned it about 3 years. He more or less bought it for speculation.

DP: Do you know any history of this home?

NM: I do, because there used to be a Dentist Drew that used to own this, and when he passed away the Chittenden Bank, I think, took care of the estate. If we had not bought this house when we bought it, the Shell Oil Company would have owned it and torn it down to build a gas station.¹

DP: Do you know when it was built?

NM: I think it is about 1885, and there is a house in Charlotte that was built by the same people and it is almost an identical house as this one. They've got the records of what it cost to built that house in Charlotte.... labor and material was \$2500.²

DP: So you know a lot about the last part of the century in Shelburne. You've seen a lot of changes, especially because of the farm business that you were in...

NM: Also, before we get into that, I should mention that Father LaMothe and I are probably the only two people in Shelburne that were baptized in this church that still live here. As far as we know, and I remember going to Catechism classes in the summertime up in Hinesburg (because it was Hinesburg, Charlotte and Shelburne), and Father LaMothe and I were just a year apart as far as classes. So that goes back a long time. We used to have summer school for two weeks up there.³

DP: So where did he go to school?

NM: He went to school in Shelburne, a one-room schoolhouse.

DP: So the village has changed a lot since you've been here.

NM: It has grown tremendously. The whole of Shelburne hasn't changed a whole lot.

DP: We've had a lot of discussions before about buildings moving around. I thought you could think of some of those interesting buildings that have been moved around, where they went.

¹ The house was built for Charles Russell. He and his wife had 2 daughters. One daughter married Doctor Drew and lived in this house until they both passed away.

² The Marcottes were the third family to own the house.

³ Father Lamothe was the son of Philiza and Blanche Lamothe who owned a farm on Dorset Street.



Figure 1 Shelburne buildings being moved

NM: Probably the biggest building that they moved was the building that used to be where the Mobil station is. That used to be what they called the Shelburne General Store. That was a brick building. That's where the Post Office was also. They moved that, probably in 1955 or 1957...



Figure 2 Old Shelburne Post Office

DP: That was moved to?

NM: The Shelburne Museum. That went up Route 7 on two sets of railroad tracks. It probably took them three to four days to go from here to the Museum.¹

DP: You mentioned one that was near the Museum property?

¹ The 2nd Shelburne Post Office is now the Children's Shop located next to the Shelburne Inn. The 3rd Shelburne Post Office is now Gillian's restaurant (located at the front of the Shelburne Shopping Plaza). The 4th Shelburne Post Office is located on Falls Road and the 5th Shelburne Post Office was built in 2002 on Falls Road.

NM: There was four houses, three of them on the west side of Route 7, they got moved across the road, up the hill a ways, off the museum property, and two of them were put together on the east side of the road, just past what's now the Citgo station. That's now the flower shop, and then the other two were moved up the road a little bit further, as separate houses. One of them is at the corner of Meadow Lane and Hillside Terrace and the other one is just down below. All on the east side because they moved them from the Museum property across the road. They put two houses together, which back in those days was a lot of work and then they moved another big house which used to be the Dubois property, Richard Dubois' grandfather, and that got moved all the way down on Mount Philo Road.

DP: Where was that originally?

NM: That was just past what they call the "Saw Mill", I guess. On the museum property just up past that a little bit. That went from the museum property all the way across the fields and ended up on Airport Drive.

DP: The museum did a lot of moving around.

NM: Of course moving the Ticonderoga, when they moved that it had to be again about the same time between '55-'57.

DP: So tell me about some of the old farms that we should remember that are no longer here, especially the ones that probably still have the farmhouses around but no longer are farms.

NM: Well, the first one is Bert and Ralph Marsett which is where we bought our first lot from, now it is all Hillside [neighborhood]. The house is still there, the barn is taken down. The next one is Tinker Strong, that's where the Shelburne Shopping [Center] now is and where the sandwich shop [Gillian's Restaurant] is, that building is the original building and that's still there. The brick house up here that's still called the Strong House, that was their original house.¹ The other one would be the John Clark Vermont Stock Farm which is where the Vermont Teddy Bear Company is now. That farmhouse is a day care center now. The original barn burnt, then they built a new barn which is still in existence out back which they use.² And Eustace Thomas, that's down on Thomas Road, and that house and that barn are still in existence. Now there's lots of other houses... they haven't developed the whole thing but their still building house up

¹ Nasan and Florence Strong purchased their 150-acre farm in 1949 from the Thorp family, who had been on the land since 1894. The land was sold to the supermarket in 1966.

² See Sally Martel interview. John Clark inherited the land from his father in 1960. The 423 farm originally belonged to Colonel LeGrand B. Cannon, a civil war veteran, who was the president of the Champlain Transportation Company and stockholder in a large horse breeding association. Cannon also owned the 60-acre Overlake estate in Burlington. The day care center is located in a c. 1830 farmhouse that once belonged Ziba Pierson who was the son of Moses Pierson, one of Shelburne's first settlers.

there.¹ Fred Thomas....the barn is no longer there but the house is still there, and that again is on Thomas Road and that's next to Tim Thomas.² He built a small barn there and lives in that area, not in that house, though right next to it. Another one which now is James O'Brien. That's a horse farm and also a bed and breakfast and they've also sold a lot of building lots on that land. The original house is still there. The original barn which was connected to the barn that's there now was taken down, but the barn that is there is one that I built back, probably back in '57 or '58. That's on Dorset Street. That barn now is a horse barn. They also sold a lot of house lots. The house itself is used as a bed & breakfast.³ Then George O'Brien's farm, that's on the corner of Barstow Road and Dorset Street, the big brick house. That was the original O'Brien property. That house is still there. The original barn, which used to be on the east side of the road, I believe it that burnt or got torn down, and then he built a new, more modern free stall barn and milking barn. We supplied a lot of the equipment for that barn. The Sutton Farm that's still the still original barn and the original house is still there, and that's also on Dorset St. in between the two O'Brien farms. The land is being taken care of by the Bailey's farm. Those are the original buildings; they have been there for quite a while and they are still there. We supplied just about all the equipment for that barn. Noel Gauthier, which is on the property which they call Shelburne Limestone Quarry. That's still the Shelburne Limestone Quarry plus they built a lot of houses on that.⁴ That house is still there but the barn got blown down. John Senesac, that's on the road to go to Hinesburg towards CVU. The next farm over from the Palmer's Sugar House. That original house and barn is still there.⁵ And, Tom Bushey, that would be on Pond Road. The original house is there, I think the barn is newer than when they first bought the property. It has been used by the LaPierres, off and on, as a second farm, and right now I guess that has been sold for development purposes. And then Arthur Auclair, that would be on Route 116, and they have a tack shop up there, just north of the Cheese Factory Road. I think that house there, wasn't part of the original Auclair farm, but it became part of that farm, and the barn of course burnt down and they built the new free stall barn. His son, Tony Auclair, still runs that farm. The brick house is the original house. Of course, you got Dunbar Bostwick's farm which is between Route 7 and Lake Champlain. Part of that now is the Wake Robin, and of course they have big plans for the rest of the land towards the lake. We did a lot of equipment installation on that farm when they were still farming. Unfortunately, some of it they only farmed five or six years

¹ See Colleen Haag interview. Eustace Thomas came to Shelburne with his parents in 1901. He went to high school at Saint Michaels in Winooski. Eustace served the community in a multitude of ways. Eustace Thomas served on the school board from 1929 to 1961 and he also served as Shelburne's Town Representative in 1961. He and his wife, Lena, ran a farm (the former Andrews Farm) near the junction of Spear Street and Thomas Road. Over the years, the farm grew to over 550 acres and it had over 400 apple trees.

² Fred Thomas was Jerrold Thomas' father. The Thomas family owned three farms along Thomas Road: the 87-acre Kate Hennessey Farm, the 92-acre George LaLanne Farm and the 25-acre Apier Farm. These were the names of the farms when the Thomas family purchased them.

³ See James and Pauline O'Brien interview

⁴ Noel and Joan Gauthier purchased the 200-acre "John Kelley Farm" from Edgar and Joyce Guilmotte in 1957. Approximately 9 acres was deeded to the Vermont Marble Company prior to their purchase. During the early 1980s, the Gauthiers sold much of the farmland that sat north of Bishop Road.

⁵ The Senesac family started farming the land in 1946.

after we had done all that work. So you hate to see something like that stop. Then Warren O'Neil, which is where O'Neill Dog Kennel is on Bishop Road. That again used to be an operating farm. His brothers had a farm down in Charlotte, about two neighbors from where I was born. That's no longer being farmed either.¹ Now another one that is interesting is on Mt. Philo Road, is Arthur Stebbins farm. That house, I think now may be a bed and breakfast also. The original barn is still there. They built some houses, and where the airport is I'm sure that was originally part of that farm. When I was a little kid, probably eleven or twelve years old, I used to work there in the summertime drive horses for the haying. I used to live with the mother and father and sisters on that farm. I used have to walk cows in the morning all the way up from that farm to near the Marsett Road. I would bring the cows up the road, and let them go to pasture, and then go back at night and get them again. Back in those days I always felt it was kind of scary, not because there was a lot of traffic because there wasn't hardly any traffic, but just the fact that when you had to go out and get the cows in the woods and bring them up the road and then make sure they got going in the right direction back to the farm. I did this many times. One of his sisters was also a schoolteacher. She was a substitute schoolteacher for us in Charlotte. The other teacher we had in Charlotte, which was our main teacher, was Freda Morrow, which was Freddy Morrow's aunt... Rupert Morrow's sister. She was our main teacher for many years. The last teacher we had in Charlotte was a St. George.... Joe St. George's aunt. She was the last teacher that I had in Vermont. Brad Caldwell's Farm, that's where the golf course is now on Spear Street

DP: Where's the farmhouse for that farm?

NM: That would be the one the barn's on the right and the house is on the left on the corner [of Webster Road]. Then the other one is Lamsons that was up again at the top of Marsett Road on the corner. That was on the west side of the road where the Museum is now. That building I believe was torn down in the early fifties.² So those are no longer being farmed anymore. We've only got eight farms now that are in Shelburne that are still farming. One of them is Claude LaPierre up on Route 116. They just had a big fire on their farm. I think they are probably going to rebuild. I haven't been told for sure. Then there is the Leduc farm which is on Cheese Factory Road, and that was the father's farm and now his two or three boys own it in a corporation. Leduc was actually my father's second cousin. Of course, Tony Auclair's farm which was further south on Route 116. That one there, the barn I think burned down and then he moved over to his father's side. That original house is still there but no longer farming. Then of course

¹ Warren and Jeanette O'Neil purchased the 174-acre Bishop Road Farm in 1960 from Lillian Bishop who bought the land with her husband, George, in 1914. Evidence from 1857 and 1869 maps indicate that this land once belonged to SW Payne, the grandfather of Lillian Bishop. Not included in the 1960 agreement, was the small c. 1915 cottage that was built by George Bishop and sat directly across the street from the homestead. The O'Neil's subdivided much of their land for the Beaver Creek development. Today, Margaret Libby owns the land and the property consists of a c. 1815 brick farmhouse, a c. 1850 barn, a c. 1900 barn and c. 1940 dairy bran that was converted into a dog kennel in the 1970s.

² George and Jeanette Lamson bought their farm in 1932. They sold a large tract to the Shelburne Museum in 1954 and 180 acres to John Clark and Allen Clark in 1954.

Shelburne Farms now owns all this property down towards the lake and Shelburne Point, not all of it but most of it. That's still farming. After that we have Jim Meilleur's Farm which was Father LaMothe's old place, and they've done some remodeling with barn in the last couple of years, so I guess they are going to be farming there for a little while.¹ Then Wayne Barr, Richmond Barr's son, and that's on Pond Road, and that's still farming. We remodeled that barn last year, put in new stalls, jacked the barn up and moved the steel columns. That was a nice fun project, probably my last big one.

DP: How old was the barn?

NM: Back in the 1850s'. That's the second barn on that foundation. The first one burnt, and that one might have been that old and the second one, they built that one probably more than fifty years ago. Bernie Guilmette, is the next one. That's also on Pond Road. They just built a new big free stall barn so I think they are going to be in there for a few years. The original farmhouse probably is not there anymore, but the homestead farm, that they built is fairly new, it's been there a few years. They still live in that same house.² Then of course we have another farm, which is kind of a hobby farm, is Mike Deavitt up on the Falls Road going towards Hinesburg. He works for UPS so he just farms it as a hobby

DP: They are in the process of renovating their farmhouse?

NM: Yes, they have done some work on those houses. There are two houses up there. Of course, his father used to work for the Town of Shelburne at the school, George Deavitt. That was a tragic loss when we lost him. Well, that takes care of the farm history. There's probably more that I don't know about.

DP: Well, we know who to come to about barns because part of our project is to see if we have missed any sites especially the out buildings where we don't know the ages. Some of it is hard to tell and know the history, so if we have any questions we will come to you.

DP: You mentioned Dunbar Bostwick...did you know him well?

NM: We got to know him quite a bit in the last few years. In the earlier years we knew who he was, but we didn't have any close contact with him, but then when he got where he was remodeling the barns and needed some new equipment, we got to meet with him quite a few times and he was very pleasant. He was an interesting person to talk to and visit with. Chris Davis, which is his grandson, is still overseeing the property and the transition in the sale of it, and he's quite an interesting person too. He lives in Charlotte now. He was with the Shelburne Fire Department for quite a while.

DP: Let's talk about your children, how many children do you have?

¹ Jim and Marguerite Maille (Lamothe) inherited the land in 1977.

² Bernie and Joann Guilmette owned 10 acres near the intersection of Pond Road and Route 116, 83 acres on Bishop Road and 102 acres on Irish Hill Road

NM: We have four children. Our oldest girl was born in '52, her name is Norma and she lives in St Albans. She has a day care business and her husband used to work for the highway department, and now he works for the INS.¹ They've got two boys. One of them, two years ago, graduated from Northeastern University and now he is working in Washington D.C. as a Civil Engineer and his wife is an Electrical Engineer. So they've both got pretty good jobs. They wish they were back in Vermont, but I guess when they get the education they have to go where the jobs are. She works for the Navy. Our next child was our oldest son, Roger. He was born in '54. He works with us here in the business with Hot Point appliances and GE. He lives in Williston, and he has three boys and a girl. So they've got a good family started. Then our next son is Gary and he was born in '58 and he works here for the business here as well. GE and Hotpoint. He has three children, two girls and a boy. The boy's kind of into the music, so he's done well with the school system here, in music. He's going to pursue his career in music, next year probably in college, out of state. So he's got goals set aside for himself. Our youngest daughter is Julie Kent. She was born in 1960. She is a registered nurse at the Medical Center. Her husband, Jon, works at the Shelburne Museum as a carpenter. They live on Mt. Philo Road.²

DP: They all went to the village school then?

NM: Yes the village school, then the middle school here, then they went to CVU.

DP: I know you are very involved with St. Catherine's, the church, when you moved here did you just start going to St. Catherine's and then just start getting more involved?

NM: Well, we've been at St. Catherine's ever since we were married back in '51. It was only a few years after that when I was asked to help as an usher for collections, which I started doing. At that time it was Ervin Viens that was basically the only usher, and he used to work for the Water Department & the Sewer Department.³ So I've been ushering I guess from that point on, and I remember when we used to take up the collections. We used to take the seatings after people were sitting in church. We would go around and it was 15 cents per seatings and you had to go around and make change at the beginning of mass. After that they brought it up to twenty-five cents and they still did that in church after mass had started. Then they stopped that and they did it coming into church again at twenty-five cents a seating, and we had to make change then. Shortly after that they decided, well, now the people can put their twenty-five cents in the basket at the offertory and no more collections at the door, and its been that way ever since.

DP: So you've seen quite a few pastors. Who was here when you first came?

¹ The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service

² Julie and Jon Kent have two children and live in Shelburne

³ Ervin Viens served this position from 1957 to 1974.



DP: Rita is joining us. Rita, tell us when you were born and where, and some of your early childhood.

Rita Marcotte: I was born in Winooski, Vermont on June 2, 1930. I lived in Winooski until I was married. I was educated at St. Francis Xavier School, did not go to high school, but I did one year of child care or day care for one year, and then I went to work at the University of Vermont in the Waterman Building, I worked there four years and changed to go to Grant's Department Store because of the different hours it was a little bit easier for me to take a bus to go to work. I met Norm in 1949 in Winooski at St. John the Baptist Hall where they have dancing. I was going there with one of my cousins, who was my same age and she knew Norman's family because she used to go dancing before I started to go, and got to know the family, and introduced me to that family. Then Norman started to go every week, so I started to go every week. One time when my cousin was getting married she was going to have a reception in Morrisville, and Norman was invited to go also for the reception. So Norman asked me if I could go with him, and I told him I was going to the wedding which in the morning, but I would meet him there at night for the reception. So I was with Norman, but also his sister and then another family. We were friends until we were married in 1951.

DP: What was your maiden name?

RM: Rita Poirier. We were seven girls and one boy in my family. I was the fifth child.

DP: So you looked around and you decided to settle in Shelburne?

RM: Well Norman and I both thought that he did not want to live in Charlotte and I didn't want to live in Winooski so we compromised. Shelburne was close to Charlotte, but it was easier at the time for Norman to work at his father's farm, that's where he was working, and also selling on the side.

DP: Now when you got married did you work still?

RM: I did until December, which was four months. Then it created a problem (traveling) back and forth to work. So I just quit working and stayed home because the house was not completed, and almost not completed after we sold it (laughing). There was a lot to do. Then I had my daughter the following year.

DP: Now have you always participated in the business too?

RM: He would go out and do his service calls and repair and installation during the day. So I was home in case a customer came to pick up parts or something like that, but I was never a seller, quoting price and all that, I never wanted to get into to that.

NM: She used to unload the trucks when they delivered appliances

RM: In those days they didn't come with a big truck. They would come with six, seven appliances and I would help them unload. We moved here about nine years later.

DP: We were talking about St. Catherine's and the social life. Where there special organizations that you were involved with through St. Catherine's?

RM: St. Catherine's Society. All the parishioner women belonged to it. At the beginning you had to belong. Every year they had, like a chicken barbeque and all that or they had bingos and all that sort of stuff, what else did they have? dinners. But I used to help more when the kids were younger, than when got older and it was harder. I guess because we had the business too.

DP: Are there any other organizations that you belong to outside of St. Catherine's?

RM: He [Norm] never belonged to the Fire Department, but my two sons did. The oldest son, when he moved out of Shelburne when he was married, he couldn't be a fireman no more because he moved to Williston. He never joined it over there. Gary stayed in Fire Department, but he also took on Rescue, and then after a few years he left the rescue. Now he is in the Rotary.

DP: Who were some of the folks that you remember who lived in the village at the time?

RM: Mrs. Lull

NM: Yes, Dr. Lull. He was the principal at South Burlington. Was he a principal in Shelburne too at one time?

RM: I think, but I'm not sure.¹ She worked in this office. Their daughter is Danyow.

DP: Did you go to any doctors in town?

RM: Dr. Holden was my first doctor.

NM: Before that we had to go to Hinesburg, Dr. Wainer.²

DP: That was the closest one?

NM: Yes, and then Dr. Holden came here, then Dr. Ryder. They opened up here. Then we started going here.

DP: Where?

NM: At the Creamery.

RM: Well, it wasn't there before. It was that little house where that big apartment is.

¹ Robert D. Lull was the Superintendent of Schools during the 1950s.

² Both Doctor Holden and Doctor Wainer served as the Shelburne Health Officer during the 1950s and 1960s.

NM: This side of the Creamery. There is big white house.

RM: Dr. Holden was downstairs and he had an apartment upstairs. He used to live in the big house. Not the red one but the other big house. There is the brick house after the gas station and then there is the other big house, that's where Dr. Holden used to live in the big house.¹ There is a lot of apartments in there now. He had built that house for his office, and then I guess Dr. Holden did live there long enough to go into the Creamery. I don't remember if he did, I think he did.²

NM: Yeah.

RM: After, he left to go to New York, Dr. Ryder was here at that Creamery. Then there was Mrs. Harrington. You know where the antique place is? Now it's her granddaughter that has the house. Then of course you have the Websters.

NM: Then there was Jimmy Barnes that used to be our first sheriff in Shelburne. He became constable then became, well they didn't call it the police department then, but he was the only officer in town to manage all the disputes, traffic violations and everything else. He was pretty aggressive. Now we have twenty people in the police department. I guess there is no way they could do it with one or two people nowadays.

DP: Do you remember any special events?

NM: Back in '63 they had what they called the Bicentennial. We had the Bicentennial Parade. The Earl of Shelburne was here from England. And they had quite a parade quite a doing on that, floats and everything. We had a Hot Point float. Our oldest daughter, back at that time she would have been eleven years old, she was on that float. That was the same year they built CVU School. So we had a couple stoves on that float that ended up at CVU.

DP: In the Home Economics Dept?

NM: Yes.

DP: Then we have the Halloween parade...

RM: The Christmas Stroll.

NM: The last five or six years. Then they have the Sidewalk Sale in August.

¹ The Tracy House

² The Creamery building was constructed c. 1919 on land that once belonged to Benjamin Harrington, one of Shelburne's first settlers. Through an organization known as Shelburne Offices Inc, Doctors Holden and Ryder as well as Beaudin-Moulton Associates renovated the 10,000 square foot building in 1970 and converted the creamery into professional office complex.

DP: Its pretty recent they started doing that?

NM: Yes, the Shelburne Business Committee started that. Corinne Bissonette was one of them that got the thing going. That's grown quite a bit.

DP: How about musical events?

RM: They used to have Cakewalk at UVM.

DP: That was a play. The Beans were telling me about that.

RM: They were older people in that, although there were some kids, mostly older people.

NM: We had a Sled Dog Race a few years back in Shelburne.

DP: Where was that?

RM: At the middle school.

NM: At the middle school and then it used go all the way down to the harbor or down on the landings at the lake, you know the fishing access.? They went from here all the way down across to the fishing access on the lake and back. It had to be what ten years ago...fifteen years?

RM: Oh more than that because Julie's been married twenty years and she wasn't even married then.

NM: It was a good size event.

RM: Could be twenty-five years. Now I 'm old!

DP: How about special ghost stories, superstitions, haunted houses anything like that?

NM: The big house across the road which was originally the Strong property. They used to hide the Underground Railroad, where they used to hide slaves and bootleggers.

RM: They would meet them at the wood over here, or at the underpass out by the Falls. They would get the Indians who would come down the River. In fact, my daughter in law, Diane, she could tell you a lot about the Indians

NM: She's done a lot of research on it.

DP: We talked a little bit about transportation, or lack of it in earlier times. Did you go into Burlington much?

NM: We used to have to go to Burlington for all of our shopping.

RM: They had the IGA here, but....

NM: We still went to Burlington for a lot of shopping

RM: Yeah, groceries we always got there and of course my parents still lived in Winooski.

NM: We used to have a nice men's clothing store right here in Shelburne, where Companions is now. The fellow's name was Chittenden, Tom Chittenden. You know, Chittenden Cider Mill? One of their sons. He was excellent, he had an excellent quality of clothes and he knew how to fit a suit for a person, and he was here probably for what, four or five years then I don't remember...

DP: When we first moved here there were three hardware stores.

NM: We had our Hot Point appliances over there in one part where Companion is now for one winter because we were remodeling in the shop here and we wanted to try it out over there. It was kind of nice, but a little inconvenient having all of our paperwork here every time you go over there you would have to bring your paperwork there. That was before the computer age. We were there for one winter; we were at both locations, tried it out.

DP: How has your business done with all the big stores coming to Williston? Has it changed?

NM: No! In fact actually it's kind of interesting. They just can't give the people the service they need. In fact our sons right now are doing most of the service for these stores, and they shouldn't be doing it really. They should leave them suffer, and take care of their own responsibilities. When you buy an appliance today you buy it with the idea that GE is going to service it for you. Well GE calls up whoever they have got set up for servicing people, and some of them aren't even capable of doing it, so now they turn around and they call up here, to have Roger go out. So Roger is doing all the hard work of all these other people that are in the business because they don't do refrigeration, they don't do this that and that, and they call up Roger and he goes out and does it. Well its not being very fair. When I started with appliances, we bought it from GE or Hot Point and we were responsible for the service for the first year, it just came out of our profit. If we didn't have any calls we just kept the profit. If we had calls we took care of them. We didn't have to get rebates back from GE. Now every time you buy an appliance, whoever sells it isn't responsible for the service, GE is responsible. Well they have a list of dealers they call, and half of those dealers can't do the work so they end up over here. So it's getting to be right now, too much

RM: When the company calls to see if you want to go and do the service, they are not in town here, they could be anywhere's. There is a person that has a dishwasher problem, now would you be able to go and service that? It doesn't matter; they even call on

Saturday. I say I don't know I don't make the appointments. And one time they say well this is in Newport, and I said definitely not. I said this is quite a ways, that's close to Canada. They don't know or they don't look. No way! They would give him \$34 to go to Newport.

DP: So business has changed?

NM: A lot of people now, respect the fact we service, and they buy here rather than buying from the big stores. You still get some people who buy from the big stores because they think: well, I'm going to save money over there. Sometimes they end up spending more money than they do over here.

RM: And then when they need service they and they get us they say we didn't realize you did the service. I do what I can, but I take care of my customers first, you know? It wouldn't be right for us to sell appliances and then to say to our customer, well I need to go on this service call because whoever sold it too them don't have service.

DP: Are you still doing the farm work too?

NM: I got 100 accounts still on farm equipment.

DP: When you retire from here, do you think anyone will take up this business?

NM: Either they got to get more help or it is going to be impossible for them continue on. Eventually the service work is going to be so much that even Roger and Gary aren't going to be able to keep up with it. They need to be training younger people now. In fact, all the years that I was in business I always had young people working for me, and they were learning while they were working, so after a while they got to where they new stuff pretty well. You just can't wait until the day you need them and then go out and hire them. You got to continue training them from the beginning because if you don't eventually your are going to end up without the help.

DP: Do you have connection with CVU or the Tech school?

NM: We've tried, but we haven't had very good luck.

NM: We haven't been able to get too much that way. We've gotten a few and some of them stayed for a while and some of them went out on their own, and went working for somebody else. When you get somebody you don't know if they hang on for a while. If you have them for a year or two, sure they are not going to know everything at the end of two years, but they are going to know more than when they started, and this is the part that hurts right now is to be able get people, and get them trained and get them to stay long enough.

NM: Big turnover of labor.

RM: In my time if you had a job you didn't give it up. You were assured the money.

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 425.¹

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.

¹ 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. ¹



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

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", 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.¹ 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.

¹ 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 there 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 her! 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.¹

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 overnighiter during the off-season which was from November through June. We

¹ 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.

Interviewee: Gus Mercaldo
Interviewer: Dorothea Penar
Date: January 2002

Born in Burlington and raised in Shelburne, Gus Mercaldo served as the principal of the Shelburne School from 1964 to 1994. Outside the school, Gus showed his love of the Shelburne community through his involvement in countless other activities.

Topics discussed: Shelburne schools, Shelburne teachers, CVU, Korny Kapers, Saint Catherine's Church, Shelburne Craft School, Special Education, multi-age classrooms

Dorothea Penar: Gus, could you tell me a little about growing up and how you came about to be working in Shelburne?

Gus Mercaldo: My grandparents lived in Burlington for years. Actually, I was born in Baltimore, Maryland. We moved back to Vermont – we used to come each summer to visit, but moved back to Vermont to live in 1947. I went to High School here. Burlington High was actually Edmunds High School. I went to the University of Vermont and got my bachelor's degree. I then went to Troy, New York and taught for five years. I move back to Vermont in 1964 and taught fourth grade at the Village School for one year. I was promoted to the principalship in 1965. I remained in that position until I retired in 1999. I watched the school change, grow and reform in many different years. The Champlain Valley Union High School opened the year that I came here to teach fourth grade. It opened in 1964.

DP: Before that, where did Shelburne High School students go?

GM: All students went to school here in the Village. It was (Grades) 1-12. That was the school that is right on Route 7. In 1966, we added kindergarten as part of the public school. Before that, it had been private but we felt that it should be part of the total education of the town.

DP: Did you ever live in Shelburne?

GM: I lived in Shelburne from 1968 to 1986 and at that time, when my mother died, I moved to our family homestead where she was living at the time. That is in Burlington, on Perrotta Place.

DP: Where did you live in Shelburne?

GM: I lived in Locust Hill. I was the first occupant in that condominium complex. That was 1972, I think it was.

DP: You mentioned lots of changes in the school. First of all, the dividing out high school. Was that because of the population?

GM: Yes. They joined the Union with the other towns – Charlotte, Williston, Hinesburg and St. George. I think that union was formed in 1962 and 1963 and they passed the bond for the High School and the facility itself. I think at one time, South Burlington was wooing Shelburne to see if they wanted to join a Union with them and then this Union came up. I wasn't really involved with that.

DP: Was Barbara Snelling on the school board at that time?

GM: Barbara Snelling was on the School Board at the time. She probably has more history on how the union actually came about.

DP: So you moved into the High School in 1964.....

GM: So we were grades 1-8 at the Village School. In 1967, our school population was growing 25%-28% every year, so it was really growing crazy each year. The High School just moved out and we immediately started looking into what we would do with our increased enrollment. We knew we needed another building so in 1967 the Middle School opened. It started off as grades 5 –8 and the fourth grade moved there the second year it was opened because we were overcrowded at the Village School. Just before the Middle School opened, one-fifth grade was in the old Town hall – in the basement and two fifth grades were over in the Methodist Church in their old Fellowship Hall – before they put on the new addition. We had two mobile classrooms on the school's village property itself. Before the Middle school, we were all over the place.

DP: The smaller schools had already been consolidated?

GM: Yes. And then we added Kindergarten in 1967. Kindergarten was held at the Episcopal Church. They had some classrooms - I think they are offices now. Where the dining room is now, that was where the Kindergarten was. Like I say, we felt that it should be part of the school. State law still did not require that towns have Kindergarten but we felt that we should. In 1994, all the grades switched to the Middle School.

DP: One of the things Shelburne is known for is having multi-age classrooms pretty early one?

GM: In 1972 was the first year. It was actually a project that Barbara Snelling wrote a grant for. It was a cooperative effort between Charlotte and Shelburne. Our (Grades) K-4s went to Charlotte and their (Grades) 5-8s came to the Shelburne Middle School. That was actually called Alternative Education and that was the multi-age program.

DP: What made Shelburne want to do that?

GM: There was some grant money available. We were really looking into the idea of multi-ages for a number areas. When this money became available, Barbara Snelling had been in touch with Marianne Stroud. Marianne was actually down at the alternative school in Bennington. She was from England and had been in the English primary schools. She was into this whole idea of alternative education for multiage groups. She was hired as director for this project that started in 1972. She did a lot of teacher training and parent training on the topic of the British primary school. They had been doing that for years where they had mixture of ages together.

DP: Were you looking at a special type of student to do this?

GM: Anybody could choose it. It was very popular – we had to create a waiting list because we could not accept everybody in it that wanted to be there. More in the primary grades than in the upper grades. In the upper grades it was more of social pressure to be with your peers. The demand was not as high in the 5-8. That became stronger with the whole history of Alpha. Alpha was the older grades and Explorers were the lower grades.

DP: Now we have several lots of ages, but there were only two then....



Figure 1 Class of 1889

GM: It started off K-4 but then when we permanently moved the fourth grade to the Middle School, it was really difficult to keep the fourth graders in that younger unit because the rest of their peers were over at the other building. So we eventually decided that we would make it a K-3 and then make the older kids...but then what they did, they started a (Grades) 4-5 and (Grades) 6-8 was an Alpha. They thought that (Grades) 4-8 was too much of a span so they broke it down (Grades) 4-5 and then (Grades) 6-8.

DP: And that has been more of a trend these days – instead of the straight grade format. That made it so that the school building had to be different.

GM: Oh yes. When the Middle School was built, they actually had some flexibility. Certain walls were movable so that they could make larger spaces. They did that for a purpose, because when we were looking at schools around the nation. We saw some of those in the Chicago area when we went out and visited some schools that were already

doing some of this more open setting and stuff like that. That was something that we thought was the future of education. I remember, we were real cautious. We wanted that flexibility as far as mixing kids but we felt it shouldn't be just a permissive kind of atmosphere. We felt that there should be more structure than you might normally have just in a regular classroom. Some people really were concerned about the whole idea that kids doing whatever they wanted to do and not really having any structure to the curriculum. We made sure that there was structure but the kids were directing what they were learning more than the regular classroom.

DP: Please talk about how you went about deciding that the Village School be retired as a school and what was the thinking?

GM: One of the main reason that we felt that the Village School had to be retired was that many of the classroom spaces weren't even 500 square feet – they were very small. Those old original classrooms with the walls and tin ceilings – they were the standard back in the 20s when the school was first built. The newer wing of the school – those classrooms were 900 square feet. So that you could easily put 20-25 kids in those rooms and not have it look like one you were one desk on another. That was the main reason. I think if the town had appropriated money and allowed us do some of the things they did after the school moved out. To knock down some walls – that was pretty expensive thing to do because some of them were bearing walls so you had to do some kind of a different treatment. The whole idea of moving out of there was that the space itself was not adequate – the size of the classrooms. While we were looking at that we said 'Look, if we are going to create families of kids – families of learners with a group of teachers then we should have classroom spaces that lend themselves to make that work.' If a group of kids were going to be with a teacher for 3 or 4 years, then lets build something that would accommodate that. They could stay right there and the teachers could configure the kids that they were working with. That is when the whole idea with the Kivas¹ where they could have their little performance areas. They would gather each morning first to start they day and then go off to their various academic activities. That is how the whole concept of the pods came about. While we were doing this, we wanted to look at what we will we be doing with classroom spaces in 20 years. So we were looking to the future. Of course, we had a superintendent then that was a futurist. Bill Crocoll was a real futurist – he had been doing that for a long time. That was his whole thrust – this idea of families of learners with a number of teachers that they would stay with. The teacher, the families and the kids really became a unit. Seeing that a family was going to be with those teachers for a number of years, build up a relationship also with those families.

¹ Kivas were an integral component of early Southwest cultures. They provided meeting areas where all members the members of the community could communicate and participate.



Figure 2 The Village School

DP: That was a big change...

GM: Yes. Of course, intermingled with all that, was this Special Education stuff, which was just peering its ugly head. I hate to say ugly but it really was because people just did not know what to do and how to handle these kids. We were one of the first schools in the state to really have integrated learning. We actually 'mainstreamed' – that's an old term – kids with special needs. They were an integral part of the classroom. If they needed special services, either those services would come to them or they would go to the services. But they would spend the majority of the day with their peers.

DP: You started doing that before the Federal mandating....

GM: Oh, yes. We started doing that the second year I was principal. We were involved with UVM for training regular classroom teachers to work with special needs kids. Now it is all mandated. The Federal Government then started to give us a little teeny bit of money so they felt that they thought they could tell you how to run all that. I am an advocate for kids that have special needs but I think that we went too far. Because we went so far that way, I think some of the kids in the middle are not getting some of things that they should be getting. And the kids on the top end of the spectrum. We saw some of the problems with the organization with the slower learner – we did not want to make those same mistakes with the kids at the top. At one time, and I think some schools still are in the nation, are testing kids to go in to special groups at the top. To me, that's not the way to do it. They have wonderful things to share with these kids and also with these slower kids. They can be a real inspiration to a kid that has special needs. Take them under their wing and they are going to learn just them.

DP: Do you think that the whole pattern of mainstreaming is going to be too cumbersome?

GM: We can see that it has gotten too expensive. We can't afford to put that much money into one group of children. We've got to find a way to put that across to the board and still meet the needs of those kids. That was another one of our main thrusts

when we started reorganizing was lets develop individual learning plans for each child. Not just for the kids with special needs or the kids who were smarter – lets do it for each child. We started to try to do that but once gain, that got very overwhelming.

DP: With Shelburne continuing to grow, just as it did in the 1960s, do you think the school system will change?

GM: I personally don't think that Shelburne can afford a high school of its own and offer the kind of things that CVU is offering our kids. Its too expensive and we don't have enough kids to do it. We couldn't have those special things – orchestra, band, 5 or 6 different courses – you know all those things those kids have – honors sciences and honors math. That takes personnel and then your budget is really shot. What I see us doing is keeping the high school and maybe building a neighborhood school in the north end. We own the land behind the orchard and Long meadow. Possibly putting a primary school there and having two K-8s. I don't think we have enough kids in the primary school to make the middle school a primary school. Maybe make the Middle School for middle grades – make it for 6-8. I feel that we should keep some kind of unit with some of those ages. I don't think the 7th and 8th graders should be alone. I think the 6th graders should be in there so that they slow down some of that stuff that 7 and 8 graders get into when they be close to getting into ninth grade. So it kind of slows that down and then they also have some good interaction with those age groups. So maybe K- 5 and 6-8 in that unit and then maybe another k-5 somewhere else feeding into that. They go that land – too bad they can't use it. They have 30 acres there. I think that was forward looking for them to say that 'Ok, we are going to need more land at some point for a school. Let's make it part of that bond.'

DP: You have been involved with Saint Catherine's Church for many, many years. How did you get involved with the church?

GM: I think it was in the early 1970s. Mrs. Grandey was directing the choir at the time and doing the music here in Shelburne at Saint Catherine's. When I was younger and still in high school and college, I was taking voice lessons from her. She directed the choir at Christ the King Parish and I was part of her choir. I got involved, went away and taught and then I lost touch. She was starting some music here at Saint Catherine's. At the time, I was living up in Colchester temporarily before I moved to Shelburne. She called and asked if I would join the choir so I said " Oh sure I will help out' – for Easter and Christmas. In the later 1970s, Gloria decided that she couldn't do it anymore.¹ We though the choir was going to disband and then some of the choir members came to me and said "will you keep going for us?" So I did and kept going and got really involved in other things. Actually, I was excited about doing it not just because of the church because I felt it was good for me as the principal of the school to be the kid's lives outside the school. A lot of them were going to church here so I got really involved. I then became a Lector and an Eucharist minister. As far as the choir, that all grew too because I didn't just do the choir, I was doing leader of song for other Masses. It grew because Father Morencey kept on saying: 'what don't you do this.' It kept growing. At

¹ Leonard and Laura Grandey owned a home on Pine Haven Shore Road.

one point, I started the Deacon Program – I was accepted into that program – but it got to be too much to do that and do school principalship and with all my meetings. I dropped out of that and I thought I would go back to that after I retired so now they tell me I am too old. I am over 60 so they say that you can't do that.

DP: You also teach?

GM: I teach religion which I have been doing since the mid 1970s. That was another way of connecting with the kids. I did that with a lot of things. I would go to soccer games and I got involved in the tournament, when they had it. Scouts.....Cub Scouts and all that. When they had things going on in the community like the parade, I tried to get involved. I thought it was really important for the kids to see me as another person in the community – someone who was an adult that had their interest in heart. I was willing to give that kind of time.

DP: We know you have a famous role as Santa Claus.

GM: Oh yes. It is funny. One of the teachers, Phyllis Pitkin, who taught second grade and she always wanted to play Mrs. Claus. She talked to me and asked me to play Santa and I said "oh sure. We can do that - It will be good for the kids." This was before all that stuff not mixing religion with school, not mixing all these holidays and not offending the Jewish people because they did not celebrate the same holiday we do. So, I got into it whole hearted. I went to each classroom. We did that, oh gosh, at least 20 years. We even went to the Nursery School, the Cub Scouts and went to the Fire Department and played Santa for them as well. It really got big, and they said we can't do that anymore. We had to pull that back.

DP: Are there any other organizations that you have been involved with?

GM: Korny Kapers was a part of the PTO. It was a fundraiser for the PTO. That is started off as a little vaudeville act, like a little talent show. That was before I came. That was back in the....I think they started that in the late 1950s. A group of parents and townspeople got together and put some different acts together. As it evolved, there was always a group of men did a men's ballet. It was supposed to be a fun thing. But then as people were starting to get their acts together, some people started to do lip synch. As that evolved, they thought "Gee why don't we do a whole show that is lip synched." Instead of having individual acts, they put three or four shows together– Broadway shows - and took songs from them. Mary Lou Sutherland and her husband Bob Sutherland were the people who did a lot of the creating of putting these songs together and writing the lyrics.¹

DP: Where did you do these?

¹ Robert and Mary Lou Sutherland lived in the village on Harbor Road next to the railroad tracks. This land was formerly owned by Vanderbilt Webb.

GM: We did these in the gym at the old Village School because that was the only performance place in town. They did it a Thursday night, a Friday night and a Saturday night. They did it three nights and they packed the place. 400 people each performance. They did that till the 1980s and then a lot of live theater came around. Like Lyric started and it pulled a lot of people out of it.

DP: Was the talent show an extension of the Korny Kapers?

GM: It was just people could sign up and do whatever they wanted to. It started in a time when the community and the school weren't working together well. We felt that this is a way to bring them together so even the school board got an act together. We tried to get various people within the community to do acts as well. That only lasted for four or five years. It did not last as long. This other thing had been going on for years. I was also involved with the Craft School at the time. We sent our kids to the Craft School for art for a number of years.

DP: When was that?

GM: We were doing that in the 1960s until the late 70s or early 80s. What the kids would do would be to walk over to the Craft School and they had woodworking, they did some pottery and they did some other things. Then it got to be a real hassle with walking the kids from school. We thought we needed to have someone supervise that and it got to be a real hassle. And that point, the Craft School was starting to change too. They were having some trouble with some of their older buildings—they weren't meeting codes. The superintendent was concerned about what happens if something happens in one of those buildings. We decided not to continue that relationship. They were talking about it again just recently.

DP: So at that point you had to hire teachers to be in the school?

GM: Yes.

DP: Barbara Snelling has often mentioned that she feels like that she gave you your start?

GM: I often say that whenever I am introducing her. She did. I did not have my Masters Degree yet when they made me principal. I had started to study during the summer and she really gave me a chance to show what I could do with that responsibility. She really took a chance on me and I was really give a lot of extra time so that I could do that. If it hadn't been for that, I do not know where I would I be at this point. The kids and the school and the community were my family. They really were. My mom used to get so mad – not mad – but she would say: “You always down at the school and you never spend any time...” I would say “hey mom, the kids are important.” I want them to know that I want to be part of all of their life – not just their school life. I want to be part of what they do on weekends and what they do at night and what they do on special holidays and all of that stuff. Then they say “Gee, this man is really part of my life.”

DP: And this hasn't changed, even after retirement?

GM: I am still involved. I am on the Freeman Foundation Community Education Fund Committee. Actually, I am the acting President right now. I feel a little uncomfortable with that because I think people would rather have somebody who actually lives in the committee be the leader of the committee. But that committee may not last much longer. That's why I said that I would take over for a while until we decide our direction – if we are going to continue with Fair Share or continue with some of that private funding of education. I am keeping my finger in that because it does keep me involved. An of course, I go to school a couple days a week.

DP: What do you do know?

GM: I am in a mentoring thing with some seventh graders. I meet once a week for an hour/ hour and half with a group of seventh graders along with some other folks from the Pillars and Wake Robin. We talk and play games. We talk about what education was like when we were in school and try to get them to open up and express some of their feelings about what is going on in their lives. Plus, I wander in ever so often and ask “do you have anything for me to do?”

DP: Do you know any teachers who are links to the early school days of this Century?

GM: When I first came, Alice Bennett was there and she still substitutes once in a while now. I remember Alice a lot because of all the help she gave me. She was really good with special kids. She had a lot of knowledge and information to share. She and Kathy Perlongo – she was a Pillsbury. She left quite a while ago. And Florence Horsford who was actually principal for the lower grades long before I came to town. She was the person who really helped me a lot. She knew the things that had to be done and she always willing to pitch in and help.¹

DP: In the recent years, it seems like that a lot of teachers that you started off with have started to retire.

GM: Ellie Messier and Joan Penrod. Joyce Havrika, Theresa Cilloe². A lot of those folks came once I started. Joan Penrod actually did her student teaching with us and then we hired her as a second grade teacher. Bonnie Douglas was the same. There are still some there who were there when I came - Pam Wiese. Mary Beth Harris was one of the original teachers who was hired for the middle school when that first opened. David Southworth was one of the original folks. Jason Lewis was one of the original Middle School folks. Sue Kiniry – she started in the late 70s. We are starting to get a turnover now where there are a lot of new people coming in which is good because they have new fresh ideas and new fresh energy to use.

¹ See Florence Horsford Interview

² In addition to working together for many years, Joyce Havrika and Theresa Cilloe spent their retirement years together in a Gardenside Condominium.

DP: Have the kids changed since the 1960s?

GM: The kids have changed. Some of the kids, when they come to us – the behavior of some of the kids. Things that we really have to work out because it really gets in the way of learning. It is behavior and emotional needs that they never had years ago. So much of it has to do with the times and the idea that the nuclear family isn't what it used to be.

DP: Are they growing up faster?

GM: I don't know if they are growing up faster. I think there are more demands on their emotions than there have been in the past. It is rough when a child, before they are four or five years old, goes through a divorce or a separation. That really affects them and forces them to actually accept responsibilities that they may not normally have to. It makes demands on their emotions. I think it is difficult for a child to spend five days a week with mom, and then spend the next two days with dad for the weekend or vice versa. Or spend a week here and a week there and then back again. They have to learn the expectations of both those environments. There is so much of that. Consequently, we get kids who emotionally can't handle the requirements of a classroom. "We have certain expectations – these are your limits." They don't understand that and sometimes I think adults overcompensate. It is a whole different environment.

DP: How have academic expectations changed over the years?

GM: I think we raised expectations for kids. I think one of the main reasons is that we know that all of them will go onto college so we want to give them those things that we feel they need to go out and get a job and get out in the work force earlier. And to still do well even if they don't go onto college. I think that one of the biggest hurdles is before these kids can learn academically they need to get over these emotionally things they have that really get in the way of learning. If you are all worried about what happened last night at home, the arguments that went on and all that stuff and then getting your mind down to learning is hard. I think we need to see some changes there. It has its toll not only on the family but the school as well. Teachers are having to handle behavior that they never had to handle before. I would have never thought that a five year old could say some of the things or do some of the things to adults that they do now twenty years ago. It would not have been acceptable. Nobody, not even the parents, would accept it. Now they come and they say, "We don't know what to do with them." You can understand the difficulty there are in. We try to work with the parents to get them to understand and say, "Let's work together. This is our line and we are all going to handle it the same way. So if you deviate from it, these are the consequences you are going to have. That is hard to do."

DP: Is there more contact with parents these days? Or is it just different?

GM: I think in some ways it is more but it is different. I think there is a lot more now where the interaction between school and family is necessary to keep a lid on things. Whereas before, it was people coming into help sharing some of their expertise with kids and giving them some enriching experiences. Whereas now, it has been done because if not, the lid blows right off. I think that is really vital that we keep those lines open even though things are harder now as far as some of things we have to deal with as far as discipline and all that. It is actually vital for that interaction to happen so I hope we never do away with that. The demands of everybody's time sometimes causes us to cut back on some of those school/family relationships – the parent teacher conferences and stuff like that. I don't know if it has to be every six weeks or eight weeks or whatever. When it is necessary, do it. Just don't let it slide. I know parents have a rough time. They do not handle those situations sometimes. So talk to someone that sees them more frequently than you do. Maybe between the two adults, the three adults or six adults – whatever number come together to work on it – can come up with a plan. The kids need the help, they are crying, they want it. They cry for that help. Three or four heads sometimes can come together with a plan.

Interviewee: Gladys Morrill

Interviewer: Bruce Beeken

Date: April 2002

Besides a brief stay in Boston during the Second World War, Gladys Morrill has lived in Shelburne her entire life

Topics discussed: Webbs, Doctor Norton, Morrill Family, Shelburne Falls, Shelburne Farms, World War II, fishing & hunting, farming, Shelburne doctors, transportation, peddlers, Tracy & Maeck, Woodmen's Hall, Burlington, Native Americans, Ticonderoga

Bruce Beeken: When were you born?

Gladys Morrill: June 5, 1912.

BB: We are looking through a scrapbook and we have come across a photo of you. Was it taken in the Falls?

GM: Yeah.

BB: How old do you think you were then?

GM: I think I was about fifteen. Pretty sure.



Photo 1 Gladys Morrill

BB: Where was the picture taken?

GM: In front of a garage...down in Shelburne Falls. It is where my parents lived when my mother died.

BB: So if Tut was 8 when your mother died, you must have been....

GM: 22...23

BB: This picture says "Ann."

GM: Ann was in the house where Tut is now. That was her home.

BB: What was her last name?

GM: Ball.

BB: Did you have jobs when you were this old?

GM: I was working when my mother died. I was just out of school.

BB: Were you working with the doctor then?

GM: No. Maybe I was 18...19. He took me under his wing and I went around with him.

BB: Did you do other things besides helping him deliver babies?

GM: Well. A women worked at the woolen mills. She had two kids and her husband worked over at Shelburne Farms. I took care of her kids during the day.

BB: Where did they live?

GM: Shelburne Farms.

BB: What were there names?

GM: Carson.

BB: Where did you live when this picture taken?

GM: It was here...I think...it was taken at my cousin's house.

BB: What was here name?

GM: Clara White. She lived juts above Tut's. Bob White was her husband. He did carpenter work.



Photo 2 Burbo Family

BB: On the same side of the road as Tut's house?

GM: On the other side of the road....going up the hill.

BB: Were you married to someone else before Bill?

GM: Yes. He was a lovely man.

BB: What was his name?

GM: Burt Wild.

BB: What sort of work did he do?

GM: He was in the motorcycle business.

BB: So, you were in the motorcycle business before you were married to Bill?

GM: Yes.

BB: So when you were in Boston, during the war, you were with Burt?

GM: Yes

BB: Was he your first husband?

GM: Yes.

BB: So it was with Burt that you had the motorcycle business down on the bay?

GM: Yes.

BB: Did you build that house?

GM: Yes

BB: What was there before? Was it one of the first houses in that area?

GM: My brother built next door and we got part of our land off him and we built our house there.

BB: Which brother was that?

GM: Clarence. Robert was the oldest brother.

BB: Here is a picture – I call it the cook shack. It is a cast iron cook stove. It is in the backyard under a roof with a big pan hanging.



Photo 3 Backyard Cook stove

GM: Somebody stole that from me

BB: What did you use the pan for?

GM: It was a serving tray.

BB: Here is a picture of Bill in a uniform.



Photo 4 Bill Morrill

GM: He was in Germany for six years.

BB: When did you get involved with the motorcycle business?

GM: When we came back from Boston

BB: That was just after the war?

GM: Just after the war.

BB: Were you the first Harley dealership in Vermont?

GM: Yes, I think so.

BB: Who bought the first motorcycle?

GM: I don't know. I am pretty sure it might a guy that lived in Winooski – a Frenchman. Boy, he had the most beautiful, dressed up Harley you ever saw. Everything!



Photo 5 Bill and his motorcycle

BB: Was it his main transportation?

GM: I think he had a car.

BB: Here is a picture of a guy on snowshoes.



Photo 6 Robert Burbo

GM: I think it is my brother Robert. I am pretty sure.

BB: Why was he on snowshoes?

GM: He was building his camp at the lakeshore.

BB: Here is a picture from 1945, with a lineup of motorcycles. Was this a rally?



Photo 7 Motorcycles

GM: There was a hill in Richland. They went to a farm and used the hill for the motorcycles to climb up.

BB: Did you climb the hills with your motorcycle?

GM: No, I was not riding one then.

BB: Where did you get married?

GM: Robin's Nest, as you enter Burlington.

BB: What was the Robin's Nest?

GM: He was a minister. He took pictures of people who got married. Tut got married there too.



Photo 8 Robbin's Nest

BB: What were your parent's names?

GM: Wallace Coleman and Alice Burbo Coleman

BB: Where were they from?

GM: Right down here in the farms?

BB: Was your mother born in the Falls?

GM: I don't know if she was born in the Falls or down in the French village. I am not sure where she was born. Her and my father got married when she was 16 years old. She raised ten children.

BB: We have Gladys and Tut....

GM: Robert, Clarence, Bernard, Laura, Ellen, Geraldine.....my mother died in '45.

BB: How did she die?

GM: She was in the hospital...she had heart trouble. She was supposed to come home Sunday afternoon and my father got a phone call to go up to the hospital. He said "She must want to come home this morning instead of this afternoon." He got there and she was dead. That was very, very sad.

BB: How old were you then?

GM: I think I was 22.

BB: Did you have a job then?

GM: I did housework.

BB: For different families?

GM: For one family. She worked in the Woolen Mill and he worked at the Webbs – mostly took care of the horses. They had several hound dogs that they used for hunting. It used to be a quite a site to see them go out on a run with those dogs. Those dogs went through Shelburne Falls and there was somebody there with a whip and made them stay in every step. They were well trained.

BB: What were the hunter's hunting?

GM: Fox hunting.



Photo 9 Hunting Dogs, Webb Estate

BB: Did they have costumes?

GM: Oh yes. The woman rode sideways. Quite a site.

BB: What color coats did they wear?

GM: As far as I could see, it must have been navy blue.

BB: Did they wear hats?

GM: Yes.

BB: Was it a large group?

GM: The Webbs had the hounds for their own enjoyment. Those hounds work for them.

BB: Did they have a horn?

GM: I don't remember. When they came through Shelburne Falls, us kids sat on the lawn and watched them go by. Those dogs wouldn't even twitch their tails towards us. They were well trained.



Photo 10 Shelburne Breeding Barn

BB: Who was the oldest in your family?

GM: Robert.

BB: What did your brothers do for work?

GM: Robert and Tut did carpenter work and built houses. Robert had a shop on Lyman Avenue (Burlington) and one summer he went down to the lake and built a summer camp. He never went back to Burlington – he stayed there.

BB: Where was that?

GM: Lakeview. Right where it used to be a movie. Now it is a nursing home.

BB: Did you father also work at Shelburne Farms?



Photo 11 Shelburne Farms

GM: Yes, for years.

BB: What did he do there?

GM: He had a team of horses and took care of the horses.

BB: Were they work horses?

GM: Yes. Beautiful.

BB: What is your oldest memory?

GM: I remember moving from Charlotte to the Marsett Farm on the corner. My sister Ellen was born in that house. We lived there for quite a few years and my father ran that farm. My father was just a common laborer. There were days when he would even work for just a dollar a day. I don't know a thing about his parents. He must have lived in Charlotte.

BB: The house where you were born in Charlotte – is it still there?

GM: It is at the museum.

BB: Where was it located?

GM: Right at the beginning of Church Road.

BB: Where did your family go next?

GM: My father worked for a farmer by the name of Webster. It was on the side road on the way to Charlotte. You go by Tut's and take that side road. Beyond Thomas Road.

BB: When he was working on those farms, were there tractors on the farms?

GM: He never ran a tractor. I remember sitting on a horse so that my father could cultivate.

BB: Where did you live when he worked for the Websters?

GM: A little house before you go there. He rented it. It's on Thomas Road.

BB: When your mother died, did you have new responsibilities at home?

GM Yes.

BB: Did you have to leave your job?

GM: Yes. At that time I was getting only five dollars a week. Before that, I was getting four.

BB: You told me that you worked with a doctor helping delivering babies?

GM: Yes. Doctor Norton was here in town.

BB: What were your duties?

GM: I took the newborn baby from the doctor and put it in my hands. I had to clean them up and dress them. I did not know how to do it – it just came natural. I had to do it – that's all.

BB: How old were you when you were helping Doctor Norton?

GM: About 30.

BB: Did Doctor Norton make house calls?

GM: Yes.

BB: How did you get there?

GM: I had a car. Of course, most of the time, I had to go in the middle of the night.

BB: Did you live in the Falls at that time?

GM: I forget where I lived. I think I lived on Bay Road.

BB: That was before you were married?

GM: Yes.

BB: Whom did you marry?

GM: Burt Wild.

BB: Do you remember how you met Burt?

GM: Right after my mother died. We never had any kids. He raced up in Canada and I stayed home every weekend to sell stuff. He got hurt up there. They half killed him. They ran over him. He was in a hospital up there for a little while. He broke his collarbone and wrecked his motorcycle bad. I never went to any of those races. Burt was a great great rider. He souped up his motorcycle and did really good.

BB: Did he race for money?

GM: Yes

BB: So you were pretty comfortable with running the business and winning races.

GM: He also made good money welding at the Navy Yard in Boston. He saved everything he could. That is where he got his money to go ahead and start his motorcycle business.

BB: Do you remember any of the other houses that you lived in Shelburne?

GM: There was one house down in the village...for one winter, I guess. Do you know where the railroad tracks are and the houses along the tracks? I lived in one of those houses.

BB: Was it before the railroad or after the railroad?

GM: After. I lived there for one winter.

BB: How were houses heated when you were young?

GM: Mostly wood because my father got his wood by picking it up over at the farms.

BB: How did he get the wood to your house?

GM: A team of horses. They would let him use a team to bring a load of wood home.

BB: How was the wood sawn?

GM: Tut has some good pictures of him as a little boy chopping saw wood from a car with its hind wheels jacked up. The power from that hind wheel made the saw go. He has a good picture of him – just a little boy – cutting some wood.

BB: Where was that?

GM: Do you know where Ken Lewis' wife lives in the white house going through the Falls. She is in the white house before you get to the store. My father rented an apartment. Se wasn't living there but it was that house. I lived there with my father. The kids were still in school.

BB: Where did your water come from?

GM: There was a pump outside. We did not have any running water in this apartment – it was just a plain house. It was not insulated or anything. Our water froze in our reservoir in our kitchen stove at night.

BB: You would use the stove for heating water?

GM: Yes.

BB: Did you have any other buildings on your property?

GM: My mother usually had chickens. Just a little shanty.

BB: What kind of chores did you have?

GM: At the time, my mother had boarders. I remember every Saturday I had to wash the stairs down with a rag and pail and suds. On my hands and knees. My mother used to have an old fashioned wash machine. Before she died, she had a Maytag.

BB: Was it a ringer?

GM: Yeah. We used to live in a house down next to Tut's – it's gone now – just the other side of Tut's.

BB: Going up the hill?

GM: No, down Thomas Road. Us kids would have to go and get some water off the river so our mother could do the washing.

BB: That is quite a steep bank.

GM: We had to be careful not to fall in. It was the only way that my mother could have us kids getting water for her.

BB: Did you have to shovel snow?

GM: No

BB: So the boys and girls had different chores?

GM: Yeah

BB: Did you help your mother take care of the chickens?

GM: Yeah.

BB: You never did have a cow?

GM: I don't remember.

BB: What kind of games did you play?

GM: My brother Robert made a jumper. You sit on the jumper.

BB: It sat on a ski?

GM: Yeah. He made his own. Every night he took that upstairs with him because I know that he had in his mind if my brother Bernard ever got a hold of it, he would have smashed it. I can see it now – painted red.

BB: Where did he take it? Top of Irish Hill?

GM: No, before. A pretty good-sized hill.

BB: Going down to the river?

GM: Yeah.

BB: A lot of that was open pastureland, right?

GM: Yeah. There was quite a hill back there –that is where we used to sled.

BB: What was down there on the river, then? I took a picture of Bill's painting of the gristmill. We know the gristmill was there. Did you use to go to the gristmill for flour?



Photo 12 Bill's painting of the gristmill

GM: Yeah.

BB: What did they grind?

GM: Cornmeal, I think. It used to be awfully noisy there. I could not have been very old when I had to go down there for my grandmother to buy some chickenfeed. She

gave me a handful of change to go get some grain for her hens. It was noisy, I was scared stiff.

BB: Where did your grandmother live?

GM: She lived across the road from where we lived over here in the farms. I don't have any idea where she came from .

BB: Was that grandmother Burbo?

GM: Yeah.

BB: Did she work too?

GM: She was a cripple in a wheelchair. Uncle Robert used to take care of her. He lifted her out of her wheelchair and throw her in bed. He helped her get undressed. He was the only one taking care of her.

BB: Where did your uncle work?

GM: He worked at the Shelburne Creamery.

BB: What was his name?

GM: Robert Burbo

BB: Where did he live?

GM: Across the road from us.

BB: With her?

GM: Yeah.

BB: Besides the Webbs, were there other prominent families?

GM: I don't think so. They were the only ones we knew of.

BB: When you were growing up, when did you wake up?

GM: I imagine kind of early.

BB: Was it dark?

GM: Yeah. We used to live on a side road over here and we had to take the school bus. Nothing but a horse and little sleigh.

BB: That is what the school bus was?

GM: Yeah.

BB: Where did you go to school?

GM: Shelburne.

BB: Right here in the village?

GM: Yeah.

BB: Did you go to any of the smaller schools?

GM: That one on the corner used to be a schoolhouse.

BB: Did you go to that one?

GM: Yeah.

BB: Do you remember your teacher?

GM: Louise Gates. I tell you....you learned. If you didn't, she would pound it into you.

BB: Were there lots of other kids in the neighborhood?

GM: Quite a few.

BB: Would you play with them or with your own family?

GM: The whole family would get out at night and play hide and seek. We did not stay out very long because we had to get in and get to bed. We weren't allowed to be out around town after dark. Something might happen to us.

BB: Did you have your own bed?

GM: Yeah.

BB: Did every body have their own bed?

GM: I think a couple of the boys slept together.

BB: Where did you get your food?

GM: There used to be a good store where the store is now. (Gallipeaus)

BB: Do you remember what it was called?

GM: Bacons

BB: Did the Bacon family own a farm.

GM: I don't think so.

BB: Did you grow any of your food?

GM: Oh, my mom had a beautiful garden. Night and day. She canned an awful lot of tomatoes. She had ripe cucumbers pickles....Are you familiar with ripe cucumber pickles?

BB: Yes

GM: My mother used to make a crock of it. When we lived in the Falls, we had a dirt cellar. We had big great cocks.

BB: What else did she keep in the cellar?

GM: Anything that she could lay her hands on, she would can it.

BB: Where did you get your meat? Did your family smoke or dry meat

GM: My father always raised a pig. Beautiful pigs. We had that to eat on during the winter. Wherever he worked, he got a hunk of beef. We did not have a fridge or anything. We put it out on the screen porch. I can see my mother now out there in the cold shaving the beef so she could bring it in and fry it. Oh my god was that good! We always had a pig.

BB: Wild game?

GM: No

BB: Any deer hunters in your family?

GM: No. Not then. Not until after the boys grew up. My father was not a hunter.

BB: Did your dad work every day of the week?

GM: I guess so.

BB: Did anybody in your family fish? I know Tut likes to fish.

GM: After he grew up. When we lived in the Falls, every Spring they would go spearing in that river. Quite a site to see – a whole mess of men with spears stabbing fish. My mother had a washtub running over with fish. She loved fish. She would clean them.

BB: What kind of fish were they?

GM: Walleyes. Big fish, you know, they were. They were going out the river and out to the lake. Every spring, a whole gang of men would make torches out of bran sacks, soak them with kerosene and that was their light. I never see them but my oldest brother, Clarence and Robert, used to go a join them.

BB: Do you remember your first car?

GM: Model A.

BB: and you had a truck?

GM: Pick up truck.

BB: What did you use that for?

GM: I guess it was the cheapest thing we could find to buy.

BB: Did your father drive?

GM: Yes. He was the hardest man to learn to drive a car. My oldest father used to have to pick his feet up and throw them on the levers

BB: When you moved from house to house, how did you move all your possessions?

GM: Horse and wagon. We didn't have a car then.

BB: You had your first car when you were in your twenties?

GM: I was waiting tables in Milton. Model A sedan. I drove it from Milton home. On the way it broke down I had to have it fixed. I already spent all my money to buy

it and register it. Drove it all the way to Milton to Shelburne. It broke down and I could not afford to have it fixed. Just left it.

BB: Tut was a handy mechanic...

GM: He was nothing but a kid then.

BB: How did they used to plow roads?

GM: Big tractors

BB: With big iron wheels?

GM: Yeah

BB: Did you travel less in the wintertime?

GM: I guess so.

BB: Did you have a wool coat?

GM: Yeah

BB: How about a fur coat?

GM: After I was married. My mother used to make all our clothes. She was an awfully good sewer. She would make me the cutest dress. She made her own patterns. There used to be a women in Shelburne who used to go around selling material. Even curtains.

BB: Did she sell the cloth from a wagon?

GM: yeah.

BB: Did other people sell goods from wagons?

GM: Yeah. In fact, when we lived up here at Marsett Farm, the guy that used to sell spices and jars of candy. He used to stay all night then he would take off in the morning and finish going to Burlington. There used to be a woman – she had a wagon – she used to sell material.

BB: Was there a tinker?

GM: I don't remember any of them going around.

BB: What were the other stores in Shelburne?

GM: Tracy and Maeck used to be on Route 7 for years.

BB: Where was the post office?

GM: When I was a kid, it used to be where the filling station is. It used to be a post office and I think tenants used to live in part of the post office.¹

BB: What kind of items did Tracy and Maeck sell?

GM: They sold food, hardware, wallpaper.

BB: Where did your mother buy seed for her garden?

GM: I can't think where.

BB: Where did you buy your shoes?

GM: Mostly at the store. Tracy and Maeck used to sell shoes too.

BB: Where did people meet to tell stories and gossip?

GM: My father never went anywhere to have a conversation. He worked on his horses and those horses were his – in his own mind. The guy next to him had a team of horses just like his. He was from Canada. He came down from Canada – he must have had ten kids. They all grew up over at the farms

BB: Did you know Ernest St. George?

GM: My father used to pick him up every day on his way to work. How did you know him?

BB: I used to know Earnest. He used to live right next to where I work at the Farm Barn. What was the bridge made up that crosses the LaPlatte on Route 7?

GM: Just cement, I think.

BB: Do you remember travelers or tourists coming to Shelburne?

GM: No.

¹ Tracy and Maeck was located in the brick building on the southwest corner of Route 7 and Harbor Road. The Post Office was located at the northwest corner of the same two roads.

BB: You lived near the train tracks. Did passengers get off the train?

GM: Freight trains stopped very often.

BB: What did they bring?

GM: They brought our motorcycles on the train. I had to go down and pick them up. We used to have trainloads of coal come in. That guy that lived across from the street from us – Walt Ball. He had a Diamond T pick up. He used to sell coal from house to house.

BB: Where did the gristmill get its flour?

GM: I imagine from what the people brought in. We used to have a canning factory down in the village. It canned corn quite a few years. It is gone now, but it was a big building. Do you know where Blodgett's field is? It was somewhere in the field. I never went over there when they were canning, but I could have.

BB: What were some of the other businesses in town?

GM: There used to be a good meat market right before you cross the tracks. Smiths. I am pretty sure that is it. You know where the Craft School is? That is part of it. Smith lived there for quite a few years.

BB: That is the main red building?

GM: Yeah. They used to make beautiful cheese at the creamery. I drove a horse and wagon down to the creamery. I was nothing but a kid. A fellow stepped out from the building and get the two or three cans off my wagon.

BB: Did your father teach you to drive the wagon?

GM: No. Taught myself.

BB: Where did you get the milk?

GM: Down where Tut lives. Across the road, there is a hill out back. There used to be farm. It used to be a pretty good farm. It is all gone now.

BB: Was there another schoolhouse up around there?

GM: At the top of Irish Hill. Somebody made a house out of the school.

BB: Why did they call it Irish Hill Road?

GM: There is a family at the top of the hill named Irish. They named it after them.

BB: How about other road names. Did you know any Spears?

GM: No

BB: Bishops?

GM: No

BB: Webster?

GM: I guess that is the one that my father worked for. Milo Webster

BB: Did you know the Thompsons?

GM: No

BB: Bostwicks?

GM: Dunbar Bostwick

BB: Did you know people who lived there?

GM: I guess not.

BB: Did you know who lived in our house before the Monieres?

GM: I think the Monieres lived there for years and years. That house and Chadwick's old house.

BB: Is the Chadwick house is still around?

GM: Yeah. There is only one guy living there now. That is an old house.

BB: Those two families – they were both farms?

GM: Yeah

BB: Was there a barn at the Monieres?

GM: No

BB: Did the Monieres keep animals?

GM: I don't remember. I remember him having a whole mess of beehives.

BB: Did you grow up with the Monieres?

GM: It must have been Boo

BB: Do you remember when the airport came to Shelburne?

GM: I can't remember.

BB: Do you know anyone who got off the passenger trains?

GM: I don't remember

BB: Who stayed at the Shelburne Inn?

GM: Whoever got off the train. I took the train once to Boston. During the war. When I first went there, I went by Bus. It was night – I couldn't see anything.

BB: How often did you leave Shelburne?

GM: I just went to school and helped my mother.

BB: Did you take a vacation?

GM: No

BB: So you did not really leave town until you got your car. You went up to Milton?

GM: I got my license up there.

BB: Did you stay up there?

GM: They built cabins out back and us girls had the share cabins together.

BB: Did you go up with another Shelburne girl?

GM: No. I went all by myself.

BB: Did you make any friends?

GM: Yah. Another girl from Milton. We were very, very friendly. Even after we were married. She was from Milton and I was from Shelburne.

BB: Did you eat dinner at the Shelburne Inn?

GM: Yeah.

BB: What can you tell me about Woodmen's Hall?"

GM: We used to live right next to it. When they had dances, we used to sit on the porch and listen to all the music. By closing time, they would get into fights and we would have to hurry up and get in the house. One guy we know, his name is Pierre – they bit off half his ear. It must have been a damn good fight because he got his ear bit off.

BB: What kind of music did you hear? Fiddle? Banjo? Guitar?

GM: Yeah

BB: Square dance and contra dance?

GM: Both. We tried to go over there one night and they guy who took us lived next to us. At 10:00, they told Laura and I to go home. They were ready to go home. We were not ready to go home. They went over and got my father out of bed and my father came down and got us tow girls and we went home. During the war, we used to go around Saturday nights to different people's house. There was about four of us. Laura lived here down on the corner. She was a beautiful cook. I remember her making cabbage rolls. A whole tin of them for us to eat. The next night we would go to somebody else's house. We just wanted company.

BB: Do you remember the first time you saw a movie?

GM: My mother and I went to a theater in Burlington. The Flynn Theater. It was an old, old picture.

BB: How did you get there?

GM: By bus I think.

BB: The bus route was Route 7?

GM: Yeah. It came to our house and picked us up. There used to be a guy who ran a bus route from Shelburne to Burlington.

BB: You would call him up?

GM: Yeah.

BB: Did you have a mailbox or did you go to the post office?

GM: They would deliver it.

BB: How has Shelburne changed over the years? What was before the shopping center

GM: I think it was a farm. It was a farm for years and years.

BB: What was there before the golf course?

GM: Just a land I think. A big farm.

BB: How about where Rice Lumber is?

GM: It has been Rice Lumber for quite a few years. I guess they just came and started living there, if I remember right.

BB: When Robert and Tut built their house. Did they get their lumber from Rice?

GM: I think so.

BB: What about Dutch Mill?

GM: I worked there one summer

BB: What did you do?

GM: Cook. I used to walk from Bay Road. I used to work at Rice Lumber.

BB: What did you do there?

GM: Housework

BB: What is the biggest change in Shelburne? Has it gotten better?

GM: People are not as friendly as we used to be. I know that. I guess it has gotten too busy. Some families have broken up. Burt would stop by.

BB: Did you stay friends with Burt?

GM: Yeah.

BB: Where did he live?

GM: Bay Road.

BB: What did Burt do before the war?

GM: He took up welding up after we were married. He did not know anything about it. The government was giving people chances to go to school to learn it. So Burt did it. There were four others from Burlington who did it. They came to Boston and lived with us in Boston. I hated it. It was too busy.

BB: Was Burt in the Navy.

GM: Army. He was in the army in Hawaii. Bill was in the army in Germany for six years.

BB: What kind of jobs did he have before he was in the army.

GM: He went around filling stations and painting gas pumps. That is what he was doing when I got acquainted with him?

BB: Where were you when you first met him?

GM: Burlington. He was out with somebody else and I was out with somebody else. The next day he found me.

BB: Why did Bill close his business down?

GM: He got sick. His back was all gone. Then he had an open sore on his hip. I had to dress it every night. Something caused it. He had to wear a back brace and that did not do in any good. Tut and I had some tough trips taking them down to the hospital. He wanted to go home and die. So he did.



Photo 13 Morrill's Service Station

BB: Did your family go to church?

GM: Catholic.

BB: Did you do other things at church?

GM: No

BB: Did you go on Sundays?

GM: Yeah.

BB: What other businesses were in Shelburne Falls?

GM: There was a sewing factory across from the store. It used to be a creamery. My sister worked there. I could not tie myself down to a sewing machine. I think it was mostly men shirts.

BB: Was the bridge always open at the Falls?

GM: They moved it.

BB: Was there a poor farm here?

Tut Coleman enters the room

Tut Coleman: Way back, they used to have a guy that looked after the poor. He used to give them stuff like oatmeal and help them out a little bit. The Webbs down there used to take care of a lot of people.

BB: Tut, what do you remember of boat traffic.

GM: The Ticonderoga and Chateauguay. The Chateauguay is down on Lake George I think. We used to get a lot of lumber of them. When they stripped them down.



Photo 14 Ticonderoga

BB: Where did you get the lumber for your house on the lake?

TC: Up in Hardwick – D.B.s Sawmill.

BB: Was that after the sawmill closed?

TC: Yes

BB: Were there different nationalities in Shelburne?

TC: Not to many. We had French Canadians here. Some Indians

BB: How did you know they were Indians?

TC: They said so. The Botals were Indians. One of them worked down at the point

BB: That was Frank. Did that make the different?

TC: No. We went to school with them.

BB: Who did fish with when you had the torches?

TC: That was everybody. They were a lot older than I was. They would come from Hinesburg.

BB: Do you know how Lone Tree Hill got its name?

TC: There is more than one up here. I like that spot. Beautiful up there. I have not been up there since Harry died. He wanted to build up there at one time.

BB: Were there a lot more fields when you were younger?

TC: I don't know about that. I know there were a lot less houses.

BB: What do you remember about the dam?

TC: I remember when the old mill was there. It used to flood clear up by where my house is. I have see the field across my lower drive all flooded. With cakes of ice. I do not know when the dam broke out.

BB: Were there any famous crimes in town?

TC: A guy shot himself up at the silo. There was a farmer there. I know a couple of shotgun deaths – three of them.

BB: Did anybody famous visit Shelburne?

TC: Yeah, the Earl of Shelburne when we had the bicentennial. English guy. He came to town hall, parades and everything else.

BB: Did you meet Governor Snelling?

TC: I worked for him. When he first came to town, he sued to rent from my brother on Pine Haven Shores.

BB: Did you see the Ticonderoga moved?

TC: Yes. I forget the guy that they sent up from Boston. He supervised it. I forget his name but he would go fishing with us. They would give him a rental car – the guys he worked for. Every night, when he got done working, he would pull into the boatyard and we would all go fishing with it. He didn't care. In fact, when he left, he had a building locked up. I forget where it was. He kept the tools locked up. He gave me the keys to it and told me to go help myself. When I went there, it was empty. Somebody beat me to it. I forget his name. He was a smart cookie.

BB: It must have been quite the job to just clear the roads?

TC: Yeah. Every other day I would go see how far they got. I had some good times on the Ti when she was running. Big dances on there. They served drinks and food

BB: Were you a dancer?

TC: No. I did the bunny hop. You get behind a girl and jump up and down.

BB: Did you go to Woodmen Hall?

TC: Not too much

BB: Where did you go?

TC: Red Barn out in Williston. The old 1812 down in Charlotte. Once in awhile.

BB: Do you know anybody that played in the bands?

TC: We used to have one guy here in town that was a one-man band. He had a drum in front of him, harmonica in his mouth, played a guitar. He had a drum with a lever on it. One-man band.

Interviewee: Ruth Irish Morrow

Interviewer: David Webster

Date: March 10, 2002

The Irish family has lived in Shelburne for eight generations.

Topics discussed: World War II, Shelburne Creamery, Palmer School, roads, schools, churches, L.H. Palmer Store, Irish Family, farm chores, haying, Tracy & Maeck Store, Reverend Lynwood Smith, Episcopal Church, Methodist Church, Burlington, life at home, 1927 Flood, Shelburne Farms, fun and games, traveling

DW: What is your full name?

RM: Ruth Irish Morrow.

DW: Where and when were you born?

RM: November 22, 1923 at Mary Fletcher

DW: And how long have you lived in Shelburne?

RM: Not quite all my life.

DW: Who were your parents?

RM: My dad was Leo P. Irish, who lived on Irish Hilltop and my mother was Cornelia Martha Wheeler, who lived, it used to be 55 Dorset Street, now its where the botanical gardens are, and her dad built that house when she was ten years old.

DW: When were they married?

RM: June 23, 1921. I think it was 23rd or 22nd.

DW: What did they do for a living?

RM: They had a small farm and dad did carpenter work and there was also an apple orchard.

DW: What did you have for brothers and sisters?

RM: I had one younger brother, Wilmot Wheeler Irish. Just two children on Irish Hilltop.

DW: Where does he live now?

RM: He's in Ithaca.

DW: How many generations of your father's family lived in Shelburne?

RM: Let's see, Homer's uncle owned the place, so there was uncle, Homer, Wallace, Dad, I was there, and my children., o.k., Wilmot, his children, and his children's children. So there's eight generations there, isn't there?

DW: So eight generations through the current?



Photo 1 Dr. Perry Irish

RM: Through the current. And my children were the seventh. I think I'm right on that because Stewart said, don't forget to count the uncle that Homer bought it from.



Photo 2 Elwood Irish

DW: Where do you live now?

RM: I live in what are the woods, it's just a step up on Spear Street and there are two meadows in the parcel and the woodland. Mother divided up the whole place between my brother and I, and I got the brick house and the land up on Spear Street, and my brother got, we used to call it the yellow cottage, with the land down there except for the two and half acres that went around the brick house. Of course, we ended up with the buildings too you know.

DW: In your married life, did you always live in the brick house, before coming here?

RM: Well its interesting, my great-grandfather Homer built the yellow cottage for his son, Wallace, who was my grandfather, and he started his married life over there and then mom and dad did the same thing, and Rufus and I did the same thing. We were there about fourteen years before my father died and mom asked if we ever thought of coming over and living with her in the brick house. Of course it made a lot of sense because it was much bigger and with three young children it made a lot of sense.

DW: She was an easy mother to live with?

RM: Yes. Oh Yes.

DW: That would be the other ingredient.

RM: No, we were a very close family. Well we probably did have some discussions once in a while but, I mean, what family doesn't. No, we got along very well. Then I remember mother had gone up to stay with her sister, and I bought her down for a picnic, and my mother said "My gracious, just in the short time I've been gone, the traffic's here is terrible". So I said well, maybe we ought to think about building up in the woods, and that's what we did. Rufus thought I'd never want to leave the ancestral home, but with the four corners, and the house was nearer the road than it was in the horse and buggy days and the cars used to come from the north without stopping. Others coming from the south had no trouble. One time a car ended up over on the east side of the house by the hatchway, and I was standing right there and I thought for sure the corner of the house was going to go. You can still hear, sometimes when you are outside, you can hear the screech of breaks. You see a car go by, and then a dump truck just missing it, you know? Coming from up the hill. It's scary.

DW: What year did you build this house?

RM: We built it 1984. We moved in just before Christmas of 1984. I've had a doll meeting for the second Thursday of December, every year since '73. I told the contractor it had to be done for the doll meeting, and so the day before the doll meeting Chrissy came down to help me, and of course we couldn't do anything because there were plumbers and everything else here, so we started putting the Christmas decorations out and some of the carpenters would go by, "I've never seen anything like it, there's not a stick of furniture in the house but she's doing the Christmas decorations."

DW: So this is the third place where you have lived?

RM: This is the third place where I have lived.

DW: And they've all been on the property.

RM: All been on the property. Couldn't afford Spear Street now.

DW: So who were your closest neighbors?

RM: The Crowley's lived at Ledgemere, and Margaret, their daughter, we grew up together, the only place we never went together was at church...she went to St. Catherine's, and I went to either the Methodist or Trinity. Then the Thomas's to the South...Eutie Thomas and his big family.¹ And the Kings lived down the hill where Jean Stevenson lived, and Walter Maeck was to the north with his tenant farmers, they changed ever so often.² Those were the closest neighbors.

DW: Did you gravitate to the village or to the Falls? Where did you do your shopping, for instance?

¹ See Colleen Haag interview

² See Doris Maeck interview

RM: Well, the shopping would be in the village, or sometimes uptown in Burlington, but basically it was Tracy and Maeck's. Of course the country school, the old Palmer School House on Dorset Street just above the four corners, they would have activities and we gravitated over there to the things, naturally because we were generally in something. And we'd go to church in the village.

DW: So you didn't really do much in the Falls per se?

RM: Not too much.

DW: What businesses were there?

RM: There was the store...the Tracy's had the store, and Clay Shortsleeves, where Barbara Kent now lives, had a store in the basement part. Then there was the Granary where Civil Engineers is. As far, I think it was more high school age that we got to know more of the children.

DW: Do you think of the Falls as being separate from the village?

RM: No, it was all Shelburne.

DW: Now you mentioned the Palmer School. Now what school did you attend?

RM: I went the first seven years to the Old Palmer School. It was just on the east side of the road, on Dorset Street, just above the Four Corners.¹ Then we had a new school, the New Palmer School, right next to Mike Deavitt's. I don't know who lives in the school house its been made into a house...

DW: Rosemary Sadler

RM: Is that the name? We were quite excited about that because it had a stage and it had indoor chemical toilets. We didn't have to go outside.

DW: A stage?

RM: A stage, isn't that something?

DW: Now what year would that have been that that was built?

RM: Probably, '35 or '36, because I think it was '37 I went down to the Village High School in Shelburne.

DW: How many kids would have been at that Palmer School when you were there?

¹ On the northeast corner of Dorset Street and Irish Hill Road.

RM: Oh probably a couple dozen. I've got a picture of it, I should count them. They were just families around. There were the Norris' where the Moores live now, of course the Lewis's, the Goodrich's were over on the Pond Road, and a couple years there was a Senesac's over on Hinesburg Road, you know that house? Tom Bushey had the farm across the road. I'm trying to think who else.

DW: Anyone on Dorset Street extension?

RM: No I don't think there were any children on that road. At that time.

DW: Who was your teacher?

RM: I had Mary Noonan for the first five grades and Pearl Savage McGraw for the next two, and in eighth grade I had Velma Thordick.

DW: Now obviously you walked to school.

RM: Yes, except in the wintertime if it was too, you know, bad, dad would hitch up the sleigh and take me over. I know that many times when Mary Noonan would ride up the hill with Will Bacon, he had the mail route, he had one of these Caterpillar cars that he was trying out and she'd ride up there and then we would all work over to school, going over the drifts.

DW: How were the roads maintained in the wintertime?

RM: There was a big huge Caterpillar tractor, I think they had something different before I can remember, and Maurice Palmer, Orris Knight, and Ralph Lewis used to operate it. They operated that big thing, and did the whole town. Your east and west roads drifted more than the others. They had snow fences up, that helped a little bit.

DW: You used a sleigh up through when, the thirties?

RM: Probably yes. Yeah it would have been into the thirties.

DW: What was the first car you remember?

RM: Dad had a Model T Ford, and he had a Chevy, I guess that was it for him.

DW: As a child you pretty much always remember having a car?

RM: Yes, but we used the horse a lot, going down to the village.

DW: With a wagon?

RM: Yup, or buggy or sleigh. I know one thing that was fun. They used to go over to the pond to get ice, and Fred Bacon lived next to the store there in the Falls. We'd go over and we'd hitch our sleds on the back and ride home on the back of his sled that was full of ice.

DW: So he would go and cut the ice

RM: And load it on his sled.

DW: Was this for his own use?

RM: Yeah for his own use, cause they had iceboxes then, they had icehouses that they put the big chunks of ice in and covered it with sawdust.

DW: Yeah, I think my father said that theirs would last until maybe August or something. They lined all the sawdust and they really knew how to put it away.

RM: They put sawdust down in the cracks and everything.

DW: How did you heat your house?

RM: We had a wood coal furnace with a big square register which we stood over and got dressed and undressed. The bedrooms were not heated. I can remember scraping frost off the ceiling. We had feather mattresses that we slept in and that was fun, especially after they were first made up.

DW: How did you keep the house lit?

RM: Lamps, candles, we studied by lamp, see it was in, I think before I got out of high school, electricity came through, in the late thirties, early forties. See it came up to just above where the Beans live¹, just above the bridge, but then there was that big long space and then the King house, then us, and so it took a long time, a lot of talk and then we finally got it.

DW: So you think somewhere along 1940.

RM: Probably 1940, 1939. I'm not good on dates.

DW: Well, you are pretty good so far. Where did the family spend most of its time in the house?

RM: In the living room.

DW: Did you have a parlor as well as the living room?

¹ See Donald and Jean Bean Interview

RM: Oh yes, the parlor door was shut in the wintertime along with the hall door, and there was a hole in the ceiling above the rectangle register, the heat would go up. That was fun if the folks had a card party or something, you could peak down and see what was going on.

DW: Now you mentioned card party, and you mentioned both churches. You had gone to the Methodist Church and then later the Episcopal Church. Where did your family make the change?

RM: Well, I guess the change was back with my Grandma Irish. She used to go to the Episcopal Church and I think Dad sang in the choir there also, and then when the Webbs came to town, they asked her to move. She didn't approve of being kicked out of her pew, so she went to the Methodist Church so that's when the Irish's transferred to the Methodist Church, and that's the story they told me. Dad sang in the choir there, and of course mother was brought up at St. Paul's. They'd go from Dorset Street in the wagon buggy. So we went to both churches growing up and at that point in time after Mr. Robbins, the minister, left, there was a period where it was hard to get somebody at the Methodist church. It wasn't continuous. Then, of course, Smith was there forever. We ended up, outside of going with the family to both churches, which came out pretty good because the ministers didn't know which church we were at, you know, we might not even be at church, we might be home. Then, when confirmation came up, mother said it was up to Wilmot and I to choose which church we wanted to belong to. So we both chose the Trinity Church.

DW: The reason I asked, because the cards made me think of it, I understand at one time, that there were a number of couples, younger couples, who would have been your parents' generation who left the Methodist Church and went to the Episcopal Church because card playing was frowned on.

RM: That could very well be.

DW: I believe the Marsetts did that because whoever the minister was very much frowned on them playing cards, and they enjoyed playing cards, Bridge or whatever, and so there were a few couples at that time that made the change because their behavior was suspect for playing cards. So I was kind of curious of whether that had been the case with your family.

RM: That wasn't mentioned. Grandma didn't want to have somebody else to tell her where to sit. I believe she was German, Ninkler, so maybe that's why

DW: Did you eat in the dining room or did you eat in the kitchen?

RM: We did both. A lot of time supper might be round the kitchen table. It was a very small kitchen, it was sort of like an alleyway. Of course you had your big black stove with a reservoir and a warming oven, and the kitchen was made larger when

Wilmot was over in Korea. They made the woodshed into the kitchen, so that made a nice big kitchen. We ate in the dining room quite a bit.

DW: What kind of foods did you eat?

RM: Oh boy, we had a big breakfast: liver and gravy and potatoes and sometimes salt pork, oatmeal, cream gravy, you know. Of course, men working out on the farm, they were hungry, and of course, we ate breakfast. I don't think they were being mean, but mother said she had to get breakfast for Gramp and she wasn't going to get more than two breakfasts, so we got up and ate with mother and dad. We had fruit, mostly apples I guess.

DW: Did you dry apples?

RM: Yes, mother dried apples, and corn, and did a lot of canning, that's where we came on picking peas.

DW: Florence Horsford said that her mother had a thousand jars and there were always a thousand jars in the cellar.¹

RM: Mother would plan on how much of each vegetable that they would need for the winter and everything and can them and fruit too. I never did care for the canned strawberries. The juice was delicious, but the strawberries were sort of soft like. I just didn't like the texture. Raspberries they had a lot of, at one time. Of course, I can remember having to go in the cellar and get some eggs and reach into the big jar and it would be in that glass, and it would be all jelly-like and you would reach down in that cold thing and pull out the eggs. That's the way that they saved them because they didn't have... I guess you would have to save a lot because the hens would not lay eggs all the time.

DW: So preserved them that way?

RM: Preserved them. They smoked their bacon and their ham, sausage, headcheese.

DW: How complete a farm was it?

RM: We had chickens and cows and pigs, I can still hear the pigs when they were slaughtering, they make an awful squeal.

DW: People say they know. They know when it's going to happen.

RM: One thing I thought was funny, Dad had some little pigs, and he put an electric fence up. He put it at the corner of the barn, which isn't there now, and before he got to

¹ See Florence Horsford interview

the back steps, the little pigs were following him. They got right out. Of course, I giggled, and Dad glared at me.

DW: How many cows?

RM: I think he had seven or eight milking cows. It wasn't a big farm.

DW: But that was more than you used probably?

RM: Oh yes, they used to make butter and peddle it in Burlington; they had their regular customers. They had a butter print, I think, the butter thing that they used went up when the barn burnt.

DW: The out buildings that you had, did you have an icehouse?

RM: We had an icehouse, a hen house, shop, a pig house, whatever you call that, the sugarhouse was down there at that point in time, there was an outhouse, and then there was also one as you went through the kitchen door into the woodshed, you walked on a platform and then there was where you put the wood to the left, and to the right there was three more, small one's for the children, and that wasn't too bad because you didn't have to go outdoors. Then you had the washroom at the end of that, at the end of the woodshed.

DW: And did you have a smokehouse?

RM: Not like Walter Maeck did.¹ I'm trying to think what dad had, I think he had a barrel or something, and smoked them out in the barnyard.

DW: When did you get indoor plumbing?

RM: Mom's uncle gave her and her siblings money and they put in a bathroom, but before that they had to drill a well. They used to take the horses down the south hill, there's a spring there, water them, and they'd drive the cows up to the woods here and down on the lower right near what they used to call the New Road, which is no longer. There's a spring and they had a big tub so you'd go down three ledges to get to it, and I guess mother talked dad into getting a well, she thought it was wasting time. So they drilled the well, and at that point in time, they had stopped raising pigs, and they took the pig house/barn and moved it nearer to the Spear Street Extension Road. And they made a well house out of it and put a big tank and watered the horses and cows. Ran the iron pipes, which are still there, into the house and put a bathroom in what used to be the buttery. And that was around '39-'40

DW: Because you need the electricity to have the running water.

¹ See Doris Maeck interview

RM: Right. Right.

DW: Prior to that, was there bath night?

RM: Oh yes, Saturday night was bath night, in the kitchen, an oval tub. The water was heated in a big double boiler. They used to call them double boilers, you are thinking the cooking ones, but I mean the humungous ones.

DW: Copper with the handle on each end, oval so it would fit over two.

RM: High, so it would sit over two grills on the stove

DW: It would have to be lifted up and taken over?

RM: Yeah, or else dipped with a dipper. They had dippers. There was a pail for drinking water. It was a cistern, every house had a cistern practically, with a hand pump.

DW: For wash?

RM: Yeah and I guess we even drank out of it.

DW: Well, you would have had to, I guess, if you didn't have a well. So that was Saturday night. That's what my father said, theirs were Saturday night too. So you would be all nice and clean for church in the morning. Now you mentioned the sugaring. That was a fairly big operation?

RM: Yes, Gramps, and then Dad, they had a big bobsleds, I'd guess you called it, and the horses, and they would tap at least three hundred trees, up here where we are now, up in the woods, and lug it down to the house, and the sugarhouse was right next to where the pump house is now, facing the road, and put it into the barrels, into the tanks, and they had a huge evaporator and a brick fireplace, and the door slid open, a fairly good sized door. Then about in the early seventies, Rufus brought it up here to the woods. Rufus and I started doing sugaring. He'd get a little bit upset with me because I said we got to have more buckets out. We went to plastic bags. So we made over sixty gallons one year. We were both working we had to boil all night. Rufus said, this was just a hobby, let's get back to a hobby. We tapped about two hundred (trees). I haven't asked Stewart how many he put up. Rufus started going back to the buckets, we could have had lines, but that has problems too.

DW: The syrup, that was obviously, when your family was doing it too, it was maybe more than they would use?

RM: Oh, yes, they would sell it.

DW: They would make Maple Sugar?

RM: Maple Sugar, and the dark stuff they would save and the real dark, the last part they would save and make it into sugar and use it.

DW: So did you find that used Maple as a replacement for white sugar?

RM: Oh definitely, we still do, or I still do.

DW: So if a recipe calls for white sugar you make the transformation?

RM: A lot of times we do, or put it on cereal or whatever, instead of using the white sugar.

DW: So what did you have to go down to Tracy & Maeck's to buy?



Photo 3 Tracy and Maeck store

RM: Flour, and of course sugar, they made their own lard if we run out, their own butter, and milk, buttermilk. I'm trying to think... I suppose raisins and nuts, although we did have a butternut tree and a hickory nut tree. You know, some of the staples.

DW: Were there peddlers that came around? Raleigh?

RM: Raleigh man, and then there was McNess, there was two, I think one of them had Wrigley's gum, that was a treat, and then sometimes mother would try out some of their puddings.

DW: Spices?

RM: Spices.

DW: Patent Medicines?

RM: I don't know if they ever went into too much on that. I do remember if we ever had a chest cold, that the skunk's oil would come out. You haven't heard of that?

DW: No, what was that?

RM: Well, apparently if they caught a skunk that had oil and they saved it, that's supposed to be good for stopping a chest cold.

DW: Opened up the sinuses? Whoa!

RM: I don't remember it smelling, but just the idea of skunk oil, I didn't want that on me, but that was all right.

DW: How would you get ready for winter in addition to having the wood supply and the coal?

RM: Yeah the wood was a big thing. You had to stack the wood. I learned how to stack the wood, Gramps showed me how. You had to do it just right so it wouldn't tumble over. There was a section of the brick house that was his bedroom, then it was mom and dad's, the clapboard end of it. They put straw up around outside. They built a framework and filled it full. They might have put some house manure in too; that's supposed to keep it warm with straw on top, just around where it was, I guess there was no cellar under it per se.

DW: Did you have storm windows?

RM: Oh yes, they would have to go on every year and then take 'em off and put the screens on.

DW: And you did have screens?

RM: Mmm hmm and the washroom had wood paneling that they would put on and then in the summer take it off and put screens.

DW: Oh! Was there separate stove out in the washroom or would you boil it out in the kitchen and bring it out?

RM: Yeah

DW: And you mentioned that you rendered your own lard did you do that on the kitchen stove as well?

RM: Mmm hmm, in fact Rufus and I did that too.

DW: Really. So what would you use the lard for, piecrusts?

RM: Oh, it made nice piecrusts.

DW: Beautiful piecrusts, and anything that you were frying. Would you have any other uses for it?

RM: No.

DW: How about your water supply in the winter? You mentioned you had springs, but this was pre-well, what would you do?

RM: The well part, when we were over at the yellow cottage, they piped it in the main well over, now by Lloyd Paul. We'd have draw water, drain the pipes, and then in the morning we would open them up and start the pumps and get the tank full.

DW: Start all over again.

RM: If you ran out of water, we had plates, bring water and put in the cistern, that was at the cottage. At the main house, I don't think we drained the pipes, I think it was all right.

DW: What kind of chores did you have as a child, and as a teen?

RM: I had to come home and either bring the cows up or come and get them at night. They generally stayed in the barn at night because we didn't have a night pasture. I had to watch 'em in the early morning in the fall, while they went out and ate in the meadow, make sure they didn't get into the apple trees. Mother would give me a couple hot muffins, buttered, and I'd take them out. It would be quite cool too. We had the wood to tend to. In the summertime, I think it was three years that Dad and I did the haying alone and Wilmot got old enough he, of course, helped out too. I loved raking. We had a Morgan horse, and then another larger horse.

DW: How many acres were you haying?

RM: We did the two meadows here. We did across the road. We used to call it the shanty. Then around oh probably 30 acres, I'm not sure.

DW: The two of you, that was a lot.

RM: I'd draw the team and dad would put the hay on. I could place it the first round but then when it got higher it would get too difficult. Before we go the hayfork we had to, you know, tread it down, that was terrible, hot. The chaff would make you itch, but it didn't hurt us any. And the garden, we had to help pick peas. They would plant a lot and take them to Burlington, peddle them, and to the stores, like Verettes. String Beans, and we did yellow-eyed beans, and we had to look those over too. You know how they'd stand out in the wind and let it fall from a distance into a pan and the wind would take the chaff out. Then you would have a screen that you would put it on and the dirt was supposed to fall through, you would have to check to see if there was a bad bean or not.

DW: You'd peddle those in town too?

RM: Yeah. Yellowed-eyed. Potatoes, I guess too.

DW: So you had plenty of outdoor chores, how about inside chores?

RM: Well I'm afraid I never really enjoyed working inside, but we had to. I'd help mom with the canning, but we would go out under the tree and shuck the peas, a lot better than the hot kitchen. And then, with the laundry when I got older, and then dusting, "and make sure you get up high". And of course, now I'm not that tall so it's great I can't see what's up high.

DW: At Laura Twichell's funeral they read something that she'd written, and one of the things she'd talked about was dusting. She said her mother was very unlikely to pull her away from a book, I guess she thought reading was important. So when she had dusting to do, she knew as long as she was reading she could get away with not dusting.. That's how she became such a voracious reader, she said, because she knew her mother wouldn't say "put that book down you need to dust".

RM: Mother, would call to Wilmot and say, we go up in the living room reading because we both liked to read. And she'd ask him to do something, and nothing was said, so she'd speak again. She'd be out in the kitchen sort of long with the dining room in between and about the third time I'd say just a minute and we'd keep on reading. She wouldn't know the difference of who was talking. It was hard to put down the book. We had to tend to our own rooms. Mother used to say I did a good job when the spirit moved me, but it took a long time for the spirit to move me.

DW: What did you do after dinner at night, for family entertainment.

RM: Well, we read. When we were really, I don't know how old we were but I guess before we could read, the folks would read to us, like *Treasure Island* and *Robin Hood*, things like that, I remember that was one. Sometimes we would have a sing or a card game.

DW: Did you have any kind of board games?

RM: Yeah. Parcheesi, Checkers, I never cared for checkers. I'd be playing checkers and they'd be playing Give-Away. I'd be playing Give-Away when they were.... I never could get it. Rufus was good at checkers. In the summertime we'd tease him and they'd play Hide-And-Go-Seek with us. Dad would hide up in the tree and then we caught on and found him. And then sometimes in the summertime we'd go down to the beach, and take our picnic down

DW: When you say the beach where was the beach then?

RM: Basically we went straight down., Bostwick's Town Beach. The only people that would be there would be Mr. Lovalette and Mr. McGee, and Fred Roberts.

DW: So you had it all to yourselves?

RM: We had it all to ourselves.

DW: That was near where the Lake House was?

RM: You could go where you go in now, same beach. We used to go over and there was a little peninsula, just past where you turned, and we'd go in there? There's stones down there with holes in it, did you ever notice?

DW: I think that when I was a little kid that's what I remember. I think my father must have pointed those out. What other sorts of things did kids do to get together, were there dances?

RM: First, Margaret Crowley and I would get together and we'd play house. We used to play house during recess, go out on the ledge flat stone, mark it out, rooms and everything, and we played with dolls until we went to high school. Isn't that something? Could you imagine them doing that now?

DW: Well, your still playing with dolls aren't you?¹

RM: When we got to high school we biked, we got bikes and we biked a lot. Around the block, which is not a city block, it's quite a few miles. We'd bike down for a swim. We wondered why by the time we got back up Irish Hill because we would be hotter than when we started. We never could.... I think I made it up once. These were bikes with no...

DW: One gear.

RM: Yeah, your feet, your legs. Remember there was an old pine tree just below Jean Stevenson's and they took it out by the driveway there, widening the road. Well we could get that far then we would have to push it.

DW: How about dances, were there dances?

RM: In high school, especially, there was Marsh Crain's Orchestra. By then Paul Crowley had his license so he would take Margaret and I. Then of course the Coles, Chris and Al Cole, had theirs.

DW: What was theirs called? Their group called?

¹ Ruth Irish Morrow has an extensive doll collection.

RM: I can't remember, and they were good, and Dot played the piano.¹ And they'd be like Richmond, Hinesburg, Charlotte, down at Jimmo's Four Corners, and at the Town Hall in Shelburne. We'd go around. Those were fun. Ed Newman, boy he could do a good waltz, he'd always ask all of us girls to waltz. He was custodian of the Shelburne School for years. Let's see what else. I think I biked to Jericho three times.

DW: When you went to the high school did you walk or did you get a ride?

RM: Pa had taken the horse and buggy and put it in the stables there at St. Catherine's and we rode then, and then they also had pick-ups with benches. Mr. Hill, from over where the Guilmettes live, I think that's where he lived, and he drove the school bus for a while. We walked or we rode our bike.

DW: So high school you graduated in?

RM: I graduated in '41. I went for four years. That's up where the I guess the SSD is now, up top facing Route 7. There were what, eleven girls and three boys or something like that in the class.

DW: At that point it was all four years?

RM: It had been back and forth earlier, sometimes only two.

DW: How about going into Burlington, did you do that much?

RM: Oh yes, I can remember mom and I went shopping. I imagine Wilmot tagged along too. Dad would stand on the corner there by Woolworth's. We'd come by and he'd generally have, you know the big chocolate brick that they'd use to get and break it up for us and he'd give us a piece and we'd go merrily on our way trying to keep up with mom, she walked awfully fast. It was just for the basic things, probably.

DW: How about clothing, did your mother make yours?

RM: Mom made my dresses and then when I got old enough, I was in 4-H and so I was making my own dresses. I had a cousin, her mother passed on clothes, and I grew into them. We didn't buy too many... I remember I had a pair of wool ski pants, but as far as just going out and buying new dresses, we just didn't do that.

DW: So would you buy the bolts of fabric at Tracy & Maeck or would she buy it in Burlington?

RM: I think she bought them in Burlington.

¹ See Dorothy Cole Interview

DW: What would you consider a luxury back in your say high school days? Or even younger?

RM: I can remember we always got an orange in the toe of our stocking, at Christmas time, and that was really wonderful, because we didn't get oranges that frequently back then. Of course, a doll was always nice. I did get a couple dolls. We always had to write a letter to Santa Claus, but we didn't seem to think much if we didn't get everything on it. It never occurred to us I guess at that time.

DW: You never assumed that that's what it meant.

RM: No. Shoes, we would have to buy shoes, and I think we went to Burlington to buy shoes.

DW: How about the movies, did you go to the movies much?

RM: We did have a radio. I don't remember when we got that. That was quite a thing. I think we had a radio before we moved over to the big house. I think Mom and Dad had a radio because I remember Grandma and Grandpa coming over to listen to it.

DW: That would be before you had electricity.

RI; Oh yes, it was a battery one.

DW: So they did use batteries.

RM: Yeah.

DW: How about telephone?

RM: We always had a telephone, everybody had a telephone. Of course you would be party lined. What was it that Gramps used to say? "Well if you listen in you'll get all the news fit to print and then some". And, they did listen in too!

DW: Yes, speaking to the other people on the line. Party lines of four or eight?

RM: I think there were eight at the time, I could be wrong. There was, well it went way over at the pond, the Mackenzies, the Hennesseys, they were great, and Frankie Palmer, George Palmer's wife, they were great, checking up with each other.. It was during November of my birthday and Mrs. Palmer brought over a nice chocolate cake for me, and I thought oh dear, I never should have thought of such a thing

DW: Well, party lines were really something. I do remember that myself. You had to be pretty sparing with the amount of time you spent on the telephone. People didn't use it the way they use it now.

RM: Well, I suppose not seeing people every day, that was their entertainment, listening to see what was going on, you know? They didn't have anything better to do.

DW: Who are some of the large families in Shelburne?

RM: Well, the Goodrichs over on Pond Road, Eutie Thomas. The Farrells were a large family, Lorraine was a year behind me, but we were in 4-H together. Those were the only one's I can think of off-hand.

DW: Did the O'Briens...

RM: Oh, the O'Briens. No they were here. They went to the Sutton School, and then they went probably to Cathedral. No, they were the big family too.

DW: Besides the Webbs, who did you think of as big land owners?

RM: Well I guess they were the biggest. The rest of them would have 2-300 acres or something.

DW: Fletchers had a pretty big...

RM: Yeah, Carl Fletcher. Well, Walter Maeck, now I don't know how many acres he had over there, I used to know, but it must be 300, 400.¹

DW: He ran that with a family?

RM: Yeah, he had different people in. There was a family by the name of the Crosses. The Cross' daughter was my age and we'd go back and forth. Of course, the Jimmos were there for a while. They lived down below the hill too. They were out there for a while.

DW: How about your place, did you have hired people on the farm?

RM: He had one of the boys, Georgie Griffin, he was in my class, come up and help one summer. Because dad had to go up to Vets hospital; he had emphysema. He got that when, or it started, he worked when he got out of school down in Proctor at the marble quarry. He was a foreman or something. The doctor told him if he wanted to live he better change. So he was bothered all his life. It got worse as he got older.

DW: He was a veteran, from which war?

RM: World War I.

¹ See Doris Maeck interview

DW: And you said you were born in the Mary Fletcher Hospital, but that was not the norm probably in 1923.

RM: Probably not.

DW: Your Mother had to go into town.

RM: Of course it was in November and mother told dad he better hurry up and hitch up the horse, they didn't have a car apparently at that time. She thought they would never get up there, sleigh? So I can imagine it was a rather interesting trip. She never forgot it.

DW: As you were growing up, who did you think of as being the civic leaders? The important figures in town?

RM: Of course Eutie Thomas was into things, and I think was very good. Tommy Thompson was the constable, I think.

DW: Do you remember Tommy Thompson's famous fish chowders?

RM: That was Mike Thompson! Oh boy do I remember them, were they ever rich and nice. Tommy lived across the tracks in one of those houses there. Bert Marsett. I remember... who had your place?

DW: Mrs. Deyette

RM: She was in charge of the schools. I remember when she came over to the old school to visit, I was probably first or second grade.

DW: She was the supervisor. So that would have been after she retired because she retired from teaching at Burlington High School?

RM: I think she was the supervisor, of course they did things differently.

DW: Other teachers that you mentioned, Mary Noonan, what other teacher do you remember?

RM: Pearl Savage McGraw was a wonderful teacher. She brought in a lot of nature stuff and that was very interesting. John McGee, he was very good. I can remember we had an algebra test, and that was when mom was sick. The next day he said I want to see you after class. Well, I flunked the algebra test, and he said "what's going on at home?" I said "mom's in the hospital, she had an appendectomy". He said, "I knew there was something. You come in such and such a time and you'll take that test over," because I liked math.

DW: Your mind was somewhere else?

RM: I just couldn't concentrate. Marion Andrews had Home Economics and English. We had Eileen Buck for Latin and French. Jim Berry, I had him for Economics. He wore a gray suit. Economics was at the end of the day so we got into class and somebody had put some bubble gum in his chair and he sat on it, so that's what he talked about for the whole period. He wasn't too happy.

DW: He didn't have another one hanging in the closet to wear the next day. Besides Tracy & Maeck's Store, did you ever go into other stores in the village?

RM: Yeah, the Country Store.

DW: Who ran that?

RM: I think I can remember when Jack Ockert was in there, I could be wrong. Then there was Mr. Palmer.¹

DW: L.H.?

RM: L.H. Palmer

DW: But your family didn't buy much there?

RM: No, we'd go down lunch hour and maybe get some candy or something.

DW: Were Mr. Maeck and Mr. Tracy were always in their store?

RM: Yeah.

DW: That had everything?

RM: Everything, you could get rubbers, coal, groceries, overalls, nails, screws, hammers, name it they had it. I remember their Pyramid Chocolate; you know chocolate with the white inside it looked like a pyramid. They had a big box of those open, and that was very tempting, but I didn't take one.

DW: And everyone had a charge account then or did most people pay cash.

RM: I think the folks paid cash. They did have a charge account.

DW: How about some of the town figures such as postmasters, town clerks, do you remember?

RM: Postmasters? There was a Isabel Neary, was she a postmistress at one time? I have to stop and think. Who came after her? Can you remember some names?

¹ See Jack Ockert interview

DW: Well, I don't remember anybody before Ed Sevee. He's the earliest I remember.

RM: I'd have to look that up.

DW: What about Town Clerks?

RM: Yeah there was Julia Norton, and Harris Maeck and May Eldred, Edna Cole, Jeanette O'Neil, then there was...

DW: Ann Carr?

RM: Ann Carr, and then Colleen

DW: And library, now you were a library trustee weren't you?

RM: Yeah, Marjorie Marsett, of course, was there for ever and a day. She cornered me one day when I went in, that was when we were living over with mom, and she said "now just how are you and your mother getting along?" I looked at her I said "fine". Why? I remember stopping there one day to see Ralph, and she was out back step shaking her dust mop, and I said, "Marjorie, that's brand new, you don't have to shake it. Come up to the house and shake mine then you will see."

DW: She kept a pretty...

RM: Boy it was spotless

DW: Spotless house.

RM: It would be nice, but you wouldn't have time for anything else. Peggy Talbot? Who took over after Marjorie?

DW: I don't know, Peggy was in there. Peggy was wasn't she?

RM: Yeah, and then the lady from Burlington.

DW: Peg Mosley.

RM: And the one before that?

DW: Anita, Anita Danegelis. And, do you remember the beginnings of the Fire Department?

RM: Rufus was on that. Do you want to know who else was on it?

DW: I was just wondered if anything was a strong memory?

RM: Well, they had they had their regular meeting. They would go out and train. Once a year they would have their banquet, the Fireman's Dance. That was always a big thing. Korny Kapers was a big thing.

DW: Pet show.

RM: Pet show, yes!

DW: Some one asked me about that today. It was "spring has sprung the grass has 'ris I wonder where the pet show is"

RM: The children loved that.

DW: Who were some personalities around town?

RM: John Tracy! "How do you feel today John" "Puffy!" And then there was...who used to sit on the steps with John Tracy? He was somebody's brother. Whose brother was he? Babcock! Is that his last name? I know there was a Gleason Babcock, I think it was his uncle.

DW: And they were pals?

RM: Yeah. Jimmy Ball was a very interesting character. Not Jimmy but Walter Ball.

DW: I remember Walter in that truck.

RM: Then across the street his brother, I think it was his brother.

DW: Do you remember any fires that stand out?

RM: Yeah! I remember when Walter Maeck's farm burned. I watched it from the north window down the hall and I thought oh my gracious. It looked like you could almost touch it. Then another time we started to go to Burlington and the Marsett barn was on fire. There was a calf tied outside of it, and Dad, of course, stopped there on Marsett Road and got out and went and untied the calf. I thought oh my gracious those flames are so close. Those were the two big ones.

DW: How about the flood? Do you remember the Flood of '27?

RM: I remember mother going around collecting in the horse and buggy. Then I remember her sister and husband lived out in Colchester, and I remember going over the floating bridge there in Winooski. It was sort of scary you know because it wiggled.

DW: How about the bridge down here.

RM: I guess dad worked on that bridge, and I think I was a little bit too young to remember too much about it. I heard that dad worked on it.

DW: One of the questions on this list here, Shelburne celebrations? There is the 175th in 1938 do you remember anything about



Photo 4 150th Anniversary Celebration

RM: There's this picture and women and men dressed in the old costumes. In that picture, I'm up on the railing looking over; I'm in that with some of the girls high school

DW: So you are up above?

RM: Mom is in the picture. Nina Cole I think was in it.

DW: Marjorie Marsett.

RM: Marjorie, yeah. There are a lot of old town people in it. That was fun.

DW: They had a dance?

RM: They had a dance.

DW: In the town hall, probably some sort of meal too?

RM: I was trying to think. They used to have meals when it was voting day, Town Meeting Day, ladies from the different churches would put it on, Methodist or Trinity.

DW: I can remember being in the dining room of the Town Hall and of course it was so well appointed, the crockery...

RM: And the table and chairs. I remember the chairs, the legs sort of went out and it was hard if you were helping serve.

DW: Which is something the young people did didn't they?

RM: Yeah. We, the 4-H had whist parties. I remember that two of us played Eva Noonan and her partner. Of course, we didn't mind whether we won or not. They got very upset if they thought we were supposed to play a certain card and we didn't. They were very vocal about it.

DW: Do you remember anything about the bicentennial in 1963, that celebration?



Photo 5 1963 Parade

RM: Yes, Stuart and Chris are in one of those pictures. They were on one of the floats.

DW: I was on it too, with Mrs. Paterson.

RM: I didn't get too awful involved because I had these young children, and it was a little bit hard for me. Mother dressed up, and her sister came down, with an old-fashioned dress. We went to Saratoga for the thing that was fun. It was really great, and the barbecue that they had.

DW: Do you have any Depression memories?

RM: No mother mentions that she always felt badly that she couldn't give us children more. I said "Mom, we didn't know the difference." We were happy; we had a happy homelife. You used your head to make games, you know. As far as clothes go, everybody was in the same boat. Its not like it is now where everyone is trying to wear names brands and all this stuff. We didn't know the difference.

DW: Were you aware of any people that you thought were in the dire straits?

RM: I think, yes, there were a couple families, and I know the folks always passed on decent clothes, if we'd outgrown them. It was never that big of a deal, as far as children go.

DW: How about the Second World War? What memories do you have in terms of Shelburne in the War?

RM: Well. I remember gas rationing and also food stamps. Of course, I was in the Service. I remember one weekend, I was working at the University then, one weekend one of the girls and I were going up to Colchester to stay with my aunt. They wanted to come and pick me up, I said no, I guess Dad was going to take us out, so then they were going to take us back, and I said no we'll walk. So we walked down to the bay and then we walked into Burlington, and I was on Buell Street and let me tell you, those last couple blocks, stepping off the curb and going across the street was painful. My aunt gave us some candy to take and we were popping them in our mouths and talking. I said, "did you know I don't like the candy with the strawberry inside?" And Viola said she didn't either, so we finally decided to bite into them , and they were all strawberry. Mind over matter. No, I know we were concerned because some of the boys that I knew were going into the service. Of course you couldn't, you know, drive whenever you wanted to, of course we didn't anyway as far as that goes. I didn't have a license then.

DW: So you graduated high school in 1941. You were working at that point during the war. You said you were in the service.

RM: That was afterwards, I got in [the service] in what '43? Yeah, I remember when they announced it, you just couldn't believe it, you know? Of course, even back then you didn't get things as quick as you do now. You depended a lot on the newspaper. Things happen today and tonight you'll get it whereas it wasn't like that back then.

DW: So you went into the service in '43?

RM: I was in the Navy and I was a storekeeper, that's bookkeeping.

DW: Where did you do that?

RM: I went to Hunter College for Basic, and I went down to Millsville, Georgia for the storekeepers classes. Then I came back to New York City and worked at 99 Church

Street. Then I was shipped to Samson. Then I came back and worked at the Armed Guard in Brooklyn, and then I was discharged.

DW: What year were you discharged?

RM: I was in seventeen months '45, May of '45 I think it was.

DW: And then you came back to Shelburne?

RM: I came back to Shelburne, and I decided that I didn't know quite what I was going to do, but I was going to take some time off. I remember I was out weeding in my mom's garden, and mother came out. I was in shorts and a halter, and she said. Mr. Lyman was here to see you. Mr. Lyman? So I went in and he was in the living room and I sat on the piano stool very uncomfortable because I didn't have a shirt to put on or anything. He wanted to know if I had any idea about a job. I said no, I had just gotten out of the Service, and he said "We'd like to have you come and work at the Shelburne Creamery" He said, would you think it over or let me know now. I said well sure. So I went down there, Park Kent was the manager at the time, and I worked there.

DW: So this is '45.

RM: You know I didn't have to write a resume. So I stayed there for and then I got married August of '47. I worked that first winter and then I said I wanted to stop in May or June, I can't remember which month. So I stopped working for the Creamery.

DW: So you were there roughly three years. How did the Creamery operate?

RM: The bookkeeping was upstairs, a big office. You go up the stairs and at the head of the stairs turning left was a big conference room and you went down the hall and the office was facing Route 7. The store was active when they were bringing milk to the Creamery.

DW: So was the store that little building?

RM: The little building in front.

DW: So, the general public could go in and buy there?

RM: Yup. I remember one of the first charges that came through was for Bag Balm, and of course you had to say what it was for, and I didn't know if it was grain or what it was. So I buzzed Ralph Cox, who was in charge of the store, and I buzzed down and I said, "Ralph, what's bag balm?" He said, "I'll call you back later." I guess the store was full at the time and he wasn't about to explain what Bag Balm was.

DW: With people standing there!

RM: I laughed more when I found out what it was. I didn't know! . I think I took Kitty Noonan's place.

DW: So who ran the Creamery?

RM: Well, the directors.

DW: Were they local farmers?

RM: Yup, Fred Lyman from Hinesburg. Howard and Elmer Lawrence from Monkton, Lester Thompson from Shelburne and Walter Maeck from Shelburne.

DW: So those were the Directors.

RM: Yup, and Park Kent was manager at the time.

DW: When he and Barbara met he would have been working at the Creamery?¹

RM: No, she had met him before. She knew him in school. He used to come to the dances. Mother would bring him to the dances.

DW: He was from Burlington, right?

RM: No, they used to live above the garage that burned. His dad had the garage there. Then he went to Charlotte and had the garage down there.

DW: Oh, I didn't realize!

RM: I think Bovat got it, he went in afterwards.

DW: Aside from the Creamery what other businesses do you think of? You mentioned the Granary in the Falls.

RM: Well, there was the blacksmith shop. It's the one where the Craft School is now. I remember going down there. And then the building next to the store here in the Falls, that was a blacksmith shop too. Joe White was the blacksmith. I don't remember which place he worked. Elmer Smith's Meat Market. And then Gervia had a grocery store in the back of Woodmen's Hall.

DW: Do you remember anything about the Woodmen's Hall?²

¹ See Barbara Kent interview

² The Modern Woodmen of America is a fraternal life insurance organization that was founded in 1883 by Joseph Cullen Root in Lyons, Iowa. Root envisioned a self-governing society whose members came from local camps (lodges) across America. The lodge system, which remains in effect today, nurtures community spirit by bringing families together for wholesome, social, recreational and service activities. (source: www.modern-woodmen.org)

RM: No, just that the store was there. The King's Daughters where Russ Little had his garage, that used to be the King's Daughters where the Kings Daughter's met. I think Russ bought it from them. He used it as a garage. I know he used to drive the cars up the hill, he came up the hill there to see if he fixed them alright, he always tested them up Irish Hill.

DW: What do you think are the most obvious ways that Shelburne has changed over the years?

RM: The humungous houses going up where it was open land. I understand that it has to be because, you know, if you have a lot of land sometimes you have to sell when it gets to a certain point in your life. Of course there are a lot more people. We used to know everybody in town per se, and now you don't. I'm not saying that's bad. We're not as neighborly I guess, and I'm just as bad as the next fellow. I know over here and across the road and the Kirkpatricks. But as far as doing anything we don't do that anymore.

DW: How about the mix of people?

RM: We'll you've got entirely different type of people then when I was growing up as far as salaries, you know. Your folks and my folks they had to work hard for what they've got. It's entirely different. The prices, I know your dollar is not worth as much now, but you don't stop and think about it. Clothes! I'm just mind boggled if I had to dress three children now. Of course with the girls, you can make a lot of things. I'm not as good of a sewer as your mother is but.... And the thing, I imagine TV. has a lot to do with it, you know they have all these nice things that you can buy, very tempting. All that stuff. Everything's changed.

DW: What are some of things that you miss from the olden days? You mentioned not knowing everyone.

RM: I think, of course I am not in the school business anymore, but I know when I was, for instance the business teachers would come down, or one of them would come, and he'd be sort of discouraged that the kiddos would get over there and they didn't know decimals or percentages or things like that. They had to start from scratch to teach them that. Whereas I think we had a good lesson in the 3Rs per se, but I can see too that younger children learn things quicker in foreign language or computers, or something like that, than the older ones would. I don't know which is better. I do think the basics, I think you got to go back. You know our great-grandfathers if they went to school or if they were taught at home, some of those basics don't change.

DW: It is amazing the number of people who were educated eight grades in a one-room schoolhouse with kids from all grades. That to me is amazing.

RM: Well, you learned too from the higher class. And if you had trouble and the teacher was busy one of the higher class would come and help you. It was more one on one. If

you get a big classroom, I would think, I'm not a teacher, but I would think it would be hard because you don't have the time to be one on one.

DW: What do you remember about Shelburne Farms as a child or a teen? Did people go over there much?

RM: Yeah, we had the Dennises, Peggy Koppel, that was one family, Doreen, Keenan, and Shirley Paterson. The Patterson's and us went back and forth. Keenan and Wilmot were of an age and Doreen and I were. We were in 4-H. I know Wilmot and Keenan would camp out on the Point and whatnot. I remember I was mind boggled to think that the big house had, what was it twenty-seven bathrooms or whatever it was. I couldn't visualize that. It was pretty, when the golf course was there, I remember that made it sort of pretty driving, seeing the golf course. Then, Chrissy and Lisa were quite close too. They were back and forth. Alex and Stuart were of an age too.

DW: But the golf course...

RM: You can see how with the nice lawns for the golf. It was quite nice. It went by the big house through there and crossed over this side of the barn how would have been a good golf course.

DW: How about the shipyard?

RM: They made the boats. I knew that. Freddie Barrett, the Barretts lived there. There were two family Barretts Freddie, and I think Luke was his cousin. Freddie married Eleanor Dennis you know. I think they are in Alaska. Of course the parents would come to the town meetings. Things like that. The Fortunes. I think the Fortunes were over there too. I saw George a couple years ago when I went up to do the absentee ballot, and he had just moved into, what's the care place?

DW: Shelburne Bay

RM: Yeah, Shelburne Bay. He remembered the name, but I think he went to Burlington Schools. Pauline and Fred Barrett went to Shelburne and the Farrells went to Shelburne too. Of course, now they have Rice where a lot of them go, and Christ the King for the younger grades

DW: Was there much mixing between families that say who went to the Methodist Church and families that went to St. Catherine's?

RM: We seemed to sort of mingle together, but I know we had religion in school too, you know. I went to both. One year I went to the Methodist and the next year I went to the Episcopal. The St. Catherine's would come back, and the boys couldn't be in boy scouts because there was a Protestant leader, and they were open about it. I don't think they believed that it should be that way, but that's the way it was. I think World War II changed that a lot. Of course, that depends too on, I imagine, your priest. I know we

went down Sunday night to a Roman Catholic priests home, he had open house. We had a wonderful time, his mother was there.

Interviewee: Robert Noonan
Interviewer: Pamela Daly
Date: March 13, 2002
Location: 1116 Falls Road

Robert Noonan is third generation Noonan to live in Shelburne.

Topics discussed: Shelburne Falls, Shelburne Schools, mills, Noonan Family, horse racing, slaughterhouses, Webb family, bridges and roads, Depression, out of state travel

Pamela Daly: What is your name?

Robert Noonan: R.J. Noonan or Robert. It does not make any difference.

PD: What is your age?

RN: 71

PD: For how many generations have the Noonans been in Shelburne?

RN: Well, let' see. If goes back to my grandparents, my parents and myself, so three generations. I think before that, I think the first...and I have to check this up...I think my grandfather's father would be Dan Noonan. I think very possibly he might have lived in Hinesburg, but I have to go over and check that out. He would have come from Ireland and from there, we don't know and I am trying to find out.

PD: Why did your family move to the Shelburne area?

RN: I have no idea.

PD: Did the move to the Falls area?

RN: I am not so sure that they originally...some of my relatives had a farm over here in East Shelburne. They also had a farm over by Shelburne Pond.

PD: Over by where Claude LaPierre has a farm?

RN: Yes, but a little further. Of course, that could have been possibly been Dan Noonan but I am not sure.

PD: Dan Noonan would be your grandfather?

RN: Great grandfather.

PD: So when did the Noonans settle in the Falls area?

RN: My grandfather and my grandmother lived in the house next door.

PD: The Kitty Noonan house?

RN: Yeah, the Kitty Noonan house. She was my aunt. I can't tell you when they moved in there but I would say perhaps around the turn of the century. 1900 or a little bit before.

PD: You were mentioning the basement of this house before?

RN: Yes. In the basement, my grandfather had a store. You can see, where the garage is now, there would be a door where you would go into the store.

PD: And he sold sausage from beef slaughtered in your barn....

RN: Yes. They would slaughter the pigs and they would slaughter the cows out there. Right where this house is, there was a barn. This was where, wherever you would get the animals from, you would keep them in here. Before the execution. Plus the fact, he would keep his horses in here too before the time of automobiles. They would go back and forth by horses.

PD: Did he run a livery stable?

RN: Not at all. He did have racehorses...harness horses.

PD: This was your grandfather?

RN: This is my grandfather. John Noonan. He had harness horses. But you have to realize that it was not big time. They would just race the people in surrounding towns. The winners would get a blanket or something. One of the racetracks used to up right where the Teddy Bear factory is now. My father worked for J. Watson Webb...riding to the house. He was a groomsmen- taking care of the horses. My uncle Ray worked there. My uncle Ray ended up being the farm manager at the Bostwicks for many years.

PD: So he ran the Noonan Dairy barns over there?

RN: Yes. But as a young man, he worked for the Webbs down on Long Island training foals for them. When I say training...he was not training, he was grooming them, taking care of them, feeding them and all that.

PD: Where were you born?

RN: At Bishop DeGoesBriand in Burlington. My family lived up there. We didn't move here...my dad off and one lived in Shelburne...actually, all my life, I remember living in Shelburne. We moved to Burlington when I was going into my junior year of high school so I could go to Cathedral High School instead of Shelburne High School. Sometime, in the very early 1960's...it might have been '63 I think, my father built this house down here for me. The house next door was his house { towards the creek}. That land belonged to the Episcopal Church but he bought it and built a house there.

PD: Were the roads paved around here when you were growing up?

RN: Oh yeah, they were. Right for here. I am trying to think where they were not paved....I will give you an example. They were not paved over Shelburne harbor. From Bay Road on, they were not paved. From what I read in history, this was the main route to Burlington until they built Route 7. They did not have Route 7 then. I think one reason it was because it was the bridging you had to put over the LaPlatte. I think they eventually put a road where Kwiniaska is. That way your are avoiding the bridge.

PD: Webster Road?

RN: Yep.

PD: What did you parents do when you were growing up?

RN: My father mainly was ait's a fancy name...a bread salesman. What he did was drive a bread truck. They called them bread salesman and they did actually sell. He would deliver the bread and take the order for the next day.

PD: Where did he deliver to?

RN: He had various routes. One time it was Addison County and other times it was up around Washington County and all that. Very seldom did he ever deliver in Chittenden (County) or in the city. Then eventually, when I was in high school, he got a chance to go to work as a lightning rod salesman. Within a few months, he bought the business out. As an older man, he had a bad heart. He always wanted to be a policeman – he was turned down by the State Police. He was hired and the day before he was to go on duty, the State Police said “Gee, we can't take you, you don't have a high school education.” He ended up as a guard at the museum and then he

ended up as Head of Security at the museum. In fact that is where he died... right where the old waterwheel is. My father did everything front row. When he died, he was going to die where every body could see him. Surrounded by his dogs. He had these German Shepherds. We used to have horses and that barn was full of horses. Right out here. That was a hobby with him. He trained the horses and then he worked over at the museum. An then eventually he sold the horses because the doctor wanted to because of his heart and then within less than a month, he started buying German Shepherds and starting training them.

PD: Could you tell us a little more about your schooling?

RB: I went to school here in Shelburne and then as a junior I went to Cathedral High School.

PD: The Village School?

RN: Yes. In those days, it had 1through 12. After high school, I went to Saint Michaels. After that, I went into the army for two years and then I started teaching for four years in North Bennington. From 1959 to 1996, I taught at Rice. In 1996, I returned but I am back. For example, this week I will be back 4 out of five days as a substitute.

PD: What do you teach?

RN: Anything they want me to. This week has been fun because I have been doing Home Economics which I have done. What I really specialize in is that most subs don't want to go in for 2 or 3 periods a day and I don't mind. So I do that. Today, a teacher had to leave because her daughter got sick so I had to take her classes. If I hadn't, I would have gone skating at Cairns. Tomorrow, I will be up there and afterwards I will very possibly go skiing up at Trapps. In the warmer months, I play golf. I always tie everything in with going up there.

PD: When did you first start living here?

RN: I would say '63 or '64.

PD: Were there any old structures by the Fall when you arrived?



Photo 1 Shelburne Falls Sawmill

RN: Walter Ball, right down on the other side, had a sawmill. When I was growing up, you had a mill down that road (north on Creek). That mill was torn down and Mrs. Webb used a lot of that material...the mill was just about fallen down anyways...to build the horseshoe type barn where she keeps the carriages over at the Shelburne Museum. If you go down there...I have not gone down there since they built that fancy house...but if you go down there....you would see...past where the mill was...there was a house for the mill keeper and all that. They had a dam down there. The dam, I think, went out in the 1927 flood. As you go out. You will notice that there is a steep bank there...the water would come up where the flat is. I guess people used to go out fishing in the night.

PD: Where was the dam?

RN: It was a quarter mile north up the creek .

PD: The river was much higher then?

RN: It was because of the dam.

PD: Did the dam ever freeze up? Did you go skating?

RN: Oh yeah. In fact, not in recent years because I skate on the artificial ice, but my mother and father used to have skating parties down there on the river. It depends on how much snow you get. Luckily, the river is not too deep.

PD: Do you know anything about the house right across the street? It has a very deep basement.

RN: I don't know, but I would not be surprised that at one time it was once a store. The house next door...my cousin Kerry owns it...and his wife Brenda tried to look up information on it in the Town Clerk's office. They don't know exactly when it was

built. The house next to the purple house, they also owned. That was my Uncle Johnnie's house. That house is so old that they cannot find information on it either.

PD: What else do you remember about growing up here in the Falls area?

RN: I grew up mainly during the war years. I lived two houses up there on the left. My grandfather had a house...this would be my mother's father...on that side, over where the Oakes live now. We used to go swimming in the river. When I got old enough to ride a bicycle, I then went to the lake. My mother was never too crazy about me swimming in the river. In those days we swam in the same place where people swim today. The town did not run the beach – you would go down and go swimming.

PD: How did you travel on bigger trips?

RN: We always drove. I laugh, because now my wife and I are into taking the train. For example, our son lives in the Boston area, and during vacation, we took a train to New York and back. I need to rectify that. I used to take the train. When was a teenager and able to go out on my own, I would go over to the station here and the train would come through, and for 25 cents, I would catch the train into Burlington and then catch it back. My family never took the train – they were always automobile.

PD: Even though it was rural Vermont, everyone had cars...

RN: When I was a kid, you tell somebody that you were Shelburne, they would look for the cow manure on your shoes. Now people who live in Chittenden County claim that they live in Shelburne because it is the place to live. On the other side of the river there, where Freddy Thomas was. He was my uncle. He married my father's sister, Rita Mom.¹ When we first moved down here, he kept all his cows out here because he had his farm up on the corner there. You could hear them in the morning.

PD: How was the village affected during the Depression?

RN: My father always had a job...as a bread salesman, but he was a heck of a salesman. I remember my uncle Johnny who lived up next to the purple house there...I remember sometimes he wouldn't be working and then he would be all excited that he got a job. Then eventually, right at the tail end of the Depression, he got a job and he stayed there for the rest of his life taking care of the cows over at the Bostwick farm. My uncle Ray probably got him the job because he was over there. My Uncle Ray's son, Terry, owns the house back there and he owns three homes around here. I won this house and the house next door.

¹ See Colleen Haag Interview

Interviewee: Jim and Pauline O'Brien

Interviewer: Joan Madison

Location: 2301 Brand Farm Rd, South Burlington

Date: February 12, 2002

Jim and Pauline O'Brien belong to a large family of Shelburne farmers. James O'Brien is a wealth of knowledge about farming life around the Dorset Street area.

Topics discussed: Shelburne area farms, hired help, Shelburne area families, milking and dairy, schools, Burlington, roads, post office

Joan Madison: Jim, we will start with you. Could you tell us your full name, where you were born and anything from the early years?

James O'Brien: Well, Joan. My name is James David O'Brien. I was born at the old Fanny Allen Hospital in Winooski on September 15, 1924. My parents were Frank and Alice O'Brien¹. They moved to Burlington and after a few years, bought a store on Shelburne Road where they had a grocery store and gas station where the road be up into Rice.² We had a large family. I had four brothers and sisters older and four brothers and sisters younger. We ended up with nine children – we lived up overhead in the apartment. My father was a farmer by trade and he owned a farm up on Moulton flats before he moved to Burlington. He then bought this farm out on Dorset Street in Shelburne right at the corner of Cheese Factory and Dorset Roads. He moved out on April 1, 1931. What I remember most, I guess, about moving was that we were getting into a pickup truck and getting stuck in the mud on Dorset Street.

South of where we were moving to and on the town line there between Shelburne and South Burlington we did a dairy of about 40 cows. I think there was about five horses and a big horse barn there. I think there were five stalls with hay storage up overhead. The front part of the horse barn was a big garage and the water system was something else. There was a huge water tank there that was supplied by a well. The water first went to a large tank upstairs in the house. The overflow from that tank went into this big cement reservoir there in the horse barn. The overflow from that went to the barn down across the road. I don't remember us being short of water.

Everything we did, of course, was with horses. My father raised horses. The first horse he got was a horse that Walter Webster had – he lived down on Webster Road.³ It was a mare that had never been broken. As I remember it, she was about four years old. My father brought her home and broke her to ride. Then he started raising colts from her. She was at least half Morgan. There was neighbor who lived down here

¹ Frank O'Brien was a long time active member of the Shelburne community. During the 1940s, he served as both Selectman and Town Representative.

² Rice High School in South Burlington.

³ Walter M. Webster (1873-1939) was born in Swanton and moved to Shelburne in 1896. He served the Shelburne community as Town Clerk, Cemetery Commissioner, Justice of the Peace and Select board member. He was the Town Representative in 1917.

on Dorset Street at a farm called the Wheeler Farm. He ran the farm for H.H. Wheeler. He had a stallion that he drove from farm to farm. He ran this farm for the Wheelers. As I remember at that time they ran the farm to halve. They would do all the work and at the end of the year, they would divide up all the money. Each would have half – they would divide up calves and...it was one way for a young couple to get started in farming. It was quite common then that people would own the farms, say from Burlington, and have somebody running it for them. I remember just south of us on Dorset Street there was the Munson Farm. A Doctor Larner, who was an eye, ear, nose and throat doctor from Burlington and he had Karl Munson running it for him.¹ The other farm was the Wheeler Farm that was run for years by Louis Slocum who lived in Shelburne in his later years. It was quite common for people from out of town to own these farms and hire somebody to run them and they would split the profits. The Palmer Farm was another one. Loren Palmer was an undertaker. He always had a couple who were real good farmers including Stearns Allen. He ran the farm for Palmer.²

Getting back to our own operation – I look back now and wonder how we ever got the work done but they did. I remember my father used to start with a team of horses and a single walking plow. Just south of our buildings there was a meadow there that was about a half mile long and he would start out plowing there. He always got it done but I don't know how. Most of our haying, of course at time, was done...we would cut the hay with a team of horses, rake it with a rake and then you would tumble it. We had a tumble it so that there would be two tumbles on each side of the path that the team of horses pulling the wagon could go. A man on each side to put the tumble in and a man on the wagon to place it. This went on until...it was 1931 when we started.... it must be about 1940. At that time, different farmers that had equipment like a big baler would come around and bale up your straw. Frank Blair who lives south of us there on Dorset Street had a big thrashing machine. He would go from farm to farm and thrash your grains. Usually it was oats, then oats and barley mixed. The thrasher would bag it; the farmers would take that and usually trade it in to a grain company for mixed grain. The straw was baled and used for bedding. The stationary baler – what they used then – was huge. That went on for a few years before the farmers started getting their own equipment. I think the first tractor that my father owned was probably about '38 or '39. That kind of took over for the horses. My father raised horses for several years. He would raise them, break them for work and then sell them. There were several farmers around Charlotte and Shelburne who would buy horses from my father. George used to break them after they bought them. My brother would work with them for a while. For years, we had a team out. We usually had a foal running with the team. If it was heavy work, it was just three horses. Everything seemed to get done.

JM: Did your father have to hire help?

¹ A.L. Larner owned 239 acres of land that he eventually sold to Cornelius "Karl" Munson in 1944.

² See David Palmer interview. Loren Palmer was the co-owner of the Corbin and Palmer Funeral Home in Burlington. Along with his brother Raymond, Loren owned 27 acres at the northeast corner of Dorset Street and Hinesburg Road as well as ten acres on the south side of Hinesburg Road right at the Charlotte Town Line. By 1963, the Palmers owned 63 acres of land. Stearns Allen lived on Spear Street extension.

JO: Well, we usually had hired help. There was one gentleman that came from Goshen every haying season. About all he did was pick up scatterings after we had picked up the hay and the bundles or tumbles. He would just pick up scatterings – any hay that was left he would pick it up and pile it and then pick it up. As I remember it, in the 1930, there was help available because there was no work to be found. There would be young gentlemen, real good fellow, who would come around...if they could just move in...my mother was a great cook...if they could just eat and get enough maybe for a pack of cigarettes or something... they would work and they were good help. Usually there were one or two of them around ready to work. They were happy to get a place to get something to eat and someplace to sleep.

JM: Who did the milking on the farm?

JO: You started milking by hand when you were quite young. I can remember that I could not wait till I was 12 because my father told me when I got be 12 I could get up in the morning and help too... Bad decision on my side...(laughter)...I always enjoyed it...always enjoyed farming. We milked by hand for quite a few years. We had lanterns in the barns. We finally got a milking machine – it was run with a gasoline engine. It was part of luxury for us. We had five boys – we kept busy but we always enjoyed it. Everything was by hand - clean the barn by hand. Now I understand that the farmers can't spread their manure in the winter. At that time, we would go out in sleds and spread by hand...very cold, but it made you work harder.

JM: Where did you send the milk?

JO: At our farm, we had a good market in Burlington...there was the Burlington Cooperative Milk Building...in fact that, I think the building is still there, on the corner of King Street and South Winooski Avenue. When our boys and my brothers were old enough to drive, they went to high school. I guess I will back up a little, there was the Sutton School right there on the corner of Dorset and Cheese Factory and Barstow Road. I think our family kept going there for quite some time. This teacher we had when we first moved out was Miss Myra Brand. Now these condos that were are living in were built on land that her folks owned – the Brand Farm. She taught the eight grades for quite a few years. And I remember that Mary Noonan, from Shelburne, was a teacher there for a number of years.¹ I was probably one of the only the ones in the school at that time. I would go and start a fire in the morning. We had a rural mail carrier – Mr. Bacon.² I still remember that he had skis in front of his car and you could check your clock by him. He was there everyday. After Ms. Brand and Ms. Noonan and other teachers – they would keep their cars in the barn there during the day just so that they would start at night when they are ready to leave. I remember when my father had hay or something ready to be brought in the afternoon and he didn't have help, he would stop by and we would leave school to help and when we were done, we would go

¹ In 1933, Myra Brand's salary was \$589 and Mary Noonan's was \$558. Mary Noonan lived on 117-acre farm on Dorset Street near the former J. L. Barstow farmstead. She also owned a house and land right in the village that she inherited from her parents, Edward and Anna Casey Noonan.

² Robert Bacon

back. They never questioned it at all. Our family grew up away from that school. It was too cold. There was a superintendent from Winooski that would stop by twice a year to see if we needed any supplies. George Stackpole¹ – he was big man. We took the milk into Burlington. We took the car into Burlington. We would take it with us when we go to school in the morning. We were going to high school, which, at the time was at the head of St. Paul Street – St. Paul and Pearl. There was a grade school and then a church – the cathedral and then the high school all within a block of each other there. We would take the milk in the pickup truck, deliver it there and park our truck there in the back station yard and walk down at noon for our lunch. At night, after school, we would bring the cans back.



Photo 1 Picking up milk cans at the Burlington Cooperative Milk Creamery

There were different farms along Dorset Street there. There was Frank Blair who used to live there. Frank and his family lived on the west side of Dorset and on the East side was his brother Ed and his two sisters, I think, Jenny and Mabel. I think his son Alec built the house right there. Then the big Chittenden Farm, which is was very good farm –there is cider mill there now. We used to either ride with them part time or they ride with us into Burlington. They went to Burlington High School and we went to Cathedral High School but we always met at noon and had lunch together. Great friends back then. I was on the basketball team, baseball team. Played football. Every Sunday there was a big gathering and we played games. Out behind the horse barn there, there was a large open field there we used to call our ball field. It's not an open field any more.

Around the corner on Cheese Factory, there was the Lane family. Will Lane worked in Burlington.² Next farm down at the end was the Attwood Farm, which was a real nice farm. My father ended up buying that – I think there was – I remember it – seventy acres on each side.³ The north and south side of Barstow Road. We bought that farm from the Attwoods. It was then bought by an attorney – the Clapps. They fixed up really nice.⁴ Lets see, farther down from them was the Stewart Farm which was the Governor Barstow home. That was a nice farm. John and Lucy Stewart and their family lived there. John used to do a lot of trucking –he had a big truck, a big platform truck, that he carried milk in. He would pick up from farms all around and bring it into

¹ George Stackpole was the superintendent of schools from 1935-1947. He was replaced by Robert Lull who served as the superintendent of the school until the formation of Champlain Valley Union High School in 1964.

² William P. Lane and his wife, Elsie, lived on a land that originally belonged to J.L. Barstow.

³ George and Helen O'Brien purchased the farm from Frank and Cora Atwood in 1955.

⁴ Michael and Elizabeth Clapp sold their land to George and Helen O'Brien in 1970.

Burlington.¹ Chris Fowler owned the farm over on Spear Street. His feather was a great farmer too. Down below the Stewarts was Jim Kelly – he and Evalina. They owned the brick house there at the end of Barstow Road.² Jim and Evalina had just one child, Rita. She and her husband Vic Meilleur lived there on the farm and I think one of their children owns the brick house now. Just north of them there was the Comeau Family that had a farm right there by the cemetery. Fred Comeau. In his later years, he worked at the Shelburne Museum. That was a nice farm in there. They had three boys and three girls. One of the boys, Joseph³, was my age – two days apart – he got killed in World War II. Some of the family still live in Burlington. His brother Clem married a Depeaux girl from Shelburne. She died of cancer but he is still around.⁴ Going south on Spear, the farm up on the left was belonged to Harry Thibault. He lived there for several years.⁵ Jim Byrnes he lived close to Bishop Road there on the east side of the road.⁶ He had quite a lot of property. Besides quite a lot in Burlington, he owned a small farm down on Cheese Factory Road – right across from the Cheese Factory. He used to drive down through with his team of horses – they were nice horses but one was a lot of faster than the other. He owned that farm down there for quite a few years and then I think he sold it to the LeDuc family.⁷ And on the north side of Cheese Factory road was the Slocum Farm – Elmer Slocum.⁸ Every Wednesday, he would take his horse and buggy and take his cream, butter and eggs and he would take it into Burlington and peddle it. He did that for years. His sons Lewis and Kenneth ran the farm for quite a few years. Betty Bandel⁹, a professor at the University, now owns it. The LeDucs were across the road.... and the LaPierres owned a farm. Years back, at the time that we owned it, we always called the Elliot Farm because there was a family of Elliots that lived there. The barn had been built by Earnest LaPierre. His father owned the property and Earnest and Joyce lived there and ran it.¹⁰ They lived in the big house there. We always called it

¹ John and Lucy Stewart inherited the 206 acre “home farm” from J.L. Barstow in 1929.

² The Kellys originally bought the 130-acre “Johnson Farm” in 1930. Parts of the Kelly’s land was eventually sold for the Hullcrest and Westview subdivisions in the 1980s. Rita Claire Kelly married Victor Albert Meilleur on November 24, 1956.

³ Joseph Comeau was one of two Shelburne residents who died during World War II. Shelburne sent over 100 of its children to the war.

⁴ Clement Donald Comeau married Dorothy Marie Depeaux on June 21, 1947. Dorothy was the daughter of Jeremiah and Alma Depeaux owned land on the East side of Falls Road. This land once belonged to Edward and Kathy Sevee, and before that, Truman Webster. Clem was the son of Alfred and Marie Comeau who bought their 149 acre farm in 1932.

⁵ Harvey and Robella Thibault owned 149 acres on the east side of Spear Street. Their family purchased the farm in 1946.

⁶ Jim Byrnes was married to Mildred. Jim sold some of his village property to Norm and Rita Marcotte (see Norm and Rita Marcotte interview).

⁷ The Leduc family own a large parcel of farmland on the south side of Cheese factory Road. Prior to the Leducs, the land belonged to Asa R. Slocum who came to Shelburne c. 1790. The Leduc’s homes sits on the site of the original Slocum homestead which is known as the “Vermont House” and was relocated to the Shelburne Museum.

⁸ Elmer Slocum was married to Cora Slocum.

⁹ Betty Bandel is a Professor Emerita at the University of Vermont and lives in the c. 1825 Slocum farmhouse.

¹⁰ Aledric and Mary LaPierre sold a 190 acre far, to Alfred and Marie Leduc in 1934.

the Elliot Farm. I think when we got it, we bought it from Clarence Bovat. His brother Harry owned the Shelburne garage.¹

JM: When was that?

JO: We moved on January 1, 1950 or 1951. We started farming there on January 1.

JM: How big was this farm?

JO: I think the original farm was about 186 acres. Then we had a lot over where that quarry is now. I think that was about sixty some odd acres. We only used the pasture for heifers. The years went by and we purchased the farm down on the corner. Ed Bessette and his family lived there. I think Tom Koerner moved it back a ways from the corner and fixed it up.² Roger Lewis and his father and his mother lived just north of that. They didn't have too many acres in there -they had a small farm. Ralph Lewis³ used to drive the snowplow. The first snowplow that I remember was like a huge bulldozer with a plow. Ralph Lewis⁴ and Orris Knight⁵ who lived around the corner on Irish Hill used to drive it. It had one huge light in the front. You always watched for the light coming down the road. My mom used to do all of her own baking – bread and donuts. She always had donuts and coffee ready for them. They would turn into our yard and stop for donuts and coffee. George Deavitt married a Knight girl and lived there on that farm until George died. I don't really know....I think maybe some of George's family might still live there.⁶ Across from road from them was the Garrett Crowley Farm. Garrett had a big horse barn out back. Garrett had two children – one son. One time I heard he was part of the a Flying Tigers. There weren't too many people that were six feet tall back then but this tall Crowley was a few inches over six. He was quite tall at that time now it is quite normal.⁷ Chet Norris, who used to drive the school bus, lived there for several years. I don't know who does live there now.

JM: Where is this house – I can't picture it...

JO: It is on Falls Road.

¹ Clarence and Laura Bovat sold their 180 acre farm to James and Pauline O'Brien in 1951. The Bovats had purchased part of this property from Earnest and Juliette LaPierre in 1945 and part of the property from C.H. and Mary Munson in 1948.

² Tom Koerner purchased the land from Ed Bessette in 1978

³ In 1963, Ralph Lewis was employed as a hospital porter.

⁴ Ralph K. Lewis married Irene. In 1954, they inherited 159 acres of farmland from his mother. In reality, the estate was bequeathed to Ralph's son, Roger, but Roger conveyed the property rights to Ralph.

⁵ The Knights lived on thirty acres on Irish Hill Road near the Marble Quarry. In 1934, Orris Knight was reimbursed \$56.90 for season's worth of snow plowing.

⁶ George and Alberta Deavitt owned a plot of land on Irish Hill Road that they inherited from Orris and Grace Knight.

⁷ Garrett Nicholas Crowley married Ann Mary Hayes on June 16, 1922 and they had two children – Mary Teresa and Paul Hayes. A third child was stillborn. Garrett Crowley served the Shelburne community as a Lister, Cemetery Commissioner and pound keeper.

JM: You are a wealth of information about the people of Shelburne. How about your own family?

JO: This is a different memory here. When I got out of high school, I stayed home and worked with my brother George on our farm.¹ I left high school in '41 and then went into the Marines in '44 for two years. When I came back from the Marines, I was looming for a job which they were none to be found. I get a call and they said there was an opening at the Strong hardware there in Burlington which was there at the corner of South Winooski Avenue and Main. There was a hardware store, the Strong Theater and office building up overhead. It was quite a nice building. There was a little old diner on South Winooski Avenue too. I went to work there in August and Pauline was the office secretary. The office was upstairs. It was New Years Eve - we went out for the first time. We went to a midnight movie right there at the Strong Theater. Eleven months later, we were married. When I first met her, I applied to the State Police and after a few months, I had been accepted. They were training in theater. I think Governor Gibson was the governor started the Police then – that would be 1947. I was in the first class of State Troopers. As soon as I got out of training, we got married in November. My first assignment was in St. Johnsbury. We lived there for a few months. And then I was transferred to Chester, down near Springfield. So we went down there and bought a little house down there. I think we paid \$6250 in a little development there a nice little house. We had two children there and then we went started looking for something different. We moved up and bought the house to the south. We moved up and January 1, 1950 we started farming. And that is where we brought up our family. Indoor plumbing didn't come in – I thought it was – until 1940. Our house- the Elliot Farm – the only hot water we had, that we didn't warm on the stove, was in the heater room in the milk room. We had hot water to keep the utensils clean. I don't know what year it was ...we purchased the LeClair farm too.² I think it was 217 acres or something like that. We paid \$25,000. I think probably Doctor Madison was one of the first ones that we sold land to after we stopped farming.³

JM: When did you stop farming?

JO: Back in 1965, the postmaster job came up. The postmaster, Ed Sevee⁴ died. At the time, it was all political. The democratic were in control – I think Lyndon Johnson, I think, was the president. I applied for that and I was appointed. We did consider keeping the farm going but with the boys, we thought that they were going to be hurt by some of the equipment.

JM: Then you started to sell lots?

¹ George was also a janitor at the Shelburne Village School during the 1930s.

² In 1962, Norbert and Eva LeClair purchased land from the O'Briens. The land used to belong to the LaPierre family and it was located on both sides of Dorset Street and it bordered Shelburne Pond.

³ James and Joan Madison purchased 11 acres of vacant land from James and Pauline O' Brien in 1968. This was land that originally belonged to Clarence Bovat.

⁴ Edward T. Sevee, who was married to Katherine, served as Shelburne's Postmaster in 1963

JO: Yes. The town wasn't.....I don't know what the word is.....but if you sold three lots, then they wanted you to give them a.....for all the land you owned and you were considered a developer and they taxed accordingly which we could not afford. So we kept selling lots, mostly to pay the taxes. They don't do that to them these days. I think they have other ways now work with them and then, they made it to difficult, that they had to sell. We had a good life there. The barn that was there was 100 feet long and sixty feet wide. We had a good farm and good dairy. We added on to the barn. The barn that was there had been built by Ernest LaPierre. He had cut all the wood for it off the land- hemlock. There was a sawmill, I think it was set up on the Sutton's land. Now they are just staring to develop that. The sawmill as set up and I think they sawed up all their lumber there too. The Suttons built their barn and Earnest built this one. After we had been there for a little while, we added 55 feet to the north end to it. Norman Marcotte¹ built it for us. After we quit farming, we torn down the old barn. I think the part that Norman built is still there. We had shad upstairs equipped with basketball, pool, Ping-Pong.

JM: Does your family still get together?

JO: Yep. Every Saturday night as a group. Sometimes small, sometimes not so small. The only one we don't see very often is our son Dan, who works for Delta Airlines out of Georgia. ²

JM: Tell me a little more about your life as postmaster?

JO: That really led do a lot. We belonged to the Postmasters Association and I was quite active in the state chapter. I was president for couple of years. We had a national convention every year at a different spot. I might have missed one or two years but most of the 20 years that I was postmaster, we went to a convention and we did get to see a lot of country. We did pay our own way. We went to Hawaii a number of times. I think we have been Hawaii four times. We went Salt Lake City one year. In fact, I think Salt Lake City was our first convention. Yes, as postmaster, I did make new friends.....good friends.

JM: What people from Shelburne stood out from the early days?

JO: Once I did get into the Post Office, I kind of got away from town affairs because I was a school director just prior to going in. You were not supposed to if Federal money was being spent. Phil Smardon, the rural carrier – he kind of gave up his too.³ The Askes were always around. Wendell was the town manger for awhile and his brother

¹ Norman Marcotte is married to Rita and they live on Route 7. They run an appliance shop from their home. See Norm and Rita Marcotte interview.

² Jim and Pauline, who were married November 11, 1947, had ten children – Ann, Daniel, Elizabeth, John, Mary, Sheila. Jim, Frank, Patricia and Karen.

³ Philip and Louise Smardon lived on the south side of Webster Road. He was the rural mail carrier from 1954-1969.

Jerry ran the shipyard. Young Jerry, I think, still lives out there. Jerry Sr.'s wife was very active in the church- she was a wonderful lady.¹

JM: What events in Shelburne's history stand out in your mind?

JO: Probably most of them were church related. I was active in the Church Pastor Committee. Father Morencey was a great priest. Father Cain² was the first one, then Father Brennan. Father Cain was very active in Town affairs. He was a school director at one time and a member of the water commission. There is Governor Snelling and Barbara, who was the school board. If her husband had not been governor, she would have been. There are so many of the families that I consider good friends. Rufus Morrow and his wife Ruth. Rufus is a ballot clerk and I would go there in early in the morning and catch up on old times. His kids are friends with mine.³ The Thomas's are a great family. Father and Grandfather. The Father was Jerry and their grandfather was Ted. Eustace Thomas⁴ was a school board member for 30 odd years and he was a good farmer. His grandfather was a good father. The Marsetts were always where Marsett Road is. Their farm was right on the corner of Route 7 and Marsett Road. The McGees. The McGees owned the farm of Falls Road and Marsett Road that was mainly the Magee house. John Magee was a principal and teacher. He was great man. He was great educator and a nice person. The Bacons. Tommy Bacon lived in Shelburne. Tom's father, I think, was Bob Bacon.⁵ At one time, he ran the farm where the golf course where Brad Caldwell was. Then he was contractor. This is going way, way back. He took some of the stone out of the quarry over there and see if it would qualify for a piece of the thruway that Governor Hoff developed in the 1960s. They told him that it was too soft. – the road. Hundreds and hundreds of tons have been on the road since then. His father.....I think it was his father.....was the mail carrier.....Allan Bacon. I remember that he used to drive his car with a ski wheel in the front.⁶ The McDonalds. The Noonans. Ray Noonan ran the farm for Bostwick for years and years

¹ In 1941, Horace Corbin leased the Shelburne Shipyard to Donovan Contracting Company of St. Paul, Minnesota. J.L. Aske arrives from Minnesota to start building subchasers for the United States Navy. Five years later, Corbin sold Shelburne Shipyard to L Jerome Aske. Along with his brother, Wendell, Jerry Aske formed the Shelburne Harbor Ship and Marine Construction Company. Wendell Aske was Shelburne's first town manager, 1968

² Father Cain served at Saint Catherine's Church in Shelburne from 1934-1953.

³ Rufus and Ruth married in 1947. Ruth grew up in c. 1852 Home at the corner of Irish Hill & Spear Street. She attended the Palmer School on Dorset Street. Rufus Morrow served the community as a select board member, cemetery commissioner and auditor. Rufus worked in the Creamery for a brief period and he was the proprietor of Morrow's Texaco Service Station.

⁴ Eustace Thomas came to Shelburne with his parents in 1901. He went to high school at Saint Michaels in Winooski. Eustace served the community in a multitude of ways. Eustace Thomas served on the school board from 1929 to 1961 and he also served as Shelburne's Town Representative in 1961. He and his wife, Lena, ran a farm (the former Andrews Farm) near the junction of Spear Street and Thomas Road. Over the years, the farm grew to over 550 acres and it had over 400 apple trees.

⁵ Robert and Margaret Bacon had seven children – William, Anne, Elizabeth, Frederick, Phillip, Robert and Thomas. Thomas was the third youngest. The Bacons owned a house directly north of the Shelburne Village School and the family owned land on Thomas Road as well.

⁶ William Bacon was the town's rural mail carrier for many years and than Allan's son, Robert Bacon, held the position. Allan Bacon served as Shelburne's selectman, county senator and fenceviewer.

and years. He was very active in church and town affairs. His brother Bob and Bob had young Bob - RJ who was a coach at Rice for years and years and years.¹

JM: You are a wealth of information. Is there anything that we missed? What about the changes?

JO: Well, I guess probably I thought the change was good for Shelburne. They had a good road commissioner. Way way back....Jack Ready was the road commissioner. Down Cheese Factory Road from the corner of Dorset, there stone walls on both sides....they were on Dorset Street too. I remember when I was sixteen years old, I took my father's tractor...I worked with Walter McKenzie...he lived right there in the Falls across from Church.² We would move each stone and place it a certain way all the way down that road. That is one thing that road will never get again. That was back in 1941. And after Jack Ready³ it was Bob Collier⁴ and after Bob it was Paul Goodrich⁵, who does an excellent job. As you go through the town officers, at one time, they came to town office and they stayed, stayed, stayed. Like Eustace Thomas for thirty years, my father was selectman for thirty years. My brother George was a Lister for years and years. Then as GE was getting active, people were moving in. I think a lot of it was they wanted the fact they were a town officer on their resume or something because they would change. They would go for one term and that was it. I think Shelburne is a great place to live. We have all the same service here as we have then – church, doctors, hospitals are closer, grocery stores. Pretty much the same.

¹ Raymond and Catherine Noonan owned land on the south side of Falls River next to the LaPlatte River.

² Walter and Annie McKenzie lived on a ¾ acre lot on Falls Road between the Village and Falls that they bought in 1944.

³ John Ready and his wife, Ruth, owned land on the southeast corner of Mount Philo and Falls Road. He served as the Road Commissioner from 1930-1948

⁴ Robert Collier lived in a home on Falls Road that had been in his family since 1931. Collier served as the Road Commissioner from 1948 to the early 1980s

⁵ Paul Goodrich started working for the Town at the age of 16 and by 1968, he was a full time employee.

Interviewee: Jack Ockert
Interviewer: Pamela Daly
Date: April 11, 2002
Location: Ockert residence, 514 Shelburne/Hinesburg Road

The Ockert family came to Shelburne in 1883 and over the years members of the Ockert family have been farmers, storeowners and caretakers for the Webbs.

Topics discussed: Immigration, Shelburne Farms, cottages, Webb family, Marsett family, Shelburne Point, traveling, World War II, Limerick Road, development, dairy farms, Burlington

Pamela Daly: What is your full name?

Jack Ockert: Carroll A. Ockert

PD: How old are you?

JO: I will be 67 in June.

PD: Where do you live?

JO: 514 Shelburne/Hinesburg Road

PD: The reason that I am here today is because you are the...third generation?

JO: Yes.

PD:...the third generation to live here in Shelburne. Was your grandfather the first to live in the Shelburne area?

JO: Yes

PD: Why and how did he get here?

JO: He migrated here from Germany in 1883.

PD: What was his name?

JO: Well, he changed it once he got here. Robert was his first name. Heinrich or Henry was his middle name. Ockert.

PD: Was he married when he came over?

JO: Yes. He came six months ahead of my grandmother. She came six months later with four children. All in 1883.

PD: Why did they come over here?

JO: I really don't know to be honest. I think in that particular time in Germany was a big time for migration because of millwork and things like that. I really think he ended up in the wrong place because his background is what we call a shipper –he worked on ships in Germany. Kind of what we gathered from the research that we have done on our family history, I think he was originally looking to go some place to work like Iowa because he talked about the what fields and all these kind of things which we don't have here. We really don't know how he got here because there is no record of him coming through into the United States. We think he came through Canada. We know our grandmother came – she came through Ellis Island. He did not come through Ellis Island or Baltimore or New York or Philadelphia. We just know that he got here.

PD: Where did he work?

JO: He started working soon after he got here at Shelburne Farms. He started in 1883. That's not right...Dr. Webb, at that time, owned Oakledge. And that is where he started working for Dr. Webb...at Oakledge. He walked to work every day. He walked from Shelburne to Burlington and walked home at night.



Photo 1 Oakledge Manor, Burlington

PD: What did he do there?

JO: Caretaker types of things...as he always did.

PD: So, dealing with building and grounds more than agricultural work?

JO: Yes. When they bought down here, he continued to work with them when they came to Shelburne.

PD: Did he live on the estate?

JO: He lived in what we call the gatehouse at the Southgate.

PD: How long was he there?

JO: He died in 1935.

PD: When was your father born?

JO: 1897. The house, that is now at the Southgate was on Limerick – Old Limerick, which is the road that runs from the Bostwick property to Shelburne Farms. There were several houses and then they moved them all. That is one of them that was moved. My dad was born in that house that was moved to the gatehouse. There were five or seven of them down there and they moved them all from down there and onto the farms. Dr. Webb developed the place and they moved the two houses. The French restaurant up here across from the Museum – that is the old schoolhouse. They had an old schoolhouse over there. The three cottages behind the old railroad station.



Photo 2 Ockert Cottage, Across from Railroad Station

PD: And there are some cottages on Harbor Road?

JO: Yes. There were four cottages up there. There was our cottage. There was Northgate and up behind the Breeding Barn, there was another cottage.

PD: Who were the cottages for?

JO: The families – the people who worked on the farms.

PD: What was your father's name?

JO: Alfred

PD: Your grandfather had four children when he came over?

JO: Yes.

PD: Your father was....

JO: the youngest.

PD: Out of how many?

JO: Lets see. I think they had a total of eight. A couple of them died.

PD: Your father was born in one of the cottages?

JO: Hmmm...hmmmm

PD: And he was pretty much raised there?

JO: Hmmm...hmmmm

PD: Where did your father go to school?

JO: In Shelburne.

PD: Was it the brick school?

JO: No, it wasn't there then. The old school that was there burned. He only went to a freshman in high school. That is as far as he went.

PD: What did he do after high school?

JO: When he got out of high school, he was in the army – World War I. He did not go overseas but he was in the army for a short period of time. He worked on the railroad as a section hand. He worked about three jobs for a while. He ended up working where the country store is now – he worked for Mr. Deyette who had that store. Then he had the store for a while. But my father was too kind hearted and who would not make people pay their bills so his business went under. In 1935, he started working for the Webbs. We moved back into that house in 1937.



Photo 3 Deyette Home

PD: Back into the gatehouse?

JO: Yes. It was empty for two years. It was the only period of time when nobody lived there from our family until 1982.

PD: What did your father do at the farms?

JO: He worked mainly down at the point for Mr. Samuel B. Webb – his caretaker. My mother worked down there and I worked down there and my sister worked down there.



Picture 1 Entrance to Shelburne Farms

PD: Where was your mother from?

JO: My mother was born....the Marsett family came from Ferrisburg but she was born in Burlington.

PD: How did she meet your father?

JO: I don't know. I don't think it ever came up. (Jack yells to the other room) Hey sport, how did mom and dad meet, do you know?

PD: You will have to explain for the tape who "Sport" is.

JO: "Sport" is Genevieve, my wife.

Genevieve Ockert: She and Ralph (Marsett) were classmates – they were the same age. He always said that he pushed her in the carriage.

JO: Oh yeah, that was one of dad's favorite stories. Dad was thirteen years older than my mother. He pushed her in her carriage until she got old enough.

GO: That would make her furious.

JO: Oh, she would get upset.

PD: So it was because the grew up...

JO: in the same community. They lived next door.

GO: Did the Rays live next door to Marsetts at one point?

JO: The mom and dad lived down at....

GO: ...three cottages.

JO: They lived down there. The Marsetts lived down there and the Rays lived down there. Those folks all worked for the railroad station. That is why the three cottages were there. My grandfather lived in one, the Rays in one and the Towers lived in another.

GO: David Tower

PD: So we have Marsett Road...

JO: That is my grandparents.

GO: I call it Marsett House – the big white house.

JO: The big white house – I was born in that house.

PD: You were born in that house?

JO: Yes. I was born at home. I used to my tease my sister: “you could have been mixed up - you were born in the hospital. I couldn’t - I was born at home.”

PD: When did you mother marry your father?

JO: They got married in May of 1928.

GO: Mr. Qiumby, the Episcopal priest, married them.

PD: Did your mother stay home?

JO: She did for a while. Then she worked with dad at the point. When we were really little, she worked over there and we would play outside. She worked down there with dad on Fridays and Saturdays during the summers until the early 1940s.

PD: What kind of work did she do?

JO: Cook. Then in the fall, the Webbs would come back in September, October and November for hunting season. She did all the cooking down there.

PD: The Webbs were there just part of the time?

JO: Mainly in the summer time.

PD: Where did they live the rest of the time?

JO: New York City. Mr. Webb, the one that I worked for, was an insurance broker.

PD: When were you born?

JO: 1935.

PD: Do you have any brothers and sisters?

JO: I have a sister.

PD: When you were living out the gatehouse, were the roads paved?

JO: The ones on the farm were paved. Not all of them. Just the main road to the big house. What we call Dairy Barn Hill was not paved.

PD: What was it like around there. Were there any other houses?

JO: Once you went beyond the Northgate, which is where you enter Shelburne Farms now. As you went up the hill, there used to be place that they called Bayview. It was a big old house and it burned down. 1950s probably...maybe in the 1940s. There wasn't much from there down to the harbor.

PD: So there was the big house that they tore down?

JO: Yeah, that was there. A little further down were the Tellers. That has been there a long time. There was one other place on the left – the Browns. Other than that, there was nothing. And then from there, it was the shipyard.

PD: So, you lived there through high school?

JO: Yes. And through college.

PD: And you went to college at...

JO: UVM¹

¹ University of Vermont, Burlington, Vermont

PD: What are some of the changes that you have noticed over the years?

JO: First of all, I would say this development right here was my grandparent's farm. Both of my grandparents died in 1952 and my mother and her two brothers inherited it.

PD: What farm is that?

JO: It is from Marsett Road all the way down to the Citgo station on Route 7. That was all farmland. About 130 acres. Then all the land from Marsett Road south to the Teddy Bear factory. And where the Gables is? That was a farm there too – my father's farm. That was odd shaped lot in what we call a twenty-acre lot – a bunch of houses and meadows. I was in Germany – it was in the 1960s when they sold the cattle and tore the old down barn and rented the house. When my uncle died in 1957, they sold the development to Ray Pecor. That was the first development in Shelburne.

PD: Ray bought a lot of land...

JO: Probably, that was the first one. How he got into that, I do not know. He did not own a house – I don't think he ever owned a house up there where Doctor Cleary is now but the land behind it, south of there- he sold it. That was the first development. There was one house on Route 7 on one side of the road – it was the little brick house that there now. A little further down, where the bridge to the museum – that was a gas station. Wesley Fisher had a gas station. And next to him were the barns across from Harringtons. Where Harringtons is now used to be a little ice cream shop – Fenwick's Diner.

PD: The house where Lisa Mann's mother lives – the converted barn. Was that barn moved from somewhere?

JO: Originally, across the street, there was a nice big old brick house. It was an old stagecoach inn. When Dunbar Bostwick bought that land all the way down to the museum, he tore that old house down. Behind it, was the brick red barn which the Lamson family lived in. The one where Lisa Mann's mother....I am not sure if they might not have been part of the Lamson's property.

PD: So it was probably moved.

JO: I think so. There never used to be anything on that corner. That barn was not there when I was growing up because it was close to my grandmothers. I used to go up there everyday to get milk. I grew up on raw milk – I never had pasteurized milk until I was in college. Two quarts every other day.

PD: When you were growing up, did your family have a car? Did you travel much?

JO: No. We had a car but that was it. That was mainly used to go back and forth to work. As far as traveling...

PD: Not even a big trip into Burlington?

JO: Well, Burlington. Saturday nights in Burlington used to be a big thing. My grandparents used to go up there on Saturdays – it was the only night they were open. We would go up to Burlington and on the way back we buy some ice cream at the little ice cream place my father really liked. We would come home to my grandmothers and have a little ice cream. That was it. As far as folks were concerned, back and forth to work. Once a year...not even once a year...in the fall, we had Thursday and Friday off for teacher's convention in October. Once every three or four years we would drive to Massachusetts – that is where my aunts and uncles ended up. All my dad's brothers and sisters – except for one or two – ended up down there. We would drive down on Thursday and drive back on Sunday.

PD: Where in Massachusetts?

JO: Attleboro

PD: So you drove down?

JO: Yes. Long drive in those days. Nine hour drive. Once we took the train. It picked us up in Boston. That was a long time too.



Photo 4 Shelburne Railroad Station

PD: So Shelburne was primarily agricultural when you were growing up?

JO: Oh yeah. Mostly farms. A large percentage of the kids that I went to school with came from farms. This was all farm through here.

PD: What kind of farming?

JO: Dairy farming.

PD: How do you think WWII affected the area?

JO: I was ten years old when it ended. It affected us the same way it affected everybody else. There were a lot of folks from Shelburne who went off to World War II and there was a few who did not come back. We had one in town who ended up being a prisoner of war from Shelburne. Barbara Kent's husband. He was a prisoner of war in Europe. He was a changed man when he came back. He was spick and span and spotless before he left.¹ We knew a lot of folks in town who went off to World War II. The same as everybody else – rationing and that kind of thing. It pulled people together. Shelburne was a lot smaller during World War II. When I was growing up, we only had about 900 people in the town. So probably in World War II, it was only six or seven hundred. If you look at the plaque in Shelburne Town Hall, there is a large number of people from Shelburne in World War II.

PD: So it was pretty much the 1950s and 1960s when the suburbs started popping up?

JO: 1960s. I remember when Shelburne Road was a dirt road. As you came from Burlington down Shelburne Road...where Friendly's is now used to be A&W Rootbeer. From there south...until you got to where the Howard Johnson's is now – that was open field. From there down...it used to be called the Victoria Inn...it was a beautiful old home...it is a restaurant now. From there down to the Lozons....Lozons is where the Sirloin Saloon has there corporate office. The Lozons lived there when I was growing up. There was one across the street. The Lozons owned both of them. And then from there down, there was a few houses. The red brick one on the left where the Lighting House is. Where the motel is...that used to be cabins at one time. Strong family.

PD: The Strong family?

JO: Different strong. Halvorsons up on Church Street? Jackie Strong married a Halvorson. She and her husband ran Halvorsons but Jackie and her family lived in those cabins at one time. Sally, Betty and Jackie – three girls. Jackie and my sister went to school together.

PD: So you were in the service?

JO: Yes. I went into service in 1958 for two years as an obligation for ROTC. I liked it so well, I stayed for thirty years.

PD: Which branch?

JO: Army. Medical Service Corps. You can't call it the administrative branch of the Army Medical Department because within there is all your rehab services. The first ten years I was in field units. I spent 3 1/2 years in Germany with the 3rd Armored Division.

¹ See Barbara Kent interview

Finally ended up in hospital work which I did not want to do. I did not want to work for the dumb doctors and dumb nurses.

PD: Your wife wasn't a nurse?

JO: No. Schoolteacher. In 1965, I knew my assignment in Massachusetts was going to be up in June of 1966. I started volunteering for Vietnam and I got a letter one day saying "no problem" in December of 1965 – "Next summer, you will be assigned to Vietnam". Good. A week later, I get another letter saying you have been selected to attend the US Army Baylor Hospital course in Hospital Administration. I got a master's degree in hospital administration out of it. For five army hospitals, I was deputy commander for hospital administration. I was in Vietnam – two different hospitals in Vietnam, one in Germany and two in the United States. On my final tour, I was Inspector General for the 7th Medical Command for 5 years. I traveled all over Germany, Belgium, England, Holland, Italy, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia

PD: You spent a lot of time in Germany. It is in your roots.

JO: I was there for 11 ½ years.

PD: Have you traced it back in your family?

JO: Yes, back to 1743. Germans did document everything which does get them in trouble frequently. We knew when my family migrated – we knew 1883. We knew where they came from. So we sent a letter off to a place in Hamburg and they kept beautiful documentation. They sent back the name of the ship, the date it sailed, the captain of the ship and where it stopped. That is when we found out what ships my family came over on. Then we also knew when they came to Shelburne, they went to Episcopal Church. We knew if they had been Roman Catholic, they would have gone to the Catholic Church. If they were Methodists, they would have gone to Methodist Church. They were probably Lutherans. We took a chance and we wrote to a little town (in Germany) and that is where we got stuff back from a priest at the Lutheran Church. That is where my family had gone to church. He took it all the way back to 1743 for us. This was when the Iron Curtain was still there and he was over 65. If you were over 65, you had a little more access to back and forth. We always paid him German Marks. We were told when we were doing all this that we would probably get three letters through but you won't get any more. We got three letters done but no more which means they were being stopped going through. They were always done in German and mailed from German Post Offices and there was nothing army/military or American about it. After three letters, they stopped. He sent a very nice picture postcard of the church. I always wanted to go there. We can go there now. Yeah, I spent 11 ½ years in Germany. It was almost like home. They way were raised and the way my father was raised was very strict. When Dad was growing up, he spoke mostly German in the house.

PD: Any other final thoughts?

JO: Growing up was different...growing up on the Webb estate. I kind of had the run of the place. I had lots of acres to run around in as a kid, which most kids did not have. I grew up there at the Point. They had two children there – Sam jr. and Holly. We were puppies together. Sam is four years younger than I am. Mr. Webb, I remember, in the summertime....Sam was about ten....every afternoon he put up a target and taught us how to shoot. I shot my first duck with him. He had a marsh up in the Missiquoi Bay area. In 1946, I shot my first duck up there. I spent a lot of time fishing, hunting and running around with the youngsters over there. It was unusual. It was fun.

Interviewee: David Palmer
Interviewer: Cathy Townsend
Date: February 21, 2002
Location: Palmer Sugar House, Hinesburg Road

David Palmer's ancestors have called Shelburne home since the mid 19th Century. For the last 75 years, the immediate Palmer family have been involved in Maple Sugaring at Palmers Sugar House.

Topics discussed: Maple Sugaring, The Ticonderoga, Shelburne Museum, Old Palmer Schoolhouse, fur trapping, Shelburne Farms, Shelburne Falls, Eutie Thomas, Woodsman Hall

Cathy Townsend: How long have you lived in Shelburne?

David Palmer: Oh, about forty years.

CT: And we should probably say how long your father lived in Shelburne.

DP: My father was born in Shelburne in 1907. My mother was 1908. He was born in Shelburne Falls.

CT: Do you know when he moved to Burlington?

DP: 1919

CT: And then did he come back to Shelburne eventually?

DP: Well, no he came back to Hinesburg, close by. About 100 yards south of border!

CT: When and where were you born?

DP: I was born in Burlington...1944.

CT: The name of your parents?

DP: Marjorie and Lawrence.

CT: Where did your parents go to school?

DP: Boy, my father went to school in Shelburne for a time, he went to Burlington High School for a time, and he went the University of Vermont. I guess that just about it covers it.

CT: Do you know what school he went to in Shelburne?

DP: Boy, it had to be before the Village School, so I would assume it was probably the New Palmer Schoolhouse because my grandmother taught in the Old Palmer Schoolhouse is 1898.¹



Photo 1 Palmer Schoolhouse

CT: What did your parents do for a living?

DP: My father was a Funeral Director and my mother was a housewife.²

CT: Do you have any brothers and sisters?

DP: Sure, I have one brother and one sister.

CT: Where do they live?

DP: One brother is homeless... no he's not really homeless...he is building a home in Hinesburg, he's been building it for four years. He lives in Alburg right now. My sister lives in Delaware.

CT: What prompted you to move to Shelburne?

DP: Family had a farm since 1858 or 1859, indirectly and directly since, well I'm not sure of the exact dates, but my grandmother's father had the farm right around the corner here so it was an opportunity. Maybe because I wasn't a team player and... I just loved the outdoors and animals at the time, so that was probably what pushed me to moving out here.

CT: Do you have a first memory of Shelburne?

¹ Lucy Peet Palmer was married to Walter Fonda Palmer and she taught at the school at the turn of the century.

² Corbin and Palmer Funeral Home on South Union Street in Burlington.

DP: The first memory I ever had of Shelburne I used to come with my father because he owned a farm even though he always had hired help to work the farm, and we used to come out here to watch the ball games on TV because we didn't have a TV and the hired man did. That was my first memory. It was a dirt road.

CT: Was this your first home in Shelburne, have you been in the same place?

DP: Yeah I've been in the same place.

CT: Do you have any thoughts on how the town has changed in the period of time that you've been here?

DP: Yeah, it's not as personable as they used to be. I mean, years ago, you know, you knew everybody, I mean that's everywhere not just Shelburne. I don't consider it as friendly of a place as it was when I was a kid, but there's different types of people, and it's more like city community anyway. I mean, that's what it looks like to me. Agriculture was a big thing in Shelburne years ago and you knew everybody who farmed and you went over and played cards with everybody. I mean his father and mother {points to someone in room} I used to go over and play cards with every Friday night with, and his father had a farm over on Cheese Factory Road. I knew Henry Webster down on Thomas Road, and I used to go down there and visit with him. He was famous in Shelburne.¹ And Eutie Thomas, of course everybody knew Eutie Thomas; I used to play cards with all these people. They all had great stories. Eutie used to come up here periodically, three or four times right up until he was ninety-five years old. I had a rocking chair, I still have it, he'd sit in the rocking chair. He'd drive up and he'd scare everybody to death. He used to say, "I can't see and I can't hear" and he'd drive up there. He would sit and visit for you know for an hour. Once and a while there, I think that is when he was escaping from his caregiver. And before that one of his daughters would drive him up and he would come up and visit. That was his big thing. You know, sugaring has always been a fun thing.

CT: Did your father ever say what life was like at home?

DP: Yeah, a few memories I have of his childhood. He owned a dairy farm, he always had hired help because it was his father's, and his father had gotten it from his wife's father. But, before that when they had the mill he said before he went to school, he had to milk six cows by hand. He said he always hated cows after that. But he always had a dairy farm even though he didn't actually milk the cows himself.

CT: Did he ever say how close his nearest neighbor was?

DP: Well, he had an uncle, George Palmer, who lived on; I think it's the Richmond Barr² Farm. George Palmer owned the Richmond Barr farm its on Pond Road, and he used to go over every summer and work for him.¹

¹ Henry and Alice Webster owned a 190-acre farm on the Charlotte/Shelburne town line on Spear Street extension.

² See Richmond Barr Interview

CT: That's his closest neighbor?

DP: Well no. He was born in Shelburne Falls, and he used to work every summer for his uncle, but his closest neighbor had to be pretty close because if you go across that bridge in Shelburne Falls, that little bridge, you go up the hill, there is several new houses but there was a big white house on the right side, there is a little smaller house just before it they built a few years ago and then the next house is that big white house. That's where he was born, in that house. The mill of course was right on the river. I can remember him telling a lot of stories about neighbors but I can't ...you know you just don't pay much attention. The stories were nice then, but I forget things that happened yesterday.

CT: Did he say how he heated the house?

DP: I imagine it was wood, everybody did.

CT: And how he kept the house lit?

DP: Got me, but I know in Burlington, as a kid they used coal so I imagine it was wood in Shelburne. We're talking about 1919, I'm not quite sure of the dates there you know, but I know when he was born. His father sold the mill, I guess it was 1919. I had a calendar somebody gave me the other day from the gristmill. One edge was ripped off, but they found it in the old Jim O'Brien House down there on Dorset Street.² The guy was remodeling and they found it in the partition, and he brought it over. Pretty neat.

CT: Do you have a favorite season?

DP: Oh, of course, spring. Sugaring! That's the favorite season. For the whole family it's the favorite season. It's been a tradition we've passed on. My mother did it, I've done it and my nephews taking interest in it, so it just goes on. I don't know, something about it, once it gets in your blood you just have to do it.

CT: Do you know how your father got to school?

DP: I would assume walk. I knew his mother. She used to call me every day.

Someone else in the room screams: He did walk! Gramps used to tell me stories about walking to school.

CT: Did he go to church?

¹ George and Frances Palmer, who married in 1894, lived on a 140-acre farm that they received from Eli Palmer in 1895. The also had 16 acres that they received from the Lucy Peet Farm in 1919. George Palmer (1868-1945) was a Cemetery Commissioner and Select board member for Shelburne during the 1930s.

² See James and Pauline O'Brien interview

DP: Well, knowing my grandmother I'll betcha he did. She was a schoolteacher. I know in his later years he always went to church but he was a funeral director, you know. You know the church I remember him going to mostly was in Burlington, the First Methodist Church.



Picture 1 Methodist Church, Burlington, Vermont

CT: What do you remember or if you want to tell what your fathered remembered about Shelburne Falls.

DP: The one story that has stuck with me all my life. My father always was a practical joker. If you said "don't tell anybody, well you were in trouble. So, one story that always stuck in my mind, all my life was that, I don't know if you know them, they just died recently too, you know the Harrington's Antiques Shop, well Henrietta Panettieri lived there.¹ Every time my father saw her, especially when there were a lot of people out, he would announce to everybody about Henrietta shooting the minister...that Henrietta shot the minister next door. The minister was in the backyard writing his sermon and Henrietta had a .22 or some gun, and was target practicing next door and shot him, but not intentionally, but he made it sound like it was intentionally and he would always tell everybody "Henrietta shooting the minister". I always remembered that all my life. We used to go down and bring her syrup down to her and immediately that was the first thing he would always bring up with her, shooting the minister in Shelburne.

¹ Henrietta Panettieri lived on 23.4 acres that belonged to her grandmother, Blanche Harrington. She also owned 96 acres of land north of Harbor Road that she gave to the Nature Conservancy in 1988.



Photo 2 Shelburne Falls

CT: Do you remember what businesses there were in Shelburne Falls?

DP: You mean forty years ago or hundred years ago?

CT: Either one.

DP: Well, the businesses I used to stop and visit with were like Little's Grocery Store, basically because their son was a friend of mine, Glen Little, he lives right near Shelburne he's right on the border I think in Charlotte. Russell and Martha Little, they had this store and of course you know it was a little teeny store in there. You hit the stop sign, you go by Galipeau's, you hit the stop sign, and you take a right. There's a little apartment house there but it used to be a grocery store. I used to go in and visit with Russell all the time.¹ Of course Galipeau's, everyone knew Frank Galipeau. I know my father talked about the butcher.

CT: Do you know of the Shelburne Falls Progressives?

DP: Are they communists or what?

CT: Must have been a long time ago.

DP: The Shelburne Falls Progressives? Never heard of them.

CT: How about the Woodmen Hall?

DP: They had a fire up there. My father played basketball upstairs. They had a gym and I think it was a pot bellied stove right in the middle of it if I remember correctly, and their biggest rival was Hinesburg.²

¹ Russell and Martha Little bought their land on the west side of Falls Road in 1947 and they sold it in 1974.

² The Modern Woodmen of America is a fraternal life insurance organization that was founded in 1883 by Joseph Cullen Root in Lyons, Iowa. Root envisioned a self-governing society whose members came from local camps (lodges) across America. The lodge system, which remains in effect today, nurtures community spirit by bringing families together for wholesome, social, recreational and service activities. (source: www.modern-woodmen.org)

CT: Was there a feeling that Shelburne Falls was separate from the village?

DP: I think so. I have that feeling because all the stories I hear have Shelburne and Shelburne Falls.



Photo 3 Shelburne Falls

CT: Do you know anything of the Union Poor Farm?

DP: I think it used to be down on Thompson Point.

CT: Do you know who the large families from Shelburne were?

DP: Are you talking about weight wise? (He laughs) Of course, everybody knew the Thomases. Their family was spread out; it wasn't even just one family. Of course everybody knows them, Colleen is the town clerk. There was Colleen and she had a twin sister, and then she had another sister, then she had Sean and Dan her brothers, but their father had a brother, Eutie Thomas¹ is related to them, Archie Thomas. That was a fairly large family in Shelburne.

CT: Do you know who the big landowners were in Shelburne?

DP: Obviously, the Webbs were at one time the, but before the Webbs there were lots of different individual landowners down on the lake. All the farms were bought out by the Webb Estate. I have a great story from when I was a teenager. Myself, a friend of mine, and a girlfriend, we were like sixteen or seventeen years old, we were out on a boat and we got caught in a storm out there; it was the worst storm of the year. The storm went on and we crashed onto to Shelburne Point at like two or three o'clock in the morning, I had no idea where, we were because we were teenagers you know. We went

¹ See Colleen Haag interview. Eustace Thomas came to Shelburne with his parents in 1901. He went to high school at Saint Michaels in Winooski. Eustace served the community in a multitude of ways. Eustace Thomas served on the school board from 1929 to 1961 and he also served as Shelburne's Town Representative in 1961. He and his wife, Lena, ran a farm (the former Andrews Farm) near the junction of Spear Street and Thomas Road. Over the years, the farm grew to over 550 acres and it had over 400 apple trees.

over to Essex, NY, I think on Sunday or something, probably to purchase some illegal alcohol, chances are, because you couldn't buy it in Vermont on Sunday or you had to be twenty one and we weren't. I think there was a place, the Coffee Pot, over there. This little old lady would sell it to an infant, and we thought that was pretty tricky so anyway we got caught in the storm, the motor broke down and we coasted all night and at around 2:00, 3:00, 4:00 in the morning we crashed into Shelburne Point. We staggered up to this brick house, you know, and we had no idea where we were, beat on the door. This guy came out with a smoking robe there, and we asked if we could use the phone and he said fine and he let us in the house, he showed us where the phone was, and he went back to bed, and I'm looking, the house is all filled with antiques and stuff. We called up and the state police came to get us and I still had no idea where I was. The next day my father brought us back to get the boat because the weather had cleared up. We were at Sam Webb's front doorstep just about. Sam had a big garage down there full of Kodiak Bears and Polar Bears every bear you could think of. So he gave us a tour of his Big Game Club or whatever that is in that garage down there. So I always remembered that about that part of the Webb's Estate.



Photo 4 Webb Estate.

Photo Courtesy of UVM Special Collections

CT: Do you remember some memorable personalities that used to live in Shelburne?

DP: Henry Webster was real memorable. He was a trapper at one time. He was just an all around hellion all his life. I can always remember, he told me the year before he died, as a kid they used to always trap and he used to tell me, you know, trapping as a kid towards Burlington, then back around down through Charlotte. He had a little dairy farm down there on Thomas Road. He was a character that everybody knew. Of course you had the Sutton Boys, down there on Dorset Street. They had a farm down there, two old bachelors. They were there forever. Most of the people from Shelburne that were from years ago were all into agriculture. A neat story about the Sutton boys - Walter and Jim. I remember one time poor old, I'm not sure if it was Walter or Jim, one

was a short stocky guy and one was tall. They were brothers but they were opposites. One of them was out bailing hay, and they always used to wear these bib overalls but they never wore nothing under them. They were bailing some and he went to pick the bail up and the strap got caught and yanked his bib overalls off, and he was walking down the highway with nothing on trying to get home.¹

CT: What do you think is the most beautiful natural areas of Shelburne?

DP: They were, but then Burlington used to be a pretty town, you know its progress. It depends on what you're used to and what you like. Well you know the farms towards the lakes, Shelburne Farms, they are very picturesque. Of course, we like our own woods. Anyplace that's not developed is picturesque to me, but that's unrealistic too. That's what my lawyer tells me, your unrealistic life goes on, but it's my life though.

CT: What kind of wildlife have you seen around town?

DP: Oh god, I've seen every animal you could imagine, all except for a camel and Charlie Hubbard, one time, was going to buy me one. Said he was going to Egypt...he was an architect that lived down on Irish Hill Road...he is dead now. He used to come and visit all the time.² He felt that I needed a came. He was going to bring one back. He never did but he always said that. I have seen bear...any animal...deer...fox...coyotes. I even saw a wolf here one time here. Years ago, I had four hundred sheep and I sued to trap the coyotes which just became prevalent in the last twenty years and now they are everywhere. Coyotes are opportunists and with my sheep, I had this hate thing for coyotes. I used to set traps for coyotes from all the way from over here all the way around. I probably caught fifty of them out there. Back then it was acceptable – everyone wore fur coats. Obviously you had to skin the animals to get the fur coat. I remember bringing hides to with Henry Webster, a fellow from Williston, over to New Champlain, New York and sell the hides to a fur dealer which coyotes were worth twenty dollars or something. He kept going through them. He came to this one hide and he kept asking “where did catch get it? Where did you catch it?” When I shot the thing, I said “This is the strangest looking coyote I ever seen.” About a year later, I was looking in a magazine and on the front cover; they were showing pictures of wolves and this thing looked exactly like a wolf. I have seen bear, bobcat, lynx...I saw a lynx not to long ago. If you go over near Shelburne Pond, you see a lot of lynx. Even in our woods, I saw a bear once. I saw a bear running across the road just down the road here a little bit. Moose...any kind of small animal Never seen a poisonous snake here in Shelburne. Saw one that I thought was poisonous. Never seen a snake like that. It was up on Longmeadow. I went up there one Sunday, captured it and let it go behind the police station. They thought they were pretty funny sending me up there after it on a Sunday, so I went up there, brought it back and let it go. I was telling one of the officers there, Leblanc who used to be patrol man there, but he isn't anymore...they have a

¹ James A. Sutton and Walter A. Sutton owned two significantly sized farms: a 112 acre Dorset Street farm that they received from Mary Noonan in 1943 and a 120 acre farm, known as the “John and Mary Higgins Farm” which sits on both sides of Dorset Street.

² Charles and Oda Hubbard owned 233 acres on Spear Street and Irish Hill Road. The coupled acquired the land from Walter Maeck in 1963 and A. Fleischmann in 1957.

picnic table out back... Leblanc used sit out there and eat his lunch. I brought the snake that nobody knew what it was and I let it go there by the picnic table. When I told the dispatcher and they asked what I did with the snake, I said, "I let it go there by the picnic table". She said, "What happens if the snake is poisonous?" I said "How do we know if the snake is poisonous, or not? If Leblanc is dead by the picnic table, then we know it is poisonous." They had a lot of learn sending me out that door anyways.

CT: Did your father ever tell you of any disasters in Shelburne?

DP: I think by the time they had they had the big flood that wiped out Richmond, I think they lived in Burlington by then. There is a story about a gravel pit collapsing and killing some of the town employees. I can't quite put together in my mind what exactly the deal was.

CT: That's pretty big

DP: For Shelburne. There weren't many people in Shelburne. I remember a picture of my grandmother when she was a teacher. I am pretty sure it was the Old Palmer Schoolhouse, which is on Irish Hill Road on the right. Right on the corner here of Irish Hill Road and Pond Road, there used to be the old Palmer Schoolhouse...a brown schoolhouse. Miraculously, it burned up and it got pushed away.

CT: Did your father or you know of any famous visitors to Shelburne?

DP: Not that I know. He always used to talk about George Peet, his uncle. He was a fur trapper. The Vermont fur trappers sent him to Washington to give Eleanor Roosevelt a fur coat. He had to take the train. When he came back, they were all excited to get all the information about Eleanor Roosevelt and dealing with the president. The only thing that he could talk about was that on the train, he met a bunch of salesman playing poker and he skinned them all. That was the biggest thing. He could care less about delivering a fur coat to Eleanor Roosevelt.¹

CT: Do you remember anything from the early days of the Shelburne Museum?

DP: I could tell you some stories but I better not. I remember some certain people who stole a bus and left it in the middle of Church Street one time. I remember going down and watching the "Ticonderoga" being moved. I remember riding on the "Ticonderoga". We had a camp down on Thompson Point and I can remember, right around from our camp, there used to be a stone dock and the "Ticonderoga" used to

¹ George and Clara Peet owned quite a bit of land in the Shelburne area. They owned a large 200+ acre farm that was on the Shelburne/St. George town line that eventually grew to 536 acres with major acquisitions in 1912 and 1924. This farmstead was originally the John Noonan, Sr. farm. The Peets also owned 200+ acre farm at the corner of Dorset Street and Hinesburg Road on the Charlotte/Shelburne town line. In 1917, John Peet donated the Lucy Peet farm (236 acres) to the Friends of Homeless Women. The Peets also own land in the Shelburne Falls area, which they sold to J.V.S. Maeck.

dock there. I remember riding on it and I remember it was a big deal when they were moving it to the Shelburne Museum.



Photo 5 Moving of the "Ti".

Photo courtesy of UVM Special Collections

CT: They are turning that path into a trail. People can read about the history along the way...

DP: Don't tell me about it, I already know about it. I work for the town. I was working for Paul Goodrich part time. I would go down there and mow the parks and the ball fields. Somebody said, "Why don't you mow that Ti trail." So I went down there, put on the brush hog and mowed a heck of a trail. People were calling up the Town Manager being mad. Apparently, one end of it is right through people's property. So they were not impressed about that.

CT: Do remember any of the buildings being dismantled and rebuilt at Shelburne Museum?

DP: I do, but...I know one time, I had a hearse...a horse driven hearse and sled. I offered to give it to them but they did not want it. They said that it was kind of grotesque. Then a few years down the line, they wanted it and I wouldn't give it up. I still have it.

CT: Do you know of any Shelburne ghost stories?

DP: No. Some people believe in ghosts. I don't particularly believe in them. I have seen some strange things. I used to live...where I live...my grandmother's brother and sister killed themselves when they were kids. That is just down the road. I used to see people around but it could be anything...I used to drink a lot too {laughter} I am not the only person who saw them.

CT: The house that you live in now, did you build it?

DP: No, I was the second one. It was built in 1942. The original house...the farmhouse was burnt to the ground...who knows how...they used to have a woodstove...that generally what torched these houses. The one I lived in was built in 1942...my son lives in it now. Even though I am a resident of Shelburne, I took care of my mother the last couple years of her life at her house. We did not know how long my mother was going to live. My son had an apartment and we made a deal because my house was empty and falling down. He said, "I will fix it up."

CT: What was your first job when you moved to Shelburne?

DP: When I moved to Shelburne? I had a dairy farm. I took over the family farm.

CT: Where else have you worked?

DP: I was about 20 years old when I came to that. Before that, I worked in a factory one time for a while. I was, generally, a lifetime student before that

CT: Do you know what happened to the mills at Shelburne Falls?

DP: I have no idea.

CT: Do you remember any stories about the Shelburne Shipyard?

DP: Nope.

CT: Do you know of any other large maple sugaring operations in the Shelburne area?

DP: Eutie Thomas¹ on Thomas Road had one for a while. He is dead now. He had a big sugar works. Of course, all dairy farmers had maples and sugared to help pay their taxes.

CT: What products do you provide with the maple syrup?

DP: Maple syrup, maple sugar, maple cream, maple candy. George Deavitt had a sugaring outfit for quite a few years too.²

CT: How long has your family been involved with sugaring?

DP: Since 1858. My immediate family –mother, father and myself – it has been since 1930. But before that, grandmother's brothers...it goes back and back. By our old sugarhouse in the woods, there used to be an old beech tree right beside the front door.

¹ Eustace Thomas came to Shelburne with his parents in 1901. He went to high school at Saint Michaels in Winooski. Eustace served the community in a multitude of ways. Eustace Thomas served on the school board from 1929 to 1961 and he also served as Shelburne's Town Representative in 1961. He and his wife, Lena, ran a farm (the former Andrews Farm) near the junction of Spear Street and Thomas Road. Over the years, the farm grew to over 550 acres and it had over 400 apple trees.

² George and Alberta Deavitt owned a plot of land on Irish Hill Road that they inherited from Orris and Grace Knight.

It fell over a few years ago, but as a kid I can remember looking and even up to ten years ago and seeing where they carved the dates, their initials and dates...eighteen something. The Peets. My grandmother was a Peet and the Peets were around Hinesburg Road especially. They had farms everywhere...even where Champlain Lanes is.

CT: You transported the sugar by horses....

DP: We used horses, than tractors and now we use vacuum pumps.

CT: How has the sugaring industry evolved over the years?

DP: It has become more technical. Sugaring is a labor-intensive business so you would have to be more technical. People don't seem to have the time, not just for sugaring, but for anything. Before, people were a lot more laid back. We always have lots of people stopping by and people would pitch in. Put the buckets up together and sap was always great fun. That was before TV I guess. Now everybody goes to their computer.

CT: Have you been recognized for your sugaring?

DP: Up until lately. A lot of people in sugaring are on a mission to get a "Point of Origin" label put on a maple syrup can seeing that 95% of syrup called Vermont Maple syrup is Canadian syrup. The State Agricultural department is not enforcing the laws. It is just a thing that is wrong...it is illegal. It is a hundred of millions dollar business.

Interviewee: Jim St. George
Interviewer: David Webster
Date: April 4, 2002

Jim St. George grew up in Shelburne Farms where his father worked on the farm.

Topics Discussed: Shelburne Farms, the Shelburne Farms' cottages, Shelburne schools and teachers, Saint Catherine's Church, Father Cain, Father McDonough, Reverend Lynnwood Smith, the Ticonderoga, Eutie Thomas, Herman Dederer, LH Palmer's Store, Tracy and Maeck Store, local farms and roads, Winter, Burlington, World War II, the Craft School, Shelburne Families, life at home,

David Webster: What is your full name?

Jim St. George: James Joseph St. George.

DW: You were born in Shelburne?

JS: Yes.

DW: When was that?

JS: October 23, 1937

DW: Where were you born?

JS: I was born in a hospital...probably Bishop DeGoesbriand in Burlington.

DW: Who were your parents?

JS: Earnest Alexander St. George and Ellen Margaret Early.

DW: Were both your parents from here?

JS: My mother was from here and my father was born in Charlotte. Perhaps my mother was born in Charlotte too.

DW: Where did your parents go to school?

JS: My father went to school in Charlotte. My mother went to school in Shelburne and then to St. Mary's.

DW: What did your father do for a living?

JS: He worked at Shelburne Farms for sixty-five years.

DW: Are you an only child?

JS: Yes.

DW: Where did your grandmother live?

JS: My grandmother lived right next door (on Spear Street).

DW: Did she come here at a later date?

JS: They lived in Charlotte and they worked on Southern Acres for J.W. Webb, Sr. They purchased this properties in the 1930s.

DW: What was your first home in Shelburne?

JS: My first in Shelburne, I think I recall mother saying, is where Laura Fisher lives now. It was a rental. Then we moved to one of the four cottages over at Shelburne Farms. I think it was the second one on the right. Then I moved over to what used to be the boarding house at Shelburne Farms.

DW: Do you remember living there?

JS: I vaguely remember moving to the big house at Shelburne Farms – the boarding house. All I remember about the cottages was that they grew watermelons one year and they had huge watermelons. That is all I can remember.

DW: Was there a time when you did not live in Shelburne?

JS: When I graduated from high school in 1955, I went to college in Boston. I was there from 1955 and 1957. And then I came back and lived there until 1960 when I went into the Navy. I came back in 1962 and lived there until 1963 when I was married. Moved back here in 1966.

DW: Whose land was this?

JS: It belonged to my grandmother.

DW: What was it like growing up on Shelburne Farms? Neighbors?

JS: I had no neighbors. The closest neighbor was Tower who was the office manager. There were no children – pretty isolated. There were lots of places that you were not supposed to be.

DW: Such as?

JS: Down at the barn. In those days you were supposed to be out of sight if you were a child. Quiet and out of sight.

DW: Did you do anything on the farms yourself?

JS: Never did. I never worked on the farms. I mowed Dave Tower's lawn.

DW: What did your dad do?

JS: He was hired on as a teamster. He drove teams. Then he worked in the dairy barn and did regular farm work.

DW: Do you remember him driving the teams?

JS: Yeah.

DW: How late do you think they were using teams?

JS: I can remember when I was in probably seven or eighth grade, maybe freshman in high school, that they had a team....two horses...Black Beauty and...almost like the story book...I can't think of the other horse. They would take a team, hook it up to a wagon and go to my other grandfather St. Georges in the village and plow that big piece where he used to raise potatoes. Take the horses down, plow it and go back to the farm.

DW: Do you remember sugaring?

JS: They didn't. My father and Oliver Burritt used to sugar for themselves. Shelburne Farms did not sugar.

DW: Where did they sugar? There or elsewhere?

JS: There, in back of the house. On Lone Tree Hill. I guess they are sugaring there now.

DW: Where did your grandfather live?

JS: Do you remember where Gervia's store was?

DW: Yes.

JS: He owned that land that is referred to as Viens Development. That whole piece of land belonged to the St. Georges.

DW: Where was the house?

JS: the house is still there...with the yellow barn. The Gervia's Store , which was fixed over and turned into apartments— just to the west of that.

DW: The house was sold a number of times in the last few years. How was the house heated?

JS: Wood. We cooked with wood. Heated with wood. It wasn't very warm. Then we got a coal furnace – I don't remember when we got that. Then, we got an electric stove probably when I was in high school. It was terribly warm in the kitchen

DW: Did you have a summer kitchen?

JS: No. We heated the hot water off of the wood stove. We had what you called a hot water front for the stove. I can remember when we went to Burlington, which was a big event, and in the wintertime, you came back and if that fire gone out, you had no hot water until you got that fire going again. That would circulate into a little holding tank.

DW: You had a bathroom in the place?

JS: We had a bathroom. In our first places, up at the cottages, there was an outhouse.

DW: How were the typical evenings spent at home?

JS: Listening to the radio, eating popcorn and we had a huge kitchen table, and just playing on the kitchen table when I was a kid.

DW: What do you eat?

JS: We had a lot of meat and we had a lot of potatoes.

DW: Did your mother can?

JS: Oh yeah. She had a large garden.

DW: Where was the garden located?

JS: It was right to the side of the house. Terrible soil. Very shaley.

DW: What were winters like over at the farms?

JS: It was pretty isolated because...they took care of their own roads like they do now... they roads were plowed....they had a huge snowplow that was made by a blacksmith. They put a tractor crawler in and hook it all four corners. It had a deep rout and it had wings. It was very slow. My father used to run the wings on it. He would stand on the back and raise and lower the wings. They might be gone for eight to ten hours. They

had big fur coats they put on. It was very brutal and it was so slow. You might be isolated in there for a day or so if they couldn't get the roads open.

DW: Did you look forward to school?

JS: No, I didn't like that much school. I had to wait in front of the barn for the bus. Russ Little drove the bus. We had to wait in front of the barn. In the wintertime, he would come in and go down to the big house and pick up the kids down there.

DW: Boisverts

JS: Yes. And when I was very little, there were the Pattersons. They had Shirley Patterson going to school. And then they would come up and sometimes the road across from pasture there to the barn would be so drifted. They would not come across. They would go back out the way they came and I could not see over there because the wind would be blowing. I would wait and wait and there would be no school bus. I did not go to school that day. I remember that he had a bus that was in real terrible shape and the clutch was bad and he would not come to a complete stop because we would have to jump off if the clutch was gone. Do you think we could do that today?

DW: I don't think so.

JS: There was a period of time that they would not come on. Johnny Boisvert used to take us to school – they had a pick up truck that they made like a covered wagon hoop covered with canvas and we would ride in the back of the pick up truck. He would take us to school and pick us up. Russell Little had a hearse. It was an old hearse that they converted to a school bus with benches on the side. Where the doors opened in the back there was a big stuffed chair sitting there. That was the prized chair. We rode in that thing for a school bus.

DW: So you to the Shelburne School and you went there grades 1 through 12. There was no kindergarten?

JS: There was no kindergarten. Boys entered from the north side of the building and girls from the south side. The bathrooms were corresponding. You came in from the Noonan side and, of course, that addition was not there. You went upstairs, the first grade room was on the left and if you went downstairs, the boy's room and the janitor's room were down below. On the other side was the teacher's room and the girls bathroom. You could not enter from the other side – you were not supposed to.

DW: Who was your first grade teacher?

JS: Miss Franklin was my first grade teacher.

DW: What other teachers?

JS: Miss Franklin was my first grade and second grade teacher. Mrs. Muzzy was my third and fourth grade teacher. The famous Mary Noonan was the fifth and sixth grade teachers. We had several teachers for seventh and eight grade. Mrs. Horsford was the principal then, I believe. She taught some of the classes. Mrs. Mackenzie from Hinesburg taught. I think Mrs. Patterson taught too.

DW: I had her.

JS: Around that period of time, they built the addition on to where the high school moved into. When I first started, the high school occupied the upstairs. The lower grades were downstairs and the gymnasium was upstairs in the old part. Mr. McGee, he was the principal. He moved over to the office in the new section.

DW: The gymnasium was upstairs in the old part?

JS: Yep. If you came in from the Noonan's side...it worked the same way on both sides...you went up one flight of stairs to the first level and then you would just turn and go up another flight of stairs to the second level. The rooms on the roadside were the two classrooms and the gymnasium was on the left side and the science rooms were on the left side too.

DW: It must have been a fairly small gym.

JS: Yeah it was small. I can remember going to basketball and watching the high school play basketball. It was really...the only place to sit was on stage. Flat against the wall. When they were practicing basketball sometimes and you were in the lower rooms, you could hear the basketball go thump...thump...thump. It would be a headache.

DW: In high school, there were probably only two teams?

JS: It was not hard to get on a team. When we started there were twenty-two or twenty-three students in my freshman class and eight of us graduated. The drop out rate was pretty bad.

DW: Why do you think that was?

JS: Well, some of the girls got pregnant and a lot of the boys just dropped out and went into the service.

DW: Sally Martel talked about a similar rate of a lot of people starting and not a lot of them finishing.¹

¹ See Sally Martel Interview

JS: When we went from the eighth grade to the freshman, we had a big class...one of the biggest. But only eight of us graduated.

DW: What sports did you play?

JS: Basketball, baseball and soccer.

DW: What kind of classes did you take?

JS: It was pretty standard. You had Algebra I and II. You had American history. I could take Latin...I think Mr. Mcgee taught Latin...if you wanted to take it. He taught physics, math, and geometry. Then you had Social studies. Your mother taught Home Economics. Had her for study hall...she had study hall too. Civics.

DW: What were social activities were at school?

JS: The seniors always ran the little candy store. We had an old Victrola box. You know the stand up Victrola Boxes? It was emptied out. It had shelves in there and it had candy in there. The seniors would get to run that every year to raise money for the senior trip which always went to New York City when we graduated. That was the noon hour social. Then we had dances on Fridays sometimes. I played trumpet in the band myself – George Sennett and Carl Lozon and Larry Sennett, Joyce Barnes. Janet Boyer – she played piano incredible. There was not that much social activity.

DW: Dances were few and far between?

JS: Yep.

DW: How about away games?

JS: They had away games. It was used to be with parents – four people in a car. We did not take a school bus. Not very often.

DW: Who did you play?

JS: We played in New Haven. Beaman's Academy in New Haven. We would play Jericho. We would play Hinesburg. We did not play Vergennes. Charlotte did not have any. The kids from Charlotte came to Shelburne. That was about it.

DW: How about the class trip to New York City?

JS: We stayed at the Knickerbocker hotel.

DW: Just the eight of you?

JS: I don't even think the whole eight went, to tell you the truth, John McGee went – he was the chaperone. Can't remember who else?

DW: Take the train?

JS: Drove. Two cars.

DW: How about field trips during the year?

JS: No

DW: Where did you go to church?

JS: I went to Saint Catherine's. During that period of time, they used to have religious education in the school. They had them on a Friday afternoon. The ministers each would have room. They did that until the Reverend Brushet, I believe, the Methodist Minister did not want to do it and he sort of put a stop to it.



Photo 1 St. Catherine's Church and Parish House, 1908

DW: I remember kids living early for catechism so it was not held in school.

JS: They used to hold it in school because I remember Mr. Smith in the room. Father Cain was the priest here then. I do not know what year they stopped. Then we used go over to Saint Catherine's Hall or to the Rectory. I remember Good Friday. That was the day you could get out of school and go to church.

DW: Father Cain. Who had the Great Dane?

JS: He did.

DW: I remember my mother saying when she first came here, the great Dane pretty much had the run of the village. It would come into the house. It was a great dog.

JS: During church services, the dog would wander into the church. During the summer time, the doors were open and the dog would wander up to the altar and pride himself.

DW: Who was after Father Cain?

JS: After Father Cain was Father McDonough.

DW: He had the red convertible.

JS: He had the red convertible. He was a chaplain for the Rutland Railroad. He was a licensed engineer. He would get on the train here in Shelburne and have one the altar boys drive his car to Rutland. He was a real railroad man. He had a cruiser, a cabin cruiser, that he rented and then he bought one. He used take us out on the lake. He took us to Montreal too. He had to buy a chalice or something for the church so he took all the altar boys to Montreal on the train. We went to a small factory where they were making chalices and various church objects.

DW: My recollection is that they were both part of the community and not just the church. Was that true in later years?

JS: In later years...Father McDonough was there all the time that I was altar boy. I think they had some priests who was not as much part of the community. Like Morency – I don't think he was a community man. He drove me To Charlotte. There was Father Harvey. Remember him? He was a character. He used to run bingos for the church if we were hurting for funds. He should have been a solicitor for some magazine. He would go every place and just skewer merchants. He would just ask him. "I need something for this – can you give it to me?" He was older. I guess you can say that he was involved with the community as anyone.

DW: When was he there?

JS: He was there, I think briefly, after Father McDonough. Father Murtaugh was there first because he was the one that married me. I think it was Father Murtaugh and then Father Harvey.

DW: How about the others. You mentioned Don Brushet. Do you remember Lynwood Smith?

JS: We had him in craft school. I remember Don Brushet. I remember him about the controversy.

DW: In what grade did you start going to the craft school?

JS: I say third or fourth. That started pretty early.

DW: Did you do that through high school?

JS: Yes. We had an afternoon class and then you could go at night. For ten cents an hour, you could use the facility. We did not have nice lumber to work or anything. We knew how to do things because Reverend Smith was a real good teacher. We were pretty good. I used to watch these grown men come down from Burlington – they paid more – probably fifty sixty cents an hour. They had this beautiful lumber and they would just butcher it. Cherry, Maple Oak.

DW: What sort of things were you doing over there?

JS: We made a lot of bowls. I made some tables. Cabinets, shelves. Before we could do anything. We had to learn how to use a “High Back Saw”. It was a little saw. A stiff saw. You could not use any power tools until you got a little more proficient. You had to take your square and then scribe it. Where you were going to cut, you had to take your jack knife and cut a little groove where you were going to cut. You had to be good at sharpening tools too. It was good.

DW: It probably gave you some lifelong skills.

JS: It is probably the most important thing, besides my basic studies, is that I learned so much about woodworking and really enjoyed it. That is where I got my start.

DW: Did you use your skills at home?

JS: Yes. I was useful at home because my father was not just that handy at building things. We did not have any tools or anything but I had everything to work with there. I think the craft school did a lot for me. A meat shop used to be there. It was pretty rough little building. There was a little bathroom tucked right into the side. The pottery shed was pretty bad. Then they taught mechanical drawing at the bowling alley. That was heated with a woodstove. I don't think there was a pottery shed?

DW: That was the late 1940s. Mrs. Webb gave the money to build the pottery shed.

JS: We were never involved with pottery.

DW: A lot of the girls did pottery

JS: They did lot of weaving. I think I would taken pottery if I had a chance at it.

DW: Were you a scout?

JS: I was a scout.

DW: I heard from somebody, that at one point, Catholic kids were not scouts.

JS: I don't know that. I was a scout from the time it started. Maybe they had their own something.

DW: They were not allowed. This might have been in the 1930s.

JS: We were not allowed to go to any Methodist weddings or funerals or anything like that. We were not supposed to go into the Methodist church or Episcopal Church. It was kind of sill.

DW: When did that loosen up?

JS: Probably in the late 1950s and 1960s. It was pretty segregated. High school was. Even to the fact why should not be dating her because she was not Catholic. I married a non-Catholic. I broke all the rules.

DW: You mentioned that going to Burlington was a pretty big deal?

JS: It was a pretty big deal because the roads...Route 7 was pretty desolate...there was not a lot of building there---just farms. In the wintertime, it could be quite an experience. I have seen times where you had to drive off the road, through field, because the road would be so drifted. We always had chains on the tires. I remember coming home one Saturday. It used to be called the red iron Bridge – it is the fishing access. We got stuck really bad – shoveling and shoveling.

DW: You would not go around the bay – you would go to the village.

JS: We were coming around the bay – that was a mistake. It would also drift really bad by the Bicknell's house. Where the middle school is and that little bridge – Turtle Creek. The Bicknells house was east of that bridge. It would drift really bad through there. The thought was if you could make it down past the fishing access area, because just that small area would be bad, you had a pretty good shot the rest of the way because the woods shielded from the drifting. I can remember as a kid, during the war, you could not buy tires. My father would have to stop and change the tires two or three times on the way to Burlington because the tire would blow out. He would have to patch it.

DW: So you were born in 1937, so you remember a lot of World War II?

JS: I can remember looking at the paper – I could not read very well but you would see pictures of ships that were sunk.. It made a big impression on me. I remember the blackouts at night. You had to black out all your windows and turn off all your lights off and no fires.

DW: Were you aware of what was going on at the shipyard?

JS: Yes.

DW: Did you ever go out there to see the PT Boats?



Photo 1 PT Boats, Shelburne Shipyard 1940

JS: I went out there one night. They were sub chasers. There were a lot of lights there at night. They were really illuminated. Of course, I used to work down at the shipyard when I was in high school. I was mowing lawns, sweeping floors...when they were building admiral barges.



Photo 2 PT Boats, Shelburne Shipyard, 1940

DW: Admiral barges?

JS: They are fancy little barges for officers. They were carried on a boat. They were 30 feet long. Like a little cruiser...cabin cruiser...but military style. They are fancy. They made them for a few years. They used to have to bring them by trailer truck so that they could put them on flat beds at the railroad.

DW: That was in the 1950s?

JS: Probably 1954, 1955. At least that was when I worked down there.

DW: What did you do when you went to Burlington?

JS: Primarily shopped.. Clothes..groceries. My mother and grandmother. My grandmother was one the best window shoppers going. My father and I would sit in the car for three or four hours while they did Church Street.

DW: How about shopping here in town?

JS: They used to favorite L.H. Palmer's store for some reason.

DW: I also think the Webbs did a lot of business at the Palmers.

JS: We used to go there and I remember old Dixon's Barber Shop.

DW: That is where I got my first haircut.

JS: That was a place where we were not supposed to go too because he was a Jehovah's Witness and he was always trying to preach Jehovah's Witness to you. So we stayed away from his barbershop.

DW: There were not too many other options.

JS: We used to go to Paul's Barbershop on Cherry Street in Burlington.

DW: Did you do any business at Tracy & Maeck's?

JS: Yeah. Of course, in the daytime we could not go shopping because my dad worked. At night, Tracy's would be closed and Palmers was open.

DW: When you went into Palmer's store, what was it like?

JS: Oh, it was really cluttered. Typical general store. What I remember most is as a boy scout, he was selling the store. I think he sold it to Mullis and Mullis was going to live upstairs. They hired the boy scouts and they had John Clark's truck and Paul Holden was the scoutmaster. We cleaned out the upstairs of that store for an x number of dollars. If I had only been a little bit older – the antiques, memorabilia and advertising and all that stuff. There was a fortune that went to the dump. I was just too young. I knew I shouldn't have been going because there was nothing that I could do about it. It was all this nice tin wear. Boxes of tin advertising signs. And buttons. Racks of buttons. And patterns for making clothes. It all went to the dump.

DW: Did people try to shop at both places?

JS: Oh yeah.

DW: Was there one that you would go for certain things?

JS: No. Whatever was open was convenient.

DW: Did Palmer sell meat?

JS: I don't think he sold meat. But, when I was little, I remember we used to buy meat at the meat market. Elmer Smiths. In later years, they always bought meat at Doenges and Towles. We did a lot of shopping there.

DW: Did you go to the movies?

JS: On Saturday afternoon, if my father did not have to work...he had every other Saturday afternoon or something like that off. He used to take me to the movies in Burlington. That was a big deal. The Strong or the Majestic which was a big theater.

DW: Where was the Majestic located?

JS: There is a filling station there now. On the corner of South Winooski avenue and Bank street. The Strong Theater was there and the State Theater.

DW: Was there any difference between the village and the Falls?

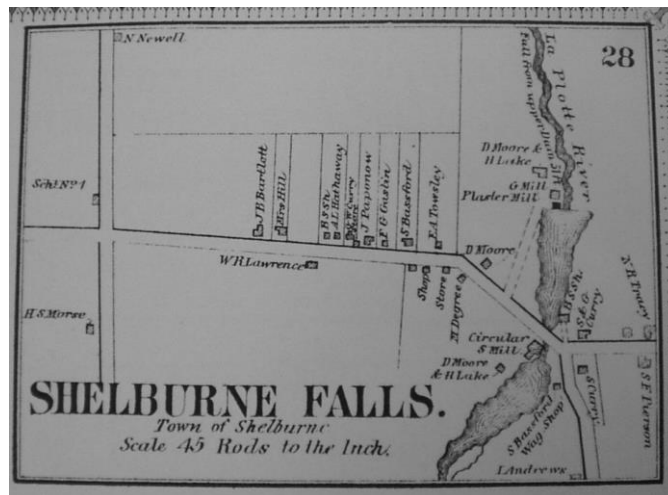


Figure 1 Shelburne Falls

JS: No.

DW: There was not as much commerce in the Falls in later years.

JS: Walter Ball was still sawing logs when I was a kid.

DW: Who were the large families?

JS: Large families or wealthy families?

DW: Large families.

JS: The O'Brien family was a large family.¹ There were some very poor families on Bay Road that were large families. The Mausseys, West. They were very poor and they had a lot of kids. Senesac was a big family.

DW: Were they out by.

JS: Hinesburg. Right on the line.

DW: Who were the town leaders?

JS: The Clarks were town leaders.² The Tracys and Maecks were always involved with town business.³ I don't know whether Ruth Morrow's father and mother...he taught down at the craft school too...Irish.⁴ The Webbs, of course, were leaders.

DW: Do you think there was a connection between the Webbs and the rest of the town?

JS: No. What the Webbs wanted is pretty much what they got back then. And the Bostwicks.

DW: There was not a lot of mixing?

JS: I don't believe so.

DW: Who were some memorable personalities in Shelburne?

JS: There was old Paul Dumas. He lived down by the railroad tracks where Roberta Coleman lived. He lived down there. I think he worked on the railroad when he was younger. There was Tom Gleason. He lived over where the post office used to be where the Texaco is. He lived up over that. He was a character?

DW: What made him a character?

JS: He used to drink a lot.

¹ See George and Pauline O'Brien Interview

² See Sally Martel Interview

³ See Doris Maeck Interview

⁴ See Ruth Irish Morrow Interview

DW: Same with Mr. Dumas?

JS: He was just different. He was a little old man. Herman Dederer, who was the Poor master, used to take care of him. He couldn't see. I used to work at the post office and I remember he came in one day and he said "Boy, It is really dark out today." It was bright, bright sunny out. He could not see and he was crossing Route 7. Today, he would probably been struck down. He would come in and get his mail...juts a little man. When I was an altar boy, Father McDonough was getting new mattresses. He said "Why don't take these mattresses down and see if Paul wants them?" We loaded them into a Plymouth car and took them down. Paul was home and we asked he wanted these mattresses. He said "Oh yes boys." He had two rooms – a bedroom and a kitchen. The frying pan was on the stove and the cats were eating out of the frying pan. He said: "Just bring them right in here." So we brought these mattresses in and there was his bed and he had two mattresses on the bed. He said "Stack them on there. I will just climb in between them." And then he offered us a piece of pie. No thank you. Mr. Dederer took good care of him.

DW: When you were growing up, was there still a Poor Farm?

JS: I don't think there was a poor farm in Shelburne. I think they probably asked for help. And then I think there was a budget for the Overseer of the Poor and he would take Paul and get him his clothes for him, and take him to the doctors. Eutie Thomas had that job before Mr. Dederer. Mr. Dederer was probably a little more zealous than Eutie. Characters?

DW: John Tracy?

JS: He was a character. But just an intellectual character. He liked to listen to himself. He used to come to school and play the piano. He would show up and do that. Of course we had the other characters. We had Tony and Norman Mears. They stuck Tony in the first grade with us.

DW: He was in his 30s at that point.

JS: Yeah. They tried to teach him to read and write I guess. Oh yeah, and there was the kids. Walter Fenwick. Remember him? He was a different story. He was a little out of control. They put him off on one side with a three-sided screen thing. They put it around his desk to keep him separate and he would always burst out screaming and throw the thing over the top. I can't remember how long he lasted. I don't remember him going to school for a great period of time. He was a problem.

DW: Who was your family doctor?

JS: Doctor Norton to begin with and then Doctor Crane in Charlotte.

DW: Did Doctor Norton make house calls?

JS: Yeah, he came to when I had the measles. The stairs going upstairs in my house were very steep and narrow. He had big feet and my father was scared that he was going to fall over backwards going up those stairs. He was a large man...tall..big guy.

DW: Did you explore a lot of natural areas as a kid?

JS: I used to go out on the farms and into the woods. I had a dog and we go up into the woods. Lone Tree Hill and that area.

DW: What do remember of the moving of the Ticonderoga?



Photo 3 Moving of the Ticonderoga (Courtesy of UVM Special Collections)

JS: I remember that very vividly because when they were moving that they were going to cross Harbor Road and Turtle Creek was thawing really bad. They worked really late and they got it across the road that night. The next day, it was a flood area. If they had not got it across the road, it probably would have drawn over. We used to sit in the high school rooms and we could look out and watch them build the horseshoe barns. I think Wes Fisher was there with his pick up truck and there was a big railroad beam on it.

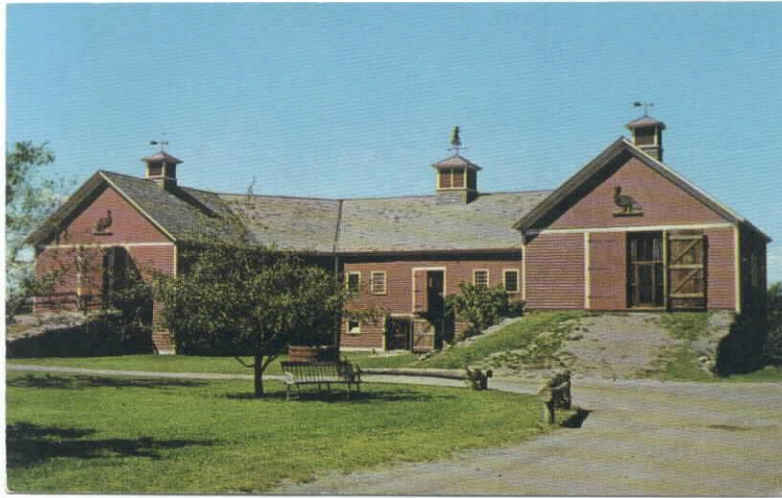


Photo 4 Horseshoe Barn, Shelburne Museum

DW: Did you go to the Museum at school?

JS: We never did. I never been a big supporter of the museum. Maybe there was not enough of it. I don't know. I have gone there. There is some nice stuff there.

DW: What do you remember of the Fire Department?

JS: I remember George Noonan, the fire chief. A lot the guys at Shelburne Farms who worked there were members of the Fire Department. The Webbs would let them go. Of course, they rang the siren. I remember a different amount of rings for each direction – east, south, north, west. So you which way to go and often times they would go there in that direction to find the fire instead of reporting down at the fire station. I don't know how they arranged that. You must remember the fire drills – they would blow the sirens at the school. At noon.

DW: Were people from all ages members of the Fire Department?

JS: I don't think they had had the younger people so much as they did later on.

DW: Did Shelburne have celebrations?

JS: I think it is becoming more so than it was.

DW: Were you around for the Bicentennial Celebration?

JS: No, I was in New Hampshire at my wife's parents place. I missed that. But they didn't have any Halloween or parades. Halloween was the time when everyone went down and got the Gadhues.

DW: Who were some of the large farming families?

JS: John Clark. Of course, the Webbs had all that farmland. Lester Thompson was considered a good farmer. The O'Briens.¹ The Senesacs. Tink Strong in town but that was not really a big farm. The farms up on Shelburne Road then had been farm but they were not actively farming. Fayette was not doing anything. Mr. Farrell there was pretty active with his apple orchards.

DW: At that point, did you considered it to be a farming community?

JS: It was a farming community but small. My grandfather had three cows.

DW: Over at the Falls?

JS: Yes. He had three cows in the barn. He was a house painter and he also sold milk. In the morning, he would do the village and the afternoon, he would do the Falls. He did that. He would make butter and sold that.

DW: Enough for a small operation. This would have been raw milk?

JS: Raw milk. He sold potatoes.

DW: And painted

JS: He was a busy man. He worked all the time. In fact, he fell off a roof when he was in his seventies. It was Harold Adams house. He had a ladder up on the porch roof. It was really hot and he didn't know it, but the ladder was slipping on the tarpaper. He fell off the roof. He did not break anything but he always had high blood pressure after that.

DW: Going back to World war II. Do you have any other memories of that period?

JS: I remember collecting meat fat and taking to the chain store where they collect it to send off. I guess they used it to make gunpowder or some war product. We saved all of our tin cans, crush them and bring them back to the stores. We used to pick milkweed. They made life jackets. I remember picking that stuff and picking grocery bags. They would weigh it in. You brought that to school and you would get a little badge to put on your arm if you picked so many pounds or such a weight of it.

DW: You got one.

¹ See Jim and Pauline O'Brien interview

JS: I got one.. It was awful stuff to pick because the pods got so sticky. I remember waiting in line to buy sugar with my mother for her coffee. Women were going nuts because they got separated and they almost got trampled. They would have had so much coffee and everybody was standing in line. When it opened up the lines to do it, they wanted their coffee.

DW: Did living on a farm make is easier?

JS: You were much better off because you always had meat. They would give you a half a side of cow. You always got that. And then you had your garden. Everybody had gardens. Everybody had a problem getting sugar. Sugar was pretty dear. It was like toys. You could not buy good toys. Everything was made of paper. There were no toys that were available. I remember I got a saw. It was just stamped out of tin. The handle was pressed paper. I was so frustrated. You just couldn't get good stuff.

DW: How long after the war did it take for things to get back to normal?

JS: Probably a couple of years after before. They were trying to make cars right after. The foodstuff came right back.

DW: If you were born in 1937, you did not live through the Depression. Do you have any memories talking about it?

JS: I have memories of people talking about it. I guess that anybody working for the Webs felt that they were fortunate because they always got paid. They didn't get paid a lot. There were a lot of people who worked on farms who did not get paid. I guess I wasn't affected by the depression as far as being deprived. Because they got paid and had a place to live.

DW: What inventions/developments have really changed people's lives?

JS: TV. I remember that we did not have TV until I was in high school. I remember where the Cathedral High School used to be there was a TV store with TVs in the window. In the wintertime, everyone standing out in the cold watching these terribly snowy pictures on the TV and Dave Towers, who used to be the office manager, he had the first TV I ever saw. He invited me up – I used to mow his lawn – he invite me up to watch a baseball game. Tiny TV and he had to put the shades down and you could just barely make out what was going on the TV. That changed your activity at night – you watched TV and you stopped reading.

DW: Stopped listening to the radio.

JS: Stopped listening to the radio. To an extent. I listened to the radio a lot.

DW: What have been the big changes in Shelburne?

JS: The services people expect and got to have - We didn't even think about. That is a big change. The general attitude is "organize this, organize that." We did things by ourselves. There was no "organize" anything.

DW: How about social organization?

JS: It is probably more. People just stayed to themselves. They were working on these small farms or they worked for a farmer. They did not get together that much – it was not easy. Now everybody has 2 or 3 cars. We had one car and it was an old car. We did not use it much. We did not drive off just to drive someplace. There was always a purpose that you had to drive for. We didn't go for a pin or down to the store for a soda

DW: Where did your love from cars come from?

JS: When I was a kid, I was always fascinated with cars. I used to cut out pictures of cars and put them into a scrapbook. I used to buy Time Magazine just to cut the pictures of Cadillacs out. They always had the best picture ads in Time Magazine. I always had a thing for cars. Maybe because we never had a nice car.

DW: Getting involved with mechanics was natural

JS: It was natural. I have natural mechanical aptitude. The woodworking...I have to back to the Craft School. If they had a mechanical course, it would have been great. Perhaps I should have gone into Industrial arts instead of regular high school.

DW: You mentioned farmers who did not get paid. What kind of hours did the farmers work?

JS: They worked awful hours. My father would have to go to work at 5:30-6:00 in the morning. If they were not working in the dairy, I think they went to work at 7:00. He worked until 5. In the summertime, you worked as long as you could hay it until 9:00 at night. If you worked in the dairy, you went in earlier and then you came home and you had a couple of hours break in the middle of the day and then went back.. Then you just worked until the sun came down.

DW: Did they have enough people working on the farms?

JS: Normally they did. In the summertime, they would get guys to do the hay.

DW: Was there much socialization amongst the people who worked on the farms?

JS: Yea, but they were so damned tired so there was not much socializing.

DW: Did the Webbs have a picnic?

JS: They had a picnic in the summertime and a Christmas Party. The big thing in the summertime as to go to the big house and there was a big party. Derrick Webb would have a Christmas Party down at his house. They would call up and ask what size a shirt you might take, because they would give you a gift. I can also remember when they were doing that damn fox hunting at Southern Acres with those little hounds and horses running all over your lawn and over you garden like it was nothing. They did not care where They would come down through and let the dogs go.

DW: The attitude was “ If we do any damage, we will right a check.”

JS: Oh no. We were on their land. It was their house. The attitude was “You are out of luck.”

DW: Was that their attitude when they were off the farm?

JS: I don't know. I have a couple of little spoons. They would ask to go across their land. Then they would have a party for everybody and they would give out a spoon. I have a couple of those someplace. You probably remember the fence that went around all the property. It had big sections that were hinged so they could pop it down so the horses only had to jump a couple of feet instead of four feet. There were big sections – probably ten or fifteen feet wide that the guys would go out and unhook them. They were so hinged so that you could jump over easy. They did not have much respect for your gardens or lawn.. It was like they were possessed. It used to really bug me. It would drive me nuts. Then the young kids. Sam Webb – the guy my age – he and his cousins would ride around in an open convertible with shotguns and they would shoot pigeons out of the clock barn.

Interviewee: Mary Twitchell

Interviewer: Oda Hubbard

Date: March 2002

Topics Discussed: Tracy family,

Mary Twitchell, born in 1939, is the daughter of Laura Wooster Tracy and Marshall Coleman Twitchell and she grew up in Burlington. Between 1945 and 1955, she and ten other grandchildren spent a month each summer with their grandparents B. Harris Maeck and Charlotte Maeck Tracy at the White House on Route 7 north of the brick house and the then old post office where the gas station now sits. Mr. Tracy kept a car, for family use, in the barn behind the house. They also had a large vegetable garden. A wooden cistern and dug well provided the water. Mrs. Tracy kept a cow in the barn for the family's milk.

Some rooms at the house were rented out to teachers. The grandparents moved to the brick house in 1959.

John Tracy, an uncle, kept a vegetable garden/business across the railroad tracks which now is Tracy Lane.

When the grandchildren spent several weeks at the grandparent's house, they slept on the back porch. Their world was from the Library, Post Office and Creamery. "Watching and counting the cars going by on Route 7 was an entertainment." Fishing on the LaPlatte. Their parents took them up to the town dump at the end of Thompson Road for playing and treasure hunts.

Mary Twitchell's grandmother grew up on the Maeck Farm on Spear Street. That was as far as a young man from the village would go courting on horseback.

The Tracy family came from Norwich, CT c. 1787 to Shelburne. They sold the family farm to the Webbs c. 1888.