

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. Than 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 ate 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 hear 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 took 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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