Hartford Agricultural Oral History Project
Interview Transcription
May 7, 2012
White River Junction (Wilder), VT

Interviewer: Kaitlin O’Shea
Interviewees: Harris Lyman with Mary Lyman

Location: 97 Albert Street
Time: 10:00 am

KO: Kaitlin O’Shea
HL: Harris Lyman
ML: Mary Lyman

The Hartford Agricultural Oral History Project, the 2012 segment, is funded by the US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, for the Certified Local Government Program of Vermont’s annual program under the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act. Previously, Hartford’s agricultural oral history has been documented primarily through volunteers, often with interview recordings and transcriptions occurring at separate phases with different people. In 2009, additional historical research was provided through the 2009 Vermont Barn Census. The purpose of this agricultural oral history project is to document the history of local residents who grew up or worked on a farm in the Town of Hartford. The Town is comprised of five villages: White River Junction, Hartford, Wilder, Quechee and West Hartford, in addition to several smaller hamlets.

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<td>[00:00:01]</td>
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<td>Introductions</td>
<td>KO: Today is Monday May 7, 2012. I am Kaitlin O’Shea and I am interviewing Harris Lyman for the Hartford Agricultural Oral History Project and his wife Mary Lyman may come in and out throughout the interview. Alright, let’s begin. Could you tell me about where you grew up and your family, your siblings. Just kind of set the – orient me to your family.</td>
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<td>1930s; siblings</td>
<td>HL: Sure. I was born in March of ’35 and believe it or not, the first six weeks of my life, I lived with a neighbor friend because I was the last of six siblings and the house was quarantine after I was born because of measles and scarlet fever. They used to come around and tack up a red</td>
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Harris Lyman – Hartford Agricultural Oral History Project 2012

KO: I’ve heard that.
HL: Saying it was quarantined and nobody could be there. I ended my first six weeks, except my mother. She came to the house where I was all the time. The lady that did this, her name was Hathlin (?) and she became Mom Hathlin (?) to the family.

KO: So you have five siblings, then?
HL: Yes.
KO: Yes.
HL: Yes. I’m the youngest of six. And we’ve lost two brothers and two sisters in between me and my oldest sister, who is approaching 90. She was one of those smart little bitties who skipped a grade and went off to college at 16. I do not remember her living at home in the farmhouse.

KO: So she was significantly older than you.
HL: So anyway when I was able to see and know things, I can tell you I remember vaguely the ’38 hurricane. Watching the great big maple tree falling down on the side of the house one the lawn. I can still picture that at three years old.

KO: Must have been scary.
HL: Well a sister and my mother kept me and the other two in a particular room. And my two older brothers and my dad were out in the barn watching the cattle while all of this was going on. And it did quite a lot of damage to the forest because there were sugar maples and other things. I can remember, still, as a very small child. We had the very first small tractor in the neighborhood ever, and Dad rented the shingle machine that the tractor (2:47). And they brought home all of the stuff from what was called the thicket that was flattened out of a hurricane. And they made wood shingles, tons of shingles. Sold some. Kept them on the farm for repair. I was just able to witness that and remember it.

KO: Did you have any warning of the hurricane?
HL: My family did, but I didn’t. I was only three.
KO: Right.
HL: The only warning I had was you get in here.

KO: So what were your parents’ names?
Dewey Lyman; Bud Lyman

HL: P. Dewey. His name was P because his first name was Philip. But my oldest brother was also Philip Dewey, Jr. And so my dad dropped Philip and went to the word Dewey and was P. Dewey. And right after they did that, they nicknamed my brother “Bud” and that stuck with him forever. So Dad went by P. Dewey. He was in legislature a couple of terms. Town selectman for 12 years. He was in the political world as well as a farmer. He started the Vermont Sugarmakers Association and he was their first president. It’s well established today.

Sugaring

When I first remember sugaring, it was horses that my brothers used to gather the sap and Dad would boil. I can remember just hanging around the sugarhouse at night and especially it was a thing for all the neighbors. Everybody cooked eggs in the boiling sap, and peeled them outside and chomped them down. That was just one of the things of sugarmarking. And after houses we had what was called a Correl tractor and we around 6,000 buckets. Dad would make 1500 gallons at home and he’d buy another 1500 gallons from the neighbors in the drum. And he never sold it until fall. And the reason for that was he could get lots more money for it. And we canned a tremendous amount and shipped it off: Pabst, Blue Ribbon, Budweiser, Miller Lite. I can remember. General Electric, Westinghouse. They would all buy a couple thousands of half pints for their customers and for their annual banquet, maybe it would be place setting. Some of it was at those sort of things and then it went to Florida to the citrus growers who put it in the middle of their boxes of fruit that they’d ship north. They’d put it in that.

Sugarmaking

And they developed a lithograph can that belongs to the association. You have to buy the cans from the association, but not the plastic ones. The metal ones. They came from the Crane Can Company and I can remember at the dining room table, Dad and the other people who were on the Board of Directors for the Sugarmakers decided what the lithograph color they wanted on the cans. So it wasn’t somebody’s office. It was on the dining room table on the farm.

Hay wagon; chickens; horses

This is difficult to go back and think of the young things I did. But when I was able to do things. I was always required to take care of the chickens. I had to drive the horses. I had a hay wagon with a hay loader. That my brothers did on the hay loader on the wagon. As the hay got bigger it had to go this ladder in the front of it to drive the team. I destroyed my arches with wearing sneakers on those run. I’d cry at night. My mother would soak my feet in hot water because I was still very young. And tie them up with ripped up pieces of sheets and get them back up again.

KO: Ouch.
| Event                                                                 | Transcript                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
| Haying                                                              | "HL: And then I had one horse to pull the fork in the hay up to track it in the barn. One brother was doing that and one brother was mounding away (?? 7:24) and I had to do this horse. I could just about reach his chin. And the great big, old animal would crowd me against the wall. I still had to go out and get him back. I hated it, but they made me do it." |
| 00:07:45                                                           | 00:07:45                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Dad had Scarlet fever                                               | "Eventually, my two oldest brothers – my dad had scarlet fever when I was young. As a matter of fact, before I was born. He went to Deacons Hospital in Boston and had half, one of his lungs removed."                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| KO: Oh my goodness.                                                 | "HL: From that episode. And while he was there and recuperating, my two older brothers worked the farm enough to pay the mortgage. And go to high school and graduate at the same time. They actually, young fellows working so hard, saved the farm from the mortgage."                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| KO: Wow. When did your family purchase the farm? How long ago?      | "HL: The farm was built in 1912 by my grandfather who was a barn builder, so to speak, as well as a farmer. And my mother and father bought a small farm over towards the Millers, that you refer to, and the first winter that they were married. No, one or two winters, let’s put it this way. My dad and a hired man logged every winter. Take the horses out in the morning and come back in black and dark at night. And my mother had to do the chores with a small herd that they had, and those calves. And she had go and out do that with two kids in the crib – baby carriage, I guess it was. They took out and came back into the house. And that house was so old it had a big fireplace with four sided arches in it that went straight in it, in middle of the house. They did not have a kitchen stove or kitchen range."
| KO: Wow.                                                           | "HL: And she cooked inside of that thing like you would see today, a hearth fire cooking pizza."                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Chickens; peddling in Hartford Village                             | "KO: Mmm-hmm.

HL: That’s the way she prepared all of the meals.

KO: Oh wow.

HL: There was four of those things going to the four sides of the house. And then they say while they were there, my grandfather became ill and my father and mother borrowed money and bought it from my grandfather, the big farm. And I can still remember the early stages of it. We had something like 400 chickens on one part of it. And one part of it was higher and that was the actual dairy herd, the milking herd was in..."
Switch to dairy only

And then it came along that you don’t do a little of everything. You do one or the other. So the family decided to go to dairying, period. And between 400-500 chickens, Dad sold to a guy – I can’t remember who he was, but I can remember being out on the lawn listening to the conversation. And apparently this guy and my father were friends. They were trying to come to an agreement on how much they would pay. This guys says, “I’m going to have to fire you. I don’t agree with what’s happening.” And I thought he was going to burn my dad. I went running in the door to my mother, “They’re going to burn Dad. They’re going to burn Dad!” So they got rid of the thing.

KO: When was this switch to mostly cattle?

00:12:19

HL: All dairy cattle.

KO: Right. Oh, which year? Sorry.

HL: Oh heavens, I was six or eight years old.

KO: Oh so you were very young.

Apple trees; herd

We also had like 100 apple trees and some old, famous apple trees. And again, you didn’t do everything so they pulled all the apple trees out by the roots with this big tractor and it became corn and hay fields to do just the cattle business. So we ended up with like 150 head of cattle, milking around 100.

KO: When you say downtown, do you mean Hartford Village or White River Junction?

Haying, milking; mechanized milking

HL: Later on in life, my two older brothers ended up running the farm for Dad for a long time, they would hay and I’d milk. And the thing was, who got done haying first or who got done milking first to take the pick-up and go downtown. So I chose milking because I got it down to a science and I could milk about 90 cows in an hour and a half with six machines. I got scolded because my father thought I was moving too fast and not getting all the milk you’re supposed to. I was doing a good enough job, I guess.
HL: White River. That’s where the action was.
KO: Okay.

HL: There might be girls walking on the street.
ML: And the movie theater.

HL: Oh yea, and a movie theater, you heard Mary in the background. The grange was in Hartford. The soulful things that go on. Earlier in life, my mother and father were church-goers in West Hartford Village. And Dad had the first flat bodied truck or something like that. They made a set of steps that folded down the back from the body, and he’d go up and down the neighborhood and pick the people up and the whole neighborhood ended up going to church in the truck down in West Hartford. That was many years ago, too, when that was going on.

KO: Is that the church on Route 14?
HL: Yes.
KO: Okay, I passed by that yesterday.
HL: It’s a house now.
KO: Okay.

HL: The church on Route 14 is the Hartford Village Congregational Church that my family moved into there.

ML: West Hartford Church is closed as a church.
HL: It was a house at one time.
ML: It’s still a church.
KO: It looked pretty abandoned yesterday when I drove by.
ML: Yea.
HL: Irene did an awful job on it.
KO: Yea.
HL: In West Hartford.
KO: It looked pretty bad.
ML: They used it during the flood to help people with shelter and food.
1953; two farms converted to one; going to college

KO: Oh, okay. So how did you live on the farm, as a child?

HL: Eighteen years. I was a senior in high school, January of ’53. My two brothers were married with families. One living in a house below us, which was another farm that Dad bought. So we had the two farms converted into one. And the other brother lived in an apartment that we made or that he made upstairs in the farmhouse, with my other brother and his wife and family. It was January of that year when my Dad came to me and said, “The farm is not going to be big enough to support three families.” My two brothers and me. “Would you like to go to college?” I packed my bag the same day he said that.

KO: Oh, okay.

ML: [Showing a photograph] That’s an aerial view of the barn.

HL: She’s not going to record you. You can talk up.
ML: It’s just a copy. You can have that to go with.
KO: Oh thank you. Neat. Where did you go to college?

HL: Wentworth College in Boston.

KO: Okay. You studied engineering?

HL: Social stuff? (?) And Mary went to Wheeler Teachers College in Boston.

KO: Ah, so that’s where you two met? College?

HL: Graduated from high school together?

KO: Oh you did?

HL: Went to Boston to meet each other?

ML: Get better acquainted.

HL: That’s the only reason I went to college. No, that’s not true. So I was 18 years old. But in between I did an awful lot of farming. Matter of fact, was driving a tractor when I was 12 years old. But nobody would teach me how to drive a truck or a car. My mother taught me how to drive a pick up and learned from that. I had a driver’s license and then took driver’s ed afterwards because it was a reduction in your insurance for having driver’s ed in those days.
| 410 acres of farmland | KO: There still is.  
HL: Other things that I think of about the farm. There was 410 acres of land. Fourteen room modern farmhouse, all rebuilt, hardwood floors and heating system. Not wood and coal that I grew up with. And they sold the whole thing for $36,500.  
KO: When was this?  
HL: ’63. Mary is looking at me, because – your not going to use this for your recording – but my mother and father moved across the street from us.  
ML: In ’65.  
HL: ’65 when they came down here from farming. And prior to that my oldest brother didn’t like farming anymore and he went to work as a carpenter for a construction firm, which I was in charge, so I hired my brother to work with me.  
KO: So your family didn’t want to farm and that’s why they sold.  
HL: Well, it was a financial issue. My dad refused to go to milking parlors so they had to borrow money and that sort of stuff. Probably, we all think that if he had, my brothers would still be farming the farm. But they’re both deceased now, but they would have made the farm go. The reason they sold when they did is that the last year in business, my mother and father sold 6,000 pounds more of milk than the previous year and made 3,000 less dollars.  
KO: Oh wow.  
HL: That’s what was happening, the cost of farming v. income. They didn’t totally go modern. They went modern on everything, the biggest tractors and all that stuff in the neighborhood. It was just booming. I think that the milking parlor that the refused to do was the start of it.  
KO: And that’s the era of going from milk cans to-  
HL: -that’s right-  
KO: -to the bigger-  
HL: -bulk.  
KO: Bulk, yea.  
HL: The milking parlor could do cans, too. But the bulk came along after cans anyway. The milking parlor still ?? milk like we did. |
<p>| 1960s; sold the farm |
| Reasons for selling out |
| Milking parlor; modern farming |</p>
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<td>Milking parlor</td>
<td>KO: And the milking parlor, was that for sanitation or what the purpose of that? HL: Well the milking parlor was sanitation and speed and all this stuff. As the animals walked in they were cleaned. They went to a spot where they grained and were milked. Yes, fast production. And therefore they milked more cattle, like the big farms like the western valley of Vermont. They have 1,000 cattle. If they had increased, it probably would have made more manure than the earth can take, which is happening now.</td>
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<td>Jersey cows</td>
<td>ML: Did you tell Kaitlin that Dad’s whole herd was Jersey cows? HL: Yea, they were purebred Jerseys. ML: All Jerseys. HL: And with being purebreds, I can remember the State of New York raised their butter fat count because they were all Holstein herds over there. And when they did that, they came into Vermont to buy a few of purebred Jerseys to put into their herd to make their Holstein herd up to a butter fat count that the state required. And I can remember Dad sold six of his best cows to a big Holstein farm in New York for tremendous money, a profit then for it. KO: What was the importance of the butter fat count? HL: I don’t really know except what the State required. The Jersey cow milk all ended up making cheeses, because the more fat in it, the more cheese you could get. And that was before they discovered it was all bad for us. So now we’ve got the 2%, the 1%, the none % because somebody in Washington decided it was bad for us.</td>
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<td>Lyman family history</td>
<td>I’m trying to think of some other exciting things growing up, I’m giving you my experience of the farm, not what the farm was. The Lymans were the first settlers in White River and throughout Vermont. KO: Where did they come from? Where did your ancestors- HL: England. KO: Okay, Oh, yea, I should have known.</td>
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HL: Of course. Don’t ask me the community. Two brothers came over and came into what was called the Town of Hartford – you and I refer to as White River now. From there they went up to settle Vermont. Green Mountain Boys. One was a missionary and went down into Massachusetts and all the way across America, into Hawaii and settled the State of Hawaii. There’s a big monument over there that says Lyman on it. He’s one of the two brothers that came over.

And where the so-called PNC store, maybe the bank in White River, there’s a monument that says the Lyman Homestead. And this is in the history books of the town of St. Croix that you may have read. I had two old-maid aunts that lived in this old house. The story is that there is a tunnel going from the house over to where the White River entered the Connecticut. Slaves would come up the Connecticut in canoes and my aunts would take them out of the canoes through this sold called tunnel into the farmhouse. And then at night they would take them to Smugglers’ Notch, that’s where that name came from.

KO: Oh, yea.

HL: From there somebody else took them into Canada. The Lymans were old settlers but they weren’t Puritans I don’t think. One of them had a rope tow in White River, that’s what Lyman Point is named for, in the back of the municipal building, where the railroad track is.

KO: Oh yea, yea.

HL: Well that’s because of that. One of my relatives had a rope tow to get you over to West Lebanon in New Hampshire. The sign said 25 cents round trip. So you put your horse and buggy on, you go over and do your errands in West Lebanon. Then when you came back if you wanted to get back, he charged you another 25 cents.

KO: So much for round trip.

HL: Yea, right. So much for being Puritans they all thought they were.

ML: Got to make a dollar.

HL: But that’s got nothing to do with the farm life.

KO: Oh no, that’s okay.
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| Eggs                          | Butter making.
| Butter making                | Mother doing the washing; Domestic chores. |
| Domestic chores              | Bath night, Saturdays; galvanized washtub. |

**Eggs**

I can remember as a kid hating to do it. I had to help pick them up, like 60-100 bushels or grain bag size of potatoes. They were on the front porch being sold to people and people would drive to get it, but also delivered. That was part of the peddlers that they were in early life.

**Mother doing the washing; Domestic chores**

My mother even did the washing. I can remember two washtubs. Of course, Mondays was always washday. Two washtubs. Water was cooked in the reservoir on the kitchen stove. And during the summer there was a kerosene type thing that heated the hot water. The washing machine and then two rinse tubs behind it. And I had to help every Monday to do all that stuff.

**ML:** Mother made butter.

**HL:** Oh yes. My family made butter. I have the bowl – after it was separated – that it was used to mix the butter up in. And then my sister, who is deceased, ended up with the square box and the mold that you push down on top of it with the Lyman “L” in it. They didn’t have to weight it because the butter fit this thing which was exactly one pound. And that’s where it’s all come from ever since. I don’t know what happened to it as this point. I ended up with the bowl. I have a greenhouse started at the end of the house and I was mixing dirt in this bowl, and my daughter wanted to know what it was. “Dad, you’re not going to do that.” She took it home and cleaned it all up. It’s an antique: the Lymans’ butter business.

**KO:** Not your favorite?

**HL:** Nothing was my favorite domestic, except I did learn to knit. She taught me how to knit. And my brothers nicknamed me Harriet because I would rather be in the house with my mother than out at the barn working.

**00:27:20**

**ML:** Tell her about this.

**HL:** I was going to tell you something else about that washing machine. Oh yea. Of course, Saturday night was bath night because of church in the old days. So you put on clean clothes Sunday and then you took them off Saturday. ?? And we had a copper washtub as we refer to it. You and I have seen it growing up with the galvanized tubs people have. That was put on the floor in front of the woodstove. And then she’d take hot water out of the reservoir that would be heated because of the wood fire and put it into this tub. And then she’d make me get into it. Well it was so hot on my feet that you couldn’t stand it. And the rest of your body had goose
Built-in bathroom; first in neighborhood

Farms in Jericho District

First tractor in 1940; diesel tractor; manure spreader

00:31:30

School at Jericho one-room school; Hartford

pimples about an inch long all over it. And eventually you got yourself down into this water. That was my weekly.

KO: Oh, that sounds painful.

HL: But we also on the farm, had the first built-in bathroom with toilet and a tub and a lavatory. Of the 12 farmers in the neighborhood we had the first one. And then we converted the tub into the combination shower also. That was the first one in the neighborhood. The first truck in the neighborhood. We had the first everything, let’s say, in the neighborhood, even though an uncle that lived next door to us on the corner there.

KO: So when you say neighborhood, you are referring to what is now the Jericho Rural Historic District?

HL: Yes, Jericho District as we used to be called. It was originally all farmers. And one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten farms were in that area. It was all farming. Originally with horses, it took forever to do things. I can remember before the tractors, my older brothers harrowing and plowing with the horses and then planting when the tractors came on.

KO: When did you get a tractor?

HL: Oh, I want to say 1940, 1941, the first wheel tractor. We first had steel wheels, steel front wheels. Everything was steel then. It eventually ended up having rubber tires put on it, but initially it was all steel. And then the tractor because the sugaring business was getting bigger. That was in 1945 when that came along. And then diesel tractors came out, and we moved over to those sort of things. I can remember when the manure waste from the cattle in the old days was holed down through the hole in the floor. And every spring we had to load it into the manure spreader with a fork and with a horse pulling it to spread it. And what an operation it was. I can still see it. My younger brother screaming at the horses. My father screaming at the horses because they couldn’t back the thing in right. And I can remember watching that not liking it. Took off. Then eventually came to a type of machine so you could spread manure all year long. So went from there to a machine that did that.

KO: Did you go to school at what is now the Jericho Community House?

HL: Yea. I was in the last class from that school. I went there six years, 1-6. I was in the last class when there was six of us before the town
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<td>KO: Which grade was that up to?</td>
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<td>HL: It was originally 1-9. When they closed or just before they closed it, it went 1-6 because of junior high. So they closed the school before I entered my 7th grade.</td>
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<td>KO: And then where did you go to school?</td>
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<td>HL: Hartford High School.</td>
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<td>KO: Which is currently?</td>
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<td>HL: Currently now down the bottom of the hill it’s a middle school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ML: Elementary school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>HL: Elementary.</td>
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<td>ML: Elementary school.</td>
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<td>KO: Okay.</td>
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<td>HL: That was originally a high school.</td>
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<td>KO: And you were in a class with Harold Eastman? Is that right?</td>
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<td>HL: Lois Eastman.</td>
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<td>ML: His sister.</td>
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<td>HL: The Eastman family were big apple orchards and farmers in Quechee. My dad, also in my high school years and junior high school – maybe more that – was a grain agent for Eastern States Farmers’ Exchange, which later became Agway.</td>
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<td>KO: Oh, okay.</td>
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<td>HL: And the grain would come in every two weeks in a boxcar to the old railroad station in Hartford Village. The buildings were there, I can remember. They weren’t able to use the buildings, but just the facility. So when it came in my dad would have to call all the people. He would get the requirements – those that bought from him – by telephone. So when it came here, he’d have to call them and tell them to pick it up. So here again my two oldest brothers were in charge unloading the cars after they got done doing morning chores on the farm. Eventually Dad delivered a bit to certain farmers, but the rest of them came to pick it up. And I</td>
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discovered later on that the income from the grain business is why I went to college. That’s where that money came from for my college. It was extra money that most farmers didn’t have because of that.

KO: So, just to clarify, your dad was taking orders for grain?

HL: Yes, taking orders and ordering it from the factory. Some farmers picked it up once a month. The bigger farmers, including ours: every two weeks. You got your grain would last for two weeks. Different types of grain for calves to young cattle to milkers. And also flour came in the colored bag, which all farmers’ daughters and my sisters ended up making dresses out of it.

KO: I’ve heard that before.

ML: Grain sacks.

KO: I’ve heard that before.

HL: Flour sacks, not grain. It was different material because of the fineness of the flour.

KO: Oh yea.

HL: Flour wouldn’t stay in a grain bag. They’re plastic now, which is different. Back then they were not.

KO: They’re more like burlap – the grain sacks.

ML: It was like a pillowcase.

HL: Like a pillowcase, exactly.

ML: Same texture, cotton.

HL: Same texture. My mother and my sisters sewed constantly. All farmers sewed. And the daughters sewed and made their long dresses out of this stuff. It was two-fold. For the grain company to make more money and for the farmers to get clothing cheaper. And when I was – we were big 4-H people, big 4-H on the farm. My sister who was next to me ended up going on the IFYE program. She went over to England for a year. And then in exchange, one from Germany came over and lived – a male came from Germany to witness, after World War II by the way, to witness farming in New England and what not, to take back to the farms in Germany after World War II because the land was all beat up.

I can remember every winter, every summer, we’d take all the windows out of the barn and put them back in for the wintertime. And he would, during milking, he would stand in the barn and look out at everything.
from these windows. One time we had a wicked thunderstorm and he was looking out that window and says – I said, “You’re going to get hit. Get back in here.” He said, “No this is a godsend. It sounds like just what the war did to me, but God is doing it this time.”

KO: Oh geez.

HL: Different. That’s nothing to do with the life of the farm, but that’s something that happened.

KO: What was his name?

HL: Franz –

ML: I don’t remember the last name.
HL: I don’t remember the last name, but he was from Germany. My sister Anne was in IFYE, and she was over at a farm in England for a year.

KO: That’s interesting. I’ve never heard of that program before.

ML: It’s International Farmers’ Youth Exchange.
HL: International Farmers’ Youth Exchange.

KO: Does it still exist?

HL: I don’t think so.
ML: I have no idea.
KO: Just curious.

HL: I think the computer has taken it over and they can call up over there, what we are doing here.
KO: Probably.

HL: And I was forced to have a Victory Garden of my own back then. I have a picture of me having a hoe; I was planting in it this time. I was forced to have this garden because of 4-H by my parents and I didn’t like it at all. Skinny as a rail, I was. Hoeing this garden and planting seeds. I did so well that I ended up with a – this had a green label, tassle on it one time. I ended up with a Victory Garden award which was called a MacArthur award, from General MacArthur who was in the Pacific. [Showing medal.] And that was an award for growing Victory Gardens because they were being promoted during the war.

KO: Who judged the gardens or how did you win?
HL: Somebody from the State came around, looked it over and wrote down information and went back. This was presented to me at the yearly 4-H thing. Somebody from the agricultural world in Montpelier came and did all that stuff. I won that. I hated gardening. As I said, I wasn’t very domestic and what not. I shouldn’t use the word “hate.” I just didn’t like doing it. Got married, had children and I got gardens all around me.

KO: I see that.

HL: I’ve got tons.

KO: I guess you have a knack for it, from a young age.

HL: I got that award. And it’s an old one. After I matured in life, I’ve got tons of stuff that I gave away.

KO: So, what did you like to do on the farm? The domestic chores weren’t your favorite.

HL: Driving the tractor, was one of my favorites. The cows were not. My older brother was so mild mannered that when he walked in the barn you could hear the cows chewing. My other brother was a screamer and a slapper. When he’d walk in the barn, they’d all get antsy. You could see this going on. You could feel it happening. Every time there was a thunderstorm, we would lose our electricity. I grew up with a gasoline engine starting to run the milkers. When electricity came along there was electricity to run the vacuum pumps. And every time there was a thunderstorm – there was one wire that came through the woods for the whole neighborhood that would break. We’d be out of power for a while. And I would always hope it would be a while. It was so peaceful to go into the barn and hear my brothers milking by hand and cattle. I wanted it to happen, but they hated that.

My older brother who was so nice to the animals, the horses just wanted to be fed by him. The cattle and the other thing. I can remember one time the milk truck fell off the side of the road. Three wheels of the truck were over the side of it. It was frozen ice and that’s what happened. My brother grabbed the Crawl (??) tractor and couldn’t pull this milk truck out of the hole. I can remember watching. It would just spin on the ice and go sideways. Just couldn’t do it. And then all of a sudden we looked up and here comes my brother – Bud, his name was, the oldest one – with the horses. We still had the horses, too. We hadn’t gotten rid of them yet. Those horses would do anything for him, by the way. They were just jumpy for my other brother because he was slapping with the reigns to
get them to do something. He backed that team down. My other brother moved the tractor and hooked the horses to the chain to the milk truck. We walked around, got on his hands and knees, just about, and talked to those horses. Their knees were almost on the ground and they pulled that truck out of there.

KO: Wow, that’s amazing.

HL: He was able to do that with those animals.

ML: He was a horse whisperer.

KO: Sounds like it.

HL: If you like animals, if you do, you can see what was going on. Cats were the same on the farm. [ML shows photo to KO.] Oh, you had to show her that one.

KO: That’s so cute. That’s you?

HL: That’s me the year I won this.

KO: You are a skinny little thing.

ML: He didn’t weigh 100 pounds until he was in 9th grade I guess.

KO: That’s nice.

HL: We were both skinny people. I weighed 124 when I got married. She weight 104.

KO: Wow. All that farming will keep you thin.

HL: Except my middle brother could lift anything. He was very muscular. I was the skinny one. There are some genes we know about that create my size. He got the other jeans. He could pick up anything, he was so strong.

KO: So when you were a school age, child – what was your – well, I guess seasonally it differed – what would be an average day for you? Get up?

HL: Average school day or farm day?
School; walk home for lunch; chores; baseball

KO: Combined. Get up, go to school.

HL: Well, okay. I didn’t have animals to take care of when I was younger going to that school. School began at 9 in the morning. You were recessed in the middle of the morning and then you were recessed for lunch at noon. Nobody carried a lunch box for an hour. You went home for an hour and walked back to school for the rest of the school day, which went till 3:00. Of course when I was in high school, I had chores that I had to do. And I had to do those in the morning. Come in and shower because I didn’t want the girls to smell me all dirty. I’d ride a school bus and later on we had to drive our own vehicles.

I played baseball in high school. I couldn’t play any other sports My father thought I should be home farming, taking care of the animals so he wouldn’t come pick me up or anything. So I had to walk six miles after practice or after a ball game.

KO: That must have taken a while.

HL: Yes, it did. And quite a lot of times it was dark by the time I got home. But the young cattle that was my job to care of, hadn’t been fed or watered yet because it was my job. My father would say to me, “Your cattle are waiting for you.” So he suffered those animals in spite because I was not there in proper time to do it. So the normal time would be five o’clock for water and grain. And they didn’t get it till nine o’clock some nights if we came home, like when we had a game in Woodstock, for example. The old road back to White River and then the six mile walk after taking the uniform off and that sort of thing.

KO: Geez. Did the cows adjust to your schedule?

HL: I guess so. They were young animals? I don’t know that it would animals. I had no pet names or pet animals out of them. They were just animals. And then the chickens I had to take care of them: pick up the eggs. Clean them out. They are dirty animals when they are housed. They were an animal.

Cattle chores

ML: You ought to tell her when Bud got his first television upstairs.

HL: Oh yea, being the first things in Jericho. We were the first ones with a television in 1948, and had a so-called antenna laying on the rafters in the attic over the kitchen. Came to this black and white TV and my brother’s and his wife’s living room. I started watching professional football games then. Every Friday night there was a boxing match or something else. My dad and I would go up to my brother’s apartment and watch every Friday night. Saturday night was wrestling. News started. As
a young person I can remember watching the first Channel 3 news way back when.

ML: It was kind of snowy, but it worked. You could sort of see the picture.

HL: We had the first big stand up console radio on the farm, with big speakers. First in the neighborhood to have that one. And I’m not saying because of us because we were the first. We were the first because of financial things back in those days. Like everything else in farming: you had to be big. Well, Dad’s farm was just bigger than everyone else’s was. And he even made it bigger. He had the opportunity to buy an adjacent farm. He had been wanting to buy it for quite a few years. It was just a bachelor and his mother who owned the farm – we called it below ourselves – where my brother and his wife ended up living. The guy really didn’t want to sell it. And I can remember at the breakfast table (my mother’s name was Lois and my dad would call her “Lo”) - and I can remember he says, “Lo, I think it’s time to buy the house below.” She says “why?” So I went out and looked down in the field and this guy had a tractor buried in the mud.

KO: Whoa.

HL: Dad went down, went over to where he was, standing disgusted looking at his tractor. He came back and said, “Lo, I was right. I just bought the farm.” That’s actually what happened, but I don’t think it totally made the sale. But, it certainly helped.

KO: Good timing.

HL: Norman’s son Dale still lives in that house. He and his family live in that house that he was brought up in as a kid.

KO: The house that was below?

HL: Yup. And my other nephew Marty lives in the trailer down where the one-room schoolhouse that is now the community building. He manages the land for the people who own our farm, and hays it for income. Bales and bales of hay that he sells during the winter and delivers to people.

KO: The house that you grew up in, who lives there now?

HL: Do not know their name because it’s changed three or four times.
Ice from the pond; sawdust; refrigerator

Corn silage; community help

since my parents sold it.

KO: Oh, okay. Is it still-
HL: I think Dale and Marty might be on your list to talk to after me.

KO: Yes, you suggested that.

HL: Because they go after I left and what I know.

ML: Marty is the caretaker of that property.

KO: The?

ML: The one that hays.

KO: Okay.

HL: The farm has been subdivided quite a bit. And John Clark, a realtor that I know here in White River, told me quite a while ago that the $36,500 they sold it for has turned over a little over three million dollars since then.

KO: Oh my goodness.
HL: All subdivisions. And when my parents sold it was just before real estate boom. The following year [indicates price going up via hand motion]-
KO: -Oh-
HL: -it went wild. Been that way ever since.

00:51:00

Ice. Our cousins own Wiggins & A?worth. They still do, one of the children do, own the big farm up on top of the hill with a pond. Every winter they would saw the ice out of that pond. The neighborhood did it together. Everybody got together. I can remember where the ice was put on our farm and packed in sawdust. And in July getting into the sawdust and getting a hunk of ice for the milk cooler or the can and another hunk of ice for mother’s refrigerator, so to speak. Ice chest, they called them.

I grew up with ice before we had any of the others. Farmers did a lot together in those days. For example, corn silage filling time was done as a community. We’d do such and such a farm first. Here again, Dad had the first machine to chop it up. The first machine to the get into bundles. And then everybody eventually ended up with a truck. We’d go one farmer’s and we’d do theirs. Every noon was a big meal put on by that wife. That was one of the requirements. And eventually to our house.
And of course we had the biggest amount, because we had the biggest amount of cattle.

But everybody kept track all year of what somebody did for somebody else. Like the farm next to me had the first snow plow on a tractor, so they plowed our driveway and the barns and all that stuff on the farm. They recorded this all year. And once a year they would all get together and go through their books.

KO: Oh, wow.

HL: And when it was not even anymore, they paid. Generally the Lyman Farm, ours, did the most because of the size and the equipment. So their snow plowing when it gets to harvesting time, enough, and what the snow plowing did they paid cash for the difference. Everybody had an old-fashioned bookkeeping book. Dates and hours and what it was. Dad would log in our truck for the neighbors. The neighbors would log in their truck when it worked on our farm for the silage filling.

KO: What time of year was silage filling?

HL: September.

KO: Okay. And then sugaring is winter/spring obviously.

HL: Yup. Town Meeting was the rule of thumb to tap. It was for years. With the warming trend that we’re now having, and I’m convinced that we are, we’re almost done at town meeting this year.

KO: Yea, this year was a little different.

HL: I can remember on the farm, my best friend who is now deceased, he and I grew up together. His birthday was April 24. And I mentioned to Mary this spring on his birthday, I can remember still sugaring back with the horses, because I was over at his grandfather’s farm. Not particularly, not our own, just watching. I can still see the horses come down to the sugarhouse. The steam and all this stuff. It was the 24th of April and they were still what we call evaporating.

KO: So when you were sugaring then, were there tap lines or did you have to carry everything?

HL: No we hauled buckets and you had to go gather it. When I was in high school, of course, I had to do this. I didn’t in the younger years as I told you. We had two sheetrock pails, one in each hand. You’d go to the
trees, put the sap into those and those go back into a container on a scoot to the sugarhouse. And I discovered that after you go down over the bank with two sheetrock pails, and there’s 10 or 12 buckets, no matter what, you put all the sap in those two buckets. You didn’t want to go down there again. And I got caught. I learned a lesson. So after that, I’d go down and come back and go down and get the rest of it and keep pouring till they were all empty.

KO: How long did your family sugar for – how many years?

HL: Well, my mother and father and brothers until they sold the farm. But my brother that lived in the house down below and his son and another nephew over in West Hartford are still sugaring. They are modern. They’ve gone to the pipelines. My relatives are still in the business, but not on Breezy Hill Farm, that it was called.

KO: That was your farm?

HL: A big sign over it, just below the 1912 that said Breezy Hill Farm. I grew up with that. Big slate roof. I can remember the whole barn being painted one summer by my father. Big slate roof. Had to hire people to come in and repair those because that was an art by itself. But they were crazy on the roof. There was no safety equipment in those days. The only one helping you was the Good Lord I guess.

ML: The property looks good up there even today. It’s been well kept up by the new owners.

KO: That’s good to hear.

ML: The barn is in good shape and the house looks gorgeous. It doesn’t look like –
HL: Oh the house is –
KO: Added on to.

HL: In a clear day during the summer you could sit out on our lawn in the south end of the house and see Pico, in Mendon, over in Rutland on a clear day. You see the top of Pico Mountain, where the ski slope is now. Tremendous views. All sorts of views. I used to get the cattle as a young person. Where they grazed during the day, I’d look down and see the puffer bellies (?) 58:15 going up through the valley. You can’t now because it’s haze. You can see as far as you could back in those days. And every Sunday, of course, people went for rides back in those days on the afternoon. They would all come along slowly by the house, and they would stop at the top of the hill by the house because of the view. I can remember asking my mother, “What are they stopping for?” I never
knew we had a view until after I went off to Boston, and discovered there 
was a difference.

ML: I think this picture, if you went to George Miller’s, his house would 
be up this way on top of the hill. You’d have to go over the brow of the 
hill and down. This actually is on Jericho Street or is it Jericho Road? 
They change names where they intersect.

HL: Street goes from Dothan to Route 14 in West Hartford. 
ML: Okay. 
HL: Dothan Road. 
KO: Oh, okay. 
ML: Dothan, Jericho. 
HL: Dothan Road and Jericho Street. Jericho doesn’t mean the township; 
it’s just the name of the community. 
KO: Right.

HL: And going from Hartford Village and you turn right. The first big 
hill was called Clay Hill up around the corner because very spring the 
clay bank would come right down all over the road and they’d have to 
clean it all out. And the big long hill, which was on valley, the lowland 
so to speak. That was called Jericho Hill. When you would get up to the 
barn, where you have been, and you could look 360 degrees. That was 
the top of Jericho Hill.

KO: Okay.

HL: During the winter you never made Jericho Hill without putting 
chains on unless it had just been sanded or something. And you would 
always try it two or three times and you couldn’t. So you would back all 
the way down on the flat and get out and put chains on. Then you get up 
the house and what not. But you’d have to take the chains off because we 
discovered you would leave them, and then when you hit the blacktop 
going back downtown again, it would wear the chains out and they’d 
come loose and they’d tear the fenders off the cars so they had to stop 
doing that. So I grew up putting chains on to get home after going out 
with this lady [referring to Mary].

KO: So only some of the roads were paved?

HL: Just the main roads were. All of the rural roads were not paved. 
KO: Right. 
HL: None of them were. And each spring it would be so bad in certain 
places that your cars would drag and get hung up in certain places 
because there would be deep ruts until after the frost and the water left. I 
can remember several times my mother getting tangled up in that sort of
01:02:08

Community events at the schoolhouse; card games

stuff. We went somewhere, mother and I, in that mud sort of season, I can’t remember where. And we got in the ruts so that the car couldn’t move. My mother grew up with oxen and was an oxen fan. One farmer came along with the oxen. And another got there first the horses. My mother says, “I hope four horses can’t do it. I want the oxen to do because your father hates oxen.” But apparently the horses, I can remember, they just pulled us out so they didn’t the use the oxen that my mother wanted to prove to them that they were better than horses.

1:02:08

KO: You mentioned that corn silage filling was a big community event and that you’d trade tasks throughout the year. Can you think of other specific events throughout the year where the community would get together?

HL: Once a month they got together at the school house. Oh yes, as a youngster, military whist was popular. It’s a card game where you get ribbons for winning. Every fifth hand there was a notch in the ribbon and you got more points for winning than the one in the middle So that went on once a month all year. And the potluck: women brought stuff. And the men brought whiskey – I mean hard cider. They had to leave that outdoors, but other drinks were available outside. And the losers had to go around to each table and each table had a name: Goshen, Dothan, White River, something like that. It was a card event. Military whist. And I learned to play cards doing that because my mother never lost. She was a Puritan but she never lost. Mary’s mother, too. Every card game we went to, never lost. She could just see what people – read the hand, that sort of thing. She did not allow alcohol in the farmhouse. My dad had a little bottle of cheri that he would have a nip of every night, but that was for medicinal purposes only. After they sold the farm, my mother moved to what we call downtown and later on she was having what we call a drink before dinner. She never had before.

KO: So were those events at the schoolhouse then?

HL: Schoolhouse.

KO: So it was community house and schoolhouse.

HL: It didn’t become a community house until the Town of Hartford sold it to the people of the Jericho District for one dollar. They were either going to sell it or tear it down. The last one room schoolhouse and community actions were on then and the town did this sort of thing. The community agreed to maintain it. The house itself had a great big potbellied stove that burned wood in it. One neighbor would get it going.
in the morning and it was up to the school teacher to keep it going for the rest of the day. And we all huddled around that at certain times. Pledged Allegiance to the Flag around that thing.

KO: How long of a walk was it from your house to the schoolhouse?

HL: 1/8 of a mile, ¼ of a mile.

KO: Oh, okay. So you had enough time when you had to go home for lunch and come back.

HL: Oh yea. And used a sled to go to the school quite often. Back in those days the cold and what not, the snow, was different. We used to slide on the crust of the snow with steel runner sleds. Which you can’t do anymore. But we used to walk all sorts of places and ride the sleds to school. Then it was bicycles. But it was not a long walk for me, but it was for some other ones. The schoolhouse was moved to where it is now, but originally it was up by my dad’s barn.

KO: Oh, alright.

HL: I do not remember it up there, but it was moved down to where it is now. It was right up my the barn. I think the Lymans had something about building it up there, but I’m not sure.

ML: And there were two swings: one for boys, one for girls.

KO: Oh really?

HL: There was one girl in the last year and she got the swing all the time. And there were four or five of us guys that hard to share.

KO: Lucky girl.

HL: And she had her own toilet, too. We had to share, which was awful. It went to a system outside that had to be pumped out later on in life, all the time. No running water.

KO: In the schoolhouse?

HL: Mmm-hmm.

KO: Did you have running water in your house?

HL: Yes.

KO: You said you the bathtub and the –
Running water in the house; lead pipes

HL: Yup. We had running water. We were the first to have running water. It came from a spring [phone ringing] next to the woods in front of the house. And for years my grandfather would haul the water out of lead pipe. It was all lead pipe down through there. Lead pipe to the house. Lead pipe around from the house, of course the water to the barn. It was all lead pipe. Drank that for years. And then they decided that lead wasn’t good for you, so all the domestic water in the house was changed to brass piping. Later on they said, hey listen, brass is made out of lead so you’re getting the same thing. So they had to take all that out.

KO: Eventually it’s all bad.

HL: It’s all true today. I can tell you as an ex-construction engineer in Hanover, I can tell you that the inner of all faucets are brass. And brass is still made out of lead.

KO: Hmm.

HL: When you get up in the morning, before you brush your teeth, you let the water run for a minute because lead comes out of it when it’s sitting in water all night. And if you run it for a minute, you let the lead wash down and then you get the water to brush your teeth.

KO: I should probably do that. The pipes are old in my house.

HL: You should do that anyway, especially when you have children, you want to do that. How I know this? One day I look on a box of a faucet that was manufactured. Down in the smallest black print you could see: “Warning: contains lead.” Not one plumber, not one hardware store, nobody ever told the client that that was there.

KO: Oh man.

HL: I just happened to discover it one day on a jobsite. “Oh yea, that’s been on there for years,” the guy says, “but I don’t tell anybody.” So the old house you have up there, just run it a little bit in the morning. I have such a habit of it that I taught my kids to do it. And run it before coffee in the morning. It’s got nothing to do with the farm, but it’s a healthy-

KO: I have to say, I like to learn something new everyday. Well, obviously I’m learning something, but it’s a tip to pass on.

HL: Well that’s why when you’re a young person, you think old men don’t know anything.

KO: Oh, I never thought that.
Peddling farm products; meat wagon

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| 01:10:06 | **HL:** Later on in life, you think, “I’d better talk to the guy. He’s had some experience.”  
**KO:** Yea.  
**KO:** Let’s see.  
**HL:** You must have more avenues written down there.  
**KO:** Oh, many. Although you’ve – you’re good at kind of angling yourself towards all of these topics. You said your parents had to peddle the farm products in the beginning? Was that from your house or did they have to go down to the market?  
**HL:** That was from the house and people would buy out of the wagons originally. And then they had a pick up truck and people would come to the pick up truck and buy from there. A lot of people were peddlers in the old days. We even had a person that came around with the meat wagon. They’d have bacon and ham and a set of scales in the back of his truck. I can remember my mother buying produce from him – meat produce. The men who came around, the comment around the community was that that man’s thumb was gold because he’d have his thumb on the scale while he was weighing.  
**KO:** So did you have to go into town to buy any food or groceries?  
**HL:** Oh yes, yes. The grocery store that I remember growing up was in the center of the village of Hartford. As a matter of fact, there was three grocery stores in those days because that’s how much population there was from the mill. And all groceries for those that could, charged. My parents were successful in those days and we were ones that were allowed to charge. They sent us a bill once a month. And during the war, of course, we had coupons – World War II. And you had to give coupons for coffee and this sort of stuff. Morse’s Store it was called, Warren Morse, and I can remember going in. My mother’s name was Lois and, “Lois, I’ve got something stayed for you out there.” We were their biggest purchases with six kids and the coupons. He would save coffee and butter, matter of fact, those sorts of things. He’d keep them in his cooler out back and then he’d sell them to her. And you had to give these coupons. I grew up with these coupons. I still have part of the family’s coupon book downstairs. You tore off for gasoline and all those sort of things, so many coupons to buy it. And then we had Victory Stamps in school supplied by the Weekly Reader, I believe it was. You paid ten cents for each stamp. And when you got a book full, the money went to |
Weekly reader
KO: Where did you bring the book to?

HL: My mother.

KO: And she took it somewhere?

HL: It went somewhere. Maybe the schoolteacher took them.

ML: The school collected mine.

HL: Yea, I guess it was the school collected them. It was a Weekly Reader, because the weekly reader was a program that came to school in those days. So I was able to buy stamps and get my book filled before somebody else that didn’t have something. So those were the days that – money still separates people. It shouldn’t, but I guess it does.

01:14:11
KO: With all the 12 farms around yours, and all of the farm chores and everything, did you have time to visit with the other kids your age? Like now kids have playtime after school.

HL: Oh, Raymond Miller, grandfather of the one you’re talking with was two months younger than I. My best friend, who is now deceased, was one month younger than I. I was born in March. Gordon was April and Raymond was in May. We were called the Three Musketeers because in between duties of what we had to do, we were on bicycles with each other. Or with sandbox toys, we’d play with each other. Raymond, not so much as Gordon as I because Raymond wanted to work. He quit high school because he wanted to work. He didn’t want to go to school, and didn’t want a bicycle even though he had one. We were also - we became great hunters because our parents were. I was 12 years old when I shot my first seven pointer and made the newspaper. From there on, my father was what we call a hunter. There are all sorts of people that hunt, but only a certain person is a hunter. My brother Norman and I became hunters like my father was. Seen tons of animals in the woods. Seen lots of hunters that never see me – purposely I did that. I knew where the animals were and could seek them out. You could hunt them. Let the guys run around with the pick-up. You only have a few seconds to shoot and you don’t carry your rifle around on your shoulder like people do. And Dad insisted, “You are not to shoot unless you can kill.” That was one of his first things. I became a successful hunter. My family had eight
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<th>01:16:51</th>
<th>(??) in here all through the years.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>KO:</strong> So you hunt for food, essentially. Well, sport and food.</td>
<td><strong>HL:</strong> The reason of these old farmers was food. When I came along it was sport.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>KO:</strong> Okay.</td>
<td><strong>HL:</strong> Because you slaughtered your eating animal. Or in most cases, which was okay for you, was not good tasting or was tough, an animal that couldn’t produce milk anymore was sold to a slaughter house or slaughtered for personal use within the farmers’ families. Here again we had the first freezer. I can remember doing that sort of thing, and grinding our own hamburg and what not. A machine for that came alone. All the farmers, they did what was called, they butchered their pigs on New Year’s Day. Tubs of water and things to dip the pig into because the hair would come all out in the hot water. I can remember seeing my brothers and my dad do ours. And looked own and the neighbors had their pots going also. My two older brothers discovered that they could get a little topsy New Year’s Eve. And then they’d have a little hangover and have to slaughter pigs. My mother would say, “That serves you right.”</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>KO:</strong> Why New Year’s Day?</td>
<td><strong>HL:</strong> Pardon?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>KO:</strong> Why New Year’s Day?</td>
<td><strong>HL:</strong> I have no idea.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>KO:</strong> Hmm.</td>
<td><strong>HL:</strong> But it was just a tradition. You brought piglets and raised them during the spring and grew them all year again. Originally the pigs were kept under the horse barns. Somebody did that because you scrape the horse manure and what not down a scuttle hole. And the pigs would rouse through it and spread it all out. There would be pieces of corn and grain in it, which they would eat. You fed pigs all your garbage. You fed them all stuff you could grow and do, but you had to also buy pig grain to get them up to size and tenderness of eating, so to speak. The swill is what it was referred to. That came along and that’s why the Jewish people would not eat pork, because they lived on swill.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Slaughtering</td>
<td>Fishing</td>
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<td>KO: Oh, okay.</td>
<td>Fishing, by the way, was a food staple in my younger days. We used to go out after chores, seven o’clock in the evening, and come back with my limit. There were two brooks that was lots of running water and lots of</td>
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<td>HL: They now eat pork because swill is cooked and what not before pigs eat it, or the grains and what not. For that reason.</td>
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<td>KO: Interesting.</td>
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<td>HL: I can remember the slaughtering – I was a young kid – of the beef animals that we ate. I was allowed to watch it after the animal was dead and hung up. During the killing process I was told to go in the milkhouse and stay there so I wouldn’t see th shock of an animal being shot or whatever it was, so I could witness the gruesome part.</td>
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<td>KO: Did you start at a certain age to help with the slaughtering?</td>
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<td>HL: To help with what?</td>
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<tr>
<td>KO: The slaughtering.</td>
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<td>01:20:28</td>
<td>01:20:28</td>
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<td>HL: what?</td>
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<td>KO: The slaughtering?</td>
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<tr>
<td>HL: No. I watched enough in the woods that I became able to slaughter the deer. That I shot. That was my job. I remember what was called “wood-stress.” Some people don’t do it right and they make a mess of it. But I was taught differently. And after the animal was reported. You didn’t take the lungs, liver, heart out in the woods. Just the intestines and the stomach. You had to take them out and report it. After you did that it was hung up and then you cut the biscuit with a saw and took these items out, because liver and heart was eatin’ in those days. It was all saved. The dog got the other scraps, on purpose. Split the animal, gently down the middle after you skin it. You let it hang for a few days and then after you took the hide out, you’d split the animal. Cut it into four pieces and you’d hang it out. And the days before freezers, by the way, the beef that was slaughtered was cut into four quarters. And it was always hung on the back porch so it would freeze. My mother would bring it in and thaw part of it, what she was going to cook and then it would go back out on the porch. This is before freezers.</td>
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Fishing, by the way, was a food staple in my younger days. We used to go out after chores, seven o’clock in the evening, and come back with my limit. There were two brooks that was lots of running water and lots of
**Fishing**

HOHP_HLyman_Transcript

fish. And Sunday mornings was a treat to have trout for breakfast. I don’t know if the whole neighborhood did it, but it was in my family. We had some friends that came up from Bellows Falls every Christmas morning with my family. One year my mother froze 22 brook trout that I caught during the summer. They were thawed and they were for Christmas morning breakfast. That was big thing in my family. It was fun to fish, but it was also a staple.

KO: Hmm, I didn’t know that.

1:23:15

HL: And that White River had good fish in it that we used to keep. We used to throw a fish away before we knew it was good for us. We didn’t want the Orientals back in those days. We just fed ourselves.

KO: The White River is the river next to Route 14.

HL: The White River is the one next to Route 14. And the White River was actually Cas-cag-nac by the Indians. Cas-cag-nac is the Indian word for white. I can’t spell it and I can’t pronounce it, but that’s why it was changed.

KO: I guess so.

HL: It starts way up near your country [central Vermont]. There are two branches: North Branch, the big one, goes through Gaysville and all through there there was damage from Irene.

KO: Let’s see.

HL: You must have a couple of more questions.

KO: Oh, I do. So you had the biggest farm. Did you have hired help?

HL: Had hired help until my two brothers were able to be it. We still had hired help during those days. Yes, we always had what you call a hired man, now that you bring that up. And I can remember the big farm had four bedrooms upstairs. One of the bedrooms was the hired man. He was always referred to as the “hired man.” I can remember the last one, as a youngster, that was living in that room at home. And then the hired man became someone from downtown and didn’t live there. Came to work in the morning and went home at night, and came back and forth. But there was always this extra man.

KO: Was it always someone that you knew for years or was it a different
person?

HL: One of them was a neighbor down towards Hartford Village that was not a farmer. His family was farmers but he wasn’t. I can’t tell you if any others were related. It was just a –

ML: One of the hired men married Mandy, the schoolteacher.

HL: Oh yea. The schoolteacher, by the way, came from Gaysville, when the school was up by our barn. And the hired man lived in the hired man’s room at the house. They ended up falling in love and got married. I think the schoolteacher lived down at the neighbor’s house and he was at our house. But they were right there together and that blossom bloomed.

KO: So your brothers must have been very helping your father.

HL: Yes, and as I told you earlier, they work hard to make enough money to pay the mortgage. When my dad was in the Deacon’s Hospital in Boston, and yet they were able to go to school and graduate during all that time. And during World War II the farm was so big and those things were happening – that my brothers got draft notices and each time my dad would go to Woodstock Court. What would happen to the farm if they were taken? What the produce that we’re doing is going to the war effort and going to the troops it was. They were deferred each time. They never had to go into the military.

KO: Was that common, to be deferred?

HL: It was common for farmers that were producing enough to help the effort.

KO: So not the small ones? The small, subsistent?

HL: Well, yes, if it was the only. They could have been married early in life and been the only farmer. And I’m not talking about in Jericho, I’m talking in general, the entire state.

KO: Yes.

HL: Most farmers were deferred. But there were those who volunteered, of course.

KO: Yes.

HL: I can remember. You interviewed people by the name of Russell that
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<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>01:29:55</td>
<td>Mary &amp; Harris met</td>
<td>lived at that farm. He volunteered and went to Germany and was wounded. He was shot in the arm. I remember it was a big deal. He came to the house one time. “Gordon, he’s here!” And we got him to roll his sleeve up and we’d see where the bullet went in and came out. Boy, he was a hero.</td>
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<td>01:30:09</td>
<td>KO: Yea. You were young at the time of World War II, right? You were about 10.</td>
<td>KO: Yea. You were young at the time of World War II, right? You were about 10.</td>
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<td>01:30:09</td>
<td>HL: I was born in ’35 and the war started in ’40.</td>
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<td>01:30:09</td>
<td>KO: Right.</td>
<td>KO: Right.</td>
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<td>01:30:09</td>
<td>VE Day</td>
<td>VE Day, I was 10 years old. It was like when Prohibition was given up. Everybody went nuts. It came off the radio. My father jumped up and screamed. I can remember being outside, what’s going on? My brothers come running out of the barn, “It’s over! It’s over!” They had an old radio out in the barn all the time. My early years is World War II about farming. Had Lowell Thomas was the narrator doing the national news from England or France where he was stationed, after they took France back. He had the awfulest, growly voice. He scared the devil out of me. My mother and father would get down to radio every night to listen. [Imitating voice] “This Lowell Thomas talking to you from Germany.” I was convinced the Russians were coming here based on how he was talking. There was a Russian scare afterwards. I can remember as a very young child, the fear that the Russians really might be coming. We were told that in school, in that one room schoolhouse.</td>
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<td>1:29:55</td>
<td>HL: It was scary, as a kid.</td>
<td>HL: It was scary, as a kid.</td>
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<td>HL: Not as an adult, because they knew better. It might happen, but it wasn’t enough to scare an adult.</td>
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<td>KO: Let me see. Looking through notes. We covered a lot. So how did you two meet? You said you went to high school together?</td>
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<td>01:30:09</td>
<td>ML: High school.</td>
<td>ML: High school.</td>
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KO: So where did you grow up, Mary?

ML: I’m from New York State.

KO: Oh, me too.

ML: My dad was a minister and so he was appointed to church here in White River when I was 16. And the rest is history.

KO: Oh, very nice.

ML: We were in the same class in high school, but I didn’t know him in high school, per say. He was just another classmate. It wasn’t until we both went to Boston.

HL: I was not a good churchgoer back in those days. All of a sudden I joined a church and youth fellowship at the church in White River. My father says to my mother, “How come Harris is getting religious all of a sudden?” My mother said, “Well why don’t you ask him?” I don’t know what the story was.

ML: He went to college for two years and I went four years. Then we were married and moved back here. I taught school in Norwich.

HL: She was fired because she got married, I mean got pregnant.

ML: And he had a job already in construction, so then a few years later we built this house.

HL: 55 years this June and she doesn’t have any gray hair.

KO: That must speak well for you.

HL: And at 78 years old –

ML: We raised four kids right here on this dead end street.

KO: Very nice.

ML: They could ride bikes. They could ball out in the road and nothing would bother them.

HL: Yea it’s been a great street for anybody, even kids today. But people with young kids are not buying these houses because they can’t afford them. But it’s a great street to bring your kids up on. You let them ride and you don’t even worry about it.
KO: Yea, that’s nice. So this is – we’re right near Wilder. Do you say you live in Wilder now, or is it still White River? Or Hartford?

HL: Delivery people say we live in Wilder. The mail says we live in White River.

KO: Okay. And you say –

HL: I say I’m from White River when I’m away. But if somebody says, “Where do you live?” I say Wilder.

KO: I see.

ML: The old elementary school and the post office and the library are just down over the hill right here. So we’re really close to the neighborhood community in Wilder.

HL: The delivery ticket on oil has 92 Albert Street in White River. And down to the bottom there are instructions to the driver and it says Wilder. It’s on his Wilder trip.

KO: That’s funny.

HL: Has nothing to do with farming.

KO: That’s okay it’s nice to know a little bit about you.

HL: Whereabouts in New York?


HL: We got a gal next door who is a cornhusker herself. She was educated out there in Nebraska. She’s a schoolteacher. Mary – they wouldn’t renew her contract because she got pregnant. You couldn’t have a teacher –

ML: Fifty-five years ago that was the rule.

HL: Mary’s mother was a teacher in Chicago and she got fired because she got married.
KO: Wow.

HL: Back in those days you couldn’t be married and teach school.
ML: Hence the term “old maid schoolteacher.” That was literally true.

KO: Wow.

ML: They didn’t want little children seeing-
KO: Heaven forbid.

HL: I used to sing. I can’t sing anymore, but I used to sing in high school and we had a music teacher who was here for years. She was [??]. She was big on diaphragm. Well can you imagine that happening today? She had us guys come up and said, you put your hand right on my stomach and I’m going to show you how my diaphragm works. Can you imagine doing that in school today?

KO: No.

HL: No way.

KO: Strict rules today. My husband is a schoolteacher.

ML: Where does he teach?

KO: Hazen Union, up in Hardwick.

ML: Been by it a couple times.

KO: It’s way up there.

HL: He’s not going to get pregnant, so you won’t get fired.

KO: No.

ML: What does he teach?

KO: English and special education to high school students.

HL: English, right your alley.

ML: Yea.

HL: I didn’t major in English or spelling, that’s for sure.

KO: Well I thank you for all of your time.
1950s: Hanover; Norman; auctioning farm equipment

Snow roller

HL: I’m being paid by the hour, right? So we can keep this conversation going?

KO: I’m not even being paid by the hour. Is there anything you would like to add? Any particular memory that you want to?

HL: Well I’m trying to think. After college in 1953, back in 1955 working in the town of Hanover. An awful difference, of course. I do remember when it came time and my parents were doing to do this helping my brother Norman who was not working elsewhere. He was still working for Dad. I remember the auctions and the cattle and all this stuff going on. And then the following year helping both my oldest brothers and dad and auctioning off all the equipment. And how hard the auctioneers worked to get certain money for certain things. A lot of – we didn’t know in those days – but a lot of antique type things that went and probably shouldn’t have. We had in our barn, our storage barn, this is back in the old days: they had horse and sheep power in those days. It was a system the animal would get and they would run and turn a wheel from a belt that was around things. One was for a small animal and it was called sheep power. And one was big and horses would get into it. We had those things, were still stored on the farm when I was younger. We kids used to play in them. It became a toy to us. And Billings Farm in Woodstock has all of those antique equipment things. And they would have loved to have those things on our farm that got destroyed and burned because nobody paid any attention to what antiques might be worth in the future. But they were toys.

And also a toy that – I had a to write a letter to the Historical Society about it – when I was younger there was what was called a snow roller. Back in the old days, they used to take the horses and roll the snow so the sleds and the horses would stay on top of the snow, instead of falling through it during the horse days of going up and down the road with milk and that sort of stuff.

And it was long round roller made out of wood and it starting to rot in one place. It became a hide-n-seek place or it became a “king of the hill” game during the winter. I had to give the historical society a letter about it because they put a picture of this thing in the newsletter one time and wanted to know what it was.

KO: How big was it?

HL: Oh it was about as round as this table and about ten feet long and pulled by a team of horses to pack the snow down.

KO: Oh.
Vehicles on the farm

HL: It had bigger ones that were shorter.
ML: It had slats all the way around.

HL: And then when the snow started to thaw you just didn’t do anything until it was thawed enough so the horses could go back onto it again. That was before the days of trucks and cars and that sort of thing. I can remember – [phone ringing]. I can just remember – I can’t remember what I was going to tell you because I was listening to that phone. It’ll come to me.

ML: When the steam roller today does the blacktop road, they roll that thing up. This snow roller was bigger, but it did the same thing. It just packed it down.

HL: I can remember the first two vehicles that the farm bought. One was a car that made so much noise, they used to put sawdust into the transmission to quiet the noise down and make sure it wasn’t grinding down. And the first pick up they had, they had to backup the big Jericho Hill that I refer to, because gasoline went into the engine via gravity. And not a pump as we used today or injection. And the gravity, because of where the tank was located, they had to turn it around and back up the big hill so the gasoline would go to the engine. I can remember that.

KO: That’s funny.

HL: So I think that’s a little history for you.

KO: Well we could probably go on for days, but-

HL: Well I’m getting paid by the hour.

KO: I think we’ve covered a lot. That’s a good representation.

HL: I was pretty well there until they stopped farming, but they were farming 10 years longer after I left for college. We used to go up there quite a bit. Still went hunting forever up there.

KO: Where did your parents move when they sold the farm?

HL: Right across the street.

KO: Oh really? That’s nice.

HL: That yellow house across the street.
KO: Do any family members live there now?

HL: No.

ML: She lived there 18 years. Father died two or three years after they moved here. She was a neighbor here for 18 years.

KO: Very nice.

HL: Was she?

ML: Yup.

HL: She hated to babysit. Once in a while we’d ask her to.

ML: She didn’t hate it. Oh she taught our girls a lot.

HL: Raising six kids.

KO: Yea, she was tired.

HL: Yup.

KO: Well thank you so much.

HL: You’re welcome.

ML: Thank you. I hope you get a chance to interview Marty and Dale.

KO: Yes, I’m going to.

HL: Dale can bring her up to speed on the rest of the family business I told you about. Another nephew – Tommy Lyman – who is a cop down in Hartford, his son is over on land that my brother and I owned at one point in West Hartford. And we sold part of it to Tommy to build his house on and what not. And his son is in the sugar business. Completely modern. Tons of stuff and vats and all the modern equipment. I’d almost say my dad would turn over in his grave if he could see the modern equipment that’s in the sugaring business now. He wouldn’t even touch the stuff.

ML: If you ever get a chance to go by the old place and see the transformation – the house doesn’t look like it used to.
HL: All the porches are missing.
ML: All the porches are gone. They put siding on it.
KO: Oh really? Oh.
ML: They decorated it.

HL: It’s a very attractive country home now. It doesn’t look like – you live on Long Island, you’ve got this country home in Vermont.

KO: Yea, some people do.

HL: Whereabouts on Long Island?

KO: Port Jefferson Station. If you take the ferry from Bridgeport, CT you land in Port Jefferson and I’m the next town up over the railroad tracks. My parents still live there.

HL: My sister and her husband lived in CT for five years.

ML: New Haven.

HL: ? still goes down to – I was going to say “Green-wich” just to be funny.

KO: Greenwich?

HL: The family has a weekend of fishing and what not when they’re running. And he goes down there and takes the ferry over to where they are going fishing on the island where the fish are running. Once a year the fish are running – blue fish – something like that.

KO: Maybe. I’m not a fisherman. My grandfather was.

HL: You must have had Carl ?? for a neighbor. Maybe you don’t even know who he is.

KO: No.

HL: You are that young.

ML: Red Sox.

HL: A Red Sox player and he lived on Long Island.

KO: Oh my sister might know that. She’s a big baseball fan.

HL: Oh good, I’m glad somebody remembers.
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<tr>
<td>00:00:01</td>
<td>PART TWO</td>
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<td>KO: Here is part two with Harris Lyman. May 7, 2012.</td>
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<td>01:46:00</td>
<td>[The rest of the interview is about Long Island and conversation – not related to Hartford farming.]</td>
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**Harvest for Tomorrow – experience of family farm being filmed for movie**

**HL:** When I was five years old they came from Hollywood to make a movie of a Vermont farm family and it was called “Harvest for Tomorrow.” And the Lyman family with farm was chosen to do this. They were here with their cameras on tripods, big cameras – the rolling movie type. Great big lights that heated the whole farmhouse when they were on. Things that I do remember – and I don’t remember any of the doings outside at the farm land or the barns, but – the ones in the house was filled for an evening farmers meal. My mother had to cook three or four different times for rehearsal before we did this.

And I think I told you the name of the movie was “Harvest for Tomorrow.” And somewhere in the family there is still a great big photo of the scene at the dining room table sitting there, with my mother brining all the food she had cooked on platters and put on the table. And the picture that was taken: my father has his cheeks puffed right out because the potatoes that the director told him to put in his mouth were so hot and he couldn’t spit it out. And this all came out on the picture. But the whole family and the different diets that the farm family ate were served in the dining room because the evening meal was the important meal of the day. All the issues were discussed and settled there with the family at the dining table. And quite often the biggest meal was the midday meal, even though this was filmed at night. So I can remember this going on in the big picture.

Now there was a picture. I was five years old, only, eating oyster crackers with a little small container with milk. And conversation was going on. To get me to not be aware of the cameras and other things going on, the director was talking to me so I ended up paying attention to him while I was doing this sort of thing. And he was talking to me about them flying into the White River airport from Hollywood. It took two or three days to get here, even by airplane. They landed in White River up there where near Mascoma Savings Bank is right now. It was an air strip...
for private clubs (??) and those sorts of things were around. And they came in on those bigger planes with all sorts of equipment. And he was telling me to do this and I was so interested in airplanes that I forgot what I was doing and unconsciously did just right. And it ended up, selling up that thing for advertisement of milk.

KO: No way.

HL: Yup. And the Lyric Theater in White River later on, and I can remember my brothers and sisters went to a movie. Before the movie advertisements were on the screen and there I was with this little glass of milk and the crackers. This whole pictures of me on that whole big screen. And because it was an advertising agent and that was what they did. But to have them come from Hollywood and those airplanes up there, it was unreal.

KO: How’d they pick your family?

HL: I really don’t know. They were interviewed all over the state. Possibly geographically because of what airport they could get into because the big one in West Lebanon wasn’t existing then. And the size of the family, size of the farm, and then the produce that was excellent that we ate. One of the directors at Hartford Historical Scoeity learned about this from me. He said, “really?” And he’s a neighbor in Jericho still. So he went to work to see if he could get that film for the society and all sorts of things. Apparently the best he could learn was that it was so long ago, those films don’t last anymore. All those ancient films were discarded because of the brittleness of them.

KO: Oh. That’s a shame.

HL: It was a national thing.

KO: And the movie was shown as on tv or?

HL: Well it was called “Harvest for Tomorrow.” It was in the fall because that’s when harvest was done and the food on the table was corn, potatoes, and all those sort of things. And I think because the farm did all those things for livelihood during those days, our farm was chosen.

KO: Who was the audience of the movie?

HL: Have no idea. I was five years olds.

KO: Yea.
HL: Where it went, what it did. It was used for agricultural purposes and advertisements. The Hollywood film makers sold that stuff for advertisement purposes.

KO: Interesting.

HL: And the director’s name was Peterson. And that was 70 years ago, but I still remember his name because he had me in his hand when he was talking about flying in here on the airplane.

KO: Well, thank you for adding that.

HL: Sure, it’s history of Vermont. It’s history of farming in the Historical Society of Hartford.

KO: Well if I ever come across something, I’ll send it your way.

HL: The only place you might come across something is if it’s in what I told you about and what research was done by the gentleman that still lives up here in Jericho.

ML: ??

HL: Yes, what’s his name?

ML: Well, Zacharsky is his last name. I don’t know his first name.

HL: He’s a professional man that bought just for the land and what not in Jericho. A lot of people were sick of farming, Okay.

00:06:51

00:06:51.6 END OF INTERVIEW PART TWO.