

Pam & John Hopkins/TC2004.3015
Neil & Susanne Rappaport Project

SR Susanne Rappaport
PH Pam Gatos Hopkins
JH John Hopkins
UM Unidentified Male [Tom?]
Place Pawlet, VT
Date 08/28/1982

TAPE 1, SIDE A

[NOTE: TRANSCRIBER MACHINE COUNT WILL CONFUSE YOU.
INACCURATE ON MACHINE #1. CHANGEVER, STARTING FROM COUNT
1, WITH MACHINE #2, PAGE 5 OF THIS TEXT. NOTE ALSO:
AMBIGUITIES OF SPEECH OFTEN STYMIE ME. FURTHER NOTE: THERE
SEEMS TO BE A SECOND MALE PARTICIPANT, TO BE IDENTIFIED AS
"UM"—"UNIDENTIFIED MALE."]

SR [.32] --Do you want to tell me the names of both of
 your kids and how old they are?

PH Brooke will be two in two weeks and Robin is—

JH Ten months.

PH Almost ten months.

SR Where are they now and what are they doing?

[LAUGHTER.]

PH They're sleeping. Fortunately.

JH That's the only reason we ever got this discussion.

SR Now, do you want to talk a little about having them
 here, at home? How you came about that idea? In

fact, I'm interested in it now only because that's one of the first things I knew about you folks: those are the folks that have their babies at home. [1.00]

PH Really?

SR Yuh.

PH That's funny.

SR Isn't it? Yeah, I mean, I remember--

JH _____ in North Pawlet. [LAUGHS.]

SR I think it's one of the ways that you're known in the town. Really!

PH Interesting.

SR And I think that when Neil, when you did the first picture in the sugar house, when Brooke was just tiny, I remember Neil coming home and saying she was born at home, right there. [1.08] And it's amazing how many people know you in the town because of that. Was that like a decision that the two of you made?

PH Oh, yes. Oh, very much. _____ decision was because of our search. [1.16]

SR Can you talk about that a little bit, in terms of--

PH We were going to Bennington for pre-natals and Bennington Hospital has no birthing room. [1.26] They swipe your baby away from you and put it in the

nursery and when the pediatrician gets done six hours later, they give it back to you. Well, Rutland Hospital has—I've heard some pretty scary stories about it because I've been— [1.38] And I really liked the doctor in Bennington, but I didn't want to have anybody take my kid away, so were going to—we started pre-natal classes and with a midwife, Lee Thomas, up in Cuttingsville and the class which happened to walk in on was the end of the series, was "Possible Risks"—"Possible Complications in Birth."

[1.51] We walked out of there. *John* wanted a home birth. [1.53] *John* wanted a home birth from the beginning and I was like wasn't going to make any decision one way or another until I felt more comfortable one way or another. After a couple of classes and getting to know Lee, we just decided, you know, that this is what we wanted to do. [2.03]

JH This was the way to go. Our doctor, our chiropractor, Francis Brooks, down in Bennington, his wife—

PH Cathy, yeah.

JH --is a midwife. [2.10]

PH She attended the birth for this one, and Lee.

SR She did?

PH Both did.

JH _____. Worked together as a team.

PH Once the decision was made, and we really worked hard at it. I guess I was probably six, maybe even seven, it was quite long before I made the final decision and I was doing pre-natals with the doctor and with the midwife and, you know, really trying to figure out what I wanted to do. [2.17] The fact that their birthing facilities were so poor in the hospitals, that's why, it certainly played an important part in the decision.

JH As well as the fact that you were so healthy and everything was going good. [2.26]

PH Well, yeah.

JH Right according to the plan.

PH And feeling good about the midwife. [2.24] Yeah. Have you heard the horror story of Brooke's?

SR MmMm. [AS IN: "NO."]

PH John was up on a ladder and the wasps swarmed him and he fell off the ladder into the cellar hole. [2.33] There was just a _____.

[VOICE-OVER.]

SR While Brooke was being born?

PH Before Brooke was born. [2.30] When I was eight and a half months pregnant. He fell into the cellar hole. We went to Bennington Hospital at seven in the morning. He had a broken wrist and a broken foot. [2.35] Came home about five that night. I canned up fourteen quarts of tomato sauce which had been sitting there from the day before and that night my water broke and I was in labor the whole next day. [2.30] Well, John was laid up. [LAUGHING.] We had _____ midwife. It was _____! Brooke was born, I called my mother and said, "Mom! Help!" [2.31] Brooke was doing a lot of things early and it was just, it was awful.

SR But the birth was normal?

PH Yeah, after Brooke, there was no question that we wanted a home birth with Robin. [2.38] And we _____ Robin.

JH It's such an incredible experience to have a baby-

PH At home, yeah.

SR Well, it must give you another whole feeling about this place.

PH Yes, yes. Yeah.

JH All of it has changed so much now. [2.38: TRANSCRIBER #1] [.03: TRANSCRIBER #2] There was a loft up here and they just—
[VOICE-OVER.]

PH _____ Robin was born. Robin was born in our bedroom, yeah. [JH IS TALKING DURING THIS COMMENT, EXPLAINING SOME OF THE CHANGES, I THINK.]

JH It's just so special. It's really special, isn't it?

PH Yeah.

JH It's that quiet that's like a special blessing in the house. [.09]
[VOICE-OVER.]

PH _____ children born in Pawlet.

SR Yeah, that's true. Not any more. Not any more. Yeah, it's real interesting how your lives have, you know, sort of, unconsciously, _____ unconsciously and otherwise, have been very tied to, you know, past tradition. [.32]

PH Yes.

SR And people—you know, people who are dying in their own home, it's like—you know, it's just all gone. [.45]
I mean, that's just a whole way of life that's, you

know, going. And gone. _____, you know, sort of connect to it.

PH It was really—I wouldn't do it any other way. I really wouldn't. [.59]

SR Did you want to have them so close together?

PH We wanted them a little bit farther apart.

[LAUGHTER.] Robin sort of jumped the gun.

[LAUGHTER.]

JH Sugaring time. [1.16] [LAUGHTER.] _____.

SR And I guess, let's see, none of you—neither of you have family living here anymore, in the town?

PH No.

SR Not counting _____.

JH In Dorset. [1.36]

SR In Dorset? And we know about your property, _____.

How do you feel about—well, this is a hard question on the interview because we never have gotten _____ quite rightly--quite correctly. Do you feel strongly about any of the natural or manmade features of the land around Pawlet? I think you've probably pretty well answered that.

JH Sure. Haystack Mountain is just such an integral part of it. [2.09] Well, we've never been up it.

SR Well, maybe you should do that sometime.

PH I haven't done a lot of things because I think our kids will _____, before we moved up, that it was, you know, those things are hard to do. When they get older we'll discover them together. [2.24] Me and my kids.

JH They were there, about twelve.

SR Now you've gotten toured around the town a lot _____.

PH _____.

JH I've been here longer. _____, the _____, the weather is a no-no. [LAUGHS.]

SR I mean, when I think of how short a time, really, you've been and, you know, when we had been here the same amount of time there was very little that I knew about the town. [2.55] I mean, you know, just about the *landscape*. I mean, in terms of, you know. I mean, we knew Haystack Mountain right away 'cause we lived right under it. Our landlord claims to own part of it, so, you know, but we lived in the area of the town where everyone disputes who owns it. [3.07] And which is the back and which is the front. You know.

All those kinds of things. Well, we should go up it sometime.

PH Yeah, I would like to do that. Yeah, I've only been here for three years, so. [3.20]

SR _____?

PH _____.

SR Do you like living this far away?

JH Love it.

PH It's funny, I was talking to Ellen about—she was _____ and I told her that until the kids were five, I'd love to live in town, and when the kids are over five, I'd love to live right here. [3.43]
[LAUGHING.] You know. Oh, I love living away, but it's real hard in the winter with the kids.

JH Last year was the first year we had {to drive into town}. [3.51]

PH Yeah. Last year I was afraid. When Brooke was a babe I walked out with her all alone. [3.59] Walked slowly to the laundry, behind me in a sled, because {Teke} hasn't decided to plow it.

SR Who plows it?

JH {SOUNDS LIKE: Jerry Ross.} [4.07]

PH Yeah, we both really love living back here. I think, with the kids so little, it's a little harder. [4.17]

JH I think when they get older it's gonna be a *magic* place for them. [4.21]

PH Well, that's why I say, you know, once they get older it would—

JH I spent my summers, some of my summers, up in Northfield, Vermont, where my aunt and uncle had a farm and that, to me, was my first real _____ Vermont and I just loved it. I always loved it. [4.37]

PH Well, back {lots}, you know, and there's Mt. Goodwin and there's _____. [4.44] They're all these little kids on the deer's run.

[VOICE-OVER.]

SR It should also help a little bit when they get to be school age. You can probably organize that a little bit so you're not _____.

PH _____, yeah.

SR Ten thousand times a day. To do the same thing.

PH Oh, yeah. There are a lot of children in this town. [5.01] It's just amazing.

SR Yeah. Have you been here long enough to project about the future of the town? Do you know the town well enough to say what it's gonna be like here in _____ fifty years?

JH I really can't say, although, the sort time I've been here, I've seen—for me, there has been a tremendous change. [5.26] It seem people my age and of my _____ have become much more involved with the town and the activities, as such, in the town. [5.37] _____ for {Gibb} Mach taking over the general store. It's a big move for him _____. He's doing a marvelous job of it. The vision of putting in a hydro project under the stoop—it's fantastic! [5.58] When I look at the various people who have been brought together into the town, there almost seems to be some kind of divine plan. Here we've got a physicist sitting up here on the hill who's responsible for *all* of our solar _____ tanks. [6.19] We have Sparkle in town, who's—[LAUGHTER.]—you know, he's a genius, you know. He's *crazy!* He's wonderful! And there's a dentist down the road now. [6.27] There's a {carpenter} moving down the road. There's someone who's a mechanic, there's someone else who's a

builder, someone else—and all of these things seem to be fitting into some {specialties}. Some of who are teachers. [6.40] I often envision it as being a self-sufficient entity at some time.

SR More the way it was?

JH Yeah.

SR Sparkle said, when I asked him that question in his interview, that it was all gonna happen in outer space. [7.01] [LAUGHTER.] _____. He did a wonderful interview—very serious, though. He really considered all the questions very carefully and did a wonderful interview.

UM Well, we wouldn't want to tell you how he got the name "Sparkle." [LAUGHS.] God!

SR I said, "I understand you have a nickname—Sparkle. Do you want to tell me how you got that name?" "No." [LAUGHTER.] Are you a minister? [LAUGHTER.]

PH He's the minister! He marries people. I know I've seen that _____.

[VOICE-OVERS.]

UM At first she thought you were a murderer. [7.30] Remember, there was a guy over in Albany named John {Hopkins}?

SR And Charlie thought there was a Hopkins who lived in Manchester who was a carpenter. [7.49]

JH {Brad} Hopkins, right?

SR Uhuh. And he thought you and Tom were—you were the sons. [7.51] But _____ was that you were a carpenter. He said, "Oh, they must be—"

JH Well, the minister was by chance, not choice, I have to say. [8.06] Dawn and Jewel, they were married, got married—

PH Three years ago.

JH Very close friends. And they were working on their outside wedding, you know, and they approached me and asked me if I'd marry them and I said, "Well, I can't marry you!" [8.21] They said, "Well, we've sent away." [LAUGHTER.] I said, "What?" "For your Mother Earth Church ministers. For three dollars you're a minister and that makes it legal. And that's how we'd like to do it." [8.36] So we wrote a ceremony and all I did was make it legal, essentially. They performed the ceremony.

SR Have you done any of that—have you _____ in the—

JH Three baptisms and another wedding—Alan and Margaret. [8.54] Again, they did the whole ceremony and I

worked with them on the _____. And just with this paper that I have, it makes it legal. [9.02]

[LAUGHS.]

PH Isn't that awful? [LAUGHTER.] It's awful!

SR I can understand why. What about--do you think you'll go back to teaching? Have you considered that?

PH I don't know. There are so many things that I want to do when I get the chance. I don't know what I'll do when--I'd like to be involved in my kids' education.

[9.26] I can see getting involved in if they *do* get set up in some kind of alternative school, getting real involved in that. I think I'd like to do that. Not necessarily for pay. I don't expect to be--tuition break, maybe. [9.40] [LAUGHS.]

JH _____.

PH But I haven't really thought seriously about--well, I never found a job that I really got turned on by.

[9.51] At all. So I don't know. Knowing the career _____. I'm so happy here that-- [LAUGHTER.]

SR How about the polio? When did you have polio?

JH Seven years old. [10.06] And I was real lucky. I was a vegetable for three months. Couldn't walk for

six months. Everything came back, except for one {leg}. [10.19]

PH Well, we remember that. That's when we were all in high school. [10.21]

JH I was part of the test group. I had the placebo. [10.27]

PH _____ the vaccine, _____.

JH But I was very fortunate, I only had--in some ways, it made me appreciate so much more the ability to walk and run. [10.39] _____.

SR Is there anything at all, physically? I mean, you don't seem to be in line for therapy?

JH I have twenty percent muscle in my leg calf, that's all, the only-- [10.50]

PH And when you get tired, you limp. [10.51]

JH Mhm, when I get tired, _____.

PH But you would never notice it.

SR Do you have any kind of physical therapy now for--

JH No, I did when I was younger, but just _____-- falling down the ladder, really. [LAUGHS.]

SR Tell me about that. That's not a problem, though? I mean, in terms of--

JH It's not. Not at all. No. I end up being faster than most people my age. [11.18]

SR I never even noticed it.

PH Nobody does. Nobody does. In fact, when you went for your Army physical, they didn't believe you, did they? Didn't you tell them? What was that? Something about that.

JH That I had polio and had this little scrawny thing. [11.34] And I showed them my leg and then they understood.

PH But they couldn't believe it 'cause-

SR When did you go for the service?

JH Well, it was-I guess, when I graduated from-

PH Well, you got called in for draft, is when.

JH Maybe it was when I was in college. [11.50] Well, what it was is I put in a 4-F deferment and I was in a 2-S for school. [11.56] Does 2-S mean a student? And the Army gave me a physical. Actually, it was for the doctor, needed to have it. He was doing _____ and he said, _____. As a result of it, I have what they call a {calcaneous} arch, where on foot is smaller than the other-about two sizes. [12.15] And,

so, of course, there have to be two other sized boots.
Forget it! [LAUGHTER.]

SR Yes!

PH Too expensive. [LAUGHTER.]

JH I was fortunate, I didn't have any real problem getting my computer. [12.34] _____. You know, a certain kind of person, for draft evasions, they so-called it, is very active. _____. [LAUGHTER.] I want to find out about it.

SR I think we're done. Anything else you want to say for posterity?

JH Nothing else, other than I think what you two are doing is fantastic and I hope someone does a good interview here, too. [LAUGHTER.]

PH Doubtful! [LAUGHING.]

JH Well, I think it should be done! I really do.

SR When we get into our new place.

JH Well, okay.

SR That's when we're gonna do our picture and everything.

JH Great.

SR Yeah. Well, thank you. That's good.-- [13.17]

END TAPE 1, SIDE A

END TRANSCRIPTION