

Neil & Suzanne Rappaport Collection/VFC2004.0002

Elsee Platt/TC2004.3024

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SR Suzanne Rappaport
EP Elsee Platt
Place Pawlett, VT
Date 10/30/1984

TAPE 1, SIDE A

EP [.29] --Neil takes some gorgeous pictures. He sure does.

SR Well, you know, some of them will come out better than others, but--

EP Well, I suppose.

SR Now, I think we're all set here. Should be. I never know whether to trust the tape recorder or not. Neil says it's like taking a picture, you never know 'til you go in the darkroom and you develop the film. Let's see, I'll put this--

EP I'll give these back to you before I--

SR Okay.

EP I just thought you might--before my friend gets at 'em.

SR Neil prints, you know--develops and prints and catches up whenever he has a chance and then I carry these two boxes around in the car. [1.23] And when I see someone, I give them their copy or--

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EP Oh, that's nice.

SR So that everyone that has their picture taken has a copy. [1.28]

EP Is it better for me to be farther away from you?

SR No, you stay right put. You're fine right there, if you're comfortable.

EP Oh, sure!

SR Yeah, yeah. That's fine. This is a microphone that would pick up pretty much anything going on.

EP You moved her out of the way.

SR No, she's all right if she doesn't bother you.

EP Well, she's apt to jump up here, you know.

SR Right. That's all right. You know, if she gets in the way, we can stop and move her.

EP I'll put her out.

SR All right.

EP She's a nuisance.

SR Okay.

EP She's a nuisance a lot of the time. Be good for her to be outdoors. Come on, do you want to come out?
[TO THE DOG.] All right, go out.

SR Okay. If you want to let her back in, just-okay, now. Let's start by your telling me your full name

and also spelling it because I like to make sure I've got the spelling right.

EP Do you want the initial or the name?

SR Full name.

EP I hate my middle name.

SR So you don't want to tell me your middle name? All right, just tell me the part of your name you want.

Whatever name you would like on your photograph.

[2.34]

EP Elsee H. Platt. [2.36] And it's spelled E L S E E .

SR Right. And do you want to spell—just spell your last name for me, so I—

EP P L A T T . [2.45]

SR Okay. Is there a history to the spelling of that name: Elsee?

EP No, no. But the Platt name is an old name. [2.55]

Early settlers from England. And my ancestors settled in Milford, Connecticut, and—do you know Milford, Connecticut?

SR No, no. I don't know.

EP Well, now, I don't know it, either, but when I lived near there—there is a memorial bridge in Milford, Connecticut, which there, the bridge is made of

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stones with the old settlers names. [3.25] And the Platt family is there. Early, early.

SR Will you tell me the date of your birth?

EP October 25, 1900. [3.38]

SR Yes, and you got some flowers for your birthday.

EP Aren't they lovely?

SR They're beautiful. And _____ has some flowers down in-

[VOICE-OVER.]

EP We had the party.

SR I knew it was your birthday. Mike told me that last week. That was nice. And where were you born, Elsee?

EP Bridgeport, Connecticut. [3.50]

SR Okay. And why don't you, since we're talking a little bit about your family, why don't you tell me a little bit about your family and, you know, who are your mother and father, who were they, what did they do? Tell me a little bit about them.

EP Well, my father was in the lumber business in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and he and my mother were married there. [4.16]

SR Did he live there all his life?

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EP No, he lived in Milford, Connecticut. [4.21]

SR And then moved to Bridgeport?

EP And then he—his brother-in-law had a lumber business in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and he went in there as a young man and met my mother and married her in Bridgeport, Connecticut. So. [4.41]

SR And did they stay there all their lives?

EP No, they moved to Passaic, New Jersey, when I was about eight years old because he had a position in a lumber company offered him there. [5.05] And so then they moved to Passaic and lived there until they died. [5.14]

SR So you grew up in New Jersey?

EP Mhm. Up until the time I was fifteen. [5.19]

SR And then what happened to you?

EP Then I went away to school. [5.23] I went to Northfield.

SR Okay. Good. Well, let's talk a little bit about that later. Did your mother ever work or did she—was she a homebody?

EP They died very young. My mother was forty-two and my father was fifty-two. [5.40] They died within five months of each other.

SR From?

EP Well, you know, in those days if you had something the matter with you, they didn't know what to do about it. [5.51]

SR Right.

EP There wasn't the opportunities to take care of them. My father had a stroke. [6.02] I don't know what, really what my mother died of.

SR Well, do you have brothers and sisters?

EP I *had* a brother and sister. [6.09] They're both dead.

SR And were you all young children when your parents died?

EP I was the youngest. I was fifteen. [6.17]

SR You were fifteen.

EP And about almost sixteen and my brother was eighteen and my sister was twenty. [6.23]

SR Where did your brother and sister end up when they left home? Where did they live their adult life?

EP My sister lived in South Hadley, Connecticut. [6.34] {Irina's} mother.

SR Okay. Yeah.

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EP And my brother lived in Syracuse, New York. [6.49]
So.

SR Oh, so Irina's the one you're related to.

EP She's my niece. [6.55]

SR See, for some reason, I don't know why, but I always thought you were related to Mike. Or Mike was related to you, shall we say. Okay, well, maybe we'll talk a little bit about that later. Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about your family, your immediate family or your mother and father?

EP Well, you see, I was only fifteen and a young fifteen, I guess, and just living every day and, of course, with a natural family life, but there wasn't anything special.

SR After your parents died, was there someone who took care of you when you were home from school or how did that work?

EP No. My father's sister had come from California to visit us, fortunately, and she stayed for a little while, but then she left, so my sister went back to college. [7.57] She was at Mount Holyoke College.

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And my brother went in the service, because that was 1915, you see. [8.06]

SR Right. Just before—

EP So then they sent me to Northfield Seminary, so that was it. [8.12]

SR Okay. How long have you lived in Pawlet?

EP Do you mean actually lived here?

SR Yes. Yeah, tell me how long you've actually lived here and then we'll talk a little bit about how you got here.

EP I moved up, bag and baggage, in 1960. [8.32]

SR In 1960? Okay. And tell me where you came from. Where were you before you came here?

EP Mount Vernon, New York. [8.38] I was teaching there.

SR You were teaching there at—

EP I taught for forty years. [8.43] In public school.

SR Terrific. Well, I want you to talk a little bit about that. Tell me why Pawlet.

EP Because I had come up here summers. [8.57] I have a friend who lives up there in Wells and I used to come up in the summer and spend vacations up there, so one summer when I was here I decided that that

was when I was gonna do something about a house, a place to live. [9.15]

SR Here?

EP And I had seen this house from the road down there and that's the end. That was it.

SR Now who was your friend in Wells?

EP Hazel Grover. [9.25]

SR Hazel Grover. And how did your friendship develop? I mean, how did you know her?

EP Well, because I was teaching in Connecticut and she lived in the same place I lived. [9.38]

SR Was her family from this area or-

EP Oh, they've been up there for many, many years. [9.44] It's now called the Grover-Blakeley farm because her sister's name is Blakely, was Blakely.

SR Right. And she passed away last year. [9.55]

EP Yeah. Yeah, Hazel still lives up there. And that's the farm that Jim Hathaway farms. [10.01]

SR Right, right. And that was, of course, the Sherman farm.

EP No. Sherman?

SR Yeah. Grace and Bertha's mother and father started there.

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EP I don't think so.

SR No? I thought that was the farm, their original farm.

EP No, they were down on Route 30. [10.21]

SR No, but, originally, they were up there—way, way, way back; when they were just young, young people; I *think*, I could be wrong. I could be wrong, but I thought that was _____--

[VOICE-OVER.]

EP _____.

SR With Martin and Hattie Sherman. [10.32]

EP I know they're related.

SR Yeah. I don't know how, but I think they started out, as young people, there, before they came over to this farm. [10.41] I could be wrong. No? I'll have to check that.

EP I never heard that in all these years. [10.51]

SR Yeah, yeah. I thought it was, but I could be wrong.

_____.

[VOICE-OVER.]

EP I'd like to check it, too.

SR Yeah, yeah. I'll ask them. I'll see them tomorrow.

EP See who?

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SR Grace and Bertha. Yeah, yeah, I'll ask them. This is a big question, but how is your life here different from your life before you came here? It sounds as if you retired here.

EP I retired here. [11.17] And so I didn't go to work anymore. I didn't have to get up at the crack of dawn and meet forty kids every day. [11.24]

SR Yeah. Were you comfortable when you first came here? I mean, in the town? Or how did you-

EP Well, you see, I had been coming up there to her house and I knew people here. [11.39]

SR You mentioned the other day Maude Ripley. [11.43] Was she also--was she someone that you had met?

EP Yes, she lived here. [11.47] And, of course, I knew--and I met the Leaches, Ruby Leach, and Dorothea Clark and Elsie Rogers. [11.58]

SR So you already--

EP I knew all these people, see, I knew--

SR You already had a lot of _____--

[VOICE-OVER.]

EP Yeah. Well, we used to have a Fourth of July picnic, either up there at that farm or at Ruby's or at Dorothea's or at the other Leach's, Francis

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Leach's, and so I knew all those people, and the ones that were little at that time. [12.27]

SR You never did any teaching while you were here, living here?

EP No.

SR And when you saw this house, was someone living here at that time?

EP No, it was empty. [12.35]

SR Now, tell me a little bit about the history of this house. I don't know that much about it. At one time it was Ken Mason's house, is that right?

EP Yes. But before that--no, I don't--I'll show you this. [GOES TO FIND SOMETHING TO SHOW SUZANNE.]

SR Don't trip over the wires, Elsee.

EP Oh, no.

[PAUSE WHILE ELSEE GOES TO FIND SOMETHING SHE WANTS TO SHOW SUZANNE.]

EP This, most of this came out of the _____ Hollister book, which you probably know. [13.14]

SR Yeah. Well, I mean, I have a copy of it, but--

EP But--

SR Oh, this is about the house.

EP Yeah. No, it's about Pawlet. [13.26]

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[PAUSE WHILE SUZANNE LOOKS AT BOOK RE: PAWLET.]

EP This house—I know where you can get ahold of that—
belongs to—it was a tenant house for the Robinson's
farm up there. [13.46]

SR Ahh! See, I didn't know that. That I did not know.
So it's an old house.

EP Now, I say a tenant house, I don't know that it was,
but when I bought it, it belonged to Helen Robinson.
[13.59] She and her sister, Mary, lived up there
and she had had people in it. Ken Mason, she had
rented it to him and he lost the house and property.
[14.16] The bank took it over from him. And it was
empty. Well, Brooks had lived in here—the milk
tester. [14.26] He was a milk tester, at the time.
And the Brooks lived in here. Whew, you should have
seen it. Whew! You wouldn't believe that anybody
could do to a place, that it could look the way this
did. [14.41]

SR Really?

EP So.

SR That was when you first looked at it?

EP That's when I first looked at it.

SR You were interested in buying it.

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EP And I didn't know whether I could live in it or not, but it had running water, it had a toilet, and it had electricity. [14.57] And that's about it. So I knew I could, I could manage. And I bought it.

SR And what year was that?

EP Nineteen fifty-two. [15.12]

SR Oh, so you bought it before you lived here.

EP Oh, yes.

SR Before you came here.

EP Oh, I had it about ten years before I—I needed that long to do things to it, while I was working. [15.23]

SR Right. Did you live here when you came in the summer or did you still live _____?

[VOICE-OVER.]

EP Yeah, I came up summers, uhuh. I managed. [15.30]
It was fun. Yeah, it was lots of fun.

SR Yeah, and who did the work on the house for you, various people or—

EP Well—

SR I must have been kind of—it must have been fun to kind of figure out what you wanted to do and—

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EP Well, when I bought it, at that time Everett Hammond over in Granville—do you know him? He's uncle to Otis. [16.07] He had a lot of friends who liked hunting over here and they had rented a house on the hill.

SR The Robinson's?

EP Yeah, but Helen got to the place where she didn't want to leave the house in the hunting season, so they came down and asked me if I'd rent them this. [16.31] So they rented this house, or, rather I made a deal with 'em, and they could use the house if they'd do work in it. Of course, they were all perfectly capable of doing anything. [16.45]

SR Yeah, terrific.

EP So that's how I got most of the work done on the house. [16.51] Except for the external—what are those? Lathes? No, they're boards.

SR Boards. They're clapboards.

EP Clapboards.

SR Yeah, yeah. And did you come up at all during the year, during the—

EP Oh, that was—is this on tape?

SR Yup, go ahead. It's all right.

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EP It was the most fun. See, I had rented it to the—
oh, I don't know how many times, 'cause I didn't
come up. I didn't need to come up, but the last
year before I retired they invited me to come up.
[17.33] I said that I would—they invited me to come
up hunting season weekend, so I did and they put on
the *biggest* meal of venison. [17.51] And they
came. They brought all the dishes, all the food.
They cooked everything. They served everything.
And there were about—oh, I don't know—about eight or
ten men—and Elsee. [18.02]

SR Terrific! [LAUGHING.]

EP Oh, it was such fun.

SR Isn't that nice?

EP I had a *wonderful* time.

SR That's great.

EP I did.

SR Yuh, yuh.

EP But that was the last season that they were here,
but, you see, they did, then, they did the work on
the house. [18.17] Made it livable.

SR So your association with the town really goes back
quite a ways.

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EP Nineteen fifty-two. [18.23]

SR Yeah, yeh. Isn't that nice. And you said your friend is still alive, who's here. Your original friend.

EP Hazel? Yeah. [18.33]

SR See, I don't know her. I suppose I'd know her if I saw her, but I don't know her—I mean, I don't know her—

EP You know the house she lives in?

SR Yeah. Yuh, yuh. But that's Wells, not Pawlet.
[18.44]

EP Yeah, I guess it's Wells. Part of her property is in Ira, over this mountain over here. [18.55] See, she owns lots of property here.

SR How much land did you guy with the bunkhouse?

EP Five acres-plus. [19.02]

SR Same as us. And that extended over to where Mike and Rena are now?

EP Uhuh. And the three acres-plus, is on this side of the road and the two-plus is over there. [19.16]

SR It's so beautiful from this hill.

EP Well, that's why I bought it.

SR I love the _____--

[VOICE-OVER.]

EP Because of that view from that end over there,
anyway.

SR Yeah, I remember the first time we looked at our
piece of land. I just, you know—we looked at the
piece of land that the Millers own. [19.30]

EP Well, that's not quite as scenic.

SR No, and the only reason we—well, the Burnsidés were
interested in selling either one and so we came up
and looked at both of them and we sort of liked
where the Millers bought, except, because it was
more secluded from, you know, from the general way
that the hill is getting built up. [19.52] But
when I saw the views from the hill where we are now,
I just couldn't resist it.

EP Yeah, a view like that and like this kind of opens
the world to you. [20.02] You don't feel hemmed in
in any way.

SR Yuh. And I never wanted to live in the woods.
[20.09] I don't like houses that are in the woods.
For some reason, I wanted—I like the open, the
feeling of a vista.

EP Well, I do, too.

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SR The _____. And it's interesting how each house has a *completely* different view. [20.24]

EP Have you been up to see Bruce's at all?

SR Yeah.

EP Isn't that a lovely view there?

SR It is. It really is.

EP All of 'em up on that hill are delightful.

SR Yup, yup. I still haven't gotten used to the wind up on our hill. [20.36] We get *quite* a wind.

EP We haven't had too much.

SR No, but in—when we get a storm, we get quite a wind.

EP I get—when the wind blows, I get a whistling in here that's out of this world. [20.51]

SR Yes, we do, too.

EP I think—I just—

SR We do, too. That's what I haven't gotten used to.

EP Yeah. It sings. You have to get used to it, when you know what it is. You know what it is, so it doesn't matter. [21.06]

SR Oh, yeah. Yeah. But, fortunately, we seem to be, the house seems to be protected. [21.12] We've never had any damage—I mean, from the *sound* of the wind, you'd think the house was about to blow down.

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EP No. Of course, this one, as old as it is, has never blown down.

SR No. [LAUGHS.] How do you feel about the town?

EP Oh, I like the town. I like the town. I always have! I felt very comfortable in it.

SR You said, when I asked you last week about it, being here all year around, you said there's no place that you'd rather be. [21.45]

EP No, no. I like it.

SR I'm surprised that you stay all winter, with your—

EP Well, I didn't, you know, for a good long time. [21.54] It's only the last few years that I haven't gone to Florida.

SR Oh, see, now I didn't realize that.

EP Yeah, yeah.

SR Did you have a home there or—

EP No. Well, yes. This is quite a story. [22.13] You see, I told you that when my parents died I was sent to Northfield and from there I went to teaching. I didn't have a home again. [22.23] But before that I had lived in Passaic and I had girlfriends, you know. We went to school together and we played together and so forth. And the name

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of--well, one year when I went to Florida, I went into the library in Maitland and said I would like to take books out. And this very nice looking, attractive woman came up to me and said, well, it would be six or seven dollars for the couple of months I was there. [23.05] Well, at that time that was a lot of money, so I said, "Well, thank you, no." The next year I decided, well, heck, what's that? So I went again. And since then this same woman has told me that she thought, well, isn't it too bad. [23.26] She said, she's a nice looking woman. Wouldn't it be nice if we could let her have books. Well, so, when I filled out the card that year, finally, she took it to process it and she came back with it in her hand, looking at the card and looking at me. She said, "Are you *really* Elsee Platt? Did you live in Passaic, New Jersey?" It was my old, old friend. [24.00]

SR Really? From your childhood.

EP Yeah.

SR Isn't that wonderful!

EP And she and her sister, both--they were twins--and they both lived there. [24.09] Their sister lived

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there. And from then on I had a place to live.

[24.14] Because Helen, my friend, had a house with an annex connected with a breezeway and so I rented that cottage.

SR Now what part of Florida?

EP Maitland. [24.29]

SR I don't know where that is. Where—

EP It's north of Orlando, just north of Winter Park.

[24.36] You know Winter Park?

SR No, I don't know. I'm very unfamiliar with Florida. My aunts go in the winter and—

EP Oh, it's right about in the center of Florida.

[24.44]

SR Florida.

EP Winter Park is north of it, and then Maitland. And then all these little towns.

[DOG BARKING.]

SR You want to let her in?

EP No.

SR She's all right?

EP Sure.

SR Okay. You have a bit of a harder heart than I do.

EP You wait! [SPEAKING TO THE DOG.] [LAUGHTER.]

SR Have you seen any changes in the town over the years that you've come here and lived here?

EP Oh, yes!

SR I mean, we've talked a little bit about them already, but can you just tell me a little bit about how things have changed, as far as you-

EP Well, of course, the people have changed. [25.19] The young people that are coming in are very different. And the older people are dying off, so that it's-and the building. You know, new houses going up everywhere. [25.34] And the fact that things change with the school. The children have to have different activities. And, of course, the library has come into the town, which is fortunate. [25.53] And all the things that take place-the little skits and things that Mary {Boken} does. It's changed a lot.

SR Do you think it's changed for the better or do you think it's just changed-

EP Probably, no. [26.13] I think it has to change to bring money into the town and, of course, there's more, that's more well-to-do people spending money in the town and that has to take place because the

farming, certainly, has lessened. [26.38] There's not as much farm.

SR Right, right. The sad thing, I think, is that there's not enough work here anymore to keep young people here. [26.46]

EP No, there's no-

SR I mean, you can't really work in the town and live in the town. [26.51] And the only people who work, really, on the farms. I mean, none of the teachers, for instance, or very few of the teachers who teach in the elementary schools live in the town. [27.00]

EP Live here or came from here, necessarily.

SR Yeah, yeah. And I'm always surprised at that.

EP And young people growing up didn't want farming. [27.12]

SR And, of course, the slate quarries, which were the other big industry, is, you know, dying out. [27.20]

[DOG BARKING.]

EP Oh, I guess I'd better let her-

SR Go ahead. It's okay. I'll just turn this off for a minute.

[PAUSE WHILE EP GOES TO LET THE DOG IN THE HOUSE.]

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EP _____? All right. [TALKING TO DOG.]

SR What are your fondest memories of your life here in Pawlet?

EP All the very nice people that I know. [27.49] I know some very nice people.

SR You know, it's amazing how many people answer that question with *exactly* that reason. I think that's one of the nicest things about living in this town. [28.03] And it sounds like you've met a lot of people.

EP And there's not a lot of, as far as I'm concerned, a lot of *bad* things and gossip and fault-finding with—that I come in contact with. Nothing. [28.28]

SR I think one of—

EP It's pleasant.

SR Yeah. I think one of the *amazing* things about this town, and Neil and I both think a lot about this, because, eventually, I'd like to write something about the town to go with Neil's photographs, as well as use some of my interview information, is how the town seems to be able—I think more than another Vermont town might be able to do this, used to be able to absorb all the different kinds of people who

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live here. [28.55] Without any—I mean, there's some _____ that—but, for the most part. And I don't think—I know a *few* Vermont towns that I don't think could do that, would be much more hostile to, you know, people coming in and—

EP Well, it's a nice place to live.

SR Yeah, it is. It is. And that's another thing that people say.

EP And I like the fact that--there's Manchester that's growing up and becoming urban, more or less, and Granville and Rutland, places that are in there--they don't seem to have affected us the same way. [29.38] We still stay a small town.

SR Well, I think that has to do *somewhat* still with the farms. Because Pawlet still *is* primarily a dairy town. [29.49] I mean, there still are thirty-five farms that milk, approximately. Of course, there were a lot more even fifty years ago, but, still, that's a pretty—you know, a lot of the land is still farmland and it keeps it, it keeps the population down. [30.04]

EP And a great many of those farmers are not willing to sell any of it just to make a buck. [30.10]

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SR Right, right. Which, I think, is probably fortunate. And Pawlet is also kind of off the beaten track a little bit. [30.19]

EP I don't think it has been advertised as much as other places. [30.27]

SR I think that's true.

EP Haven't got that kind of people in it.

SR Yeh, yeh. And, as we were saying before, it's a difficult town, in that you can't really, you can't work here when you live here. [30.40]

EP What brought you here?

SR [LAUGHS.] Well, Neil and I were married in Bennington. [30.48] I was at Bennington College and Neil had just graduated from Williams College, and we were married in Bennington in 1966. But we didn't want to stay in Bennington 'cause we thought Bennington was getting too grown up and too _____.

EP Well, it is one of those cities that that happened to.

SR And very fast. Yeah, yeah. When we were—when I was at the college we lived about halfway between the college and the center of Bennington and there was

nothing, there was absolutely—it was called “the flats,” because there was nothing there. [31.19]

EP I used to go through there, you see, going back to Mount Vernon. [31.23] I’d come up here weekends and then go back.

SR Yeah. And right after—well, after I graduated, after we were married, Neil worked at {Spring} Electric down in North Adams as a purchasing agent and had just started to take pictures. [31.39] He studied literature in college. He didn’t take pictures at all. And when we were first married his father gave him a camera and he taught himself to take pictures and to develop film and to print while he was working at Spring Electric and I was finishing college. [31.53] And then his mother and father lived in New York City and retired to California, and we had some good friends in California and we thought we *might* want to go and life there, so we packed everything up, drove across the country, lasted in California for five months. [32.13] *Hated* every minute of it. Packed everything we owned *back* into our car and drove back

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to Vermont. [32.19] They used to call us the
"Green People."

EP Well, I used to go to California and I felt the same
way. [32.25]

SR We were so miserable! I cannot tell you how
miserable the two of us were. We'd only been
married for two years and all we wanted to do was to
get back to Vermont. [32.38] That's all we talked
about.

[VOICE-OVER.]

EP I just know all about it, 'cause I-

SR We had about fifty dollars to our name when we came
back. [32.48]

EP I have family out there now. [32.50] And I used to
go out to see them and one year I thought, well,
I'll take that trip back by train that was so
popular, you know—all around trip, northern part of
the country. [33.04] And when the time came, I
couldn't stand it any longer. I got on the plane
and came home as fast as I could.

SR Yeah, isn't that something? Well, when we came back
to Vermont, we knew Stan {Oaken}. [33.16]

EP Oh, yes.

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SR And we were looking for a place to live. We were broke and Neil wanted to try to make a living as a photographer and I was teaching dance for children. [33.26] We knew Stan. We were looking for a place. We came to Pawlet, visited with Stan. He said, "I think Charlie Baker's little house is empty. Let me talk to them." [33.38] He went over and talked to Joyce and Charlie. Joyce and Charlie met us. We were, obviously, two very desperate young people. It was the first of December. [33.45] We had no place to live, no money in our pockets, a few jobs lined up down around Bennington, and Joyce and Charlie rented us that house for sixty dollars a month. [33.56] And they thought we'd be there for about six months and we ended up living there over thirteen years.

EP Really?

SR Yuh. Before we bought this piece of land. [34.05] And they just—we became part of their family.

EP Why sure. They're like that, anyhow. [34.10]

SR Oh, yeah, they are two very significant people in our lives. We lived there for three or four years, though, without having, you know, an awful lot to do

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and they watched out for us. [34.22] But it was very hard moving just across town, to leave that.

EP To leave and come up here?

SR Yeah. We'd been there a long time and we had lived in that house and I was—

EP Because they rented it now?

SR A young couple lived in it the fall after we left. [34.40] We moved in April up here and a young couple lived in it for three or four months and then couldn't stand how cold it was and moved on. [34.47] And they've never been in it again. Charlie has started to restore the house. [34.51] It's a wonderful little house and Neil and I thought about buying it _____--

[VOICE-OVER.]

EP _____ a lot done to it.

SR It needs a *tremendous* amount done to it. [34.59] And we didn't want to live on that road.

EP Just like this one did. [35.02]

SR Yeah, but that corner, Elsee, is *just* awful.

EP Yeah, noisy.

SR Yeah. We even contemplated moving the house back, asking the Bakers if they would sell it to us and

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let us move it back into one of their meadows.

[35.12] But Joyce and Charlie really wanted to hold onto all of that land for their own use.

EP Well, it's theirs.

SR Yeh. And they didn't—if we—we never actually asked them about buying land. [35.23] I mean, it was one of those questions that you never ask.

EP No.

SR And they were *very* happy when we bought this piece of land and are, you know, just *delighted* that we settled in Pawlet and have our own house.

EP And you were delighted, too, weren't you?

SR Very.

EP Wasn't that a thrill?

SR Yeah.

EP I can remember the day that I settled for this house, which was *nothing, REALLY!* [35.50] It was just a mess, but it was going to be mine and the first thing that I owned, a house, a home that I owned. [36.01] And it was *really* a thrill.

SR Well, Neil and I had always wanted to build our own house, ever since we were first married. [36.07] And we always lived in tenant houses and always

rented them. And it was very exciting to build a house.

EP Isn't it wonderful?

SR Yeah.

EP That's yours.

SR Yeah. And, also, we built it and designed it as working artists and—

EP The way you wanted it.

SR Yeah. And for our, hopefully, older age when we'll be working and living and being at home a lot more.

[36.27]

EP And trying to get up and down this hill in the snow.

[SR LAUGHS.]

SR Tell me about your own schooling. Just tell me a little bit. Where did you go to school? What has been your education?

EP Oh, well—

SR You went to Northfield.

EP Yeah, I went to Northfield Seminary from high school. [36.53] You see, I didn't finish high school because my parents had died, so I had two and a half years in high school and a year and a half at

Northfield—that made four years. [37.04] And from there—

SR Now, Northfield, let's define Northfield.

EP Don't you know Northfield Seminary?

SR Yes, I do, but the tape recorder doesn't.

[LAUGHING.] Tell me what kind of a school was it?

EP It was—

SR It is.

EP Well, at that time, it was a Protestant school, mostly. [37.26] For girls.

SR And private?

EP Yes. Oh, yes, it was a private school. [37.34]

And—

SR And a boarding school?

EP A boarding school. [37.42]

SR Used to be a boarding school.

EP I went up there and I boarded in a boarding house—not a boarding house, but one of the dormitories—and I had two and a half years there, which finished my four years of high school. [37.59] And then I went to Smith kindergarten training school in Bridgeport, Connecticut. And I had two years there. [38.13]

And at that time that's all you needed for a teaching job.

SR And that's what you wanted to do? You wanted to teach.

EP It was a kindergarten training school and I wanted to teach kindergarten. [38.27] And so that's how I got my first job.

SR Which was where?

EP In Manchester, Connecticut. [38.38] And the kindergarten supervisor from Manchester came down to see me and she took me and my best friend up there, so, you know, I didn't go cold into the town. [38.58] There were two of us. And my sister had been working in Manchester at {Chiney} Brothers. [39.03] See, Chiney Brothers owned and ran Manchester, Connecticut.

SR What is Chiney Brothers? I don't-

EP Chiney Brothers Silk Mills. [39.13] Though, you wouldn't have known, of course, no. And my sister was working in there at the time for the main office and it was through her that I was hired, of course. [39.33] And my friend, too, so we went up there to live and we taught, we both, we had different

schools. [39.42] We taught in different schools, but we lived in the same house.

SR And you taught kindergarten?

EP Taught kindergarten. [39.48] From then on, I taught kindergarten for forty years. There were two years there in Manchester and then the rest of the time in Mount Vernon, New York. [39.58]

SR And what school in Mount Vernon? Did you teach in the same school all those years?

EP Mhm. Mhm.

SR And what school was it, the Mount Vernon?

EP It was—well, Mount Vernon, of course, had several—a lot of schools. [40.14] This one was Number 3, Jefferson School.

SR And you were there all those years?

EP Mhm.

SR That's wonderful. I mean, I knew you taught school, but I didn't realize that it was kindergarten.

EP Well, I taught kindergarten there for thirty-eight—no, two years in Manchester and thirty-eight years in Mount Vernon, and two of those years I had first grade. [40.39] So. The last two years were first grade.

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SR What do you think about the schools here? Have you ever—

EP No. No idea. Have no contact with 'em and no—I've not seen anything of them or know anything about it.
[40.59] I don't know any of the teachers.

SR Do any of your friends who are still alive, from your days in Connecticut and teaching, ever come here?

EP Yes.

SR And you keep up with some of them?

EP Yes.

SR Still?

EP Well, just one. [41.16]

SR That's nice. Did you ever do any other kinds of work?

EP Did I?

SR Yeah.

EP No. [41.27]

SR Just taught school.

EP Just taught school.

SR That's terrific.

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EP Oh, in the summers, when we had our summer vacation, a few summers I did camp counseling. [41.41] But not for too many years.

SR Boy, you put a lot of little ones through kindergarten, didn't you?

EP Mhm, I sure did!

SR That's my—you know, for teaching, for my dance teaching, when I do teach dance, that's my favorite age. That's *such* a wonderful age. They're just terrific. What did you like the best about teaching?

EP I don't know what I liked best. I just enjoyed my life. [42.12] I had a pleasant place to teach and work and I had wonderful friends and I had a very nice social life.

SR Did you follow any of the children as they grew up?

EP No. *They* would come back to visit. [42.26] They would come back to visit school and, of course, they remembered their kindergarten. No, I didn't. After all, when it gets to be so many, you can't do that. [42.39]

SR Yeh! Neil always said, that's what Neil always says. [42.43] His students, when they leave

Bennington, a lot of them always, you know, think that you will, you know, kind of keep up with them or whatever, but he says you just, you can't. [42.51] You know, when they go, they're gone.

EP They're gone, yeah.

SR It's like—they're just like a student here.

EP Yeah, they spread out.

SR Yeah, yeah. And, of course, that's pretty—kindergarten's pretty early, you know. In a little one's life. How about hobbies? Got any hobbies? You do handwork!

EP I do handwork. [43.15]

SR What—

EP I *did* handwork. It's not as easy now because my hands are not agile as they were. [43.22] That is why—this is not my piece here. This is a friend's and she got tired of it and I knew she wasn't gonna finish, so I said, "Well, let me take it and work at it," 'cause it—

SR It's good for you.

EP It does help.

SR Yeh, yeah.

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EP So that's what I'm doing now, but I've got knitting there and I didn't want to do that. [43.46] I've got a hooked, a pillow that I'm—you know, a chair seat that I'm supposed to be doing. I don't want to do that. But I get 'em started and then stop. [43.55] [SR LAUGHS.] I read. That's my _____. Haven't got any books here, they're all {in the cars}. I go to the library. So the days go fast, very fast, believe it or not.

SR That's good. When did your—is it arthritis that is the problem for you?

EP I guess so. [44.21]

SR When did that become a problem? I mean, is that something you've had for a long time or—

EP You don't know when it creeps up. [44.29] You don't know when it starts.

SR Has it gotten a lot worse?

EP Not too bad. Not too bad. Just old age! [SR LAUGHS.] That's what slows me down.

SR Yeah, yeah. [LAUGHS.]

EP You go just so long and then things begin to happen. [44.47]

SR Yeh.

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EP And you're slowed down.

SR But your mind's not slowed down. [44.53]

EP Well, I think it is. I think it is.

SR [LAUGHING.] Doesn't seem to be slowing down maybe quite as fast as those knees. [45.01]

EP Oh, no. Oh, no. It isn't the knees, it's the—the whole—the vitality that you had that lessens all the time, so you-- [45.15]

SR Well, I can feel that even at age forty. [LAUGHS.]
Do other members of your family live in Pawlet?

EP _____.

SR Tell me how they got here, how did that all work out? Just what you want to tell me.

EP That was really quite something. Of course, I had lived here and come up summers, of course, for a long time. And they had come up and brought the kids and, somehow, we all bunked in the house and so they used to come up here. [45.56] Well, Mike—

SR Rena—let me just ask again, Elsee—Rena is the daughter of your sister? [46.02]

EP Mhm. And Mike was spending his time—I guess, I should think he'd gotten to the place where he thought, ah, if I could only get out of this rat

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race. [46.18] And he just *loved* coming to Vermont and he would come up and they would look at places and they'd see an old place and he'd go around and he'd look all around at it. And one summer they came up—not coming here, but just driving up—and he bought a lot of cherry, he bought a cherry tree that was cut down, to take down and use the wood, you know, to make things. [46.51]

SR And they lived in Connecticut? Is that right?

EP Mhm.

SR Yeh.

EP And so one—I don't know how it happened, but one night I was thinking how much he liked coming to Vermont or look at—he'd see an old house and he'd, you know, look at it. I don't know just how it happened, but I woke up. I was thinking: why in heck don't I give him that-- [47.24]

END TAPE 1, SIDE A

START TAPE 1, SIDE B

EP [.44] --if he'd like that piece across the road.
And he said, "*What?*"

SR It must have excited him.

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EP It did. It did. And so the following Saturday, when he could come up, he came as fast as he could and he went over to Paul Douglas and made out a deed and that was it. [1.10]

SR Isn't that terrific? What year was that? Do you remember? I was curious. I don't know how long they've been here.

EP No, I don't.

SR Did they own the land for quite a while before they built the cabin or did they start right away or—do you remember that?

EP Well, they didn't build right away because, of course, they had to make up their minds what kind of place they wanted. [1.38] And he would come up and look at the property and decide where he could build something. They bought that trailer, the little—

SR That's down in back?

EP Camper.

SR Right.

EP And they'd come up with that.

SR And stay.

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EP And stay over a weekend. And that gave them somewhere, when none of us—the rooms upstairs, so that there was room for everybody.

SR I didn't realize until last spring that Mike and Rena had so many children! [2.09]

EP Yeah.

SR I mean, I thought they had a couple. That was just, you know, sort of my general impression. And where did Mike work? He was an engineer, is that right?

EP What's the big company in Hartford? You have to have—

SR I wouldn't know. But he was an engineer? [2.35]

EP Yeah, yeah.

SR And wanted to get out.

EP Yeah, had it. Kept his nose to the grindstone to bring up five kids. [2.48] Wouldn't you want to?

SR I guess so. That's a lot of kids.

EP Yeah. Well, of course, the fact that they were all grown up and leaving home, the house was too big for them. [2.57]

SR Yeah.

EP A house that houses seven people gets to be pretty big when there's only two.

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SR And they did all this, pretty much, by themselves, all they built here. [3.08] I have a lot of respect for that.

EP It was very exciting for me because I love to watch that sort of thing. [3.20] I was just sorry I couldn't walk up on the hill and watch more going on in your place.

SR Well, that's great. Well, I guess, in a certain way, we've already talked a little bit about this question: do you feel strongly about any of the natural or manmade features of the landscape around Pawlet? Do you like living in the country?
[LAUGHS.]

EP I love it. I love it.

SR Where you lived and worked, was that a fairly urban area?

EP Mount Vernon?

SR Yeah. I don't know—

EP A big city. [3.56]

SR Big city.

EP Big city. Just, it's a bedroom for New York City, you know. [4.03] It's right—

SR I just—I'm totally unfamiliar with that—

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EP New York City and the Bronx, and Mount Vernon.

[4.08] I could look out my windows and see the Empire State Building.

SR Do you miss any of the activities that go along with living in the city?

EP No. No, because my friends would come up here to see me and I could go down there. [4.27] I mean, it wasn't that—it wasn't traumatic in any way at all. And I had friends here.

SR I think people who live in the country, most of them feel very much a part of the country. And I also found that people who live in the country, 'cause there are a lot of people—well, there are a lot of people in Pawlet who live alone. [4.51] And I found that they're very resourceful people. A lot of inner resources. A lot of ability to—

EP Well, yes. Yes, I suppose so.

SR And I think that's, again, I think that's something that's quite—

EP Of course, living alone, I never—that was my life, that's my life. [5.11] After my parents died, I was alone, that was it. You might be interested in what happened—and I told you I was living up there

at Hazel's and bought this. And after I'd bought it and owned it for a little while, that summer, later that summer a friend asked me if I'd go over to Granville shopping with her, so I did. [5.51] And I was living in this house. You know, just staying in it. And so we were out, gone for some time, and when we got back here she acted a little strange and she got me in here and talked to me in here. And pretty soon I heard a car coming up the road, tooting it's horn, and I said, "Oh, for heaven's sakes, what's the big idea?" [6.20] And they drove up my driveway and I said, "Oh, if they'd just stop drilling the horn. It'll upset Helen Robinson up on the hill." Pretty soon another car came and then another car came. And they gave me a housewarming. [6.33] You would *never believe* the excitement! They came in with a little stove to heat the water on, they made tea, and they decorated this. They had streamers and they put streamers everywhere. [6.52] And it *really* was wonderful. It was all these people that I have mentioned to you, that I knew at the time.

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SR Isn't that wonderful? I remember when, the winter when Neil and I were building the house. We did, of course—I think I've probably told you this—we did all the painting in the house ourselves, 'cause, see, Neil's off in the wintertime. [7.11] Bennington has that work term, where the students go and work, so he teaches thirteen weeks and then he's off thirteen weeks and then he's on fifteen weeks, which is why we could do all the work and finish the floors. And we never would have been able to afford the house if we had to—

EP You couldn't do it.

SR Do it by ourselves. So we worked that winter every day. [7.30] We came here from North Pawlet at eight o'clock in the morning and worked until seven or eight o'clock at night. I thought if I saw another paint brush, I would go crazy. Well, my birthday is in February and on February 20th we were up at the house here, painting away, and just, you know, sort of that _____, _____. You thought if you just—it just seemed like we were never gonna finish. Neil was just about to go back to school. We had wanted to move before he went back to school,

but that was—and I thought, the day that, when we had gotten to the house that morning—it was a weekend. I don't know whether it was a Saturday or a Sunday. But I thought that Neil was acting a little bit strangely. [8.09] He made sort of a little—it was already quite muddy around the house and he made a little boardwalk, you know, coming up to the house. [8.16] And I couldn't—he seemed a little, to be doing things a little strangely.

EP A little differently.

SR And I didn't think too much of it, and we don't usually make too much of our birthdays and occasions. Well, suddenly, at about three o'clock in the afternoon, I was in cleaning in the pantry, and here comes all the Bakers, and Ed and Rose Baker—I don't know if—do you know Ed and Rose Baker?

EP No.

SR Well, that Joyce's mother and father. [8.41] Joyce had—they had two birthday cakes, a big pot of hot coffee, cups—you know, _____, everything. Presents—everything. So we set up—I mean, there was nothing in the house. [8.57] It was just, you know, bare. We set up places for everyone to sit

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and had hot coffee and birthday cake, and it certainly was exciting, and it really made my day.

[9.06]

EP In your own home.

SR Yeah, in our own home. And that was very exciting. And Neil, of course, knew about it all the time, but I didn't know about it until they arrived, so that was very _____. How about traveling? Have you done very much traveling, other than to Florida?

EP Yes, as much as I could. [9.21]

SR Yeah. Tell me a little bit, some of that.

EP I've been to Europe two or three times. [9.28]
California.

SR Where did you go in Europe?

EP Well, one trip was mostly Italy and Sicily and Switzerland. [9.43]

SR Wonderful.

EP And another trip was Norway and Sweden and Denmark and England. [9.49] Then another time was mostly England and Scotland and up the—that direction. So.

SR Did you enjoy that?

EP Oh, of course! Of course. I love anything like that. Had a beautiful time.

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SR Did you travel with a tour group?

EP No, with friends. [10.14] Friends.

SR Oh, isn't that nice.

EP No, I never went on a tour. [10.21] That wouldn't suit me. I would *hate* having to get up and get through breakfast and get in the bus and go somewhere. No, no. The time we went to Italy and Sicily, I was with two friends. [10.45] And another time I had—there were five of us, all teachers, all friends. So, you know, it's much easier. It's nicer.

SR Yeah, yeah. And then you've been in California and Florida. Have you been to any other places in this country?

EP I don't know. Granville. [11.11] [SR LAUGHS.]

SR Now, that's far enough away.

EP That's far enough, yeah. [SR LAUGHS.] And that's why I got the little car. [11.21] Granville and Pawlet, that's it.

SR It's terrific that you still drive. [11.25] That's wonderful. That gives you a lot of freedom.

EP Well, you have to here! [11.29]

SR You really do.

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EP How are you gonna get anyplace unless you can drive?

SR Yeah.

EP I have friends who don't drive and I just can't imagine it. [11.38] Just being dependent on somebody else. Of course, that's the answer: I'm not dependent on anybody. [11.44]

SR On anybody, yuh.

EP If I can help it.

SR And you said you were gonna stay this winter?

EP Oh, yeah, I've stayed here. [11.52] This'll be what? Three of four winters.

SR Oh, I know one thing—you seem to be a birdwatcher. [12.00] Is that one of your—is that hobby or is that something that—

EP No, that's just something that happens out my back window. [12.06]

SR You enjoy that?

EP Oh, sure. Yeah, I love it. That's why I feed 'em. [12.11] I spend half my income _____ birds.

SR [LAUGHS.] We did—we had several feeders in North Pawlet and we haven't set any up here yet, but we're going to this year. I miss it.

EP There are lovely birds that come here.

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SR Wonderful. And they really do make the winter cheerful.

EP Well, that window there—

SR I bet you spend a lot of time here when you're watching.

EP That was also—those men that came here, rented the house, hunting, put in that window for me and that was a great blessing. [12.44] There were two windows there, two small windows in that place, and when they took them out, the center part of them—see, there was a window on each side and then there was a partition sort of between them. [13.04] And that partition was one of the cow stanchions that came out of the cow barn.

SR So there were barns up here?

EP Oh, there were two big barns there. [13.14]

SR Oh, you see, I didn't—I guess I did know that. This was a farm here?

EP Yeah, that picture in the kitchen shows it, the one over the icebox. [13.23]

SR Yeah, let me look.

[THEY GO TO KITCHEN TO SEE THE PICTURE.]

EP You see?

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SR Who did that?

EP Well, it was friend of Helen Robinson who lived up here. [13.36] Did it in a sepia. And I painted it on this paper and a friend of mine who is an artist put in much of the shading. I couldn't do the shading. And she didn't finish the shading because she said, being an artist, she didn't do that sort of _____. [13.56] But, you see, this door goes into that—see that little building behind? That was—

SR Out this way?

EP No. It went right out through there. And the original road came up the other side of my driveway, over there, and came across the brook and over this way. [14.28] And that is the old silo hole. You see that stone?

SR Oh, yeah. Yeah.

EP Outside of the bird—where I feed—that was the silo and this was the newest barn, and the oldest barn was in back of it. [14.42] See? Over here was another barn.

[THEY RETURN TO TAPING AREA.]

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SR I think someone told me that when I was asking about Ken Mason, that there was a farm. Do you know what happened to all those buildings?

EP Well, when I came—

SR Were some of them still here?

EP They were both there. [15.06] But the back building, the back end of it, the east side of it—
[PAUSE WHILE EP DEALS WITH THE DOG.]

EP So, the back building, the boards were all off it. [15.57] I was like one of those old barns, just falling down. So Helen thought that, just to protect it so that it didn't get all the elements, she was having a man board it up, the east end of it out there. [16.13] Well, you can imagine two big barns going out there—they were bigger than the house and it cut off all that view. And I said, well, I don't want those barns, so the man who was doing it—Croft, over there in Rupert was doing it—and I said, well, I don't want it. I don't want it and I'm not gonna pay for it or anything. [16.45] Helen was gonna pay for it. I said, "And I don't want to pay you to take it down, but I'd like the whole thing taken down." And so, for taking it

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down, I gave him all the slate on the roof, plus a broken toilet-- [SR LAUGHS.]

SR Threw that in.

EP And threw that in. And, of course, there were beautiful beams in that barn. [17.09] And so he took it all and built a barn over there in Rupert.

SR Now, Helen Robinson would have been Danny Robinson's daughter?

EP Who?

[DOG BARKING.]

SR Danny Robinson's daughter?

[DOG BARKING.]

EP Danny?

SR Danny Robinson, the original--

[DOG BARKING.]

EP Danny Robinson.

SR Danny Robinson, uhuh.

[DOG BARKING.]

EP His name was Denzel. [17.28]

SR Denzel.

[DOG BARKING.]

SR 'Cause I don't know that much about the original farm.

[DOG BARKING CLOSE TO MICROPHONE.]

EP Well, he had it there for a good many years.

[17.39] Of course, he wasn't the original owner,
but Helen was his wife.

[DOG BARKING.]

SR Was this still quite a good orchard when you first
were up here?

EP Yes.

SR So that's a big change.

EP The wind, the air currents were such that the stage
had said it was one of the very *finest* places for
growing apples. [18.12] Isn't it too bad they're
all, they've all gone back.

SR Well, you know, it's funny, the year we built the
house all our trees, and that whole orchard, was
loaded with apples. [18.26] The Burnsidés—Eleanor
told us, when they bought the orchard and the land,
that they had a state person come in and look at the
orchard, to see if it was worth trying to bring back
into—

EP _____ done to it.

SR No. And the state people said, no, you know.

[18.44] You can prune the trees and keep them

yourselves, but you're never gonna make any kind of business out of this orchard again. The year we built the house our trees were all full. [18.53] *Beautiful* apples. The last two years they've been almost entirely barren. [18.57] The pear trees are still pretty good.

EP Well, they were beautiful. They were just—the apples were wonderful when I came. [19.07]

SR Yeh, yeh. Well, Neil and I thought that we would try to, you know, work on the trees on our land.

EP Well, Mike has tried that.

SR But I don't think it's gonna work. And I said to Neil, I think probably we're gonna have—I think—we had wanted to start new trees ourselves and establish a kind of, you know, re-establish the orchard. [19.29] And our original idea, of course, was to try to work with the trees that we had and we did a lot of work on them last year. It says you have to give them, you know, three or four years, but we're not giving the kind of—I mean, they really need a *tremendous* amount of—

EP They need a lot of attention.

SR _____ of attention. And I don't think we're going to—we have too many other things that we're trying to do for ourselves. I think, probably, most of them are gonna come down. [19.50]

EP I think, probably, from what I observe of people who, like you, who have other things to do, the temptation is to have too much: you want apples, you want—just like this down here. They've got everything, but it's too much to take care of. [20.11]

SR It's a lot.

EP Plus the other things that you want to do, that interest you.

SR Well, you have to learn how to juggle all of that. [20.20]

EP I can't take care of anything here anymore, you see? I don't have a nice garden, I don't have my raspberries. [20.28]

SR Did you have a garden?

EP Mmm! Not a vegetable garden—flowers. [20.32]

SR A flower garden. Yeah. Well, I know that. We grow a gigantic garden and we also have a greenhouse that we're trying to get going with things in the

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wintertime, but it takes—you know, if we weren't, if we didn't—I mean, Neil only teaches three days a week and I am, off and on, sometimes working away from home, sometimes I'm not, and we do spend a lot of time at home, so we can have a lot of those projects, but they do take a tremendous amount of time. [20.57]

EP It takes an awful lot of time.

SR And, also, a lot of physical energy. [21.00]

EP Energy, effort. Yes, I had a nice garden out there, but I can't—I didn't even weed it last summer. [21.11]

SR Well, you do what you can do. And when you can't do it anymore, you have to—

EP I can't mow a lawn anymore and so forth. [21.21]
Those things I used to do myself.

SR Do you have any—I think I asked you this before, but just before we finished—do you have any ideas about the future of this town? Do you think it's gonna stay pretty much the same or do you think it's gonna—

EP Yes, I think it probably will stay pretty much the same because it's, it doesn't have the railroad, it

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doesn't have the bus facilities, it doesn't have things like that, that draws *some* people, but not everybody. [22.01] And the people who come in, who are coming in, *want* it the way it is. That's why they come.

SR I think that's true.

EP Sally {Kirkwood} has sold her house. [22.18] Do you know where I mean?

SR Yeah, I do.

EP And the man who has bought *it*, also bought Stanley Norton's. [22.25] Do you know where I mean, that farm?

SR Yes, I do.

EP Back of Elsee Roger's?

SR Right. Only recently learned—

EP And the Stanley Norton property, all over in back there, adjoins Sally's property over back there, so he has bought her house. [22.40]

SR Is she gonna leave Pawlet or—

EP Yeah, mhm. She's going to Pennsylvania. [22.45] She's going today. She'll be back in the summer—in the spring—because she's left her furniture here, stored it, but—and the place that she's going to in

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Pennsylvania is not ready yet. It's a senior citizen's development. [23.06]

SR She never lived here in the winter. She always-

EP No, she won't. She didn't like the winter here. [23.13]

SR Yeah, yeah. I remember, Neil did a wonderful-

EP You know, that's-it's difficult living out and that's a difficult road. [23.22] That road, that part of it isn't as bad as the one beyond. The {Balms} can't take it anymore. They tried. And that's really too bad, too hard to get up to. So. The Greens still seem to be able to get up and down. [23.47] But they've been here since the year-one, so it's natural to them.

SR Yeah, yeah. Well, you know, it's taken-it's gonna take us some getting used to, living on this road. [23.59] I mean, we were used to all those years living on Route 30. _____ that Neil had to miss any school because of where we lived. He missed one day after we had that big storm. [24.09] We were down in Bennington the night of that storm, in the spring, and we got home. We didn't get up the hill. We walked up the hill. [24.18]

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EP I remember. You left the car down there.

SR And Neil didn't get to school the next day and that's the first day in thirteen years that he's missed school. [24.26] Because we lived on this hill. If we were living over in North Pawlet, he probably would have gotten to Bennington that day.

EP Yeah, 'cause that road is plowed. [24.32]

SR Yeah. And if you could-

EP Well, we're not plowed out until the last thing. [24.37]

SR Yeah, yeah. Well, it's a secondary road and no school children. [24.42]

EP Do they plow your road at all, up to Burnsidess'?

SR No, they go up to the farmhouse.

EP Yeah, and turn around.

SR See? So the Burnsidess own that stretch of road coming up to us and the deal, our deed, is that everyone living on that stretch of road shares the maintenance of the road, so, as more and more people are here, then that'll be kind of shared. [25.07]

EP Does he plow it out?

SR Well, Tom has a plow and these two winters, the winter we built the house and last winter, we shared

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the plowing, but his plow is very old and it is *not* in good condition, so we're to have someone plow us this year, instead of using Tom's plow and having Neil and Tom do it. [25.27] 'Cause it's not, I don't think that's a good solution.

EP Jim Hathaway plows my driveway. [25.33]

SR Well, Bernie {Larrabee}, we had contacted him, the year that we were building the house, about plowing. [25.41] He does plowing.

EP Does he have a plow?

SR Yeah, he does quite a bit of plowing in town. [25.47]

EP He does?

SR And this was before Tom offered us his plow and he came up and looked at our road and said he would be perfectly willing to plow it, so, I don't know, I'll probably back in touch with him, although, if Jim comes up to plow you, maybe he'd—having two people on his route.

EP Of course, he lives up there and he has the farm and he has cows and he can't do everything. [26.11]

SR Yeah.

EP He's an awfully nice chap.

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SR Yeah, they're a nice family. Nice family. Let me ask you one more question before I shut the tape recorder off. What do you think about the photograph Neil took of you?

EP The what?

SR The photograph that Neil took of you?

EP I think it's a lovely, it really is a very nice photograph, very nice, but it doesn't really mean too much. [26.40] It's just the picture of the house and me and my dog sitting on the step, but it is cute. It's very nice.

SR I'm glad you like it.

EP Yeah, it shows—yeah, just—

SR Where you live!

EP Yes, where I live. Yeah.

SR Is there anything else you'd like to say while I've got the tape recorder on, that you can think of, about your family or your life here or—

EP Well, of course, my life here has been improved immensely since Rena and Mike have come across the road. [27.08] Because they can look after me. There's somebody close by that I can call. You know, it's family.

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SR Yeah, yeah. That's nice.

EP And like last weekend, all those kids here, was a beautiful time. And I get to see the grandchildren that way. [27.31] I wouldn't, otherwise, 'cause I can't go to their houses.

SR Mike and Rena are very good neighbors.

EP Very good neighbors. It's wonderful for me to have them there. Mike does so much for me. And to go down there for dinner every once in a while or have them come up here, it really is marvelous.

SR Good! That's nice. And you have Jody. [27.58]

EP Yes.

SR You've had other—

EP I had Heidi before Jody. [28.05] Looked just like her. But Heidi was a gentler dog than this one.

SR Did you get Jody around here or—

EP Up in Rutland. [28.16]

SR We have—she's a full breed Dachshund. [28.23] We have a good friend who teaches at Bennington, he's an anthropologist, and he always has two together. And he lost his—

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EP I have her genealogy. [28.34] I have her, you know, when I got her, but it stops with her because I had her spayed.

SR She must be good company, though.

EP So, yeah. Well, I think everybody who lives alone should have *something* alive in the house. [28.53]

SR Yeah.

EP It seems to me very sterile for some of these people who have nothing, just nothing.

SR Yeah. Well, I think—I grew up with dogs and we lived—I was born in, or, my folks lived in Weston, Massachusetts, when I was born—way out in the country, at that time. [29.10]

EP In Weston?

SR Weston, yeah, which is—oh, it's maybe an hour, an hour and a half outside of Boston, near Wellesley and _____, in that area, and when I was born, which was in 1944, that was still pretty rural. [29.24] It's not anymore, but it was then. And my father traveled a lot. He was at MIT and he traveled a lot. And my mother was alone with three small children, way out in the middle of _____. [29.35] And she had two dogs that we grew up with.

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They were Norwegian Elkhounds. And she depended on those dogs. I mean, they were watchdogs and-

EP Yeah.

SR --when anybody came to the house when she was alone at night, she would *never* go to the door without one dog on one side of her and one dog on the other side of her. [29.53]

EP Well, I think it's right. I think it's a good idea.

SR And I felt--Neil and I went many year without a dog because, mostly, because we lived on that terrible road. [30.05] But, really, when we got Strawberry I felt a lot more comfortable and I don't think I'd ever be without a dog again.

EP I had a cat.

SR Yeah, I like cats, too.

EP I had a cat for *many*, many years there in Mount Vernon, when I lived in the apartment. [30.23] She was marvelous. But then when I got rid of her, I had to have her put to sleep, I didn't have a pet until I came, 'til I moved, {about a year}.

SR And then you got Heidi.

EP Yeah.

SR Yeah.

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EP Because I don't think it's—you know, an apartment and working all the time. [30.45] I waited until I retired, then I got Heidi.

SR Well, when our friend in Bennington lost his last Dachshund, he had one—he had two and one died, and then he had one, and then when she died, he was—oh, he was so brokenhearted; just very, very morose.

EP Yeah, it is traumatic.

SR Yeah, yeah. And then he went and got himself two long-haired Dachshunds, which I'd never seen. They're beautiful!

EP Aren't they interesting?

SR Red-haired. And he's just delighted now that he's got those two again. He goes everywhere on campus with them. I mean, they're always with him. He just adores them. He's alone and he just adores those dogs.

EP They're a nice dog. As you say, they go with him and he probably doesn't move without them.

SR No.

EP And you don't have to tell them to come, they just are with you. They don't run away.

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SR I don't think I--when we have another dog, I don't think I'll have as large a dog as Strawberry is. I think I'd rather have a small dog.

EP Well, it's easier to have a small dog.

SR Yeah, yeah. And all the problems when Strawberry was a puppy. You know, there were many problems. She's a very powerful animals and with deer and, you know, the woods and hunting in this whole area, it's tough when you have a dog that size. [32.00] Now, of course, she's no problem at all.

EP Because she's older.

SR She's older. She can't chase a deer. You know, I walk her at night, during the hunting season--I guess I should shut the tape recorder off. Well, when she won't go out on her own, I like to make sure she's getting enough exercise, so what I do is I take her in that nice meadow next to us that the Burnsides--well, our friends, you know? They've got that nice open meadow and I just walk the perimeters of the meadow with her. [32.29] And yesterday I came home and it was--well, it was getting towards dark. I hadn't quite adjusted to it getting dark so early and I wanted to get her out and give her a little

exercise. It was about 4:30 and I thought we could get around before it got dark. And just as we went past our garden and out into the meadow there were three deer that we've watched all summer, that have been together all summer—it's two does and a male.

[32.54]

EP They were there?

SR They were right there in those apple trees on the far side and they, I saw their white tails go up, and Strawberry looks at me as if to say, "I know I'm not supposed to run after them, but I'm just gonna run just a *little* ways." [33.07] And she'll run them just a little ways and then she'll just stop. But, of course, when she was young, boy, she was gonna—up and we were, oh boy, what—

EP Well, I didn't think {they were that close to}—and the other day one came by, bounding right up my driveway and right out up there. [33.22] I think it was a buck. It was a very big one. Beautiful animal. And I thought that it was because David was down there and they have their two dogs. [33.35] I thought they had maybe just kind of run the deer up.

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SR Maybe, they might. They kind of stay—we've noticed they kind of stay—they love the Burnside's pond up there and they kind of stay—if you're on the far end of that meadow that I'm speaking of, you can go right over onto the Ross's land and then right back down around where that pond is, and I've noticed that they—you know, when we were first building the house, of course, where all the apple trees are—

EP They love that.

SR That was their run. But now Strawberry's there and we're there, they've expanded, they've extended their run, so you only see them—most of the time you see them in that distant meadow and they're obviously moving down from the apple trees, across the meadow, and back down into where that pond is, so they kind of go around us. [34.23]

EP Well, those two dogs of David's are there. Of course, where they live up there in Huntington, it's just wild. [34.35] There's nothing there at t'all and the dogs are used to being loose and running in the woods anywhere they want to, so when they come here they run down below there to the brook, to the

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pond and so forth, and I thought it was they who might have disturbed this deer.

SR Well, maybe.

EP Because they come from over that, that hillside, come down through there, come around here—

SR And across.

EP Come up this way.

SR Well, we've been lucky, with Strawberry they don't bother the garden or anything. [35.06] They've just sort of gone around us. In the wintertime they eat up what's left.

EP Well, she goes out and stands out there and barks, but I can't see into the swale there any longer 'cause it's so grown up, but I think there must be something there, for her to be carrying on sometimes the way she does. [35.24]

SR Yeah, yeah. Well, Strawberry can't run them anymore, anymore than about fifty feet, so I don't worry about—

EP It's just as well.

SR Yeah. No, she—as I say, when we lived in North Pawlet, I mean, there were whole areas, times of the year that you couldn't even walk her! [35.37] She

had to be tied all the time because—I mean, she could easily run down a deer.

EP Of course, you get a little dog like this, it can stay home easier. [35.47]

SR Yeah.

EP Much easier.

SR Yeah, yeah. One day when she was a puppy—well, she wasn't a puppy, she was three or four years old—but I was walking her in March, when the deer are so weak, and we *literally* stumbled across a young deer sleeping down in some juniper trees. [36.08] And, oh, my goodness, what a time. Oh, I don't know—you know, it's the first time I'd ever seen a dog and a deer, you know, together. [36.15] And, to me, of course, it looked like they were playing. I mean, it's like a cat and a mouse. But, actually, what Strawberry was trying to do was kill the animal. [36.20] And I didn't know how to get them—I didn't know how to get her away from the deer! It was a young deer, very weak, trying to, you know, box with Strawberry, and you know what—

EP You mean Strawberry really attacked it?

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SR Well, to me, they were playing. I mean, you know, it's like a cat and a mouse when they play. And Strawberry-

EP I guess so.

SR What the dog tries to do is he gets around the back of the deer-

EP And it defends itself, yeah.

SR Yeah, yeah. Finally, fortunately, we got down close to our house and Charlie came out and-Charlie Baker came out and just took, just kicked Strawberry as hard as he possibly could, which I would never do.

[37.00]

EP Picked her up?

SR Kicked her.

EP Oh, kicked her.

SR *Hard*, in the middle of the body, and she-

[DOG BARKING.]

SR I mean, it hurt him and the deer took off and Strawberry kind of crumbled for a few minutes and then was fine. [37.15] And the deer was gone. I was helpless! I didn't know what-you know, I didn't-

EP It probably upset you to have him kick her.

SR Well, it did, but I was glad that he did it.

[37.24] I mean, I wouldn't know to kick her. You know, I wouldn't do that without, you know, 'causing some serious damage. Plus, I didn't know how dangerous the deer was, you know. [37.34]

EP No, you don't know what sort of an attack it would be.

SR Right. And, also, a deer, when they're excited and being attacked, can be very dangerous to a human being. [37.42]

EP They can?

SR Yeah. I mean, they can kick hard, so I didn't want to get into a position where I was doing that sort of thing.

EP No wonder.

SR Well, I guess we're all set! Thank you. Do you want to hear this?

EP No.

SR Okay. I'll tell you, Elsee, what-- [37.59]

END TAPE 1, SIDE B

END TRANSCRIPTION