

Neil & Suzanne Rappaport Collection/VFC2004.0002

Freda Rogers/TC2004.3026

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SR Suzanne Rappaport
FR Freda Rogers
Place Pawlet, VT
Date 10/03/1983

TAPE 1, SIDE A

[NOTE: ROGERS SEEMS TO HAVE A SLIGHT SPEECH IMPEDIMENT THAT OCCASIONALLY IS A PROBLEM FOR UNDERSTANDING WHAT SHE SAYS.]

SR [.20] --Okay, do you want to start by telling me your full name?

FR Freda Rogers.

SR Okay, and will you spell that for me?

FR F R E D A R O G E R S . [.27]

SR Okay, and what is your date of birth?

FR February 6, 1922. [.33]

SR Okay. And can you tell me where you were born?

FR In Tinmouth. [.37]

SR In Tinmouth. When did you come to Pawlet?

FR Nineteen fifty-one, we came here. [.45]

SR Okay. And can you tell me where you've lived in the town? Have you lived any place other than the farm?

FR No, we moved here and we've been here ever since, on this place. [.55]

SR All right. And you were married when you came here?

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FR Yes.

SR All right. Well, I want to talk—a little bit later I want to talk about the farm and how you got here and what you were doing before you came here, but first let me ask you a few questions about your parents. Can you tell me what their names were?

FR Fred and Bertha {Caldin}. [1.15]

SR And where were they from?

FR They lived in Tinmouth. [1.17]

SR Were they both born there?

FR No. My father was born in Dorset. [1.24] I don't know just where in Dorset, but somewhere down that way. I never discussed it with him too much, I guess. But he was born in Dorset and my mother was born in Tinmouth and lived there most of her life, or just about all her life. [1.36]

SR How did your father get to Tinmouth?

FR I have no idea how they met. [LAUGHING.]

SR What did your mother and father do?

FR They were farming. [1.48]

SR They both worked on the farm?

FR Yes.

SR Your mother worked very much like you do?

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FR Oh, yes. _____ and everything, the same as me.

[1.59] Worked in the hayfields and everything.

SR So they pretty much ran the farm together?

FR Yes.

SR Did they own their own farm?

FR Yes.

SR How many brothers and sisters do you have?

FR I have four brothers. [2.12] One of them lives on
the home farm.

SR In Tinmouth?

FR In Tinmouth. [2.16]

SR I guess I didn't realize that.

FR One lives in Poultney, one in Benson, and one is down
in Bennington now. [2.22]

SR Okay. And can you tell me a little bit about what
they do?

FR Three of them are farmers, the other one works in a
shop of some kind. [2.33] I don't know-{a wood
shop}.

SR Is he the one that lives in Bennington?

FR The one in Bennington works in a wood shop. [2.39]
The other three are farmers.

SR So they all live in Vermont?

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FR Yes.

SR And pretty much within a small area.

FR Well, from Bennington to Benson. [2.47]

SR Yuh, yuh. Let's see, you weren't married in Pawlet.
Where were you married?

FR In the _____ parsonage. [2.58]

SR Okay. All right. Now let me just look over this section and see if—okay, now. Let me ask you a few questions down at the bottom here, Freda, about just your feelings about the town of Pawlet and then we'll talk a little bit about the farm. How has the town changed since you came here?

FR Well, there are less farms than there were before, now, than there were when we first came. [3.33] And I guess the main part of town has more houses built up around it. I don't know of anything else, but I know definitely there's more {farmers that are renting, too,} that used to have cows. [3.52]

SR Yeah. How come you think there are fewer farms?

FR Because they—well, like I said, they {never} had cows of their own on the two farms that we were renting and then the Haskins place up above us here _____--well, that'd be in Pawlet, too—the {Smith plot} building up

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here. [4.16] They had a farm there at one time, had cows there. Fred Cooper had it. [4.19] When we moved here. And I {know there's that many left}.

SR But why do you think that's happening?

FR I don't know why. Most people are all older people that had them. [4.37] And they gave up farming. I don't know. Just because they were older, I guess. [LAUGHS.] As far as I know. They sold out. The Patch place up here, they sold that to two people—the divided the farm in selling it to people from out of state. [5.01] Well, Warner, I guess, lived here in Pawlet and he bought half of it and somebody from down in {Rhode Island} bought the other half. [5.08] And the Cooper place, somebody from, some doctor bought it.

SR Did you—you rented farms before you bought this farm?

FR No, we owned a small farm over here in {North} Pawlet. [5.25] {Or Dad did.}

SR Right.

FR And then we ran two farms on shares. [5.36] For two years, that's all. And then we moved to this other one in Pawlet, was buying it, and then we decided on

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something better and bigger, and we came over here.

[5.46]

SR Okay. What are your fondest memories of your live here in Pawlet?

FR Just our work here on the farm, I guess. [6.02] I just enjoy farming. I like the views and the sunsets that we get here, as much as anything.

SR What did your parents think about you becoming a farmer? Were they alive when you were farming?

FR Yes. They liked farming themselves and they knew that I was brought up on one and-

SR And your mother really worked in the same way you did. [6.30]

FR Yes. _____, I guess.

SR What do you like the least about the town, as it is now?

FR I don't know the town that well, really. We spend most of our town here on the farm. We don't go to town that much. [6.48] [LAUGHING.]

SR Right, right. Is there anything you don't like about the town?

FR Nothing special, I guess. Except the taxes! [6.57]
[LAUGHTER.]

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SR The taxes are too high?

FR Yeah. The taxes are too high everywhere, I think.

[7.02] [LAUGHS.]

SR I guess so. I guess so. Okay. Now, let's talk a little bit about your schooling. How long did you go to school?

FR I went to through high school and then two years of Castleton. [7.17] Well, normal school it was, at that time.

SR Where was that?

FR Castleton College. [7.25] Where Castleton College is now there used to be a normal school. [COUGHS.]

SR And what did you study there?

FR Teaching. [7.30]

SR Teaching.

FR I taught school for two or three years. [7.33]

SR Right, right. That's what I wanted to ask you about. Tell me a little bit about that. Did you think you were gonna be a teacher, instead of work on a farm, or-

FR Well, I liked teaching very much, but, then, one of the schools that I taught in over to Danby closed up.

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[7.51] And that put me out of work. And then we had the farm and I like farming, too, so—

SR Were you kind of doing both for a while?

FR Yes. And we weren't that much into farming the first few years. [8.06] We just did—we had very few cows the first two years and then after that we had more. And then when we moved over here, we had really a lot of 'em. [8.19] I started substitute teaching, but I didn't care for that at all and couldn't get along with the children, for substitute teaching. [LAUGHING.] It was all right to do the teaching when you were part of the whole school, but when you have to substitute, there's the ones that wanted to make trouble or something. [8.39] It seemed to be that way.

SR So where did you teach?

FR Scottsville School and Rose Hill. [8.45] In Danby.

SR In Danby?

FR Yes.

SR And what grade did you teach?

FR Well, Rose School, it was all eight grades. [8.52]

SR What years would that have been?

FR One through—

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SR No, but I mean what year, 19-what? I'm just trying to place it.

FR Forty-three. [9.05]

SR I was going to say, at the very end.

FR Well, when I first come here--

SR Right, at the very end--

FR Well, we got married the year that I got out of Castleton and then I had a job that fall, before we were married, and then we got married later in the year. [9.21] And I taught at Scottsville School two years, I guess it was. And then we moved up to that other place in Danby and the public school, one year. _____.

SR That must have been at the very end of the rural schools. [9.39]

FR I guess.

SR I think the last one--I think the North Pawlet one was the last one to close in Pawlet and I think that closed in 1944. [9.45]

FR Well, they had all their schools up there in Danby, but they--

SR They still had the rural ones.

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FR They still had the rural school. [9.52] One of 'em-
well, they moved two schools together in Danby and
made a double school out of it. I think they had a
two-room school and, I'm not sure, I think they had
two teachers the last end of that, but they were
cutting out the smaller, eight grade schools. [10.11]

SR What did you like teaching the best?

FR The lower grades, I think. [10.19] Teaching them to
be-math, I liked math. I liked that very much.

SR How did you meet Howard?

FR At a dance. [10.29]

SR At a dance?

FR At a dance over in Tinmouth. [10.31]

SR And now, let's see, Howard was from Danby?

FR Howard is from Danby. [10.35]

SR Right, right.

FR And everybody went to the dance in Tinmouth and we met
there.

SR What was he up to when you met him?

FR Square dancing.

SR No, but I mean was he-was he farming or-

FR He was working on a farm for someone else. [10.47]
He worked for that same fellow-after we got married.

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And then we took a farm that he had on shares.
[10.59]

SR Now, what does that mean, exactly, "on shares?"

FR He furnished part of the cows and we had some cows of our own and then we shared the expenses. [11.14]
When we'd get the grain bill, well, he paid half the grain and we paid half, and we always—each had half the profits, so. [LAUGHING.]

SR Did everyone work the farm or did—

FR Just he and I worked, Howard and I worked on the farm. [11.25] And he owned the land. And we had the cattle and I think he had the horses, because we bought one horse when we left there from him. [11.37] And we didn't have tractors then. And then half of the cows. I forget what we had. I think we—I forgot what the machinery was, whether we owned it or whether we didn't. That was a long time ago. [LAUGHS.]

SR What was it like—what was it like, working on a farm without tractors? Before tractors?

FR Well, we worked with horses. [LAUGHS.] [12.04] It was hard work. You had to do a lot of things that you—by hand, that you—a lot of walking with the horses

Neil & Suzanne Rappaport Collection/VFC2004.0002

and cultivating, because you didn't have the machinery to—you had to walk and lead the horse.

SR Did you do all that?

FR Oh, I used to lead the horse, yes. [12.24] And then rake hay {with the horse}. And then load hay on the wagon. Pitched it on by hand 'til we got our hay loader, one of those hay loaders that you drew behind and the hay came up with—it was called a lot of handwork. [12.39] And then we used to milk by hand at first, 'til we got a milking machine.

SR And how many cows would you have been dealing with at that time?

FR Oh, we only had about fifteen to start with. [12.54]

SR Much smaller.

FR Much smaller. And we went to—I think, over at the big farm in Danby we had about thirty-five head. [13.05] That was all together, I guess. I don't remember how many cows we did have then, probably not over twenty-five or more. The others were heifers.

SR Do you remember when you got your first tractor?

FR Just before we moved over here we got a small tractor. [13.23] Just before.

SR And what would you have used that for?

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FR For mowing. We got a mowing machine that I think we bought and used the mower on that. [13.39] And I think we made a pull for the rake, for the horse rake, or either bought a side rake to draw with the tractor.

SR But you were still plowing with horses at that time?

FR Yes.

SR So, in other words, your first machinery was really for haying?

FR Yes.

SR Not for plowing?

FR No. Yes, I guess so, for automated _____. [14.10]
And we still had horses when we moved over here, we had a team, and we used—well, we bought more modern machinery after being here for a while. [14.24] We were here just so long. We got another tractor, which was also small, then we had the plow for that and the harrows. And, before, we had the horse-drawn harrows and we bought harrows for the tractor after we moved over here. [14.43] Well, we were really horse farmers, we might as well stay it 'til we came here.
[LAUGHING.]

SR Now how about for cutting corn? Did you need to start getting machinery for that process?

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FR Oh, well, we had one to cut—well, first we cut it by hand, then we had the corn harvester the horses drew.

[15.06] And we still had that when we came over here, with the horse-drawn cutter and then we had the tractor. We used the tractor on the blower, to blow it up into the silo. [15.26] I guess we {needed} that over to Danby, too.

SR So the transitions were gradual?

FR Yes.

SR As you could afford it, you got a more sophisticated piece of machinery and—when did you have your last horse?

FR Well—

SR Did you keep horses just—

FR Yeah, we just had those two and when they—one of them died, the other one we _____ for a while and then he got so he'd go down there. Every fall he'd come right back down, or every spring or something, he'd come back down and run away from us and go down there, so we finally sold it to Mr. Wait up there on {Wait} Hill up there in Pawlet. [16.12] And I don't know what he did with him, whether he just kept him 'til he died or—he was quite an old horse. And _____ the

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tractors on the other _____. That's the only two tractors—two horses that we had over here. [16.24]

SR I think I've seen pictures of them in your wonderful snapshots from when you first lived here. [16.30]

Tell me a little bit about buying the farm here, how you did that. Was that a really big step for you? I mean, what was the condition of this farm when you bought it?

FR Well, it was run-down. [16.43] There was no fences. There were stone walls and fields, through the fields, and they were smaller, and the fences were real down and the land needed plowing real bad. [16.58] It was really run down, as far as haying things, or hay goes on. And we went—well, we plowed the first year and put in corn, I guess, right off, to get some of it worked up. [17.14]

SR What time of the year did you come here?

FR In May. [17.16]

SR In May?

FR In May.

SR And did you bring cows or did you—May of 1951?

FR Yes.

SR Did you bring cows with you or—

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FR Five cows and what machinery we had, even some wood that we had for sugaring. [17.31]

SR Had this been farmed?

FR At one time, but not when we—I don't know how long it had been idle. That's why {there were} still fences on it, because nobody had cattle right here when we first came. [17.45] The Purves hadn't been farming for some time. I don't know just how long.

SR Who was it that owned?

FR Purves. [17.54]

SR How do you spell that?

FR P U R V E . [17.56] One of the boys lives over in Granville now.

SR I've never heard of that name.

FR Never heard of that name?

SR No.

FR A long time ago there was a Brown owned it. [18.10] And Mrs. {Fosher} over to West Pawlet is their daughter. She was a Brown.

SR Okay. Now, wait a minute.

FR She's quite an old lady.

SR Right. Now there was a woman I met this summer, Shirley Hanley was her married name, and she said *she*

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- was brought up here. [18.29] I think. And I think she was a Brown.
- FR It could have been.
- SR I think she was a Brown, because Neil did a picture of her at the end of the summer and Hanley was her second married name. [18.39] Her first husband died and then she married again and her second husband died pretty recently, but I'm sure she told us that she lived in this house. [18.47]
- FR It could be.
- SR And I think she was a Brown.
- FR The Browns owned it before the Purves had it, I guess. [18.54]
- SR But the Purves had it, at one time farmed it here?
- FR I think they farmed it, yes. [19.01] I don't know. Yeah, I'm quite sure. The neighbors have said that they had cattle here.
- SR How were you able to buy the farm? I mean, had you saved—was that like a dream of yours, to buy a bigger farm and really go at it, or—
- FR Well, the place we had over there was very stony and not too large. [19.24]
- SR And up high, wasn't it?

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FR It was up in the mountains. [19.28] And it had lots of cold weather in the wintertime, lots of snow. [LAUGHING.] And we thought we'd like to get down on more level ground and we came riding over through and see that it was empty and stopped in and it was for sale. [19.43] We went to see Buzz Meyers and he helped us put it through.

SR So you've been on this farm for over thirty years. [19.55]

FR Yes, yes.

SR I know that one of the things that people always say about this farm is how much you and Howard have built it up and {put in improvements}. [20.19]

FR Oh, we've put in _____--

[VOICE-OVER.]

FR _____ morning we got into burying stone walls and cutting out hedgerows and then we ran into the wire problem and that almost finished us off. [20.29]

[LAUGHS.]

SR How much land do you have here?

FR Three hundred and fifty acres. [20.31]

SR Three hundred and fifty--that's a pretty good farm for nowadays.

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FR Yes. And we rent the Connor's place up there.

[20.38] We rented that because there wasn't water on the place and we had the pasture where the brook ran through it for the cattle and to keep them watered. And then, well, that was the same down here, the same brook comes down through the lower pasture, too, and so they had extra pasture and water for the cattle.

[21.09] And then we rented the Hatch place, when they used to be Hatch's, where Warners are, we rented that. And we had some corn up there, but mostly we got that for hay and then most of it for pastureland.

SR So you've really expanded the boundaries of the farm since you first bought it.

FR Yes.

SR Did you buy the three hundred and-

FR Yes.

SR --plus acres when you first came here?

FR Yes. That's what was on the farm. [21.41] We bought on--no, there wasn't quite that many, though, because we bought on this place down where our trailer is, was a separate place. Taylor had it. [21.55] And we bought that, too. Had seventy-five acres on it, so we had about two seventy-five. We bought the seventy-

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five down there, but it added to our meadows by taking out the stone walls in between there, too. [22.14]

SR Right, right. I thought the state did that, took all the stone walls out. No? You had to do that yourself?

FR Yes, that was our own, our own projects. [22.24]

SR Boy, that must have been tough.

FR Oh, it was! [LAUGHS.] It took a lot of work.

SR How did you do that? What did you do?

FR We hired backhoes and they dug holes and tool bulldozers and pushed 'em in. [22.40] We hired Doug Baker's some and then a fellow we knew from Tinmouth had a backhoe and bulldozer and he did that, too. We've built onto the barn twice since we've been here. [22.56]

SR Right, that was my next question: what were the buildings like when you first came here?

FR Well, the big barn is where it was then and then we added on to the lower-

SR This is the end that you added onto?

FR The other end, yeah, we added on two different times there. [23.14] Then we added on the manure pit, plus the silage house after that. And then the garage over

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there, it backed right in the road and I didn't like that, so we got one over across. [23.29] We just store machinery in that one now.

SR I didn't realize you had a manure pit here.

FR Well, it's where we drive through with the tractor. We call it the manure pit, it's just a place where the elevator goes out to where, the spreader, to clean the barn. [23.47] But that's separate from the cow barn. It's divided off there.

SR But you don't have a manure lagoon, like some of the farms have—

FR No. I hope we never have to. [23.59] They say you're supposed to go into that, but if they do I think we'll sell off ours 'cause I don't care for those at all. There was, right where our tool house is now, our machinery shed out there, there was a big chicken house, which was fairly ready to fall down. [24.21] We did store machinery under the roof of it for a while. The front of it was all gone. But then that sort of collapsed and when we built up—and then the wind took that down and we had to rebuild it.

SR Is that where the chicken house is now?

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FR Well, it's a whole building. [24.38] It was a huge building there, a big chicken house. I guess, maybe, they had chickens, a chicken farm, along with their cattle, at one time, because it was a huge chicken house.

SR Have you always kept chickens there? Have you always had chickens?

FR Yes, we had 'em.

SR Right along?

FR Along, and not too many at a time. [25.01] That little end that we put on to the end of the tool shed, after a while it was just for chickens.

SR What conditions was the house in?

FR It was good for an old house. [25.17] We have had to repair the porch a couple of times. And then we put the insulation inside. Took off some of the clapboard—or, the {lathing} plaster and put on the plaster board. [25.37]

SR Now, let's see, do you know when this house was built?

FR No, but they said it was over a hundred years old when we moved here. [25.43] I don't know. I don't know just how old it is. It's got plank in it, so I guess it's older. When we tore it off, you know, you could

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see there's plank and—they said they had insulated the north end, but the plumbing insulation had got off.

SR Settles right down, yeah.

FR Settled right down. And we {put} _____ blanket insulation in.

SR What do you mean by planks? I don't know what you mean by that.

FR They were thick boards, like this, for the walls.
[26.18] They're just like boards. It's that thick—

SR Like a post, almost.

FR Thick 2x6's or whatever. And that's what there was, just straight up. [26.30] And then we put the siding on the outside afterwards, put it up to keep out some of the wind. They had a wood furnace, they had it down there, with a big, long pipe that caught the stairs on fire one time. [26.52] And we changed to oil after a while.

SR So you used that for a while when you first lived here?

FR Yes.

SR How did it catch the stairs on fire?

FR The pipe got filled with soot and it caught on fire.
[27.03]

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SR Oh, so that was like a chimney that went out, sort of.
[27.06]

FR It was a smoke pipe that went to the chimney flue on
the other end of the--and the smoke pipe went all the
way from here, out over to the other end--

SR And then up.

FR --and then up to the--

SR So it was a horizontal to a vertical.

FR Yes. And it took a--you had to keep the pipe cleaned
quite often and then it just caught fire and it
charred the stairs. [27.31] [LAUGHS.] But we caught
it in time, so we didn't--and then we used to be able
to buy this asbestos paper we put over it, between
the--where it was too close to the wood, to stop it
from catching again. And then we changed.

SR What year was that? Do you remember?

FR When the wood changed to oil and the hot water heater.
I don't remember what year. Quite a while we've had
it.

SR Do you have a period of time in your mind where you
feel, looking back, that the farm was really at its
best? I mean, when it was the best time to be a

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farmer? I mean, I don't think it's right now that great a time to be a farmer. [28.26]

FR No, I guess not, because of the prices of—when the milk is down and the price of all machinery is up sky high. [28.33]

SR And grain is gonna be fantastic.

FR Grain is gonna be very high this year, too, I guess.

SR But you have—can you, in your memory do you have a period of time where you really felt like, you know, the farm was running well, you were doing well. You'd gotten it kind of where you wanted it?

FR We must have had more money to spend when we were burying all those stone walls than we have now. [28.58] We sure don't have it to put into 'em anymore! [LAUGHING.] We've always had a mortgage and borrowed for different things along the way, tractors and things, but they're paid for right now. [29.15] Except for the farm, that's still under mortgage.

SR Do you think you'll ever own it, be able to own it outright?

FR Not unless we sell out. [29.24] And then we can pay off the mortgage. That's the only way we could do it now because it's just too much.

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SR Has that been affected by your medical expenses? I seem to remember when Howard was ill, you mentioning it to Neil and I that that had really sort of put you *back*, in terms of the farm.

FR Yes it did. It put us back. [29.48] I guess it's gonna put us back some more, I guess. [LAUGHS.] I guess. I don't know. We've never had any steady hired help. [29.56] We tried that, but it never worked out very good. We got the trailer and that's never worked.

SR So, have you and Howard pretty much run the farm on your own?

FR Quite a lot. [30.14] We hired the kids around for help and then haying, putting in hay at different times, until we tried to have hired help and they'd work part-time and then they'd quit. [30.25] And then it was back to the kids again. [LAUGHS.] But we've had it mostly by ourselves. It's all been _____ and all that.

SR Have you really enjoyed that work?

FR Oh, yes.

SR Yeah.

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FR I love working on the farm. [30.46] I love any kind of work. I like to work.

[BREAK IN TAPING.]

SR What work do you enjoy the most, have you enjoyed the most on the farm?

FR Oh, I like most any of it—the haying and I like milking the cows. [31.08] Feeding the calves.

SR You do a lot of the mechanical work, too, don't you?

FR Oh, I've done some, yes. [31.13] Anything that breaks down, if I can tear it apart, I can usually put it back together again. [LAUGHS.] And try to fix it up.

SR How'd you learn how to do that? Do you remember? From your parents or just from doing it?

FR Doing it ourselves, mostly. [31.27] See how the thing went together, you could tear it apart and put it together again. If it isn't too complicated.

SR I always loved the pictures Neil did of you plowing. [31.38] I always thought you liked plowing.

FR Oh, yes, I like—most of the tractor work I liked. [31.44] I used to love to get out there and sing to myself. [LAUGHS.] With the plow and harrow. And I've done—oh, anything that's done with a tractor, I

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can do. [31.55] I've done chopping and bailing. I like the summer weather best. [32.03] I always did, anyway, because the cold, I couldn't keep warm in the cold weather. I didn't care much for winter, wintertime, but spring and summer and fall are wonderful for me. I like being out, always outside and doing all that work. [32.21]

SR How about the bookwork? Do you like doing the bookwork?

FR Well, not really, but you have to do it. [32.29] There's certain things that you just don't like, but if they've got to be done, you do 'em. [LAUGHS.] I do, anyway.

SR Are there a lot more regulations on the farm than there were when you first started out, in terms of the state? I mean, about the milking.

FR Yes, I think so. [32.42] They have more regulations on that. You've got to get the water tested every so often to make sure that there's no {coloform} in it. And they've always been pretty strict with the cleanliness of the barns. [33.06] It has to be cleaned and whitewashed and all of that. That's been pretty strict right along, but I don't think it's so

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- much different, except for the water testing. [33.14]
They never used to do that, as far as I know.
- SR You had to convert your milk house at one time and get the stainless steel tank and all of that, or had it always been that way?
- FR We had a milk cooler and we shifted milk cans when we first came. [33.26] And then—
- SR What was that like? What do you mean by a milk cooler?
- FR It was a big tank that had water in it and it was cool and had ice, at first, to keep the water cold. [33.41] And you set the milk cans into this great big square tank-like with water in it and then it would keep the milk cooled down.
- SR Until it was picked up?
- FR Until it was picked up. [TRUCK PASSES BY.] {We had to cool the night's milk, the morning's milk we didn't cool. [33.51] We just cooled the night's, keep the night's milk cold. Milk at night and put it into the cooler.
- SR And when did you put in—when was the bulk tank put in?
- FR About 1959, -60, we went to the bulk tank. [34.11]
And then we got the bigger tank after that, after we

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built on a couple times, I guess. [LAUGHS.] We got a bigger tank. And then when Howard had his heart attack, we put in the pipeline milker. [34.26]

SR Oh, that's right. Now, before you had the pipeline milker, you were milking on a machine. [34.31]

FR Oh, yes.

SR But carrying the milk to the tank, or how did that work?

FR No, I had the dumping station. [34.38] Well, we did carry it for a while, until I was in the hospital back seventeen years ago, and he bought the dumping station. They dumped milk with the machine and dumped into it and it went through a plastic pipe to the—so we only had to carry it a short ways. [34.51]

SR That's right. You had that when Neil did the pictures. [34.53]

FR Yes.

SR Right, I remember that. I remember that.

FR He put that in—he had a hired help problem again. [35.02] They walked off and left him. He was doing it by himself, so he sold a couple cows and bought the dumping station and it worked out much better, much

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easier pouring into that than have to carry it all to the milk house. [35.16]

SR What do you need the most right now on the farm?

FR Hired help. [LAUGHS.] [35.24]

SR Okay. Well, that leads me to another question: how do you see the future, in terms of the farm? If you have a good operation and you're back to your normal health? Do you and Howard have an idea of, you know, what you'd like to do in the future? I mean, do you-

FR No. Going to sell out, I think. [35.45] [LAUGHS.]

SR You think so?

FR I think so. I don't think we will keep it too much longer. We're getting at the age where we're close to Social Security and it's too much worry right now, with the prices the same--the milk is down and your machinery prices and repairs are up so high, and grain prices and everything. [36.07] I don't think we'll--we may sell a lot quicker than we want, but I think we won't plan to keep it forever, I don't think. [TRUCK PASSED BY AS SHE WAS SPEAKING. THAT SENTENCE MAY NOT BE QUITE RIGHT.]

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SR Yeah. Do you wish, do you ever wish that you had someone who had worked out as hired help that you could leave the farm to?

FR I really would have. I'd like to see it still in the farm. [36.31] I'd hate to see it put into building lots, but-

SR After all the work you've put into it.

FR Yes, we did put in so much into the fields to get them big enough and *big* to work on and then without the stone walls in there, it's much easier to work on them--bigger places to work the tractors and the machinery and things. [36.51] And I'd like to see it go on, but, I don't know, just the little things that they've got with the holding for manure pits and things, they say that's coming to be regulation at some time and if that comes in we'll surely sell out because I'm not for that at all. [37.11] I can't see where it's that much benefit, myself.

SR The principle of that is you store the manure until a time when it can be spread, when the ground can absorb it, instead of it running off into the streams.

[37.24]

[VOICE-OVER.]

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FR _____ and not spread it in the wintertime.

SR Right, right. Do you think that would sort of be the cut-off point for you?

FR Yes, I do.

SR Would you keep a small piece of land and build a house for the two of you? Is that—

FR I think so. [37.36] I'm not sure where yet, but I'd kind of like it right out here by our garage, but we'd have to drill another well or do something for water if we did, and I don't know what—down there we've got the well, at the trailer place, so we may keep some land down there and build a house. [37.52] I don't think I'd want a trailer. I think I'd want a house.

SR Yeah, yeah.

FR {It would be our next place, I think.} I do—would like one right out here beyond that garage out here. [38.06] I think that's a much better place for a house, but, like I say, I don't know what the water situation would be there.

SR Right, right. How come you like that spot?

FR Well, you can see a better view, I think, than you can down there. [38.17]

SR You wouldn't want to go up in on this side, up behind—

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FR On the mountain. [38.23] I wouldn't want to be too far away from the roads, I don't think. I wouldn't want to move back. At one time, I guess, there was a—there's a well up there at the top of the hill. [38.34] I don't know whether anybody ever lived up in there or not. There's stone walls through the pastures, too, where they—they said they were all open at one time, but not since we've been here. [38.44] They've grown up with brush and trees and pine and different things like that.

SR Yeah, it's beautiful up there.

FR Well, they said there used to be—they called it an old orchard. [38.57] There's some more apple trees way up in there, too, and they had an orchard, so I think maybe at one time it was open.

SR There must have been a settlement _____.

[VOICE-OVER.]

FR Open land. And perhaps houses, I don't know. I never saw anyplace where--_____, so there could have been one up there somewhere because there is a wall there, I know.

SR Another thing that I wanted to ask you about, tell me a little bit about, is your maple sugar operation.

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- When did you start that up? Was that—was the little sugar house here when you bought the farm?
- FR No.
- SR You built that?
- FR There was a corn crib, one of the old-fashioned corn cribs out here. [39.37]
- SR What is that? I don't know what an old-fashioned corn crib is. [LAUGHING.]
- FR It's just a building and the boards were about an inch apart and the stored corn in it. [39.49] It was open, more or less, so that they could store ear corn in it.
- SR Not chopped?
- FR Not chopped up, just the ears of corn.
- SR Right, right.
- FR And the floor was raised up and that had holes in it, too. [40.03] To ventilate it. And they used to store ear corn in it for the animals, I suppose, but we never used it and we tore it down and made the sugar house out of that after we came here. [40.15]
- And—
- SR When would that have been? Any idea?
- FR Oh, I don't know.

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SR Approximately?

FR It must have been pretty near when we first came over here, because we bought the sugar {works} secondhand down to Manchester. [40.34] That must have been before 1960. It must have been '55, I should think. Then Howard had his heart attack and we couldn't do it and we didn't have the help to do it. [40.52] Now it's disintegrated over the years.

SR Yeah. Did you do it as—did you build it to do it as a small business, kind of side business?

FR Oh, yeah. There was something come from it, yes. [41.04] We canned it up and sold it different places.

SR Yeah, right. 'Cause when we first lived here you were doing it very seriously. [41.12] I remember that year that some of my favorite pictures that Neil did are _____ of sugaring, that year.

FR Yes, we did it every year there for a while. [41.25] And we ran the _____ off out of {the cow's} pasture and now all the trees is going down and it just got old and rotted out, so they don't run sap the way they did before. [41.34] And then the sugaring equipment just rusted out, along with it. [LAUGHS.]

SR Yeah.

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FR You know, it aged, too.

SR We're going to try to make a little sugar house at the bottom of our hill. [41.50] We've got that beautiful, young sugar bush down there and there are already probably ten trees right there that we could tap right now. And within the next, oh, I think five or six years you would have a nice tapping down there and a nice little spot down there to put a sugar house.

FR We thought of putting a small one out here, but then, I don't know, it runs into quite a lot of money nowadays, from what it used to. [42.13] That one there, I don't think we paid over three hundred dollars for the rig and the bunch of buckets to go with it.

SR Right, right. [LAUGHS.] And now they're doing all of it with the lines and it's quite different. I remember, this year, it really struck me, the past spring, how few buckets you see hanging out now and it used to be such a symbol of sugaring in springtime when we first came to Pawlet. [42.39]

FR I know, so many of them were out.

SR And now you don't see them anymore.

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FR No.

SR You just see the lines going through the woods and that's-

FR Clark's over in West Pawlet still have all the buckets. [42.48]

SR Yeah. They're wonderful. Their operation is terrific.

FR Yes.

SR Yeah. Did you ever raise any other animals here? Did you have pigs or anything else you did as a small-

FR Just for our own use. [43.00]

SR Just for your own use, but you never had any other small businesses.

FR Pigs and chickens, for our own use. [43.05] Like, the syrup was the _____.

SR Where did you sell your syrup?

FR At different ones. We sold some-well, different places around. [43.21] Rutland, we sold some. And then we just-people would come here to buy it. We didn't get around to ship too much of it. [43.36] We sold some to _____ dealers around. I know _____ up in Fair Haven took some one year. And we tried selling candy, but we make out too good on that.

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[43.56] We made the cream, but we didn't make out too good on that.

SR Lenora makes that, yeah. Okay, let me see if there's anything else about the farm. That would be a big change for you, if you sell the farm?

FR I guess so. We've always—it's all we ever did was farming and to sell the farm and just not do anything, I don't know. [44.30]

SR What do you think you—

FR We've thought some of, when it's _____, having a small barn and raising beef cattle, but I'm not sure _____. [44.40]

SR How about raising for showing? Raising cows and stuff for showing?

FR That's run into too much expense, I think. [44.51] You have to have it registered. Cattle, you've got to pay for registration and all of that, and I think that's too expensive to get into. And now beef cattle aren't worth that much, so I don't know if we want to go into that, either, so just have a house and _____, I guess. [LAUGHS.] Live as best we can.

SR Yeah, yeah. Do you have any hobbies?

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FR I can do crocheting. [45.21] I haven't touched a
crochet hook in years, but I can crochet some. And I
love to read.

SR How's your reading coming since you've been-

FR Well, I've keeping busy with cooking right now.
[45.37] And I've been doing more of the cooking. Oh,
I'm reading some, but when I'm not resting _____.

SR I have a book for you I want you to try.

FR I get so tired, so I'm not doing much of anything.
[45.49] And then, like I say, I can't stand the
_____ and _____. And go to the barn. I did go
out there in the morning to get milk samples for
_____. [46.02] And not _____, because he can't
do things with the cattle. And brought down the
samples. But he had the big fan going _____ down
here. If it wasn't for that, I'd have had to quit.
[46.14] Because we got through-- [46.19]

END TAPE 1, SIDE A

START TAPE 1, SIDE B

SR [.38] --who live in the town.

FR No.

SR No?

FR No, we never have.

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SR Do you like the landscape around here? You mentioned before that you really do.

FR Yes, I do. I like the scenery. [.52]

SR You like to take your evening rides?

FR Yes, we do. We go out riding through the fields or around the back roads and just look around. [1.06]
Love it.

SR What do you see as the future of Pawlet? Do you have any notion about how the town will change?

FR No.

SR Do you think there'll be fewer and fewer farms?

FR I'm not sure. I think so. [1.32] I don't know. It's hard to say. Some places, maybe. Well, other places that have farms, they're renting them now to other people to raise corn on in different places—the Mason's over there and some of the other places around. [1.54] And they don't have the animals, the Masons over in—the other way, too. And that used to have cattle on two places, I remember. [2.02]

SR Bill McClellan has a good—

FR He still has heifers. [2.09]

SR What does he do? He raises heifers and sells 'em?

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FR He raises heifers and sells 'em. [2.12] He sells,
does that.

SR And he just kind of keeps small fields and-

FR Cuts some hay for you, for his heifers, too. [2.25]

SR But he buys all the corn?

FR Buys the corn. [2.26]

SR Yeah, I think he buys everything else, doesn't he?

FR Oh, yes. Grains. Grain. I don't think he raises any
corn.

SR No, I don't think so. I don't think so.

FR And maybe he doesn't feed corn, maybe he just feeds
hay and buys grain for 'em. [2.39] And things.

SR Has the town changed very much since you've been here?
I mean, except for the fact that there seem to be
fewer farms?

FR The schools. [2.52] There used to be, have more all-
grade schools in the lower grades—all eight grades,
rather. And both schools now, there's only three in
each one. [3.02]

SR Right. I think eventually probably the elementary
schools are gonna close in Pawlet. [3.07]

FR That's what we wondered.

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SR Yeah. Okay, let me just go back through this for you and see if there's anything else I've forgotten to ask you. [PAUSE.] How long did your mother and father live, after you were married? Were they alive when you bought this farm?

Fr Yes. My mother stayed here with us for a short time after my dad passed away. [3.49] I've forgotten when she did. It must have been about 1970, I guess, she was here for just a short time and she went back to my brother's. [4.06]

SR Did she like it here?

FR Oh, yes. Yes, they liked the place.

SR Yeah, but it's nice that they got to see it.

FR Yes, they liked the place. And they never did get—they came a few times, but they never got over too much. [4.21] They were getting along in years and—

SR Did you have a pretty close family?

FR No.

SR I mean, why—can you tell me a little bit about what you remember fondly about growing up? Your early years?

FR We just lived on a farm. [4.44] We did farm work and then worked together and—

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SR Did you all get along pretty well together?

FR Oh, yes. We never had much problems. [4.54] We've had problems, but my brother's had bigger ones. [LAUGHTER.] He didn't like to get up, but it never bothered me. [5.01] I always got up. Been getting up at five o'clock so long I can't remember, I guess.

SR Yeah. Were you the youngest?

FR No, just next to the oldest. [5.09]

SR Next to the oldest.

FR I have one older brother and-- [5.13]

SR And two younger.

FR And three younger.

SR *Three* younger.

FR Three younger brothers. [5.16] I have four--

SR Four brothers. The only girl.

FR That's why I'm a tomboy, I guess. [5.23] [LAUGHS.] I've always worked out with 'em.

SR I don't know. I grew up with two older brothers and I don't think I would have wanted to have any sisters.

[5.30]

FR No.

SR I like growing up with brothers.

FR With boys. [LAUGHS.]

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SR I was a tomboy when I was younger. I was, you know, I mean, I was always competing with my older brothers.
[5.47]

FR I'll bet.

SR And, I don't know, I always like it that way. I still, to this day, do not like large groups of women.
[5.54] And I don't think I would have liked having sisters.

FR Having sisters.

SR I was pretty close to my mother. [6.00] And I think when you don't have sisters, sometimes that happens, and they you're just kind of good friends with your brothers.

FR With your brothers, yeah. They're real friendly.

SR You keep up with them pretty-

FR Oh, yes, we go visit every little while. [6.16]

SR Are you pretty close in age? I'm not sure I asked you that.

FR My oldest brother's two years older and the next one's two years younger and then the youngest is about six years younger and then one about twelve years younger.
[6.33] And the youngest one, I was about twelve years when he was born and so I babysitted for him quite

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often. [LAUGHS.] Took care of him and played with him, entertaining him and one thing and another.

SR Right. Let's see. Okay! I think we've got everything, for a start. Think we can convince Howard to do this?-- [7.02]

END TAPE 1, SIDE B

END TRANSCRIPTION