

**Neil & Susanne Rappaport Collection/VFC2004.0002**

John Scott/TC2004.3027

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SR           Susanne Rappaport  
JS           John Scott  
Place       Pawlet, VT  
Date        09/22/1982

**TAPE 1, SIDE A**

SR   [.15]  --Okay, now tell me your full name, John.

JS   John Leroy Scott.   [.19]

SR   Okay.   And we'll skip your date of birth.   We'll  
      skip by your date of birth.

JS   No, put it on there.   Put it on there.

SR   Okay, why don't you tell me what it is.

JS   I don't know now.   I don't know what the date is,  
      but--well, skip it.   [.38]

SR   Okay.   Where were you born?

JS   Rupert.   [.41]  Vermont.

SR   When did you come to Pawlet?   Do you remember how  
      old you were?

JS   No.   I went to school in Pawlet.   [.53]  That's way  
      back there.

SR   Yeah.

JS   Knoxville School.   [.57]

SR   Where's that?

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JS Down below West Pawlet. [1.01] We lived up in \_\_\_\_\_'s here.

SR Where did your parents move to when they first came to Pawlet?

JS Hm?

SR Where did your parents *move* to when they first came to Pawlet from Rupert? Where did you live in the town?

JS Where did they live in the town? Over on {Blossoms} Corners. [1.23]

SR Did you live where Billy Waite lives now?

JS Yeah. The first place right there. [1.26]

SR Right, right. And your folks moved there from Rupert?

JS No, they moved there from Wells. [1.33] They lived up on the hill in Wells. We lived up on the—up on the hill there. I went to school to Wells. [1.44] Went to school. I went to \_\_\_\_\_ down there just a couple of years. Yeah.

SR Why did your parents come to Pawlet? To farm?

JS My father was a dickerer around farms and {handling} horses. [2.01] Yeah, he moved around, {went to}, worked the—and Middletown and Poultney. No, he

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wound up up in Poultney, East Poultney. [2.14]

Yeah, outside of that. Then he bought that place down there.

SR So tell me a little bit about what he did. What kind of work did he do?

JS A farmer all the time. [2.28]

SR He ran a farm? A regular dairy operation or did he—

JS Oh, yeah, yeah. Forty, fifty cows. [2.36] And maple syrup. He never bought a farm less there was maple syrup trees on it, maple trees on it, yeah.

SR And he owned his own farm? He didn't work for somebody else?

JS No.

SR He always owned a farm.

JS Well, he owned four of 'em and mortgaged two of 'em. [2.59] Worked along down the line, like that.

SR Yeah, yeah. What do you mean, he dickered with cows? What do you mean by he dickered with cows?

JS Oh, he'd buy and sell cattle. [3.10] But he owned the place up in East Poultney there. They lived there a long time.

SR That was after they lived in Pawlet?

JS Yeah.

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SR Did it farm it down here at Blossoms Corners?

JS Yeah, we had forty cows there. [3.26]

SR I never realized that was a farm. Is the place where the restaurant is now, is that part of the farm?

JS Yeh. Oh, yeah! Up on the hill, in the back of the place, and over on where the schoolhouse used to be, just before you get over into Woodruff's there, where Woodruff lived there. [3.49] Who else used to be there?

SR So that farm joined the Covino's.

JS Hm?

SR That farm joined the Covino's.

JS Next to Covino. [3.56]

SR Yeah. Were they there then?

JS Covino? No. Woodruff lived there then. [4.02]

Yeah, Woodruff.

SR What'd your mom do?

JS Hm?

SR What did your mother do?

JS Raised children! [4.13]

SR Eight of 'em!

JS Ten! [4.15]

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SR Ten? Oh, I thought you put down eight.

JS Huh?

SR Did you put down eight or ten?

JS I don't know.

SR You said eight.

JS Well, eight. Well, she had some more when she left from there. [4.31] I guess—that's all. That's close enough.

SR Okay. [LAUGHS.] How many of 'em are still alive?

JS Let's see—one, two—three of us, is all. [4.46]

SR Just three?

JS Yeah.

SR Brother or sisters?

JS Both of 'em are brothers. [4.54]

SR And they're up in Poultney?

JS They're up in Poultney. [4.57] All, except one is, he lives in, Forest lives in Burlington and the other one lives in East Poultney. Forest and—East Poultney, yeah.

SR Have you ever lived anyplace else, other than Pawlet? After you came here with your parents?

JS After I came here?

SR Yeah. You always stayed here in the town?

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JS Oh, I been right here ever since. [5.23] Yeah.

SR Tell me about where you've lived in the town.

JS Huh?

SR Tell me about where you've *lived* in the town. What houses? I know you lived up on the farm up here, didn't you, beyond George? At Mabel's?

JS No.

SR You never lived there?

JS I never lived there, I just owned it. [5.40] And the only place I ever lived in Pawlet was here and over there. That's in the Town of Pawlet.

SR Yup.

JS Yeah.

SR How'd you come to this house?

JS This house?

SR Yeah.

JS My wife, we was working in--well, living in Granville, working over there, and she never liked it. [6.04] And she'd come home to visit her people on a Saturday and when she came back home on Sunday morning to--and she said, "I've found a house over in Pawlet." And this is it! [6.21]

SR Who did it belong to?

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JS It belonged to Baker. [6.26] Her uncle. This was, she was—she'd come back and she told me, she come right in, she said, "I bought a place over in Pawlet." I say, "Why'd you buy it? And who'd you buy it from?" "Fred Baker." [6.42] And I says, "I don't know what—" And she says, "Right next to the schoolhouse, you see." [LAUGHS.]

SR What year was that, do you remember?

JS Oh, God, no! I'd have to go look in the books. I don't know. I ain't got 'em, either.

SR Yeah, yeah. Let me see, what year were you—did you write down? Do you remember what year you were married?

JS Well, I just guess at it.

SR Give a guess.

JS Nineteen thirteen. [7.13]

SR Nineteen thirteen?

JS Yeah. And was married in the Baptist Church over to Granville by—*oh*, I had that when I started talking!

SR Yeah, it's on there: Reverend {Beckaquick}?

JS Yeah.

SR {Beckawick}?

JS {Beckwitts}. [7.30]

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SR Beckwitt.

JS Yeah. Yeah, yeah, I had it there. I think that's right.

SR Tell me a little bit about Mabel. Where was she born?

JS She was born down here by the corner of the road where—right here on the corner. Where George Young used to live. [7.57]

SR Howard Young.

JS No, no.

SR No?

JS George used to own this farm right here, before you went down the hill. [8.06] George Young's.

SR I don't know—which one do you mean? Going back up towards George Clark's?

JS Yeah, right down there. That farm right down the hill.

SR Right past George Clark's?

JS No, this side of him.

SR Is it still there?

JS Yeah, yeah, it is.

SR Who lives there now?

JS Smith. [8.31]



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SR Oh, Nate and Brenda.

JS Yeah.

SR Oh, that farm. She was born there?

JS Yeah, yeah. Then they moved down and bought that farm where they are there. [8.40]

SR Her parents were farmers, or, her father was a farmer?

JS Absolutely. Yeah. [8.46]

SR How did you meet Mabel?

JS Well, I think it was through a dance. [8.55] Yeah. I think it was to a dance down in Pawlet. Yeah. 'Course, travel wasn't so great them days as it was now, see. [9.04] Yeah. See, yeah. But she was always a go-getter, you know. When she'd worked. She picked apples and that's what's the matter with her now, is where they used to spray apples. [9.24] Don't even put that down.

SR Yeah, you said that. Yeah.

JS I told you that.

SR Yuh, yuh.

JS Yeah, that's it, you see.

SR How long before you got married, after you met her?

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JS Oh, boy! Three or four years, I guess. [9.39] She worked over here on a farm, or on a—for a woman over here. Yeah.

SR In the house or out in the field?

JS Oh, in the house. [9.49] Oh, she was, she was banged up on the housekeeping, boy.

SR Yeah.

JS Yeah.

SR Was she a teacher? Did she ever teach school or not?

JS No, no.

SR She always worked in the house.

JS She just, she went to, she just went to grade school, that's all. [10.07] See, I never went to school only two days in my life. I tell everybody that. [LAUGHING.] I was late the first day and went home early the second. I tell you that, didn't I?

SR Yuh.

JS That's when I went to school down in Nelsonville. [10.26] You can put that right down just like that.

SR Okay. And that's the only place you ever went to school? In Nelsonville?

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JS No, I went to school in Wells. [10.34] When we lived up there on top of the hill up in there. They used to *walk* to school from the top of the hill over in the {Bull Frog} Hollow, come down across, put a plank across the river and they used to let-it went across there. [10.50]

SR So how many years did you really go to school?

JS Ohh, like I told you, two days. [10.55]

SR Okay.

JS Now that's the closest you'll ever get, *but* where I got my education on the books and stuff was when I was a kid I used to go down and work Saturdays and Sundays with my grandfather when he was running a gristmill in West Pawlet. [11.23] And they made potato starch and they sold, a gristmill and they sold feed and stuff like that. And then they went into the, they went into the furniture business, then they went into the undertaking business, and I came along, as a kid, all the way up through that part of it. [11.45]

SR Now which grandparents were these? Your father's parents? Or Mabel's?

JS My mother's. [11.51]

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SR Your mother's?

JS Your mother's, yeah.

SR And they lived over in West Pawlet?

JS They lived in West Pawlet, yes. [11.57] That's where I got the idea of doing business.

SR Yeah, yeah.

JS Yeah. Hawkins. [12.08]

SR Hawkins?

JS Yeah.

SR That was their name?

JS Yeh. Yeah. John Hawkins, yeah. [12.14] And he was—he commenced to work as a wheelwright for these quarries and then he went to that company. They put him in the feed business and he went from there on himself. [12.32] Furniture, then the undertaking, and everything like that. Yeah.

SR You worked with him for quite a while.

JS Oh, just weekends, you know. [12.45]

SR Yeah, when you were growing up. You were just a boy.

JS Yeah, I used to drive the horse—drive the horses on the hearse and stuff like that, take care of the horses and stuff, yeah. [12.56] They had a big

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shop right in back of where {Beecher Guffrey's} garage is, right down in there. They took that down. Yeah.

SR How has the town changed since you've lived here?

JS Huh?

SR How has the town changed since you've lived here?

JS A lot! [13.18] It's changed a lot. Some of those that didn't have, have got, and some of those that had it then, haven't got it. [13.33] That's money! You can put that down. [LAUGHING.]

SR How do you think that happened?

JS Well, it's just a matter of circumstances and the way the world is changing. [13.45] The world is changing all the time, see. That's where the, to the--those people. It's the same today. Same today. The people today thought they had all the money tied up in the world--they didn't. [14.05] There's a lot of 'em's got money today that, tomorrow, they'll be broke. They thought they had it all. But that's--back there, who had come up. The farms used to sell--eight thousand dollars is a big price for a farm--eight, ten, twelve thousand. [14.28] Today, the sky's the limit.

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SR Yeah. You think the farmers are doing pretty well today.

JS They're doing just as well as anybody else. [14.40]

SR Yeah.

JS That is, right up until recently. Recently. But they're doing all right now! But not like they did five years ago. [14.52] Five years ago, the people, if I knew, and you know, the people that go by here carrying their money all in their pocket, it was from a boat, fishing boat. [15.10] They don't even—they've gone back to the *old* things. They don't even—they got no faith in the banks or nothing, a good percentage of 'em. [15.24] That's right.

SR Yeah. 'Course, there a lot fewer farms now than there were.

JS Oh, yes! Farming is hundreds of acres right in the Town of Wells and Danby and right here in Pawlet. Nope, they ain't farming, see. I seen it yesterday, up at—there's a sad example of it up there where we was up in there. [15.53] Lord heavens, he has I don't know how many acres there. I never got it into my head. You could tell by going down to the

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town clerk's office, but he had that big farm [HEAVY TRUCK PASSING.]. He was the first man around here that had the apple business—Denny Robison, yeah. [16.13] He's the first man I remember because he come round and get us to go up there and pick apples—kids. Yeah.

SR That was a big operation.

JS Oh, yes, it was.

SR Yeah.

JS Yeah. I don't know how much land he owned here.

SR I don't know, either.

JS I think he owned—oh, it was above five hundred acres. [16.39] Yeah, and that's the first place I ever shot a bear, was up in there.

SR Yeah, tell me about that.

JS What?

SR Tell me about that. How old were you?

JS Oh, I forget just how old I was. I think I was about twenty. [16.57] The first place I ever shot a deer was up there in Denny Robison's, yeah.

SR Who were you with?

JS A fella, I used to call him "Uncle," and he wasn't a damn bit of relation to any of us. [17.12]

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SR Were you out bear hunting?

JS Oh, yeah.

SR Yeah.

JS And his name was Jim Norton. [17.21] Yeah. He was in business with my grandfather. His grandmother married my grandfather. [17.35] They came up from the South and the grandmother was dead and they came up. And we always called him "Uncle Jim," and he came here and he died here not too long ago. [17.53] And he was a wonderful guy for the kids, with me. Yeah.

SR Who saw the bear first?

JS Huh?

SR Who saw the bear first?

JS I did. [18.13] Yeah.

SR Big one?

JS He was what they call a {yearling}-that's a year old. [18.24]

SR What do you think happened to all the farms, John?

JS Huh?

SR What do you think happened to all the farms?

JS Well, that's a long story. I wouldn't know. The people that they, that farm it, they want to get out



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and jump on a tractor and that's it. [18.47] Years ago, they had a rougher—they used to use horses and they used a lot of the rough land, but, today, they want a piece of land where they can jump onto a tractor and hitch onto a mowing machine or a plow and plow ten acres a day and things like that, you know. [19.16] And the other land is passé. And a lot of the farmers, which—they thought they had the world by the necktie, you see? Well, come to find out, those people that I used to know, they thought they was big. [19.40] They had the money, those people. First thing you know, they didn't have it. For instance, you had twenty-five thousand—years ago, when they used to move off these farms down to the town, they thought they had it all. They didn't. [20.00] Then another crew come along. Well, they got up there, they had forty, fifty farm, or forty, fifty thousand dollars, and they had it. And today these farms are worth—we're selling. All they're worth—the idea, whether they can sell it or not. You take a farm: a hundred thousand dollars today. [20.30] And them people that had farms thought they was worth forty thousand—they thought

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they had the world by the {shoulder} strap. They didn't. Today it's the same thing. And then they commenced to buy automobiles and stuff like that and they, the farms, the money melted away from 'em.

[20.56] I'm going onto the money racket now.

[LAUGHS.]

SR Yeah. [LAUGHING.] Yeah.

JS But that--that's the way the thing come up. Wages, things come up. But your money ain't worth anything today. [21.18] What I mean, the government don't seem to get hold of it to do anything about it. They can't.

SR Yeah.

JS And them politicians, the politicians down there--I don't want that on there now, this one. [21.41] There's around eighty of them Congressmen, them people, if they wasn't there--they've got rich against 'em before they've violated the laws, but the law can't touch 'em because they're--you know that.

SR Yeah.

JS Sure! Same thing. And that ain't all. I'm telling you, that because all of the people going, some of

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them big shot, but they got a reputation of being--  
somebody come along and talked with me and he tells  
me what he wants me to know. [22.24] Well, that's  
all passé! Huh?

SR Yeah.

JS Yeah. And just the same now, is like that. Yeah.

SR What don't you like about the town?

JS Huh?

SR What don't you like about the town today? Is there  
anything you *don't* like about the town today?  
Pawlet?

JS Oh, no! No, I wouldn't live anywhere else. [22.52]

SR No?

JS I used to didn't care—I'd just soon go and live in a  
sap house somewhere, anywhere—Middletown, anywhere.  
[23.01] Yeah, we lived in Middletown, too.

SR Yeah.

JS We did, yeah. And I went to work when I was  
fourteen years old right in Granville. [23.11]

SR What'd you do? Was that when you worked with your  
grandfather?

JS No, no, no. I worked—

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SR This was real work?

JS What?

SR What did you do?

JS Oh, over there?

SR Yeh.

JS I was a carpenter and a painter, paperhanger.

[23.26] My mother learned me to hang paper, in the wintertime over here, and the things commenced to come up like that. One winter, one fall here, before Christmastime and a big time, why, they had me hanging paper for—and then a hobo came along.

[23.49] And he was a paperhanger. That was the next spring. And he was a fella that didn't smoke, he didn't drink, you never heard him swear or anything. [24.01] He came in here in April and he worked for the same fella I did. And he passed along through. He never would drink or smoke or swear nor nothing. And he worked along that year, along about fall he come over and he said, "Well, Sonny," he said (he was a middle-aged fella), and he says, "I'm gonna leave you." [24.39] And I had—and he went and got his rig and he took a train out of here. There used to be a train out of here at

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three-something, going south. [24.57] The last I ever heard of him. Real nice man he was—didn't smoke, drink, swear—nothing!

SR How long did he work with you?

JS He—just about six months, six or eight months there.

[25.09] Yeah, he worked for this other fella.

SR Who was it you were working for?

JS Ed Porter. [25.16] Yeah.

SR Did you work with him for a long time?

JS Oh, yeah. Yehsss. He picked me up. But he picked up the trade. He wasn't even handy as a paperhanger, but he was a painter and the people knew him and he went to church on Sunday and they called him an honest man. [25.54] And, yuh. Yeah, he was, but he was a farmer, I think, Porter, {right along}, \_\_\_\_\_. And the Quakers, you know, my grandmother was a Quaker. [26.08] I used to go to church with her.

SR In Granville?

JS Yeah! Right there. Right there. Right where that corner there, the church used to be right there. The graveyard is right out back there, on Quaker, North Quaker. [26.24] Yeah, and that's when they

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used, the Quakers, they used to go—they'd come in and they'd have their meetings and then all of 'em would have a—not all of 'em, but a lot of the people, they'd have a jug of gin in the buggy set in the middle of a bucket full of ice. [27.03] No cars then. Oh, God, no. [LAUGHING.] That's where I've been—yeah. Yeah. But my old man—I'm the only one of the crews that ever drink, of my brothers or sisters or any of 'em. [27.24] And not that, you know, that I ever drank a t'all. I was the only one. And my father told me, he said—one night he come home and he says, "I understand you go in and take beer once in a while." [27.37] And I said, "Yeah!" Well, went along two, three, four weeks and I went over, I was over to Granville—we worked Saturdays then, see. [27.50] He come along and I says, "What you doing over," I said, "this time of day?" "Well," he says, "an old man would take a drink once in a while, so come on in and have a drink." [28.01] Yeh. We went in there to drink a beer and went out, and they had, you could get pint beers then. He says, "All right," he says, "I knew you was taking a beer once in a while." He says,

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"Never, John," he says, "don't try to drink it all 'til you drink the beer dry, 'cause you can't do it." [28.21] And I said, "All right, Dad, that's all right." After that he went right out on the street. And this is—they had back doors, you know, at that time and all the church members, they'd go down to the back door. [28.31] [SR LAUGHS.] And he'd come right down, he'd go in the street and have \_\_\_\_\_, "Well, as a young kid, didn't you..." You know, come right at 'em. He'd have a couple of beers, that's all. [28.42] The old man didn't drink, just in the summertime once in a while, a beer. And so I've always, I never quit, never quit. Take a drink once in a while. All except when I was steeplejacking there, I didn't drink nothing at t'all, no. [29.02]

SR What's that: steeplejacking?

JS Huh?

SR What's steeplejacking? Working on the roof?

JS Climbing. No, climbing on the church steeple.  
[29.09]

SR To paint?

JS Huh?

SR To paint?

JS Paint, yeah. Carpentered, everything. [29.15]

Yeah.

SR Now you've got quite a reputation as a steeple climber.

JS Oh, yeah. It don't make any difference—after you get up thirty feet, if you fall, a free fall—that's what I mean—without nothing under you, you'd just as well be up two hundred to come down. [29.35] Doesn't make any difference. Yeah, I {worked} on these steeples all around. And then I worked with a guy in Rutland up there. [29.44] There's one, used to go up and paint his steeples for him. He was a contractor up there. I forget what the hell his name was. He used to be down in here and he went to Rutland. And he was a painter and a paperhanger—and a good one! [30.08] And he'd get them—but, on the reverse side, he was no good to climb. There is, he couldn't get his men to climb, you know. [30.19] It was hard work to get anybody. 'Course, I hit him for equipment. [30.27] When I wanted a ladder, wanted something, I didn't pay no attention to him, I went and got it, and he'd have a steeple over in



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Wallingford, here, there, down in the valley.  
[HEAVY TRUCK PASSES BY.] 'Course, travel wasn't so  
great then, you know. And all of that stuff, yeah.  
And that steeple business, that's where I made the  
money 'cause when the other guys that was getting  
twenty-five cents a hour, I was getting seventy-  
five, a dollar. [31.02]

SR 'Cause you'd do the climbing.

JS Yeh.

SR Yeah. How'd you get from place to place? Did you  
have a car or-

JS Bicycle. [31.06]

SR Bicycle?

JS Hell! Oh, a bicycle. I had the first-I had the  
first bicycle in and around here. [31.20] It cost  
forty dollars. Oh, God, that was something. Forty  
dollars-that Scott has got a forty dollar bicycle!  
[SR LAUGHS.]

SR Could go anywhere.

JS Oh, yeah. As long as you pushed it. They were  
\_\_\_\_\_. Yeah. But it all-I was always pretty  
healthy. [31.48] Let's see, I never had-I had just  
a prostrate gland operation and that was a few years

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ago. And then I had this blood from working in the turpentine, that stuff, that I had—I was up there two months, up here. [32.18] It was not too long ago, up here.

SR Yeah, I remember. I remember, yeah.

JS All of that stuff. {I'm healthy}, you know, but this old doctor up here, now, he said to me, he says—he's jamming away there—and, "Listen," he says, "how old you say you was?" [32.41] [SR LAUGHS.] I said, "Hey, {I ought to} know. I wasn't \_\_\_\_\_." He says, "If you don't do any different than you been doing," he says, "you'll live to be a hundred." [32.49] [SR LAUGHING.] And I said "b.s." to him. [SR LAUGHS.] He says, "Scott, I mean it." And he says, "There's nothing {to it}." But he says, he told me to be careful of eating, you know. [33.05] But I used to get up in the morning, hell, I'd eat the cat or dog right off from the table for breakfast. And, then, I wasn't running around 'til eleven—ten, eleven o'clock to get \_\_\_\_\_. I had 'em—I used to leave 'em on that. [33.27] But these guys get up in the morning and take a cup of coffee or a glass of milk or something and go to work—ten,

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eleven o'clock, they'd be {honking}, sitting around looking for a sandwich or something to eat. [33.37]

I didn't. I didn't bother. Just the same now. See, I get up and I fuss around here in the morning.

This morning I had—did I tell you—cabbage? [33.48]

SR And ham.

JS Eh? What is it?

SR And then eat again at night?

JS Hm?

SR And then eat again at night?

JS Not too much. [33.56]

SR Just a little bit.

JS Yeh.

SR Yeah.

JS {Hardly} anything at all. Last night the woman over there, I don't know, she brought it over the other day or some day, she had a pie. [34.09] She made a pie and {I ate it here}. Apple. A chunk of apple pie there. And the apple pie is—and a piece of cake there. I don't know, what do you call it? Fruitcake, or not. The woman from—yeah, she fetched it down here. [34.46] And a cup of tea.

SR That's it.

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JS You know, I tried to get myself used to {slodging} up this coffee—this woman and that man and this, was telling his wife made him coffee, oh, just as good as it ever it was. I had more damn stuff in here, you know, but mixing coffee up at—I took the whole damn {bitch} and put it in a bushel basket and took it down and throwed it over the bank and started drinking tea. [35.22] [SR LAUGHS.] And, first thing you know, you got your tea. Tea is no—there wasn't a drop of tea in a pound package, you know that?

SR Yeah.

JS Huh?

SR Yeah.

JS Sure you do! And then Mrs. Clark down here—Mrs. Clark down here, she says, "Here's the tea I use, is that bag tea." [35.45] Well, I says, "I don't like them bags." But that's tea, it's still tea, isn't it?

SR Yeah.

JS What is it? A dollar or something for 'em. A dollar or two. But coffee—

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SR What other kinds of work have you done? Did you ever work in the quarry?

JS Oh, yeah, in the wintertime. [36.09] In the wintertime I had that--well, they call it lead poisoning from--

SR The paint.

JS Paint, yeah.

SR Yeah. What quarry did you work in?

JS Norton Company. [36.24] I used to climb the sticks, oil 'em, and this and that. And then I'd mix like some--that much. One engine--they had steam engines at that time, pumps. [36.42] I knew. And then you had the compressors--all that stuff, I knew 'em. 'Cause I'd go, just the same as you do now--you take these guys that want an automobile and they don't know how, what kind of make it's in, and they don't know what kind of make it is--all they gotta do is, there's the places they can go right down and buy and rent the books. [37.01] And tell them just what, how it acts and just to fix it. And then they'd take the book back to the company, or some of 'em keep 'em. Ed Connors keeps 'em. Ed Connors up here, keeps 'em. [37.18] God all Friday, that guy

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knows. I never believed it, but I didn't think that Ed was ever drinking. [37.27] Well, he went to drinking. I never believed it and I didn't believe it 'til about a year ago. I know the Connors, you know. There used to be a flock of them, like a flock of turkeys. [37.40] Scotts. And, why, {Coranzios} here and Browns.

SR Did you ever own a quarry?

JS Yeah.

SR You did?

JS Yeah.

SR Which one did you own?

JS Up in Bull Frog Hollow, the Purple Quarry in Bull Frog Hollow. [38.04] Yeah. Just a little ways out of Wells here. Then I got acquainted with that \_\_\_\_\_ there in the gristmill. [38.17] 'Course, I knew his father. The gristmill just as you go in, up on the Wells Road here--just go right out in there a little ways and there's a big gristmill. [38.26] And the quarry was just up and above there, see. But that was one of them deals where the people thought they had the world by the shoulder strap and all wrapped up, you know. [38.42] And

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this guy goes up there and there was—the \_\_\_\_\_  
over a couple of families. I don't know where, just  
what it was. I couldn't tell you, but it's too  
long. And, gee, this fella went up there and he  
said—and we was a couple of—this {Gurticher's} son  
and myself—we lived up on top of the hill there then  
and we were just ragged kids around there and he,  
but he was with us, and they used to keep three,  
four cows and there, the pasture come right into our  
pasture, up on the same farm. [39.30] And they  
went up there. Well, the fella said—and went up  
there and he says, "Well," he says, "you buying or  
selling?" And the fella says, "I'm buying it." And  
he bought it and I bought it. [39.49] Yeah.

SR This was the quarry?

JS Hm?

SR This was the quarry?

JS Yeah.

SR Yeah.

JS Twenty thousand dollars, I bought it. [39.57] And  
then I sold it for thirty.

SR How long did you own it?

JS Oh, I would say about seven years. [40.08]

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SR Did you run it yourself?

JS Oh, yeah.

SR Yeah?

JS Wintertime. [40.11] And it's a purple quarry—it's something—it's a good quarry.

SR How many men worked for you? Do you remember?

JS My brother-in-law went in with me and we—but I had all the machinery and the compressors and things like that. [40.31] And now that's coming again. You take out in California, there's a certain percentage of those fires that have slate {loose} and they've never burned. [40.43] Now they've commenced to holler for slate. Did you know that?

SR Yeah.

JS Huh?

SR Yuh.

JS They've commenced to—

SR What do you think happened to the slate business?

JS Well, they went through and they picked up the stuff that they get the easiest and the fastest. [41.08]  
[LAUGHING.]

SR Right.



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JS And the slate firms cut one another's neck all the time. [41.16]

SR Now there's not much left.

JS Well, they was cutting their neck in two different ways. That was in the rock and their sales technique that they all used, it was all cut to, cut-throat. [41.38] And all they tried to do is to drive the men to less and less wages. That's the way it went. Yeah. I had a good job there. I had a good job in there. You know them sticks? You don't remember here when them sticks, some of 'em would be—there's one over here, set side the road, \_\_\_\_\_.

[VOICE-OVER.]

SR Oh, yeah, I know. Oh, yeah.

JS Well, there was dozens of 'em \_\_\_\_\_.

[VOICE-OVER.]

SR Oh, yeah, I know. You could see 'em all the way in a line.

JS Yeah!

SR Even when we first lived here, there were a lot more than there are now. [42.07]

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JS Well, I used to work for this outfit, they had a big bunch of 'em in there. Charlie Baker's father was a superintendent—about sixty men, yeah. [42.22] That's a funny thing, too. You know? Fella like Baker—never smoked. Once in a while, I guess, maybe he might, he'd always have a little barrel of cider. [42.37] And I guess I lived here probably fifteen years before he ever offered me a drink. We bought the place from him, see. [42.45] And then he had this awful cancers. Never drank nor smoked nor *nothing!*

SR Yeah.

JS Whether it's heredity—is that the word? In families?

SR Yuh.

JS Hereditary. Is that the word?

SR Right.

JS Yeah. Yeah. Then my daughter, well, she was a nurse. [43.15] She used to work through them. She went to the Methodist, she went to the Methodist—the hospital down in New York and she {did a lot of that}. She used to fetch 'em home and I used to read 'em, but I didn't know them words—what them big

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words was, you know. But every year she'd take her books and put 'em upstairs and I'd take a read of every one of 'em. [43.41]

SR Yeah.

JS And then—and, you know something, that's a funny thing: she'd never swear or nothing. And no vulgar talk, no nothing. [43.57] And the goddamn things, first thing I know, I got a letter from her, she was across the water. She worked for the State of New York, \_\_\_\_\_.

SR This is your daughter?

JS Yeh. Still is. [44.14] Did you ever see her?

SR I saw her up at the Baker's reunion there, for Ed Rose. [44.19] I'd never seen her before.

JS Yeah, that's her.

SR Yeah, that was the first time I'd seen her. How old is she now?

JS I don't know. I don't remember.

SR Don't remember when she was born?

JS No. Christ, up there's a book there of her—

SR And you had a son, also. [44.35]

JS Yeah. Well, he died and he had, got poison ivy in his leg here. [44.51]

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SR And he never got over it.

JS Well, some doctor made a mistake. [44.57] He never knew what poison ivy was. The doctor came to me afterwards, after he died, and told me. He says, "Scott, I—that was way beyond me." [45.10] Yeah, yeah. Oh, but never—Jesus, Jesus, boy. God almighty. I don't mind anybody drinking, but, oh, I hated {opium}. [45.24]

SR Yeah. Did she ever get married?

JS Oh, hell, yes.

SR She did?

JS Surrre. Hell, yes. Her husband, she got—yes. She worked for the state there for years. [45.40] She used to be a receiving nurse there of a three hundred-bed hospital. Sat there with her feet up on her goddamn desk. Two telephones over here on that end of the table and one woman over here, who \_\_\_\_\_, see. This one. This one, she was on the telephone.

SR Did she ever have any children?

JS Yes. Hell, yes.

SR Oh, so you're a grandfather. [46.17]

JS Oh, yes!

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SR I didn't know that.

JS A grandfather, yeah. [46.21] Joanne will be up here. I got a card from her the other day here, said she'd be up. Maybe she will, I don't know.

SR So how many grandchildren do you have?

JS How many grandchildren? Just the two of 'em.  
[46.35]

SR Two. Joanne and-

JS And the cook there. [46.42] I'll tell you his name in a minute. And, yeah.

SR Is Mildred's husband still alive?

JS Oh, hell, yes. [46.49] He worked for the state. Oh, they're out of it and they go to Florida. They got a place down here, they got a place down in Florida.

SR What did he do? What did Mildred's husband-

JS He worked for the state. [47.06] He used to work around in one of them state-- [47.10]

**END TAPE 1, SIDE A**

**START TAPE 1, SIDE B**

JS [.15] --what that cost.

SR A couple hundred.

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JS Same difference. Just like I saved up the cigars, yeah. Yeah, that's really about—I came up on that, see, but that could be probably put in a different, some things would be different, but on this, on your education, that's where I learned to handle money, down there. [.46]

SR When you worked for your grandfather?

JS That's correct. And them farmers come over there. We used to handle two and three carloads of grain a week! [.58] That's way back here. And what drove all these, like {Gertry's} gristmill and Hawkins' gristmill and down in Salem, that gristmill, they all went out of business when the A&P commenced to do business. [1.19] They could buy so goddamn cheap. Used to buy grain, what they called "direct." Oh, I lost that again. Oh, oh—rail. Direct rail. [1.36] And that come from the West. And this company in Buffalo guaranteed this grain. Well, that corn would heat, you know, and stuff like that. [1.48] They guaranteed it.

SR And that put the gristmills out of business.

JS No. These bigger companies started, like what—over here to Granville here, there's one of 'em there.

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[2.04] Yeah, yeah. They gradually put 'em out of business.

SR 'Cause they helped—you mean, the big companies got their grain from the West, the direct rail.

JS Direct rail.

SR And that put the little guys out of business.

[2.18]

JS Yeah.

SR The local gristmills.

JS Yes, yeah. They started that. And these other outfits, you know, they could—they can {send} it, you know, direct rail. Yeah, she'd come. And she was inspected in Buffalo. [2.44] They'd inspect the grains of oats and corn. They'd take a outfit and run right into a—run into a carload of grain. They'd tell you how hot it was, you know? If it had—that heat in there had \_\_\_\_\_. [3.09]

SR Yeah.

JS Yeah. But that, necessarily—and then, I don't know, it was quite a deal.

SR Did that put your grandfather out of business?

JS No.

SR No?

JS No. Well-

SR He kept his gristmill going?

JS Oh, he made it, see. [3.32] You know, what he figured, he made it, see. But when he died, this fella that we call Uncle Jim, which he was no relation, we was left seven farms down here and this uncle here, he had the money and he had about forty-seven or -eight thousand dollars. [4.05] He thought he had the world by the shoulder straps, see. Then he had these farms, he had the mortgage on 'em, see? Down there in {Hudson Falls}, right across the line here, down in Hudson Falls and down in there. And I seen him acting funny one day and I asked him what the hell was the matter and \_\_\_\_\_ and he told me—and he didn't think too much—he was a Southerner. Never chewed-tobacco chewer. [4.44] He'd take a—he'd always come in at noon, when he come in for lunch, he'd go right to the cupboard and take a mouthful of whiskey and go and spit it out in the coal hod. [4.58] That's what they had then down there, the coal hod. Go back and take just one swallow, put it right back. Well, he was D. Hawkins and Company, see. [5.13] He was in there. And he



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{left the room} on day and he told me what kind of a deal he was in. [TRUCK TRAFFIC.] What that is, you know. I said, "That's all right." I said—he was a systematic saver. [5.26] Every Saturday morning—or, every Monday morning he'd go in and unlock the middle door and he'd go in and he'd sit down and he'd put a certain money in a envelope, which I never knew. He was a secretive guy. So that the bank—well, the bank, he went up after his—these banks, these two banks busted here—the one in Salem and the one in Granville. [5.58] Well, what happened, well, I said—and I see he acted funny, see—well, I said, "Jim," I said, "why in the hell? You done business in that bank over there for years." So I went into the lady there and told her, "I'd like to see the vice president or president of the bank." [6.29] And went in, we went in [HEAVY TRUCK PASSING.] and told him the story and he says—I said, "Jim, tell this fella the story." He says, "You're worrying about nothing." He poked at a damn button or two and in come a guy, \_\_\_\_\_ paper there, and he said, "Jim, you go to work and tell me that there's your \_\_\_\_\_." [7.04] He went and

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told them that. And he says, "You got nothing to worry about." He {went over there to} the telephone, his own telephone, this super did. Called right up the outfit over to Hudson Falls over here. And the mortgage deed, see, he had it. [7.27] He never—he made money off the deal. Right off'n them seven farms. And then he sold me this farm up here, the Clark farm. [7.44] Jesus, we lost money on that. But he knew it. He knew. I knew it. I knew that there was gonna be a bust. [7.51] That fella wasn't wound up. But over there, it was wound. And New York State was a different rules. [8.00] Christ, he got that money off there. Then he went to work with—but that's the way the thing worked out, see? That's the reason that—why I got it. We used to have—here's one thing—we used to have, they had a cash register there and we all had—he had a pocketbook and my grandfather had a pocketbook and I had one. [8.34] Oh, the rugged kid, you know, running around there, going to ball games and everything. And every time you'd taken any money, see, you'd run it up there, but you didn't put the, you didn't put the money in the

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drawer, you kept it in your pocket—or wherever you want. [8.56] And Grandfather come around, “Well, somebody wants so many hundred dollars worth of grain up there and let’s see it—give him that. Throw him out the goddamn \_\_\_\_\_.” Say nothing. [9.12] Maybe my uncle would do the same thing. And they’d take train into Granville. And their credit was good enough, so that the railroad, you could open a carload of grain anytime when they shunted her in on the side. [9.27] The bank—their credit was good, see. Lord, that’s where I learned it. Learned to keep books, you know, after the fashion that they had keeping books. [9.43] Somebody’d come in, they’d buy a ton of grain, look, just go right in, put it down on a book—the only thing, you had a daily book. [9.56] Right there. Couldn’t hardly read my own name, but I got so I could keep books. [10.04] But it was after *their* fashion, not like anything today. Right there. I forget—right there—I forget the days of the week for the last ten years and that’s the way I do it: every day, in the morning, I—

SR Mark it off.

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JS Mark it off.

SR How did you get to be constable?

JS Oh, Christ, I was sheriff the last—for fifty to eighty years here. [10.33]

SR In Pawlet?

JS Oh, the state, statewide. [10.38] They changed that all over, statewide. That was—

SR Did you have another job at the same time?

JS Oh, hell, yehsss.

SR Oh, I see.

JS They didn't pay no attention to that. [10.49]

SR So it was sort of like the constables are now?

JS No. Well, no, the sheriff business, that was no good. It's just a sucker's job, to tell them what was going on. [11.03] I never listened to it too much and it didn't bother—but the constable's job, of course, they elected me here in town as a—oh, tax collector and stuff like that. [11.19] That was a job. You could go anywhere in the state. If you was close to confine a bird and you picked him up in Bennington, you had to confine him—you had to confine him in Bennington County. [11.36] That was—or any other. And then they'd go to work and

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they screwed it all up. I don't know how it did come out there.

SR Were you an elected constable in Pawlet?

JS Oh, yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Oh, yeah! I was elected to the--yeah. Sure! Hell, yes--sure, you was elected by the people. [11.58] That's how--but the constables ain't got no right to go out there on the road and tell you to get out of it. Used to be, you could--you'd break their goddamn neck, take 'em up to the jail. [12.12] [LAUGHING.]

SR Who'd you put in jail?

JS Heh?

SR Who did you put in jail?

JS Oh, just two, three old boys. [12.24] I used to send 'em up here. I didn't go up here. I tell you, you go up to Rutland there and the judge, they put on a new judge and he got mad at me because I'd take a, write it on a piece of paper and send the guy up to [LAUGHS]--without even calling collect about of this and that, you know? Why, the goddamn judge! And that's no good. That was no good. Ah, the damn--no. I used to shoot deer and the rest of the

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guys used to dress 'em. [12.58] [LAUGHING.]

Jesus! Yehhh. Boy, oh boy.

SR Was that your favorite hobby: hunting?

JS Huh?

SR Was that your hobby: hunting?

JS Yeah.

SR You like to hunt?

JS Hunting and fishing. [13.13]

SR Yeah. I didn't know you were a fisherman.

JS Oh, hell, yeah.

SR Ice fishing?

JS Yeah, everything. Anything. Sure. Well, of course, did you see the way we'd put it in—now, like that property up there, we got it there, you know, and we broke up on that. [13.36] I got sick of the damn thing and I said, "Mabel, you can have it."

SR Up at the lake?

JS Yeah.

SR Yuh.

JS I come home one night and she says, "I sold that place up there." "Did you get the money?" "Yes sir, I got the money." I says, "Who was it?" "Well," she says, "the woman who owns it there."

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"How much did you get?" "Fifteen thousand."

[13.57] And, "By Jesus, all right. Be sure to get your money." And it was a good thing I did split it up, see. She split it. [14.05] And I had some others there. I had some other deals. But the best thing that happened, when I was a constable--now this goes back again--the farmers would sell--these guys--he farmers would get hard--want some money or something and they'd have a woodlot up here and they'd sell it, see. [14.41] Well, these guys, these guys is way ahead of 'em and they would buy that woodlot in its entirety, lock-stock-and-barrel and what was on there, and when they got ready, the market was right and they could use the stuff, whatever--it was oak or birch or whatever it was there--they'd go up in there and they didn't stop and horse around with a farmer and dicker and this and that--you couldn't go across his meadow if it wasn't froze up and he had to okay it. [15.30] So--and they, afterwards, somebody'd come along and like to own maple trees up here, and the one up there under that, over, way to hell and gone, right over there. And they'd cut that maple. [15.51] They bought

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that and cut that maple off. Then they wouldn't—these companies wouldn't pay any more taxes. [16.00] Well, when I was the constable, I couldn't buy that lot if it was in Pawlet, but I could go up in Wells and the Wells constable, I'd get him to go down here and buy the lot over here [LAUGHING.], but pay the taxes and you could buy 'em for paying the back taxes. [16.24] Nobody ever voiced anything against you, if they—the taxes would be fifty, sixty dollars.

SR But you couldn't do it in your own town?

JS You couldn't do it in your own town. [16.37]

SR Because you were a constable.

JS No, you couldn't do it if you were the constable.

SR You mean, the guys that owned it would just cut and then leave it?

JS Heh?

SR The guys that owned it would just cut it and leave it?

JS Yeah.

SR So it would just be all cut down.

JS That's it. You see, they wanted it, they knew right where it was, and when they got a chance to buy that



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maple, which was one in particular, this maple, and this guy wanted—they sold it out and they'd cut it off and sold it out. [17.14] They didn't have to wait to ask any farmer or a dickerer or a damn thing—they owned it. And they'd {log} it off and then they'd go away, they wouldn't pay the taxes and the town would attach it, see. [17.28]

SR Oh, I see. And then you would buy it.

JS Yeah, I—

SR You'd get your friend in Wells to buy it.

JS That's correct. {It was froth and horses.} [17.37]

But that was the law!

SR And what would you do with it once you bought it?

JS Oh, just leave it to set right there. [17.44] Pay your taxes.

SR And let it grow back.

JS No! I'd pay the taxes and wait 'til somebody come along and sell 'em the lot. [17.51]

SR To build on.

JS Yeah.

SR Or—aha, I see.

JS That there, or for pasture. [17.55] Or for this or that.

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SR Whatever they wanted.

JS Whatever--I'd make some money. [17.59]

SR I see.

JS Hell, you'd make—I was making money right along. Parks didn't have any money and he had to be broke half the time. [18.08] He come back from the Army, he come back from the Army—he was a painter, too.

SR Now who was this?

JS Stewart Parks. [18.21] Oh, he lived in Wells there. He come back and he had something the trouble with him and he—they elected him constable up around the lake, in there, and but he, he's a nice fella, but he died. [18.40] He had something the matter with him he got in the Army. I don't know what the hell it was. And, yeah, he used to—he'd cater, too. [LAUGHS.] Oh, God! But I got this thing—

SR Going?

JS Yeah. Well, it was just the right time of the year, the right time or when things was moving around, see. [19.05] Just like this, take Brown up here—take that pond. There's, I forget, ninety or a hundred acres in up there. That lot there, I sold

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him the whole goddamn business for a hundred dollars—that mountain there, all of that mountain there. [19.23] You probably know that. Or whatever it was up there, I don't know. But there's nothing—no, it was with the Bailey place, this place. [19.33] And I only paid two thousand dollars for this place. I paid a thousand—she paid a thousand for this.

SR This is a nice house.

JS Well, it's good enough for me. [19.46]

SR Yeah.

JS That's one thing, my daughter didn't like it 'cause I didn't dress up and had a nicer car than the one down the road and {the dope fiend}. [19.56] I hate a {dope fiend}. I don't mind nobody drunk. If you come in here drunk, I'd put you to bed. But dope, Jesus Christ, that's a—I'd throw you out, boy. [20.06] [SR LAUGHS.] Yeah, yeah. And, you know, that—it's a great old—it's a great old come-up, you know? Used to be that people had money, they're sending their kids to this college and stuff, these farmers had money. [20.29] Down here the other day a fella says, "Ain't you going to {Reese's}

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auction?" I says, "No." I says, "What's the matter?" One of the nicest farms, nicest house, metal ceilings—I put 'em in there. [20.44] Well, he says, "They gone into bankruptcy down there 'cause \_\_\_\_\_." [TRUCK PASSING THE HOUSE.]

SR Yeah, she's in a nursing home. [20.55]

JS Yeah. I forget how—and they didn't have any money. [21.04] They were spending it right up just like that. And they had—was you down at—they had an auction—

SR Yeah, Buzz called Neil to come and take pictures. [21.12] He wanted Neil to come down to the auction and take pictures. They sold about fifty thousand dollars worth of furniture.

JS Yeah.

SR But her grandson is gonna move into that house. [21.26] Ruby's grandson, Tim.

JS Well, she didn't go through bankruptcy then.

SR They just need money to keep her in the nursing home. [21.35]

JS Well, what's that?

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SR No, that's right. No one had enough to put into the nursing home, so they had to sell her furniture.

[21.45] But they didn't have to sell the house.

JS No.

SR No.

JS But that's coming. That's-

SR No. No, no, no, no! Her grandson's gonna live in the house. [21.58] He owns the farm.

JS Oh, he owns the farm.

SR Tim. Do you know young Tim?

JS Oh, well, that's-yeah.

SR Ruby gave the farm to him. [22.07]

JS Oh, well, that-I never knew-I knew Ruby, I knew her well. [22.13] Well, I used to-

SR Wonderful woman.

JS Oh, I guess so.

SR Yeah.

JS I done worlds of work down there! The barns and the houses and metal ceilings put in there. [22.28] Good God, when Ruby first hooked up in there, she was a good one. No, but, well, no, they won't take the farm for that, for her.

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SR No, I think they've got enough, you know, with the sale of the furniture.

JS Without the farm?

SR Yeah. They just sold everything that was in the house—everything! [22.57]

JS I didn't know. I didn't pay no attention to it, but, you see, like I am—you're new, probably, to all this—and it cost nine hundred and some dollars a month for up here. [23.18]

SR It's a lot of money.

JS Well, as luck would have it, I've just go money to just about—I only get about a hundred and twenty-five dollars to live on. [23.29] You can believe that or not. But, yeah. And I had that Navy where, when I worked in the Navy there, I get a pension out of it—a hundred and fifty-five dollars a month—and then the rest of it is money that we've throwed in the banks. [23.53]

SR When were you in the Navy?

JS Huh?

SR When were you in the Navy?

JS I was in there ten years, living right here. [24.05] Let's see, well, you must have been here.

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And when I was some of the time here. Just from '40—oh, no, '41—'40 to '52. [24.17] I worked for them as a carpenter. [TRUCKS PASSING.] I was connected with the Navy. And then I got me a job—I sold maple syrup and I made—they give me a job down there doing—

SR So, were you in like the Reserves?

JS Hm?

SR You were in like the Reserves?

JS No. Nineteen-forty, when the government froze all lumber and all—in '40, '40. [24.54]

SR Right.

JS They froze everything. [24.58] They took me on so they wouldn't—so they had a union meeting down there and I didn't know what it was for, a carpenter's union in Schenectady, for like a \_\_\_\_\_ that'd be, on the back of the \_\_\_\_\_, and they said, "Well, I'll tell you where you're going." They says, "You go up to the Navy people and up to the Navy recruiting office tomorrow morning sometime, sometime before eleven o'clock." [25.31] We went up there and then they put us—I don't know what,

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they put you into something. We went over in there and built a, we built the \_\_\_\_\_ {Navy Depot}.

SR So you never went overseas?

JS Oh, no. No, I wasn't a regular Navy man, anyway.  
[25.50]

SR Oh, I see, but you still get a pension.

JS How?

SR You tell me.

JS Well, there're two things.

SR How old were you then?

JS God damn if I know! Figure it out. [LAUGHS.]

SR How can I? I don't know when you were-

JS Forty. [26.12]

SR Forty? Nineteen-forty?

JS Well, I went from forty down there, from forty up to fifty. [26.17] Figure it out. \_\_\_\_\_ for you. I'll have to go look at their papers there. I got these papers. Well, let's go back on that now. I went up there, you know. It all depends on maybe who you know or what you know. [26.39] It don't never depend on what you know, it's on *who* you know or what kind of a person. I never figured that your reputation would carry you so far as it did, as it



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carried me. [26.57] *I never figured it.* Well, I went up there and went right to work then. He says, "You're working for the U.S. Navy right now." [TAPS ON TABLE FOR EMPHASIS.] 'Course, they couldn't pay carpenter's wages, they only paid so much. [27.14] I forget-it's pretty-about twelve dollars a day. And went over there the next day and they bought this place out, just out of Scotia, going up towards-no, going west there. [27.48] They come right into there and they had potatoes and corn. Them Navy guys come right in there and they had there-over on the back side there's a New York Central Railroads and these cars in there. [28.07] They was contractors right there taking their goddamn outfit right off, coming out in there, and a fella come along with a wheelbarrow and he says, "Scott, there's your outfit there: a wheelbarrow full of stakes." [28.25] See? And then these guys around there \_\_\_\_\_. And they mowed the corn, they {hoed} the potatoes, they let the cows right over onto the road and everything else, floating 'em right out of there, them goddamn truckers, these guys up there. [28.49] [TRUCKS PASSING.] Well,

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"Put a stick right there! Hold it up straighter! Set over there a way, two-feet." You didn't even have to drive it down. The fella'd go--was driving it down. That's the way they was. But they took cows and sent 'em right out onto that big, that driveway up through there. Hot? Boy, Jesus Christ, first thing you know the place was full of--full of--  
\_\_\_\_\_ two \_\_\_\_\_ come down and did they say anything to them Navy guys? Nothing! [29.26]

SR So what were they doing? What were they putting the stakes down for?

JS They was gonna put a Navy Yard. Not the Navy Yard, the--

SR Housing?

JS No! No. Navy Depot. [29.39] They were just out of Scotia, going north--just about a mile up the road there. Yeah, they said, "You don't let nobody flush you out of it." Some guy'd come up and say, "Aw, you can't do that. Do this!" The old fella that owned the place there, he said, well, he says, "Where's your contract?" [30.07] "Oh, I had a lawyer read it." He says, "You can't do nothing about it." And they'd flip potatoes and the cows in

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the corn-acres of it, you know! Rolling right over it. [30.19] And then, first thing you know, we wasn't about five days, we was pouring concrete there for storehouses 600-feet long, 150-feet wide. And no \_\_\_\_\_! And the old fella—the old fella used to come up there, that owned the place. [30.49] 'Course, they had bought this of him before he'd signed the okay, see. He knew--what he thought they was gonna do, I don't know, but the old fella, he finally come into it. He used to—I don't know why he used to come and talk to me. [31.07] "God," he said. He says, "I guess there's mean business up there." "Mean business?" I said, "Listen, you've got your money for this place and everything." I says, "All you can do is just keep still and bury it." "Jesus Christ," he says, "if you take a drink, you better go get your quart and put a nipple on it and drink that." [31.35] [LAUGHING.] And he used to go around, you know. And then the guy'd come around and say, "What the hell does he want?" "He just tried to console himself." I says, "He's doing no harm to me at t'all, 'cause I know what he—he just didn't think it could be done." [31.55]

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\_\_\_\_\_ laughed and he says, "Jesus Christ! What in  
sakes did you tell him?" I says, "It could be done  
and they're doing it." In the middle—I was, you  
know. Well, I wasn't siding in with nobody, you  
know.

SR Yeah.

JS Yeah, there were right around six—oh, boy.

SR How long were you down there, did you say?

JS Heh?

SR How long did you work down there?

JS Ten years. [32.18] And I lived here the whole  
while.

SR You did? You went back and forth?

JS Weekends. [32.24] Yeah.

SR Was this when you were married?

JS Hm?

SR Were you married then?

JS Oh, hell, yes. In '40? Yeah, she-'40 and '50  
there, yeah. Only time I wasn't there was when I  
had this—yeah, sure. Mabel lived down there, that's  
where she sprayed them apple trees, see. [32.48]

SR Yeah.

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JS Well, they was a-but now-what do they call that now like--you take all of-the Baker daughter, her father, he got so he {couldn't find} the barn-by God, he didn't know the way back in. Fred Baker? [33.09] Which you know. He's all full of cancer? Never dranked, smoked, or *nothing*. Their sisters all had something. [33.19]

SR Well, it's probably around here, a lot of the chemicals that are used on the farms and sprayed--they're all pretty dangerous. [33.27]

JS Well, no. My wife worked down in the apple orchard, the Green Pea apple orchard in, down here in-- [TRUCK PASSING.]

SR Dorset?

JS Dorset. [33.37]

SR Yeah.

JS By Jesus, I was a busy man that time. [33.43] We had that Goddamn stuff up there to the lake. Jeez, I was a busy man. She was a busy woman.

SR How long has she been up at the nursing home now?

JS Heh?

SR How long has Mabel been in the nursing home now?

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JS I couldn't tell you exactly--about four, five years--  
going right on five years. [34.03]

SR Oh, but she's been gone from here longer than that.  
She went almost right after Neil and I moved here.  
She's been gone, what, about thirteen years?  
[34.15]

JS She was up in Rutland--no, no. Can't be. See, I  
don't know.

SR I think--we've been here almost fifteen years and I  
only just barely remember Mabel. [34.28] I met her  
a couple times, when we first lived here.

JS She was sprayed, sprayed them apples down there.  
You know, when they sprayed 'em, they had a truck  
and they had one sprayer on that side of the truck  
and one on this. [34.47] And they sprayed 'em!  
And that's spray is what they say--'course, but I  
don't know why all that Baker family happened to  
[CLUCKS WITH HIS TONGUE.]

SR Yeah.

JS Even way back to their, like the, like Fred up here  
and like Mabel's father, their aunts and uncles and  
all of them. [35.21] I can't understand it. And

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the young man here, he got--well, they say kind of  
poison--

SR Poison ivy.

JS Poison ivy.

SR Yeah. What was his name, John?

JS Earl. [35.39]

SR Earl, that's right.

JS Yeah, he got poison ivy there and the doctor, he  
didn't catch it. [35.47]

SR Yeah, yeah. What do you think about all the new  
people in town?

JS It's all right.

SR There's lots of different kinds of people here now.

JS Yeah. The only thing--yeah, yeah. Getting so that  
the only thing I can tell you was is I was here  
fifty years and never locked the door 'til--  
[36.17] [TRUCKS PASSING.]

SR Yeah.

JS That's all I can tell you. That's all the  
difference there is in it, *but* them are not the  
people that live in the town. It's the people zing,  
zong, zing, zong. [36.29]

SR Going through.

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JS Yes. And, yeah. There's some people in town it ain't safe to be—you know what I mean. [36.38]

SR Yeah. What do you think the future of the town is?

JS Hm?

SR What do you think the future of the town is?

JS It is the same thing. [36.50] The same old, same old thing coming up. They've got a—they're putting in that outfit over to West Pawlet \_\_\_\_\_.

SR The water system. [37.06]

JS Yeah.

SR Yeah.

JS Sewer system. [37.07]

SR Sewer system.

JS And there isn't a goddamn thing that the town can do about it or anybody else. The only thing they can do is pay! [37.17] That's all.

SR Yeah.

JS That's all there is to it. And I don't consider, Lady, that I own this house. [37.29] They've got laws coming up or got 'em on the books—all right, I've just got the privilege, as long as I pay the taxes [COUGHS.], to keep the roof from leaking, I can be here. [37.46] And \_\_\_\_\_.



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SR Now that didn't used to be that way.

JS Huh?

SR Didn't used to be that way.

JS You know it! I think you know it! Don't you?

SR Uhuh.

JS You know the government. And the state is doing it.

[38.06] It t'wasn't—you think like—you're like up in Montpelier there, what the hell? They give them guys two dollars and a half for breakfast, three dollars for lunch, and five to eight, ten dollars for supper. [38.27] And the goddamn—if you went down here to Bob Graff, which I know him from a *kid* right up. Ain't a better guy going. He don't-- \_\_\_\_\_ paying that taxpayer's money. Did that go down on there?

SR Sure.

JS The hell with it.

SR We're almost done. Doesn't make any difference.

JS Rub that off! Rub that off! [38.57]

SR Okay. [LAUGHING.]

JS Huh?

SR I will! I can do that.

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JS Yeah, you do that from now on, but water, this water business. [39.16] I used to fish trout from here at the foot of Haystack, and like that-speckled trout. I talked with Charlie out there the other night, where that truck was broke down the side the road. I don't very often talk with him much 'cause him and me don't agree on a lot of that stuff. [39.37] And he's got some good ideas, too. And the only thing that I got is water. [39.52] Now, you see the well over there, which you know there's a well over there that the water runs out of there and runs down under here. In the spring the \_\_\_\_\_ that we've got is up here and the water in that spring is fourteen to fifteen inches higher than where the water runs out on the ground down through here. [40.24] Now there's something in there pushing that, in that old spring here, the water's boiling right up out of one corner, let's see, it's boiling about that. And the water comes from across the road and when the state put this road up around here, they put a, they put a-I forget. I think it was about a four-inch pipe through under the road. [41.11] Bill Owens had that done, that home owner

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over here, and that come across and it comes down here. And they get their water, of course, out of the well. [41.21] You can't pump it twice. They had to run two pumps down to it. You couldn't—but it's a funny deal. I'm sorry I ain't got an education. I write my own name and that's all. [41.40] That's all I do. I can. There ain't nobody gonna come down there and throw something \_\_\_\_\_--here's this, here's this. Decide that--no. They all can go to hell. And I can! You know that. [LAUGHS.] I don't think you believe me. No. Well, but I cut that stuff out. I just change gears here. What the hell. I used to be tough like that. Yeah. Down here {where there's all this} \_\_\_\_\_, I got seven feet out there that belongs to the state roads! [42.23] Did you know that?

SR No.

JS That's what I say. And they been around here again. I don't know what they're fussing around about.

SR Well, I saw them out here last week. [42.36]

JS Yeah. But I don't think--see why they've gotta have a three-lane road out here. [42.43] Good God, there's only just once in a while, \_\_\_\_\_, that it

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ain't doing forty. The majority of 'em are about doing forty. [42.52] All of this stuff in here-- used to be they had signs down on the corner there and now they took that stuff all down. [43.05] They ain't been an accident there since.

SR Yeah. Do you remember when they paved this road?

JS This road here? Yeah, sure. Sure, I got--

SR You were living here?

JS Yeah.

SR When'd they do that? In the fifties, didn't they?

JS God damn if I know!

SR I think it was in the fifties.

JS We had an office in the house. [43.31]

SR In the tavern?

JS Yeah. The tavern was empty then. [43.34] I had that. That was empty. Ohhh, I can't tell you all I know. I was in--I got, for the barn and stuff there, I think we got about six thousand dollars out of that. [43.54] There used to be a barn over there. They used to keep--that's before you.

SR Oh, yeah. Yeah.

JS That's down where you've got there.

SR Yeah, Charlie's got some pictures of it. [44.04]

JS Yeah. Then, I don't know. It's been a long deal.  
[SR LAUGHS.] But I say there was a hundred acres up  
there. I sold it to Tink. [44.24] His wife and my  
wife and myself, we went up to Rutland. T'was on  
some deal, I don't know, but, anyway--no, t'was on  
that mountain lot. [44.42] And then this woman  
side the road up here, that lot there, I said to  
Tink, "You gonna take that lot up there side the  
road." {The guy'd go in there.} The lawyer looked  
it over and then, then, "No, ain't anything down in  
here." Well, I said to Tink, I says,--and his wife--  
I says, "If you want that mountain up there, you  
gotta take that damn lot down there right side the  
road." Give it to him. The lawyer says, "You can't  
do that unless some money changed hands." "What do  
you say, Tink?" Tink says, "Here's a dollar."  
[LAUGHS.] He give me a look. Just a dollar for  
that lot out there. Jesus Christ. Land! I wasn't  
land crazy, see. 'Cause I've worked on land on the  
farms. Yeah. But we went along up the life, life's  
pathway, and your nature, human nature and this and  
that, I don't know. Well, no, I {hear} this goddamn

thing down to Leach's, that that farm is all mortgaged up. [46.13]

SR I don't think so.

JS You don't?

SR What do you mean it's all mortgaged up?

JS Well, whoever's got it has got a mortgage on it.  
[46.22]

SR I don't think so. I think they own that outright.  
No, I think that's all pretty secure.

JS What'd you say? The young lad?

SR Tim Leach. [46.34]

JS Is there just one?

SR It's Ruby's grandson.

JS Yeah.

SR And he runs the farm and she left it to him.

JS Hm?

SR She gave it to him. It was his father, James, who died. And mother.

JS I know him well.

SR Well, they died. I never knew them, but they died.

JS Now there was a farm, there was a bunch of people, those people were—you take James Leach there, Ruby's

husband—he was all crippled up with—that stuff.

[47.11]

SR Yeah.

JS But, it's funny, we're getting—I'm getting on to that stuff. I'm getting on to their stuff. I can't see into it. Why. Like all of them Baker people was afflicted with that, with cancer and this, that, and the other thing. They were good, straight-living people, too. All right, that's Charlie father and Mabel's father down there. And I can't see through to that.-- [47.47]

**END TAPE 1, SIDE B**

**END TRANSCRIPTION**