

Judson Smith/TC2004.3030

Neil & Susanne Rappaport/VFC2004.0002

SR Susanne Rappaport
JS Judson Smith [Mark Smith?]
Place Pawlet, VT
Date 01/00/1981

TAPE 1, SIDE A

SR [.20] --Okay, I think we're all set now, so I'll come
 over here and-[CLEARS THROAT.] Okay, do you want to
 start by just telling me your full name, Judd?

JS It's {Mark} Smith. [.44]

SR Okay. And what is the date of your birth?

JS March 22, 1894. [.54]

SR We figured that you must have been about a teenager--
 or, Mrs. Sherman must have been a teenager when you
 were born.

JS I guess so.

SR Do you remember her when she was young?

JS Well, I've been around here quite a while. We moved
 down here from Poultney. [1.19]

SR Well, let's see. Now the next question is: where were
 you born?

JS Up here on the hill. The house burnt up. [1.25]

SR Right here on this road?

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JS Yeah, right up on the hill here, back of that big pine tree. Used to be a house there.

SR I didn't know that.

JS And when we moved down here, we moved down here the eighth day of November, 1919, and my grandfather and aunt were living over in that house, over there where Eunice is, and we moved in there. [2.05] They was room enough when we moved in there. And then during the winter I built one of those ready-cut _____ bungalows up here on the hill. [2.18] And that went for quite a few years and that burnt up. And my aunt, she wasn't much of a housekeeper, you'd get a lot of papers around the stove and I think that's what touched it off. [2.36] She'd just have a path through, you know. [LAUGHS.]

SR Oh, I think I've heard about her.

JS Wonder she didn't break her neck.

SR What was her name?

JS Bertha. [2.46]

SR Oh, that's right. Charley Baker told me a little bit about her. Yuh. Didn't she live in the house—

JS She was an old maid. [2.55]

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SR Did she live in the house where Floyd Trombley lives now? At one time?

JS No. My folks lived there. [3.07] And there's a couple old maid aunts used to live there, but my Aunt Bertha never lived there.

SR Well, it must be another one.

JS My folks lived there for quite a while. He worked on the patrol road with horses and wagon for quite a number of years. [3.34] And then they went into the truck business on the patrol road.

SR What do you mean by the patrol road?

JS Route 30. [3.44]

SR The main road.

JS Yeah, yeah.

SR Have you always lived in Pawlet?

JS Oh, no.

SR Can you tell me where else you've been? Can you tell me where else you've lived?

JS Well, I lived in Poultney quite a while. [4.03] I worked in the foundry up there. And I worked on the corporation, that street there after I got through to the foundry. I don't know how many years I did work at the foundry. Quite a while. And then I run a farm

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up there on the Lake Road, up t'other end of the lake.
[4.39] Those old, big buildings are all falling down,
on the right-hand side before you get to the hill
where you go down into the Village of Poultney. I run
that farm for George Griffin quite a while. [4.56]
And there used to be another house where they built a
new one now, down around the corner there, where you
turn to go into Poultney Village. Used to go there in
the wintertime and then they've move up to the big
house in the summertime 'cause they went down to the
lake to live. [5.19] And be near to the chores.
Keep track of the house. My wife's folks lived with
us quite a while. [5.32] They moved down here with
us. I have done most all kinds of work and then,
after I got through farming, I was supposed to have
this four hundred acres here when I got fixed up.
[5.54] And my aunt, she got in an argument, and we
had a falling out. I cranked an apple machine up
there in the barn for twenty-five years and the
electric line there's coming through and they put it
up through there for nothing. [6.16] And she didn't
want it. I got it in here and she wouldn't have it in
her house, so she got mad over it, anyway, and I lost

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out on the farm business and my brother, he got it.
[6.33] The Lavine Smith, lives over in Spanktown? So
he has it now. I got it all—stone all picked up there
and when I come down here, you couldn't winnow eight
{rows} with a pair of horses. [6.50] There wasn't
hay enough or anything. And the farm was pretty near
all run out, so I got it all up into shape and when I
sold her out that time, I had fifty-five head of
cattle and I had a lot of hay to sell. [7.13] And I
bought that place over there.

SR Eunice's place?

JS Yeah. William Constantine owned it. [7.34] And I
tried to buy it when I first come down here and then I
wouldn't have had to build this house, but he didn't
want to sell it to—and he couldn't. He was married a
second time and he had two or three kids or something
that bothered him. [7.52] And he was an old cuss,
anyway. So he let me have the whole farm and eight
cows here for—if I paid the taxes on it. [LAUGHS.]
So I run it that way for quite a while and then one
night he come to the barn and I was up in the silo
throwing down {into it} and he wanted to sell it to
me. [8.23] Then he got worked around so he could

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sell it. "God," I says, "I ain't got no money to buy it." You didn't get seven or eight dollars a hundred for milk then. [8.36] [LAUGHS.]

SR Right! [LAUGHS.]

JS And, well, he says, "You don't need any." [8.46] Didn't have no writings or nothing. And I asked him how much he wanted for it and, God, I think it was either twelve or thirteen hundred dollars—thirteen fifty, something like that. [9.06] So he said, "You pay me just when you can." And I didn't think he'd live long enough so I'd ever get it paid for then, but I got it paid for before he died. [9.22] So Ed ranged it there for quite a number of years and he had a bunch of cows there. And the cow stable all fell down since he got through farming. [9.43]

SR What year did you build this house?

JS I built this place here in 1926. [9.54] In 1927 we moved in here, in the spring.

SR From Poultney? Did you come right here from—

JS No, from over there.

SR I mean, from—that's right, you lived there first and then came here, yeah.

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JS And I didn't have it finished then. [10.11] I had the two outside doors on and the windows in and finished it up afterwards.

SR What did Elsie think about that?

JS My God, that was quite a trick. [SR LAUGHS.] The lumber was good. It was cheaper then. And there used to be an old sawmill over here where {Gertrude South} lives, out back of her house there, a big sawmill. [10.37]

SR I don't know where that is, Jud.

JS Do you know where Gertrude South lives?

SR No.

JS Do you know where Ken Mason lives?

SR Yeah.

JS Well, she lives across the road in that house. [10.47] She lives there in the summertime. She goes to Rutland. She's got a daughter up there she lives with in the wintertime. Well, he had this big sawmill over there and I took that down for half of it and I needed {some other} timbers and stuff, 'cause it's got 8x8 timbers under here. [11.21] And all the rafters and stuff he could use. And I needed a lot of slate, so I took the slate off. And I got the house put up.

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I built a lot of houses, or helped build 'em, up to Poultney when I worked up there for Travis and Thomas.

[11.48] And even run a sawmill, sawed logs of all kinds. And, well, she worked up there in a dress shop. [12.05] And I picked a load in Granville, all I could carry. We used to ride back and forth. And I worked up there eight or ten years, I guess.

SR How long has your family been living in Pawlet? When did your mother and father come to Pawlet? Do you know?

JS They lived there a long time. [12.35] I don't know what year, of course.

SR And you still have other family in Pawlet now?

JS Yeah.

SR You have—Leslie is your brother. [12.52]

JS Leslie and Lavine.

SR Right. Do you have other family still here that are alive or not?

JS No, I don't believe no more. Bertha, she lives up in Middle Granville. [13.09] And I've got a sister lives in Wells.

SR Still pretty close.

JS Hm?

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SR Still pretty close to Pawlet.

JS Yeah, yeah.

SR Were your mother and father born here? Do you remember that or do you know that?

JS I don't know. They were both Smiths. [13.38] They used to be a lot of Smiths around Pawlet here, but they've kind of died out. [SR LAUGHS.]

SR There are a lot of family names in Pawlet.

JS Yeah.

SR Big groups of families. And they seem to be in different areas. You go in one direction and you've got Waites, and you go in another direction and you've got Leaches, and-

JS They used to live over where {Clyde} Troumbley lives. [14.03] Do you know where?

SR Yeah.

JS They used to live there. My father, he worked on the road, patrol _____, a long time. [14.14]

SR Let's see, the next question, Jud, is: can you tell me anything about how the town has changed in your lifetime?

JS My God.

SR Has it changed a lot, to you?

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JS Getting rid of the Smiths around here. [LAUGHS.]

SR That's a big change.

JS Yeah. [LAUGHING.] Well, there used to be—my grandfather, both of 'em were Smiths, you know, and, by God, they had all kinds of families. [14.51] Oh, I don't know as it's changed too much. [TAPPING FINGERS ON SOME SURFACE.]

SR What do you like about the town?

JS Haystack Mountain. [15.09] I don't like to get away from that. I get homesick. [LAUGHS.]

SR I heard that. Dorothy {Offensen} told me that. [15.16]

JS Yeah?

SR She told me that your wife used to tell her that you would never go on a vacation 'cause you didn't want to get out of the view of Haystack. [15.24]

JS Oh, we went down to Florida. [15.29] And we been to Canada and we went around Elmer {Travis}. My wife is Elmer's aunt. [15.46] And he used to live with us for along time when he was a kid. His mother worked in a little dress shop up to Poultney. [16.00]

SR Is he the one in the picture?

JS Yeah, the little one.

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SR Right. I think Eunice-

JS Sitting up on the side hill here.

SR He's your newpnew.

JS Yeah.

SR Yeah, Eunice mentioned that to me when I was talking to her.

JS Yeah, he lived with us quite a while.

SR Where is he now?

JS He lives down to Salem. [16.26] He must moved up there last fall or last summer some time, from down in Connecticut. He was a weatherman for a long time up in Burlington and he went down to Connecticut and had the same job down there for a long time. [16.46] And then he, I guess he retired after. And his wife had some job. She worked down there. I don't know what kind of work she did do, but they both retired now. So he bought an old place that needed a lot of fixing up. [17.14] It's down by the prison down to Salem there, the lock-up, or whatever you call it. You go up in the hill there about three miles. He's got it all fixed up nice now. We were down there last Sunday to dinner.

SR That's nice down that way.

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JS Yes. See a lot of turkeys and deer up in there all the time. [17.41]

SR When you go down do you go down through Rupert?

JS Well, you can go that way.

SR Yeah, that's a nice drive.

JS You go down 22.

SR 22, yeah.

JS And turn at the red light there and go in on the hill there. [CLEARS THROAT.] He has one boy, Elmer did, and he drives a tractor trailer outfit for somebody down to Connecticut. [18.13] He's on a trip somewhere and he's stopped to get something to eat and he locked the car all up and left his things in the car and, by God, when he come out the whole thing was gone. [18.32] Sixty thousand dollars.

SR Really?

JS Yeah. T'was a big outfit. So he had to get new truck out of it.

SR Can you tell me anything you *don't* like about the Town of Pawlet?

JS Gosh.

SR Now? As it is now?

JS I don't think so.

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SR You and Eunice. Eunice couldn't think of anything she didn't like about it, either. [19.07]

JS No, I like it here all right.

SR It's a pretty nice place to live.

[PAUSE. JS CLEARS THROAT.]

SR Now, let's see. Can you tell me a little bit more, Jud, about the various kinds of work that you've done? Other than what you've already mentioned, at the foundry and—you've probably done a lot of different kinds of things.

JS Oh, yes. And farming is some different them days than it is now. [19.51] There was a lot of it all by hand. Now they've got a seat they can set on and ride. [LAUGHTER.]

SR Even umbrellas over your head to keep the sun out.

JS Yes. [LAUGHS.] God, I used to cultivate all the stuff with a horse and cultivator, and now they don't cultivate nothing. [20.11] They got a weed killer that a fella come right along and spray that whole thing. Have to get it planted and that's all they do. That's a good scheme. And used to stab all the corn in by hand with a stab planter. [20.32] You know, you used to have the stabbers and _____ for the

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kernels. Plant potatoes. God! Went right out in the
_____ and _____.

SR Did you like farming, though?

JS Oh, yes. I liked it all right. [20.58]

SR What kind of work did you do at the foundry?

JS Well-

SR I don't even know that much about what a foundry is.

JS The foundry's all gone now that was in Poultney.
[21.14]

SR I know.

JS T'was right on-

SR Yeah, I know where it was. Those were wonderful
buildings.

JS Yeah, it's all gone now. Oh, I had to help pour them
castings, you know. [21.26] They make them, they
have a mold. They put this pattern in and fill it
with dirt and pack it down in there and they take it
apart, take the pattern out and have a hole in there
to put the iron in. And you use two men, one on each
end of this ladle, to carry the red-hot iron in and
dump it in the holes. [21.58] And that was no cinch.
God! You get anything wet, you know, that would fly
just like hailstones.

SR Dangerous.

JS Oh, God! Yeah. And all he had to stop it from running out of the _____, the big thing that they melted the iron in, was a piece of clay on a stick with a round thing on it. [22.28] He'd put a gob of clay on that, stick it in that hole, and that would stop it. Yeah, I did a lot of hard work there. And then there was an old guy, he was older than I was, that used to do the trucking there with a one-horse outfit. [22.53] And I used to have to go out and help him. We used to load cars with castings to tow the stuff up the street. And I worked at that a long time. Then he got kind of crippled up and he wanted to sell out, so I bought the whole horse and wagon and sleighs and chains and crowbars and everything, and I was trucking there for quite a while. [23.27] And that old horse I got, he was a strawberry roan. He weighed fifteen hundred, with a bridle on. Fred Sheldon over there to Granville, he used to be a slate man and he had a pair of horses just like that and one of 'em died. [24.06] And so I bought out the old guy and I trucked it there until it got too much, 'cause I couldn't draw it all, and then they went and got a

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truck. [24.17] Well, of course, they put somebody else on the truck and I got through then and went to work on the corporation. I bought another horse and had two horses then, and worked for the town on the street. [24.35]

SR What type of a horse was it called?

JS Strawberry roan, the color of it. [24.37]

SR Roan?

JS Roan, yeah. He was red and white. [24.46] White hairs in it. I kept him for fifteen years. I moved him down here when we moved down.

SR It was quite a change when people stopped working with horses.

JS I guess so.

SR Yeah. Lonnie Loveland told us quite a bit about that. [25.07]

JS Oh, I used to have to do all the plowing with a *hand* plow and finally I got a hold of a sulky plow. [25.20] You sit on that and ride.

SR When you were farming?

JS Yeah, yeah. But now they sit on most everything they use! Farming. [LAUGHS.]

SR It's true.

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JS Milk all the cows with a machine. And they have to dump the milk. [25.54] All of 'em have a thing that goes right along behind the cows and you dump the milk into it and it goes into the tank.

SR Yeah, I've seen those.

JS And I had a little two-horse engine that run the milker and that's all. [26.11] [LAUGHS.]

SR Any other kind of jobs you had that you want to tell me about?

JS [LAUGHS.] Well, when I worked for Travis and Thomas up to Poultney there, we used to build houses. [26.44] And they owned a sawmill. Sometimes way up to forty-eight hundred. Castleton, we built them up there, and on the East Poultney Road, between Poultney and West Poultney, we built quite a few up through there. [27.01] And some, built a whole street right in there next to where the sawmill was.

SR How long have you worked for Zoni?

JS Well-

SR Quite a while.

JS Be seventeen years in March. [27.22] Yeah. I went up there to fix the door, fix the door knob, and I've been going there ever since. [SR LAUGHS.]

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SR What kind of work did you do there when you first started?

JS My God, there was a lot of work to do. The buildings was all falling down. [27.53] I built that kitchen on the north side of it and put on a lot of slate. And then she got some geese and I had to build a goose house, down where that little pond. I drew it up every year, but this year I had this spell with my eyes and I—she didn't want me to monkey around with it. [28.26] She keeps the geese all up in the barn now. She did keep some of 'em down there.

SR And you worked with the sheep.

JS Yeah.

SR Yuh.

JS I went up yesterday and got some hay down for her to feed 'em. [28.43]

SR Did she raise them for the wool or—

JS Yeah. And have 'em eat up the grass on the meadows. [28.53] And then I've been up there sixteen years and those meadows never been cut with a mowing machine, you know. It's all growing up to that little sumac stuff. [29.08]

SR Yeah.

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JS So a year ago last spring I bought a lawn mower outfit goes behind a tractor—six-foot cut—and I went over all them meadows with it. [29.27] You ought to see that make the dirt fly around the woodchuck hole. [LAUGHTER.] So it's growing up again now, I guess, because of the _____. I got stuck with the mud two or three times and _____ Mason's farmer there, a young lad, was drawing up the fertilizer up to that other place and he used to see me hung up and he'd come right down with the tractor, pull me out. [30.07] I always used to carry _____ on 'em. [LAUGHING.] So that wasn't bad.

SR Does she own quite a bit of property?

JS Well, she sold off what there is in Danby, up beyond, on the right-hand side as you're going up. [30.24] They got a shack built up in there, back of those pines. Somebody from down-country. I don't know—in the interior or—and a young lad stays up there all the time and he's got I don't know how many sheep up there. [30.45] And he's had much to do. So she hasn't got so much land to pay taxes on as she did have. My uncle used to own that place, the place up

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where _____. [31.13] Did you ever meet up with
Lois Baker?

SR No, don't think so.

JS Lives over in the village.

SR Where does she live?

JS You turn by the post office and go up in that-

SR Up on Cemetery Hill.

JS No, she don't live out on there, she lives right-

SR Oh, I know who she is! Yes, I do.

JS Pink house?

SR Uhuh.

JS I stopped there and see her a minute yesterday. I
hadn't seen her all winter.

SR I haven't seen her for quite a while.

JS She don't get out much. She fell down a few times and
hurt herself. [31.49] You don't want to get out when
it's slippery. [LAUGHING.]

SR Yeah.

JS Sis Waite brings her mail to her most the time.
[31.55]

SR It's that house that's kind of down a little bit, as
you start up the hill? On the right-hand side?

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JS It's on the right-hand side, right straight up from the main road there. There's another house down in there, sets down nearer the {road there}. [32.15]

SR Right. That's her house.

JS No.

SR Uhuh. Which is her house?

JS The one that sits up away from the road a little further. [32.25]

SR I don't know if you want to answer this, Jud, but can you tell me how much property you own?

JS Just this, this that's fenced in right here. [32.36]

SR Uhuh, so it's what?

JS Hundred and fifty by two hundred. [32.38] [CLEARSTHROAT.]

SR Okay.

JS And it's enough to pay taxes on.

SR I guess so, today.

JS Over \$200.00 for just this little place here. [32.52]

SR That's quite a change.

JS Well, I guess taxes are going up, like everything else.

SR Yeh. That's a big change.

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JS Yeah. And there's no sign of anything stopping. [SR
LAUGHS.] Going up. [LAUGHING.]

SR That's for sure. People don't own land the way they
used to. Can't afford to.

JS God. I stopped over to Clark's the other day and get
that Bronco filled up with gas and it was about half
full: sixteen dollars and something, to fill it up
half full. [33.34]

SR Yeah.

JS God!

SR That's too much. It's not gonna stop, either, I don't
think.

JS You take the gasoline and what groceries is to get, by
God, it takes about all you can get. [33.48]

SR Yuh. What is it you like about Haystack so much?

JS Oh, gosh. I never been up on there yet. [34.00]

SR No?

JS No.

SR That's terrible.

JS Right. [LAUGHING.]

SR We go up every year.

JS Stay down here and I won't fall off. [SR LAUGHS.]

SR We go up quite a bit.

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JS Yeah.

SR Yeah. It's not a bad climb from our place. You know, we go up right on Charley's land and go straight up. [34.17] We don't go around to Rachel's. Go right up from our side.

JS A lot of 'em go up through Rachel's. [34.21]

SR Boy, she told Neil when he went to do her picture that she counted 700 people last summer and then stopped counting. [34.31]

JS Yeah?

SR That's a lot of people. [LAUGHING.]

JS Yeah! [TAPPING HIS FINGERS.]

SR It's a beautiful mountain.

JS Yeah. Well, I used to make sugar up there at the farm for a long time and when she sold that land off up above, the sugar house went with it and the maples, so I don't make sugar no more. [34.54] _____ bought an outfit up to {Grimm's} there in Rutland. I built a sap house right up there at the foot of the mountain. And I got a big tractor up there. Fixed the rigging, put the {engine} around to the back end of it. But then you had to carry it in pails, the sap. [35.32]

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Now they have it, run them, one of these big _____
and pump it into the-

SR Right. And all with those little tubes.

JS Yeah. [LAUGHING.]

SR Coming out of the trees. Looks like surgery instead
of-

JS They've got a new sap house up here on the hill.
[35.45]

SR Here? Right up here? Yeah.

JS Right here. And they used to boil it over—you know
where you go to the back road to Granville?

SR Uhuh. Right, I know where you mean.

JS Up in the woods there, but the little sap house is
pretty near ready to fall down. [36.00]

SR Uhuh. That was a nice sugar bush right there. Yeah.

JS So Nate built a new sap house up here the last spring.
[36.11]

SR We used to help Howard and Freda Rogers boil, until
Howard had his heart attack, and now they've given it
up. [36.16] They have a nice little sugar house out
back there. I don't know if you've ever seen it, but
it's a nice little house. It's quite a job, though.
They did it, you know, buckets and-

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JS Yeah. It's a wonder I got any arms left, or legs, either.

SR It's true. [LAUGHS.]

JS My God. [CLEARS THROAT.]

SR Well, I think that's all the questions I have. That wasn't too bad.

JS Well, no! [SR LAUGHS.]

[PAUSE.]

I think Eunice's daughter was coming over today from—he probably went away somewhere.

SR Well, Neil wanted to—you know, she wanted Neil to try another picture of her.

JS Well, you can't get a new picture out of her unless you can catch her.

SR Right. Well, we'll catch her. [LAUGHTER.] I know she often goes away on Saturday, when anyone in her family comes.

JS She hasn't had her car out in quite a few days now.

SR Yeh, it's been quite a while.

JS She rides with this lady over this side of _____'s place. And she don't get home 'til pretty near six o'clock.

SR Yeah, that's a long day for her.

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JS Yeah, _____ works 'til five. And Eunice gets through at four.

SR That's an awful long day.

JS Yeah.

SR Yeah, I said that to her when I was with her. Let me make sure my tape recorder is still going.

JS All over, isn't it?

SR I don't think so. [JS LAUGHS.] I'm not used to working with one of these, so I'm learning how to use it. Neil's the one that usually does it, but-

JS You don't make much fuss about it, anyway.

SR Nope. [JS LAUGHS.] Well, thanks a lot, Judd. That's just what we needed to know.

JS Well, tomorrow-- [38.33]

END TAPE 1, SIDE A

END TRANSCRIPTION