

INFORMATION SHEET

John Partridge Hunt

Born: June 3, 1901

Place of Birth: Brattleboro, Vermont

Mother's Name: Minnie Herrick Hunt

Father's Name: Arid Hunt

Spouse's Name: Charlotte Lannon Hunt, deceased

Date of Interview: March 18, 1981

BJ = Barbara Jenkins, Interviewer

JH = John Hunt

Original transcript by Barbara Jenkins

BJ: You were born in Brattleboro, and you explained something about a dam. That's why you came down here to Enfield. Did you come down here with your parents?

JH: We came to Ashburnham first. (Where is that?) North of Fitchburg, about 7 or 8 miles from Fitchburg toward New Hampshire.

BJ: What about the dam there made you move?

JH: We were on the Connecticut River, and when the water filled up, the water set back. Our farm wasn't too far from the river. (Was that considered water shed land then?) No, of course, the Yankee Power Plant is there now.

BJ: Did they buy that land from you?

JH: Oh yes. We had to get out, that's all. We lived not far from Bernardston—about 5 or 6 miles, toward Brattleboro.

BJ: And you had to get out because they were going to make a dam?

JH: We had to get out because the water set back when it filled up.

BJ: So you came to Ashburnham. How old were you then?

JH: I was eight.

BJ: And you lived there how long?

JH: That was 1917, and then we went to Springfield.

BJ: How did you get back to Enfield?

JH: Well, my folks—I was in the army for awhile—and my folks bought a place in Enfield. My sister ran a tearoom there—my sisters.

BJ: What year was that?

JH: They moved there in 1922. (You were in the army. What year were you born?) June the third, 1901. (That makes you going to be 80.)

BJ: So your parents lived down there, your sisters ran a tearoom. What did your family do down there, your parents?

JH: My mother died when I was four. Had just a small farm. My grandmother lived with us—my father's mother. She died in 1924. She was 92.

BJ: Did they have a farm down there?

JH: Just a small one.

BJ: At the time that they bought that farm in Enfield, did they know they would have to leave?

JH: At the time, no.

BJ: When did they start to talk about that?

JH: In 1927 they bought a place in Connecticut—Killingworth. (Why?) They had to sell the land anyway to the state.

BJ: So by 1927 they knew they were going to have to get out?

JH: Oh yes. (But in 1922, they didn't.) No. (So some place I those five years?) Right.

BJ: Do you remember them talking about it?

JH: I wasn't home at the time.

BJ: Did it surprise you that they had to move so fast?

JH: Yes.

BJ: How did you get back then? You worked on the whole reservoir, right? When did you start working down there?

JH: I worked some—I really started in 1937.

BJ: What stage were things at right then?.

JH: Clearing. Where the spillway is—in front of the dam there, they were digging test pits. And on the side where the road goes over Quabbin, we dug test pits there for bedrock. (That was to see what—why did you have to do that?) I really don't know. I couldn't really tell you. I guess it was something they had to do. (It had to do with building the dam, though.) The spillway, especially.

BJ: You went in 1937 and you were clearing.

JH: I started clearing in 1936. Curley had a lot from Boston in there. (Mayor Curley?) Yes, they came from Boston out there. (What do you mean?) They hired them for clearing.

BJ: Was that the first thing that was done out there to cut down and clear the trees? (Yes.) Down to the ground level, right? (Yes.) That was started in 1936? (They started it then, I guess.) You came in 1937 and what was the first job you had there?

JH: Digging test pits. (Then what?) Well, I did everything—I worked on the cemetery.

BJ: You had to take bodies?

JH: I didn't do any of that. I did a few, but there wasn't nothing but bones.

BJ: How did they do that? I've never heard anyone talk about that.

JH: They had a rod, and they'd poke some way and find where the ground was soft and they'd dig down. They had these three small boxes to put bones in. Of course, there were bodies they had to move, too.

BJ: Let's say they dig down and the wood on the caskets and things might be rotted too. (Oh yes.) So all they'd find was bones?

JH: Some of the later ones were bodies too, and the caskets. They moved all the monuments and the gravestones. They had a crew that did that. (You just worked on putting them in the new cemetery, right?) They had these small graves about two and half feet wide and a half foot deep and two and half feet long and about a foot wide. (So, in other words, people don't turn out to be very wide and long and deep when they get to be just bones?) No.

BJ: How did all this make you feel?

JH: Well, I know the first time I had to dig up one down in the Packardville Cemetery, I didn't think much of it, but when all I found was bones, I didn't mind it so much. After that, I was on mowing the lawn down there, trimming around the headstones. You used to have to do it with sheep shears in those days. Nowadays they have electric trimmers.

BJ: Did you do any actual work on building the dam?

JH: No, just the clearing, that's all.

BJ: When did they actually start to build the dam again?

JH: I think about in 1940—along in there. I guess it was before that. I can't tell just when it was.

BJ: When did they finish it?

- JH:** Around 1940, a little later than that. They figured it would take six years to fill up—no, they thought it would take ten years and it took six.
- BJ:** Your family moved out in 1927—you didn't go back until 1936?
- JH:** I worked for the town of Enfield before that. (Oh, you did. When did you go back to Enfield?) I went to Enfield, I stayed there. I was married in 1926. I stayed for awhile with my wife's folks.
- BJ:** I have to get this straight. You said you were away from your family when they bought the farm. (Yes.) And that was in 1922. (Right.) And at that time, you were working where? (I was in the army.) Where did you meet your wife? (In Enfield.) When you went to visit your family? (No, they had a birthday party one night and she was there. That was the first time I met her.) Was that in Enfield? (Yes.) Were you back visiting?
- JH:** No, I came home. I was in the Fitzsimmons Hospital in Denver. I was in Walter Reed Hospital first. At the X-Ray Laboratory. They told me I had TB of the lungs. So, in 1921 they shipped me to Fitzsimmons. That's about 9 miles east of Denver.—right on the prairie. They own 600 acres there. That following March they told me I had TB of the lungs. So I laid flat on my back or on my stomach and took the sun 2 hours a day. Just the sun that cured it. I was tan as an Indian. We had a doctor there that studied that in Switzerland. I had to wear a brace after that from here up to here. Had to wear a brace for two years.
- BJ:** In other words, you were out in Denver from 1921 to 1923. Then you came back? (Came home to Enfield.) Then you met your wife at this birthday party, right? Okay. So, when your parents moved, you stayed in Enfield. (Oh yes.)
- JH:** We lived with my wife's folks for awhile until 1935. Then we rented a place from the state. The houses were sold, and anyone who worked for the state could rent a house. My oldest daughter was born in 1927 in Mary Lane Hospital in Ware, and the other daughter was born there in 1934.
- BJ:** You went back to Enfield because you'd been sick and in the army and you met your wife. What was her maiden name? (Charlotte Lannon.) Her family had always lived down there? (Oh yes, her father was a mail carrier. He used to carry mail up here and down through Pelham Hollow. He'd go through West Ware and up through Packardville up to here and then he'd go down below and then he'd turn into Pelham Hollow and then back to Enfield.) So when you went to Enfield, your father was farming, your sisters were running a tearoom. What did you do?
- JH:** I helped around the house, and then after they left, I worked for a woman in Enfield taking care of the place—mowing the lawns, shoveling the snow, taking care of the furnace. Then she moved to Belchertown.

- BJ:** So you lived there during the time everybody was moving out. (Oh, yes.) You had to move out too. How did you feel about that?
- JH:** I didn't mind as much as my wife did because she was born and brought up there. She was kind of sad, of course. We moved up here the first of May, 1938. It was part of Adriance's farm—we were in the house across the road. We moved down here in the last of April, 1964.
- BJ:** So you lived not that far away all that time, and then ended up here.
- JH:** My son-in-law and his brother-in-law built this place here. And some of the neighbors. He works in the university.
- BJ:** So you didn't care that much whether you moved out of there or not. (No.) You wife was sad. How about other people?
- JH:** They were really sad. People that had lived there all their lives.
- BJ:** When I ask people around up here, nobody seems to say much about it. I guess unless you lived right here, you didn't care much one way or another. Did they try to fight it or not? (Oh, yes.) What kind of things did they do?
- JH:** Of course, they hired lawyers. I don't really know because I didn't have anything to do about that.
- BJ:** It was decided by the time you got there, in a way. (Oh yes.) You said that when your parents bought it, they didn't know. (No, no.) By the time you got there, were they talking about it then? (Not too much, no.) That was 1923. So, in just a short time, it seems, they decided. (Yes.) You moved out in 1938. You started working there in 1936. What happened to your house that was in Enfield?
- JH:** I don't know. Somebody tore it down as far as I can figure out. I used to have to go down there at first. I used to ride with a man from Shutesbury. He worked at the cemetery too and we used to ride together. He'd stop in Enfield to pick up a truck and I'd take a truck down to the cemetery. Some houses were moved—one house went to Staten Island. (How come?) Well, people would buy them. There was a man who mad a specialty of that—tearing down places and rebuilding them. He was from Dorset, Vermont. He made a business of that. There's a house that came from Enfield at Amherst College. One of the first ministers—Reverend Crosby. His house went to Amherst College. He was one of the first ministers in Enfield. As far as I know, it's still there.
- BJ:** When you would go from here to go down to the cemetery, you'd be going sort of through areas where you lived. All the houses were gone?

JH: No, there were still houses. In '38 everybody had to get out—'39-'39. My father-in-law had to get out. He went to Rutland to finish out his mail time. He got out about the same time we did.

BJ: Was it like going into a ghost town sort of?

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JH: Oh yes. We had the hurricane in '38 and oh God, we went down the next morning and what a mess in Enfield.

BJ: That's right, but were most of the houses gone?

JH: No, a lot of the houses were still there. They didn't get blown down, just the trees. Took almost 600 trees out of the cemetery. We worked for weeks down there. At one time they had over 250 laborers. (Just cleaning up the trees?) Everything.

BJ: That's interesting. Then they didn't have to cut so many down.

JH: They uprooted some of the headstones. Had to clean that up. They sold the logs—mostly pine. After the crew from Boston left, we had to go around and burn the brush. We did that in '37 and '38—'38 mostly. We began in the afternoon and would take a fire pump and wet down all around it. Then each man would take a can of kerosene and walk down through and touch them off. Some nights we'd burn over 100 acres. (That was just the brush that was left?) Yes. (That couldn't be used for selling.) We had to burn the brush anyway because the land was going to be flooded.

BJ: So they started to clear in '37 or something like that. Then the trees blew down in '38 and then they had more clearing to do. Is that right? (Yes.) So they burned all that?

JH: Burned all of the brush and some of the trees. They had great big fires. They had these big machines, big bulldozes to push them into piles and burn them up.

BJ: Did they cut every tree down right level with the ground? (oh yes, oh yes.) I think there are people who think if you look down in Quabbin you'll see trees.

JH: Oh no. They had to bring big machines in there. Two or three different contractors. Of course, they hired help. We did a lot of the clearing, especially down toward the dam and in front of the dam.

BJ: You mentioned that there were 250 that came from Boston.

JH: Oh there were more than 250. Oh God, when you'd go home at 5 o'clock, you couldn't cross the street. (How many do you think?) I don't know, there must have been thousands of them.

- BJ:** Then when they left and just the rest of you regular people worked, how many people were down there working with you?
- JH:** One time they had 250 laborers. (These were local people?) Oh, Shutesbury and all around.
- BJ:** Of course, that was during the Depression so were people happy to have a job?
- JH:** Yes they were.
- BJ:** So in a way, like you're saying, people were sad to leave, but there was a job for a lot of people too. (Oh yes.) What was Enfield getting to be like before they left?
- JH:** The mills were gone—there used to be a couple of woolen mills and those were gone. Wasn't much of anything for anybody to do.
- BJ:** In a way, this had been hanging over their heads for a long time. (Right.) Now, you were in Enfield and you moved up to Pelham—why did you choose to move to Pelham instead of anywhere else?
- JH:** My father-in-law knew Mr. Adriance, and he knew he had a house so he spoke to Mr. Adriance about it. So we got the house—a seven room house. And that house came from Pelham Hollow. (They moved that out?) From Pelham Hollow. All the finished work inside is chestnut. All the woodwork inside is chestnut.
- BJ:** Who lives there now?
- JH:** Sidney Stone and his wife. That was Mr. Adriance's daughter. He works down—he has to take water samples every so often.
- BJ:** At the time you lived in Enfield, did you have much to do with Pelham? Did you go back and forth or when you lived down there, did you pretty much stay down there? (Stay there, yes.) There wasn't much traveling back and forth? (No, used to go to Ware, that's all. Or once in awhile—my wife had a brother who lived up in Athol—used to go up there once in awhile.) Did people in Enfield have much to do with Pelham? (No) You don't think so—they tended to go to Ware and Athol. Quite a bit of Pelham was removed for Quabbin. (Oh yes.) Did you know much about that area down there, like Pelham Hollow?
- JH:** I used to travel through there. Of course, the old Conkey Tavery was down there. (It wasn't still standing?) Oh no, it's under water now. (But was it?) No, it fell down. I remember going by there years ago during the hunting, but I couldn't tell you when. (Did you ever see it standing, did you mean?)

BJ: I've seen a picture where people stand on the corners. They think that's where it was—I guess they weren't too sure.

JH: Yes, that's across the river down Pelham Hollow. Of course, it's under water now. Going towards Prescott.

BJ: So you were a young man when you came back to Enfield—in your early 20s. (Yes.) Sure, because you said you were born in 1901. (I was 22.) You said you worked mostly for other people down there and then you worked on the cemetery and things like that. When Quabbin was all finished, then what did you do?

JH: Some of the time, we had to mow hay on the dam with a scythe, and over to Quabbin with a scythe. They've got tractors in there now to do that. Some of the time we cut brush. So you stayed working for the MDC all the time?) Oh yes. (Until you retired?) Yes. (Oh, I see.) Thirty-two years. (So you worked on the grounds crew basically?) General maintenance. We used to cut lumber up in Prescott. In those days it was a cross cut saw. There was no power saws. A frozen hemlock three foot through! (You developed some muscles.) Of course, they had the sawmill and then the state help did the work.

BJ: Now at the time you're talking about, were the trees starting to grow back?

JH: No. In all the open spaces in Quabbin they planted trees. In Prescott and Prescott Hill and up around there. Up around Shaft 12 up around Hardwick. That's the intake for the waters of the Wachusett. The water goes in an intake, and then goes in the Wachusett Reservoir. (That's around Worcester?) Yes. The Wachusett's in Clinton. They dug a tunnel, and the deepest shaft is something like 600 feet. around Great Barre. Route 122. See, the flood waters on the Ware River, they're driven back into Quabbin. (Every spring, sort of?) Yes.

BJ: So you kept working on maintenance around there—did anything especially

JH: A lot of the fellows used to find a lot of old bottles. They'd dig in the old dumps and find bottles. I used to see deer every day, especially in Prescott. One time we were up behind a tree, and there were a pair of albino deer. White, pure white. A doe and a buck. Boy, were they pretty. Somebody had shot them. During the war, the army came in from Westover. They came in then, and did practice bombing. (Around Quabbin?) Yes. Those bombs could go right through a foot of ice. (This is in World War II?) Yes. Double winged planes. Those crazy bombers would go right under the high tension. Oh, they were a crazy bunch. (This was practice, right?) Yes. They'd drop bombs and set fires. They set a big fire in Prescott one time. I don't know how many acres they burned over. That was in 1944. The practice bomb set a big fire. I went one night and set out all night—Saturday night and Sunday. They brought a bunch in from Westover to help put it out, but most of them were drunk. Hide in the bushes.

- BJ:** They didn't actually use bombs, did they?
- JH:** Yes, a bomb shape, a regular bomb shape. 100 pounds of sand for weight and I don't know—3 or 4 pounds of black powder. They'd set it off with a shotgun shell when they hit. They used to set bombs off right near some times. (That was with the permission of the MDC?) Oh yes. They didn't go to MDC until 1947. It was the Metropolitan Water Commission before that. (It was basically the same thing, though?) Yes. When they went over to MDC, we went over to Civil Service.
- BJ:** So when you moved up here to Pelham, you already had your children, did you?
- JH:** The youngest one, Barbara, was only three when we moved up here. Margaret, she was eleven.
- BJ:** So how did you find Pelham as compared to Enfield? Was it very different?
- JH:** Not too much difference. There weren't quite so many houses, of course, on top of the hill. All dirt roads.
- BJ:** That was different than Enfield which had been like a little town? (Yes.) How did people receive you coming in from some place else?
- JH:** The neighbors were very good to us. Mr. Adriance, especially—they were very good to us. Anything I wanted, all I had to do was ask.
- BJ:** And then you were going back down to work every day? (Every day.) How did you go? What way did you go? (Down 202.) Was 202 built like it is now?
- JH:** Yes. They started 202 in Belchertown in 1933. When we went down there, it was all done then. (They started in Belchertown and worked up to Route 2, is that it?) No, right up to Athol, up through New Salem.
- BJ:** So you didn't go through the Quabbin area so much—you were around the cemetery down in Ware. You didn't have reason to go in these gates much?
- JH:** Well, not till afterwards. Then when we went to Prescott, we always had to go in a gate—Gate 17 up here in Shutesbury. I used to have to go around and make a 40 foot strip around the outside—what they call a fire line. I had to go around and post that "No Trespassing"—the dividing line for the state land and the outside land. I had to go around and post that with "No Trespassing" signs—oh, about 8-10 miles a day. It was all right but the lines went in and out like that (Jagged, huh?) I used to go with one of the MDC police. He lived in New Salem. He'd say, "I'll meet you at the first gate. Next gate up half way." I'll get to the next gate, he'll be sitting in the car.. Take a bunch of signs, put them in a box. Take a bunch of nails and a hammer and start. (How often did you have to do that?)

Every year. After I quit, they had two men do it. Well, you see, in 1947—no, 1957, I went to the hospital. For a cataract operation on both eyes. I was totally blind in my left eye. I went to one doctor in Amherst and he wouldn't tell me I had cataracts. He said it might hurt my feelings. So I went into the hospital the last week in May 1957 on a Monday and he did the first eye on a Wednesday—on the left eye. They inject cocaine in both sides—takes about half an hour. Then they cover that eye and put tape over it. First day you have to lay right on your back. You can't turn either way, but on the next day you can turn on the opposite side. I was over there 17 days, and the next week, on a Thursday, they did the other eye. I was over there 17 days with my temporary glasses. The lenses were about that thick. (That's about an inch.) It's painful because your eyes burn. I have to go once a year. I have to go now in May for a check-up.

BJ: It sounds like even though you had that health problem when you were young, and you have when you're older, that you did a lot of hard work in between.

JH: Yes, a little bit!

BJ: Did you do a lot of work around the house? Did you have a small farm when you moved up here? Did you keep cows or anything?

JH: No, just run the house and some of the land—had a garden, of course. I used to help Mr. Adriance in haying time especially—anything he wanted me to help him out. In those days, up till 1946, we worked six days a week. In 1947, only half of them were showing p so they said five days a week. (That was a big change then?) I guess so. Back then we got two weeks vacation and 15 days sick leave a year. But now you're allowed to accumulate your sick leave. By the time I retired, I was getting a month vacation. Now they're trying to get five weeks. You accumulate sick leave. When I went to the hospital, I had about 250 days sick leave. I didn't work from the 15th of April to the 17th of August because the doctor was afraid I might get—anyway, I couldn't bend over. If you bend over and there's any pressure on your eyes, you'll go totally blind, and there isn't a darn thing you can do about it.

BJ: Were you ever involved in town politics once you moved to Pelham?

JH: No, no—God, no. (Why did you say it like that?) Well, I was never asked, anyway.

BJ: Do you remember any town issues once you moved to Pelham?

JH: It was so long ago, I can't remember now.

BJ: You remember other things really well, but politics you don't. (No.) Did you go to Town Meeting?

JH: I went to only a few of them—not too many—when they had them up here in Town Hall.

BJ: You don't remember any special arguments or anything?

JH: I used to like to go into Enfield—how they would argue! (Were the town meetings here very different than they were in Enfield?) No, about the same.

BJ: Did you ever get very involved in anything here in Pelham—any church or school or anything like that?

JH: I belong to the church, but I never go. My daughters used to go to Sunday School.

BJ: You lived up here at the top of the hill; did you feel like you were connected to the rest of Pelham, or is there a division between the top of the hill and down the hill?

JH: I think there is some, yes.

BJ: What kind of thing do you feel?

JH: I don't know; they don't seem to mix much.

BJ: It's a long way up here, you know.

JH: Seven miles from Amherst.

BJ: Were you involved in the recent hearings about the Pioneer Valley Cablevision antenna up here?

JH: No, I didn't hear anything about that until it was all over. (Things can go on today and people can still not hear about them. Was anybody here in the house involved?) No, we don't need cable television up here. We're up so high. I get Manchester, New Hampshire and get Worcester and Albany, New York. Of course, we get all the Springfield stations and New Haven. When we first moved up here, I could get Channel 5 New York City wrestling every Monday night. One time I picked up the call letters for Little Rock, Arkansas. (I live up on North Valley Road and we can't get things like that.) We're up so high, of course. Down in Amherst, where my daughter lives on South East Street, they have cablevision down there. My other daughter, she works at Hamilton Newell, the printer. She went to work for him in 1945 before she got out of high school. She started on the linotype. My son-in-law went to Amherst College in 1948, and he's been over there 30 years. He works in some of the dormitories, now he does. One time he was in charge of the skating rink; and another time he was in charge of Pratt Field, the athletic field.

BJ: What did the land look like up here when you moved? In 1938? Were there trees around or was it more cleared or what?

JH: It was about the same as it is now. Of course, I had to clear out here. This land belonged to my son-in-law's mother. This land here, they gave it to me. Two acres and a half. Before I knew him too well, his step-father used to raise chickens in the chicken hose out here. Now we're using it for storage.

BJ: It seems like people used to—at least, the people I've talked to in Pelham—raise a little something or other. Was that true? Did most people raise some of their own things?

JH: No, no. (You didn't, you said.) Just the garden. That was it.

BJ: Now your wife, did she do a lot of canning?

JH: Oh God, I guess so. She died three years ago last August. [edited section]

BJ: I can't help but notice as you talk—you have a tremendous memory for exact dates. You name everything right down to the whatever. Are you famous for that?

JH: I don't know.

BJ: I saw you have this book out here about "Quabbin: the Lost Valley" and I thought you must have it out there for a reason.

JH: There are some pictures of Pelham in here.

BJ: Now that's the Pelham Town Hall and that's down in Pelham Hollow. That picture of this Charles Davis of Pelham Hollow—I notice they've been using that in the Amherst Savings Bank ads. Have you seen those? (Yes.) The birthplace of Judge Conkey and everything. Is this the way the Town Hall looked more? (Yes.) It still looks pretty much like that, I guess. There's the church, right? This Pelham Hill School (That was down by the high tension.) I think they also call that--- (the Canterbury School) the what? I don't believe this. I have heard these schools called everything, but I've never heard any named Canterbury! Is that also the South School? (Yes.) That's how I know it. Why was it called Canterbury? (I don't know.) Is that the one that was moved to the Easter States Fairground? (I don't know.) And this is the Pelham store and Post Office where Mrs. Adriance's mother worked? As you start down the hill to Pelham Hollow? Across from the old Town Hall and then down the hill a ways. And this house that says David Shore, was that down there? (Pelham Hollow.) Did the Swift River run right through Pelham Hollow? (Yes, oh yes. The west branch of the Swift River goes down through there.) That's all under water now? (Yes.) I was talking to Carlton Robinson up here, and we were talking about his old home

place on the corner. We were talking about why they had to remove everything, not just the things that were under water. Do you know why?

JH: I don't know. They could have left a lot of houses, I think. All the way up both sides of Route 202, they own 100 feet back, up as far as Route 122. We used to have to mow brush up there in the summer time. (It seems as if they just didn't want to be responsible for any of those houses or letting anybody live there.)

BJ: Let's see what else we have there. Here's the old burying ground up by the church. Somebody told me about Gertie Hanson's place in Pelham, and here's a picture that says "well-known to local sportsmen." I wondered about that.

JH: I never saw it. Down in Pelham Hollow when you start going north, I know it was. I heard them telling about it quite a bit. Fellows used to stop there when they were hunting and like that. Even the game warden used to stop there once in awhile.

BJ: Was it like a drinking place?

JH: I don't know. I couldn't tell you.

BJ: Oh, I see. It says, "Maple Grove Quick Lunch" –soda, candy—okay. It was down there like by the store?

JH: No, way down in the Hollow. Way down at the bottom of the hill. (That's right, the store was on the side going down.)

BJ: Pelham Hollow was how many miles from the top of the hill? (Two miles.) And, as I understand, there was a school down there called the South School? (Yes, my son-in-law went to it.) That was a mile down, as I believe. (Yes.)

JH: Years ago they had a saw mill down in Pelham Hollow. They used to make bobbins for weaving. They had a factory down there. They used to call it Bobbin Hollow. (When was that?) Don't ask me! (Way before your time?) Yes.

BJ: Oh, here's Bobbin Hollow and the site of the Daniel Shays house and the Conkey Tavern.

JH: There were the charcoal kilns down in Pelham Hollow. I've seen those. (Those would have been where the water is now—but they were still there when you were around? But they weren't using them?) Yes, they were using them. When I first moved there, they were using them. (Like in 1922?) Yes. (When did they stop?) I couldn't tell you.

BJ: How did they make the charcoal?

- JH:** They used hard wood and these big kilns. Then they set the fire. (This is brick and you put the wood in these brick, domed things?) Yes. (And just burn it down. It becomes charcoal because it's burning inside? I don't know that much about it.) I don't know that much about it myself.
- BJ:** Oh, this is a picture of the inside of Kingman Tavern where Carlton Robinson lived. And here are some people on the 100th birthday of Dwight L. Moody. He was born here? (I couldn't tell you.) I guess so. These pictures are of earlier times and people your age don't remember that. You know it from the books. I had seen this book before, but it had been quite a while since I'd seen it. Now Packardville was the east part of Pelham, right? (Yes.) When you were talking about that Canterbury School, was that considered Packardville? (No, that was in Pelham.) You said you weren't in Pelham Hollow that much—how far was it from Enfield? (Oh, five or six miles, probably.) So you didn't go there for any reason? (No, not till I started working for the state.) How did you go from Enfield to Pelham Hollow?
- JH:** There were two ways we would go, either side of the Swift River. (There were little bridges that crossed that?) Yes. (When you talk about the Swift River, how big was it? Was it about the size of, say, of the Fort River?) It was wider in some places than the Fort River. There was the east branch, the west branch, and the main branch. This was the west branch down here.
- BJ:** So you were saying when you lived up here on the hill that you didn't have that much to do with the rest of Pelham? (No.) West Pelham and all those far away places! Do you still feel that way or have things changed?
- JH:** Oh, it's changed. Now there's so many strangers living over there, you don't know anybody any more. So many professors and like that. You don't know anybody any more.
- BJ:** When did all that start to happen?
- JH:** I don't know. The last few years. Maybe twenty years ago or something like that. I wouldn't say for sure.
- BJ:** Has there been a division in the town between the old timers and the new people?
- JH:** I think there is to some extent. (You don't get to meet many of the new people, then?) No, I don't know them.
- BJ:** Some of the people up in this area have lived here quite awhile.
- JH:** Oh yes. The Adriances and the Suprenants down below here. My son-in-law was born down in Pelham Hollow. Howard Frost, he works as a heavy equipment operator. He works out in the coal yard, most of the time. In the winter he has to

- plow snow and things like that. (Where is that?) You go up North Pleasant Street (In Amherst?) Yes. East Pleasant and you turn by the new fire station and that will take you right down by the coal yard. Right down by where they keep the horses. (He works for the University?) Oh yes, he's a heavy equipment operator.
- BJ:** How, you have two daughters, is that right? (Yes.) What kind of things did you and your family do for recreation back then?
- JH:** Not too much. We used to go over to Adriances' Saturday night to play cards. (You did things mostly with neighbors?) Oh yes.
- BJ:** It doesn't sound as if you traveled very much.
- JH:** No, not in those days. Take a taxi and go into Amherst to the movies on a Saturday night. (Take a taxi?) You used to go into Amherst for 50¢. (Where did you get a taxi?) From Amherst. (And they'd come up here?) Yes. (You didn't have a car?) No, we didn't have a car until my oldest daughter got married. She had a car then. (What did you have—a horse, wagon, nothing?) We had to go to the neighbors or call a taxi. I never drove. The only car I ever drove was a Model T Ford and that was a good many years ago. (Why didn't you have a car?) Oh, I just never learned to drive.
- BJ:** I can see now why if you didn't have a car, you didn't go very much.
- JH:** Of course, my daughter got a car in '48. She got a car then because... (But you'd already been living here 10 years.) When she got married, she got an old Ford, and then her husband got a job at Amherst College. My youngest daughter got her license in '52.
- BJ:** But you were here and you either took a taxi or--- what about the trolley? When did that stop down there?
- JH:** I don't just remember. (Probably before you moved here.) I imagine so. I remember the trolley coming to West Pelham years ago. (When you were where?) When I used to go to Amherst from Enfield.
- BJ:** Did you come to Amherst much when you lived in Enfield? (No, not very much.) What would you come in for? (Shopping and things like that.) You went more to Ware or Athol? (Sometimes maybe Springfield. I used to go to Northampton a lot. My wife used to have a sister that lived in Northampton. We'd go over there once in awhile. Of course, she's dead now, too.) Are you the only one that's left?
- JH:** I've got a sister in Connecticut. My brother died last summer. He and my sister were twins. They're 83 now.

BJ: When you look back now because you are getting older, do you have things you thought you would have done or are you doing pretty much what you would have thought you would be doing when you were 20?

JH: I couldn't tell you.

BJ: I find that a lot of people your age wanted to get a job, and it was unsure as to whether you could get jobs and they were happy to have a job and that was it.

JH: I help out here when I can. The washing—get supper for them.

BJ: You're still working. That's great.

JH: Work on woodwork some. I don't know how many bird houses and bird feeders I've made.

BJ: I've been trying to get some cardinals. (I get one once in awhile, that's all). I was talking to Mr. Robinson up here and he gets them all the time! I think he's got a little grove of pine trees right there. (My daughter down in Amherst gets them. Down in Connecticut, my sister once had nine in the yard.) You mentioned the deer and things in Quabbin when you were working—do you think there is more wildlife down there now than when you were....

JH: Oh yes. They're seeing mountain lions in there now. There are a lot of beaver and you see a bobcat once in awhile. (Have you seen one?) Oh God, yes. (You mentioned that you hunted. So did you go down there quite a lot? When I was in Enfield, I used to hunt, yes. I never hunted Quabbin though. I used to hunt on Quabbin Mountain and out towards Pelham Hollow. Packard ledges. All of it is under water now. My son-in-law built a little house up there one time. They had a sawmill there one time.

BJ: Where is Packard Ledges?

JH: Go down to Pelham Hollow and then go on south. (It is under water?) Oh no, it's high. Of course, some of it is under water.

INFORMATION SHEET

Pearl Keyes

Born: April 20, 1891

Place of Birth: Reading, Vermont

Mother's Name: Eunice May Pease

Father's Name: Mark Augustus Keyes

Spouse's Name: Julia

Date of Interview: April 20, 1980

BJ = Barbara Jenkins, Interviewer

PK = Pearl Keyes, Sr.

Original transcription by Susie Wentworth and Barbara Jenkins

- BJ:** How did you happen to have the name Pearl?
- PK:** As I understood it, that was given me by my parents from some Civil War hero. Now I have no idea who or anything more about it. That was what was given me. That was what was told.
- BJ:** You passed it on so you must like it all right.
- PK:** Yes, I like it. [edited section]
- BJ:** So it's going on down the way? (Yes.) Well, I think that's good. A name like that you remember it once you hear it. The first time I heard it, I remembered it!
- PK:** Years ago there were more people named Pearl. Now it's become more of a feminine name. But it used to be I knew a number of people with the same name years ago.
- BJ:** Why did you come to Pelham?
- PK:** I took a job for the late Professor Morse upon Arnold Road. At that time on Arnold Road there were only two houses. One was where folks named Harris lived, and the other was what they called "Grey Rocks." A great, large place owned by this late Professor Morse. He owned, if I remember rightly, 600 or 700 acres of land scattered around there. So I worked for him until he died, and then I worked another year afterwards. At that time he owned this place as part of the area I'm talking about. Then I married and made a deal with them to take over this part of the place. That's how I happen to be out here.
- BJ:** I'd like to hear a little more about that place because somebody referred to that as "The Castle."
- PK:** That's right. They called it "Grey Rocks." Professor Morse was a professor of history at Amherst College, and he had retired. It was a real, nice place—a beautiful view both to the west and to the south. You never been up there?
- BJ:** Not way up there. I think it was Mr. Burrows told me he looked through a telescope there once and he could see the capitol in Hartford. I couldn't believe you could see that far. That was when there weren't lights in between.
- PK:** I know that Mr. Burrows' father did a lot of work for Mr. Morse. That was before my time.
- BJ:** Yes, he talked about being young because he had to be boosted up to look through the telescope. It was different—more trees—by the time you were there.

- PK:** When I first come here, there was a lot of open country out here. Very much more open than it is today. Today it's all grown up.
- BJ:** That always strikes me. To be able to have seen long distance.
- PK:** Oh yes. From here, for instance, you could see Amherst College buildings. You could see South Amherst church and all the buildings in between. Now it's all grown up.
- BJ:** Is that because there was so much more farming?
- PK:** You could use that word, but to get back to the farming part of it—all the old-timers here, they just made a living on what they had. That was all the living they had, what they got off the farm. Many of them had large families so that they was able to do the work, you know, without hiring anybody. And the work was all hand work compared to what you see nowadays.
- BJ:** And it was more just to support that family than to do a lot of selling? (That's right, very little cash money came into it.) When you came out here, how old were you? (Early 20s.) And why did you have background in knowing about doing farm work and things like that?
- PK:** Well, I was brought up on a farm. (Around Amherst somewhere?) Yes.
- BJ:** And had you gone through high school in Amherst? (Yes, I graduated from Amherst High School in 1910.) And then you worked for awhile?
- PK:** I worked on my father's farm before I went up to Professor Morse's.
- BJ:** And this Professor Morse had been there quite a long time?
- PK:** I don't know how long. First, they had it as a summer home. Then they built this great, big place up there. I remember that he had children and grandchildren that came there for the summers so he wanted a lot of room. Most of them were college people, you know, and had free summers so that's what they came here for. He lived there the year round although he had another place on Northampton Road in Amherst.
- BJ:** Was that unusual for somebody like that to own so much land in Pelham or was that common?
- PK:** No, I think that was a bit unusual.
- BJ:** Was he resented at all because he had so much?

- PK:** No, I don't think so. He was well liked. The only other man I ever knew to own so much land was Cadwell whose widow gave that area upon Mt. Lincoln to the University. He owned all that.
- BJ:** Did this Mr. Morse have a lot of hired men?
- PK:** No, not too many.
- BJ:** What did he grow or what were you doing there?
- PK:** He had a little orchard. He had a furnace that took four foot wood so it took an awful lot of wood to heat the place. He kept about 50 cords of wood. That seems like a lot, doesn't it? He had a big shed.
- BJ:** And you were in charge of what? What kind of things did you do?
- PK:** I did whatever they wanted done. There was a garden. We had no lawns, but we had a garden. And, of course, there was the wood to haul and I tended to the fires and stuff like that.
- BJ:** And when you got married, did you rent this from him or was it just part of the deal?
- PK:** Yes, at first—the first year we rented it and then we bought it.
- BJ:** A very smart investment! You probably didn't think about it back then, it was just a place to be, right?
- PK:** Yes, it was a long, hard struggle to make ends meet and to pay off the mortgage.
- BJ:** Did you plan to be working at the university or did you think you'd be doing something right here?
- PK:** After I left him, I had a number of jobs. For instance, I went to work for Bartlett, the fish pole man. He said, "For a few days," and I worked five years before I went to the university.
- BJ:** Did you ever expect to do more real farming?
- PK:** I had hoped so, but I never had enough capital or enough stuff to make a go of it. In order to make a go of it, I always had to work out for a living. And that's what the majority of people did here.
- BJ:** Seems like everybody worked at that fish rod factory at some time or another.

PK: That's the only industry that was ever here in the town. At one time, that boomed very big. I didn't work in the fish rod factory, I had an outside job there. Really what I did was farm work. There again I hauled lots of wood—they burned wood there to fire the boiler so all winter was devoted to hauling wood.

BJ: What do you think now of getting back to wood for energy?

PK: We always used wood. Of course, if you have your own wood, it's better, but you have to go get it and that's the difficult thing. Oh, I think it's okay, but I'm not too sure about every Tom, Dick and Harry trying to make a go of it. I think it's overdone. It's become a fad to a certain extent. I think it costs almost as much if you have to buy the wood.

BJ: When you were down here, you said you were the only house here and then the Ward house where the Carys live now. Did you feel off by yourself or was that ever something you minded?

PK: Personally, I like very much to be by myself; that is, I enjoyed it. I never been too enthusiastic about this growth of the town they talk about. I never been too impressed. I know they think it's a good thing, but the way I look at it, it just costs everybody so much more money. Everything has gone up. They want so much. They want a bigger school, they want better roads. I have no quarrel with that. It's nice to have a bigger school, it's nice to have good roads, but to pay for all that is a horse of a different color!

BJ: One of the reasons I'm doing this and hoping to have the interviews is so that children can read them because I know that a lot of the children in town are from new families and they don't have much connection with the older families.. I know there's suspicion, a little bit, about newcomers and old-timers. That's one of the reasons I wanted to do it. I asked you about if there was any resentment of this Professor Morse because one of the things I hear a lot about is "The Professors have come into town and done all this stuff."

PK: That's just something that's cropped up these last few years the way I look at it. It is true that this town has become what you might call a bedroom community for the town of Amherst and every time that Amherst moves, Pelham is just a tail that wags on it. That part of it is bad. I can see, I can understand that people resent that. You see, the trouble is all these school teachers, professors, doctors, lawyers, and what have you, they come out here. That's fine, but they want too much. They have good income, and they expect everybody else is the same which is not true. Now, for instance, my retirement pay, base pay, is just under \$4,000. I can't compete with those people where usually there's two of them working. Nine times out of ten, they've got two incomes. So, you see, that's why the old-timers resent all these newcomers.

BJ: People are afraid they can't keep their places because of the taxes.

- PK:** Yes, that's one thing. I've hollered about the taxes for along time. Now, for instance, to show you what taxes are—the increase. I got a little old barn down here. That barn is assessed over two and a half times what I paid for the place. (Would it be all right to ask how much you did pay when you got it?) \$2,600. (For how many acres?) 65, at that time.
- BJ:** I like to hear those stories because I think what lucky people. But, as you say, you really had to work for it.
- PK:** Yes, not as lucky as you think. It represents a long, hard time. You can't raise a family—you want to remember in those days, for instance, I only earned \$40 a month.
- BJ:** That's what you have to remember. So then it isn't so amazing.
- PK:** Viewed from that way. What makes it hard, every time they revalue, it goes all out of proportion. For instance, these newcomers come and they build a house say, \$50 or \$60,000. They use that as the yardstick to assess our place which is not quite fair, but that's what they do.
- BJ:** When you were first living here, did you feel pretty self confident? Did you produce most of the things you needed or did you mostly buy things?
- PK:** Well, we got a good share we provided ourselves. We kept chickens. We often time raised a pig or beef critter. We kept milk cows. At one time, we had the only milk cow in town.
- BJ:** You had a big garden, did you?
- PK:** Oh yes.
- BJ:** And your wife canned most of the foods?
- PK:** Oh yes. She canned food a long time ago.
- BJ:** I think that's a big difference that you don't have to know how to do as many things. You have to know how to do more things. You would probably repair more things around here.
- PK:** Oh yes. You spoke about Sally Ward. Now, her father, I knew him quite well. He was the only registered Democrat in town.
- BJ:** Oh, this used to be *that* Republican. All those Yankees!

- PK:** He told me that he got his start by picking blueberries and selling blueberries in Holyoke. That's where he got his start. Then he went in the lumber business and wood business with this Mr. Cadwell. They would buy a place like this one, for instance, that had some timber growth on it and cut off the growth and then sell the place. They made out okay.
- BJ:** So, in a way, part of this clearing of land was not to make the fields, it was to get the lumber. Is that why it was more cut down?
- PK:** Yes, years ago. Of course, there was both wood and lumbering, you know. It all depended on what the growth was on the land.
- BJ:** They would either use it for lumber or for burning. What was most of the wood around here used for?
- PK:** Well, at one time there was a lot of chestnuts. That was all gone with the chestnut disease, you know.
- BJ:** It was also used for building and making furniture? (Oh yes, yes.) Do you remember if there were a lot of chestnuts around here when you were here or is that before you were here?
- PK:** The chestnuts were gone. There was a lot of dead trees when I first came here. All kind of dead trees. Most of those have either been cut off or just simply wasted away. Of course, chestnut takes a long time to rot.
- BJ:** Were you very involved with the whole issue when they built Quabbin? Is it something you got involved in talking about, doing anything about it?
- PK:** Well, no, not personally. I wasn't involved. But when they built Quabbin, there were quite a few people came over here and bought places. (Like Bea Smith's family?) Oh yes. Doubledays, Hamiltons, and various others I can't think of. Quite a few people.
- BJ:** Was there much talk about it? I mean, was it a big issue that you'd talk about if you went down to the store?
- PK:** There was more talk, you see, where people were being put out. Not too much talk here, no.
- BJ:** There wasn't any attempt to do anything about it?
- PK:** No, not as far as I know.
- BJ:** Is that your dog?

PK: That's not my dog. I haven't got any dog. The dogs all belong to somebody else.

BJ: Did you used to have a dog?

PK: Oh yes, we used to have a collie dog.

BJ: Somehow that poodle doesn't look like your type of dog! I was also surprised with Quabbin because it seemed like people didn't talk about it as much as you'd have thought they would have. Now it seems that when you look back on it. You'd think there would have been a big fight or something. But there just didn't seem to be one. It just seems as though it wore people out by the way it took so long to do it. I thought maybe there was a big political discussion or something like that. You don't remember anything like that?

PK: Well, of course, there was always something going on, but as I said, we didn't hear too much about it because they only took a little slice off the town of Pelham. Well, it was quite a slice. Of course, Prescott was originally part of Pelham.

BJ: Now you've been here 65 years. Do you feel like you are a native of Pelham now or do you feel like you really had to be born here to be a native of Pelham?

PK: Well, let's put it this way. We've been here long enough to be part of the town regardless of what happens. I don't know just what to say on that.

BJ: Around here you have to live here 200 years or something. To me, you would be somebody who raised a family here and it just seems that you would be considered a native of the town, but at first you said something about, well, you didn't grow up here. Maybe it didn't count as much or something. But, do you feel like this is your home town if somebody asked you.

PK: Oh yes.

BJ: You wouldn't say Amherst just because you grew up there?

PK: We spent a lifetime here. We haven't accomplished any great things, as I would say. We have a cemetery lot up in the Valley all waiting. I think you'd have to book us pretty near native.

BJ: I want to ask you something about what you just said, that you hadn't accomplished much.

PK: That's very true.

BJ: What would you have considered a big accomplishment, something that you wanted to do that you didn't get done or what?

- PK:** Well, let's put that this way. Very few of us ever get done what we'd like to get done, do we? That's the way I look at that.
- BJ:** Did you have something in mind when you were 20 that you thought you would do that you didn't do?
- PK:** Well, I guess I would have to say that we were wholly influenced by circumstances. I don't know any other way to put it.
- BJ:** So that you really didn't have something that you had hoped to do, you just thought you'd see how it went year by year?
- PK:** From day to day.
- BJ:** Do you think it's different now?
- PK:** You mean about people?
- BJ:** Yes, about people starting out at 20 it seems often that they have something that they think they will do because maybe they don't have to worry so much about day to day living. Is that true?
- PK:** Well, I think so. Certainly people have a chance now that we didn't have.
- BJ:** You didn't ever expect that you would farther away or do something completely different. You expected that you would be around here somewhere.
- PK:** Yes, that's the way I looked at it. Some people think differently.
- BJ:** You say you haven't accomplished a lot. I'm interested in that whole idea. When, as you say, get towards the end of your life and you look back, do you feel sort of satisfied with how you've lived?
- PK:** Well, satisfied in this way. I got married, raised a family. The family has grown up and they just became like everybody else. They're no burden to somebody else nor did they accomplish any great thing. They're just what you might say is the runoff the human race. We didn't hurt anybody nor did we do any great things.
- BJ:** You mention not being a burden to somebody else. Do you think that's a different idea than people would have now?
- PK:** I think now—I don't know about this welfare stuff. That's quite a question. I think people in my day were much more inclined to take care of themselves than to look to the government. I'm quite sure they did. Now you have to have

something they call unemployed and they got all this aid for dependent children and all that stuff. We never heard of it.

BJ: What happened to people who couldn't make it?

PK: Well, they had a town farm. Not in Pelham, but in a great many places they had a town farm. In Pelham, as I understood it, they boarded them out.

BJ: Everybody talks about how families used to stay together, but my impression is that that was not always true. People did get, as you say, boarded out and this Mr. Harris you mentioned, he's the one who hung himself, is that right?

PK: Yes.

BJ: Miss Kimball here in Pelham used to the old age assistance, and I asked her about what it was like for old people before that. She said that there would be people who were boarded out or having to find a place if they couldn't stay with their families. Do you remember much about that with people you knew?

PK: Well, I can't help you out much on that. That stuff was kept kind of quiet, I suppose for two reasons. They didn't want to embarrass the poor people that had to go through it. I don't think there were many cases. I don't think so.

BJ: And I know there were many children who were state wards in town. What happened? Do you know of any children in Pelham or families where there just wasn't enough money? Do you know how they got help?

PK: No, I can't answer that question. I should tell you I never got involved in town meeting or town affairs at all. One of the reasons was that I was working all the time in order to make a living. That's one of them. Another was they used to have the meetings on top of Pelham Hill. That's four miles away, and I had no way of getting up there.

BJ: How did you get into town? To Amherst, I mean?

PK: Originally there was a trolley. After that, I used a horse and buggy. And eventually, I got a car.

BJ: How soon did you get a car?

PK: Well, I'll tell you. I wouldn't a never had a car, except one of my brothers died, and my father gave me his car.

BJ: Do you remember what year that was?

- PK:** The car was a 1929. (So you didn't have one for along time?) Oh no, that was the first car.
- BJ:** About when were cars starting to be used in Pelham?
- PK:** A few people had cars. The first two cars I remember in the town of Pelham, one was a man by the name of Hawley who worked in the box shop up town, and, of course, Bartlett had a car. That's the only two I remember early.
- BJ:** How early would that have been?
- PK:** In the early twenties.
- BJ:** You mentioned Mr. Bartlett, and others have too, as being sort of the wealthy man in town having a chauffeur and whatever. How was he considered? After all, he was the employer of a lot of people. What did people think of him, not him so much as there being one person who was the richest man in town. Was that a problem?
- PK:** Oh no, not in those days, I don't think. He got his start, as I understood it, from his wife's folks, and of course began to make fish poles. Then he went on from there. I don't know what you want me to say.
- BJ:** I don't have anything I want. I was just kind of curious when I began to realize that there was this one man who owned the only industry in town, and I just heard different things and I wondered how it was with somebody who was sort of on a different level than the people who worked for him. It doesn't sound as if it was an issue.
- PK:** I don't think so. Not in those days. Of course, somebody like him always had somebody who didn't like him. I tell you an incident that I remember. You have that dam there that furnished the power to run the mill. He was having it repaired at one time. So he hired this stone mason. He was repairing the dam, and Bartlett came out. They were mixing cement, and he said would it be all right if they mixed it one to twenty.. And the mason looked at him and says, "Why don'[t you put it all in sand?" and threw down his trowel and never worked for him again for twenty years.
- BJ:** So he was called what you would call a sort of economical type of fellow?
- PK:** Independent. In other words, he didn't want his mortar cut below the standards.
- BJ:** Okay, I see. I thought you meant the other way. He wanted to cut a little bit more or something so that it would cost less. (That's what Bartlett wanted. That's not what the mason wanted.) Somebody else mentioned that Mr. Bartlett watched the money because that if he had been alive they never would have gotten that hard

- top road—Amherst-Pelham Road. He wasn't for spending more money on the town or something like that. (I don't know where that came from.) Well, I just got the idea that he was somebody who watched the money. You mentioned not going to town meeting with the difficulty of being busy, but it seems like there might be something else—that you just didn't care to get involved with that kind of thing?
- PK:** Well, yes, that might have been it too. As I look back, I'm somewhat sorry that I didn't.
- BJ:** Why?
- PK:** Well, because I think it's every man's duty to take an interest in the town. I had an interest, but I let somebody else do it.
- BJ:** You would not do it that way again. I bet you are a Republican to. You sound sort of like it. But it's hard in Massachusetts any more.
- PK:** That's true. I remember when this Charlie Ward, that's Mrs. Shepard's father, was the only registered Democrat in the town. One of my sons remembers when there were only two registered Democrats. Now you can take the list and the Independents lead, then the Democrats, and there are only a few Republicans left. That ties in, doesn't it, with what you spoke about all these newcomers coming into town and taking over.
- BJ:** Well, I think the whole state of Massachusetts has changed so much in the party system. You almost have to be in a Democratic primary in order to vote. There are not that many people running as Republicans. One impression that I get is that there weren't too many other ethnic groups in Pelham except Yankees because they mention one Polish person and very few other kinds of people. Now, is that the way you remember it when you came to town?
- PK:** There were very few outsiders when I first came here. The rest of them were what you might call natives.
- BJ:** People talk about English coming over to work at the Fish Rod factory. Maybe Scottish or something?
- PK:** Well, that was true. You'd bring one in and then promptly they'd bring others the same way.
- BJ:** Why do you think a lot of people did come here, but didn't come up to Pelham?
- PK:** In the first place, there was no industry, no jobs. For another thing, this is not farming country. It's just a nice place to live.

BJ: Most of the people up here were then working out some place?

PK: That's right.

BJ: It was farming country back 100 years before that?

PK: Yes. As I remember correctly, the town reached its peak of growth in about 1840. About 1200 or so inhabitants.

BJ: Yes, I would say. It's been awhile since I've seen that list, but I would say.

PK: And now, it's been slowly building up. It's just such a nice place to live, that's all.

BJ: I want to ask you something kind of different. Do you feel that you have had or know any special kinds of things or special talents that young men wouldn't have today because they wouldn't have had experience with it? I'm thinking of things like doing things outdoors or anything like that. Does anything come to mind that you can do really well?

PK: I wouldn't say so.

BJ: You know, some people are expert wood choppers or things like that. When you were at U Mass as head of the agricultural program, what kinds of things were you responsible for?

PK: I was not head of the agricultural program. I was head foreman. There is a difference. I was responsible for seeing that the work got done. I worked under five different superintendents in a little over 30 years. They mapped out programs, and it was my business to see that it was done.

BJ: You worked a pretty long day down there?

PK: That's right. I got there in the morning before everybody else and I had to stay in the evening to see that everything was shut up.

BJ: So that didn't leave you a lot of time to do other things. (That's true.) that was pretty much your life. You'd come home and eat and read. Are those your books?

PK: They're library books.

BJ: Well, I mean, are you reading them? You look like a pretty big reader. Have you always been?

PK: Yes, but I picked it up since I retired. I used to read before, but during the years I worked, I just didn't have time to read.

BJ: Did you do any kinds of entertainment with the family?

PK: Not much. We didn't entertain much.

BJ: Just among yourselves.

PK: We just didn't have the money.

BJ: You worked. I get the impression you worked and the kids worked too. What kinds of things did you do for fun with your family?

PK: I can't recall anything in particular.

BJ: Did they go sliding around here?

PK: Yes, they slid, of course. In those days everybody was so busy they just didn't have much time for what you'd call pleasure. They could go to the movies once a week in Amherst.

BJ: Did you go, or just the kids?

PK: The kids mostly. I didn't go much.

BJ: It sounds like you pretty much worked and didn't even do that much reading until you retired. It seems you always had something to do around the house.

PK: Well, that's true. What reading I did in those days I had farm papers that I subscribed to. For 50 years I read the *Saturday Evening Post*.

BJ: Did you have men friends in town or were you pretty much on your own?

PK: We were pretty much on our own. We didn't socialize much.

BJ: Where would you go for groceries and things, Amherst?

PK: In the older days, the grocery man came here.

BJ: How was that?

PK: Twice a week.

BJ: From where?

PK: From Amherst.

BJ: Was that typical to do? Go up to houses?

PK: Oh yes, in the early days.

BJ: they would have everything and you would pick out what you wanted. (That's right.) And you would buy mostly what, like flour?

PK: Flour, some meats, canned salmon. I couldn't tell you too much more.

BJ: You had your own eggs and you made your own butter and milk, and di you buy beef then?

PK: Sometimes. Sometimes we had our own beef. Not always.

BJ: You mentioned canned salmon—was that a favorite of yours?

PK: Yes, in those days. Because it was cheap.

BJ: Now look at it. You buy a little can of salmon now, it's about \$2.00. I like it too, but it's gotten so expensive. Did you get fruit very much?

PK: No. I don't think we had much fruit, except apples which were native.

BJ: Did you make cider? (Yes, I have made cider.) I've heard more about Pelham and their hard cider mills and the stills up non North Valley Road. That seems to have been a famous place for people having stills.

PK: Is that right? Now you're telling me something I never heard! I didn't know they had stills. The only thing I ever heard was somebody asked where they could get cider out here, and they used to say, "Every other house above Ed Shaw's."

BJ: I hear these stories, so I don't know. It sounds like there were some hard drinking people out here, I think.

PK: I don't know. I wonder if some of those things are just stories.

BJ: I know. You have to consider that. Stories build up over the years. And they get bigger and bigger. Each telling makes it a little bit bigger. You don't sound like a real story-teller type.

PK: Well, I haven't got nothing to tell.

BJ: I doubt that! Nothing funny every happened to you in Pelham? Funny or unusual or peculiar? You're grinning like you are thinking about something. Somebody else?

PK: Well, yes, somebody else.

BJ: You can't tell it, I suppose.

PK: Well, yes, I can tell it, but I wouldn't call it funny—I'd call it tragic.

BJ: This incident about Mr. Shaw down here happened before you were here, right? Is that what you were thinking of?

PK: How'd you guess?

BJ: Because that's one that comes up a lot. It just seems that everybody has their own versions, depending on how old they were. And most of the people who've told me either saw him go by or either came down to the place right afterwards and have all the details. But that was in 1912?

PK: Yes, 1912.

BJ: And you came when? 1915?

PK: Yes.

BJ: But you still had heard about that after you were here. So that must have been something that was still talked about. He lived down there on South Valley Road?

PK: He lived right here. This is the place.
[Mr. Keyes' daughter interjects: "We still have the stump where he blew himself up"!]

BJ: The famous stump! I heard about that. I got the details from three different people. They all know exactly where they were when it happened and what they were doing. Mr. Burrows was 18 and one of the others was only 8. The story depends on how old they were. So this is the place. Is that how you bought it?

PK: You see, when the Shaw's estate was settled, Professor Morse bought it.

BJ: I kind of feel like a detective trying to put these things together. But I don't know that much. I found a lot of people who lived here a long time don't know that story. I was telling them about it.

- PK:** Well, it's died down, of course. As a matter of fact, I never heard it mentioned much all the time I've been here. But perhaps I didn't come in contact with the right people.
- BJ:** Well, you didn't come around with a tape recorder either trying to find out about the past. That's one way to find out about it.
- PK:** I used to have contact with some of the old-timers, particularly a number of the Thorntons and Morgans who are descendants of the early settlers so I got quite a lot of the early history passed on down.
- BJ:** I used to talk to Reggie Thornton when he was in the nursing home. He told me some of the people I could talk to up here and things like that.
- PK:** Of course, he's a native. He combines both families—the Morgans on his mother's side and the Thorntons on his father's.
- BJ:** I talked to Ethel Cushman who was a Thornton.
- PK:** I don't know about her.
- BJ:** She lives right next to that old Morgan place., but they don't seem that connected to the Thorntons. She also was related to the Pages. Okay. Now, you weren't in World War I at all.
- PK:** I was registered. But I had two children at that time.
- BJ:** Do you remember any particular—what you would call—characters in Pelham?
- PK:** I remember Ed Shaw, brother to George. He lived over on the foot of Thornton Hill. He was, you might say, different.
- BJ:** How different?
- PK:** He used to come down and visit me sometimes. He lived by himself. He lived alone. I swear I don't know how he made a living. One thing, he used to cut bean poles., sell them for a cent. Every spring he'd go someplace, and he'd have to kill so many black snakes. Every spring. I suppose they're a little different than the rest of us. That's hard to put into words. He just didn't mix with other people. He didn't want people to step on his toes and he didn't want to bother anybody, that's all.
- BJ:** Why did he shoot those snakes each spring?
- PK:** Just a quirk he had.

- BJ:** They were old Pelham residents, that family?
- PK:** Yes, they'd been here a great many years. I don't think they were born here, but they grew up here.
- BJ:** Well, it's about your lunch time, and we're about done here. I'll stop for now unless there's something you'd like to bring up. I just sort of ask you all kinds of questions. I may not even hit on anything that was interesting to you. It's interesting to me—all of it—but if there's something else that you wanted to mention, you could.
- PK:** Well, I don't see as if there's anything. I hope you got what you were looking for.
- BJ:** Well, like I told you, I'm not really looking for something specific. I have general things, and each person, because he's an individual, has different things that he likes to talk about—both about himself and about the town.
- PK:** Well, it's a nice town to live in, but if it keeps going where it is, it's going to be priced right out of the market. None of us can stay.
- BJ:** One of the things you said about it becoming a bedroom community, I think that's one of the things I'm trying to help it *not* be by taping people who have lived here a long time, and having some of the new people get a better sense of the town. I want to make them feel that they know something about it rather, than like you say, just having it be a nice place to live. I've used some of these tapes at school. It's very exciting for some of the younger kids who are reading this because they don't know about this. Their grandparents aren't here to hear it from. It's just like my grandparents are back in Iowa. So these kids, like my daughter, wouldn't hear about these old things in Pelham. Like when I grew up in a town where my parents lived, I'd hear about those things.

INFORMATION SHEET

Evelyn Kimball

Born: July 30, 1901

Place of Birth: Belchertown, MA

Mother's Name: Grace Collis Kimball

Father's Name: Austin Kimball

Unmarried

Date of Interview: March, 1979

BJ = Barbara Jenkins, Interviewer

EK = Evelyn Kimball

Original transcription by Wendy Larson and Barbara Jenkins

BJ:lived here since 1918. Were you born in Pelham, then?

EK: No, I was born in Belchertown, about a mile over the town line in North Belchertown, up off of 202.

BJ: You said your great grandfather came here to build a church. Was that the way I remember?

EK: No, let's see. My mother's people, my mother was born in Pelham and her mother was born in Pelham, and her father, my great grandfather, came up here to burn charcoal, because where he was living in Monson, between Monson and Wilbraham, the wood supply was getting pretty low—gone—to make charcoal with. So he came up here because there were a lot more woods up here to make charcoal. That was around 1830s or 40s, somewhere in there, he came into Pelham to do that. That was his way of earning money, was burning charcoal. He burned charcoal differently than any of the—no, not any of the current people, but most of the current people burn it in a kiln, and they stack the wood inside this oval, beehive shaped sort of a thing and like they have up in Leverett. They'd stack the wood inside of there and start up a fire inside there, in the wood and then they close up part of it and control the draft so it burns slowly enough so it makes charcoal instead of all being consumed. And this method, this was also used by those people in Leverett, because I used to visit an old man, Mr. Glazier, Gene Glazier in Leverett, and he had done the same way my great-grandfather did. You dig a pit out in the woods where your wood is, about—I've seen the pits my great-grandfather had that had grown in—I would think that they probably were originally maybe three or four feet deep. Just a big, circular pit. They dig up a place and then they pile the wood in there and pile it up above the ground, and cover it back over with the sod that they took off, and then they burn in that. And they cut the wood right there, stick it in, burn it, and my great-grandfather had a wagon with high sides on it that he could carry charcoal in. And they called it a van. That's what it was called. I think sometimes he had four horses that pulled it because he had so much in it. And he sold charcoal to the Armory at Springfield and to the brass works at Haydenville. Those were his two main outlets for it.

BJ: So the charcoal was used mostly then in like business, industry.

EK: Industry. But that was his way he earned money. None of the family after him did this, but he did this. My mother remembered him going off and, when you did this, you stayed right with your fire all the time until it was burned. And this old Mr. Glazier told me that when you were out there burning like that, you sometimes put up a little rough shed like, two sides with a light sort of a thing to break the wind and put in boughs to sleep on in there sort of, or you got under a real heavy evergreen tree and made your little nest, and you stayed right there with it, and you used a sharp pronged instrument to poke into it if it wasn't burning fast enough, or if it was burning too fast, you added some more sod over where you had opened it a little. And you had to keep close watch, even if you

burned in a kiln. You had to keep close watch, because if the wind changes a little, there's too much air, or too little air. And they'd burn them up every now and then, even in the kilns. They would burn up the whole fill that they put in would burn up into nothing but ashes instead of coming out charcoal.

BJ: Your grandfather did this in Belchertown?

EK: In Pelham. He came to Pelham. He always lived in Pelham after he came up this way. My great-grandfather, this is. On my mother's side. He came up here and that was what he did.

BJ: And where was it that he was doing that?

EK: It was—the first house he lived in was about a half mile east of the Shays Highway and just south of Knight's Corner. I've never even been down to where that house was. I know where you go down to it, but as you go toward Belchertown now, there's a beaver dam in there and there's a lot of swampy land on the left hand side just below Knight's Corner toward Belchertown, and his place would have been back in that swampy area. That's where he lived. But then, he also, at the same time, owned a house together with his wife's uncle, or his wife's brother—I don't know which it was—and someone named Butler, and that was on the road that goes down to Gate 8. And after a time, he moved back into that house and lived in that house. And he lived there all the rest of his life. And he was a very strong church man. His family had been Baptist. Back of him, his mother was apparently a very strong church people. They were Baptists, and I believe that was the—he was a great one, according to my mother. He would sit and argue all night with a fellow on whether there was for ordination or not, things like this. He was a great bible study man, something of this sort. He was called "The Deacon" in the neighborhood, and sometimes rather derisively, I think, from some of the neighbors. But his religion, he lived his religion. Very much. There was a little church down in that corner which is gone now because of the Quabbin. They bought the church and disbanded it the time of the... It was right there at the corner of the town of Pelham. Enfield was back of the church and Belchertown was about a quarter of a mile up the hill, so it really served three towns over in there, three separate towns. Originally it was a Baptist Church and then there were people moving in weren't Baptists, and they finally became a Congregational Church to get support from somebody that would take in allsorts of different denominations. But somewhere along in the line in there, this great-grandfather of mine—they had a young minister in there, which they quite often did, somebody from Amherst College who wanted to go into the ministry, came out and preached for them—they had a young minister come up, and he ordered some materials to rebuild part of the building. They had had a fire once or twice, and he ordered this material and they had no money to pay for it. And he just ordered it because he wanted to get the work done. And my great-grandfather was very upset at this, that the church was getting a bill they couldn't pay for, and he mortgaged his own farm to pay the bill because he wouldn't have

the church have the name of not paying their bills. And he never was able to pay the mortgage off. Later on, the church all burned down, and they rebuilt the church at that time. That's probably soon after he came up here, because I think that church was built sometime in the 1830s or 40s too. And that was the one that my grandfather came up here from South Belchertown where his folks lived. He came up, they lived in the town of Bondsville, which was part of Belchertown and he came up here to work as a carpenter to build that church up.

BJ: Now that's on the other side of the family? Another grandfather?

EK: That's my—another grandfather, and he married the deacon's daughter, Deacon Firman. He married Deacon Firman's daughter, Stella, and he stayed on and farmed the farm where this family lived over on the road to Gate 8, and Stella died of consumption fairly shortly, not too long afterward. But he stayed on there, and he married another daughter, who was actually older than the one he married first. He married my grandmother, Dorcas, and had three daughters. And my mother was one of the three daughters. And that's the other side of the family and they're living in Pelham. I was born in my father's family, where they lived. (Which wasn't too far away?) No, my father's grandfather lived right on Daniel Shays Highway. It goes right through where his barn was south of Knight's Corner. And that was his great-grandfather Kimball lived there. And his mother's people who were Shaws, and they lived in a house on a road called Kimball Road now. That's the first road off Shay's Highway going south toward....

BJ: Did you say Shores? (Shaw.) Oh, because yesterday Mr. Burrows was talking about a Shores.

EK: There was a Shores over in Pelham Hollow. They burned charcoal in a kiln. This was Shaw, and the Shaw family had lived on that piece of land from somewhere around 1780. And that was the place where I was born. And my father had been born there and his mother had been born there in the same house. The house is still there. And after that, there was one—my great-grandfather built the house when he was married, and back of that there were three generations of Shaws that lived in other houses on that same piece of property. So that was Shaw. On the Kimball side, my grandfather Kimball had been born over here, just beyond where Mr. Burrows lives on Gulf Road. He'd been born up there, lived up there, house up there, first old one on the right, and it was heated by fireplaces only, and he could see no reason when he got to be an old man, why anybody'd put a fireplace in a house, because he had lived in a house where that was all they had, and you were too hot on one side and too cold on the other. And he couldn't see any reason why you'd put a fireplace in a house—he thought it was pretty stupid arrangement. And they were beginning to put them in before he died.

BJ: So you lived over there for how many years?

EK: I lived over there in North Belchertown—oh it's a beautiful spot—if you ever want to see a beautiful—well, it isn't as beautiful as it used to be, because the trees are growing upon the hillside below it. But you go straight up the—you go down to the brook there and cross the brook but very short distance off of 202. It's just three or four car lengths, you can get down to the bridge and then you start climbing, you'll climb right up, much higher than the Shays Highway and look right down over.

BJ: As you're going toward Belchertown, would it be on the left?

EK: Left side. There's an old saw mill down on the left over the hill.

BJ: But now, the sawmill's still working?

EK: Well, there's a mill in there. The Conkeys have mills in there and sell wood and lumber, but there's just beyond. They have one powered by electricity, but the old mill was powered by the Jabish Brook.

BJ: Is your house visible from the road?

EK: The barn used to be visible. I guess it's all visible probably if you look. It's the second place up the hill. There was one farm first and then there was this other. But you look—from that farm you look down into Chicopee, Springfield. You look right directly at Mt. Tom, the ski area. You look right directly at that ski area. The Holyoke Range stand up one hill behind the other instead of flat like we see them. You looked right at the end of that—you see this sort of one hill behind the other lined. It's a beautiful view up there.

BJ: I'm surprised it's that high. You know, I think of it not being that high.

EK: Well, it's not awfully high, but you're upon the hill and beyond that you keep going up to the top of the hill and you're probably up about as high as the top of Pelham Hill when you get upon to the top of the hill. But that's all in the water company land now. (But somebody lives in the house?) Yes, somebody lives in the house—somebody named white lives in the house now. The man died fairly recently but I think they still live there.

BJ: And how long did you live there?

EK: I lived there until I was eight years old, eight or nine. (So you went to school there?) Well, that was the problem. I had been sickly as a child. I had problems as a child with my ears and my breathing apparatus, and everything else, which is why I have some problems with breathing the present day—same thing. And when I was old enough to go to school, we lived in Belchertown, we had to go to Belchertown school. There had been a school up on the east hill above our house and my father and his brothers had gone to that school, it had been closed for

quite a while. There was a school over on what was called the West Hill Schhol, between Knight's Corner and West Pelham on that road that comes down from Knight's Corner and comes down by Mr. Burrow's house. There was a West School over on that road, because that's in Belchertown, part of that road. But that was not in use at the time I was ready for school. And the nearest school for us to go was the Federal Street School which is down on Route 9 in Belchertown. And there was one other family that lived up in there at that time that had children. They lived up over the top of the hill and down on the road called Junket Hill, which is currently being built up from the other end in Belchertown. This woman drove us to school with a horse and buggy. She had three kids in school and me. No, her youngest one didn't go when I started because she was younger than I and she didn't go yet. She just rode along for the nice ride. I don't know how far it was—must have been four and a half, five miles, and the horse was an old, slow farm horse. And we got up and started even in September, set out at daybreak, and we were home late afternoon, behind the plodding horse. I went to weeks and I began to have ear trouble, and I stayed out. And the next year I went to..... my folks must have paid my tuition, I suppose. I don't know how else I got there, but I went to South School in Pelham because my aunt taught there. And so I went and lived with my aunt and my grandmother over at the house on the road to Gate 8 during the week, and walked to school from there. (And where was South School?) South School was up on the Shays Highway going toward Pelham Hill from Knight's Corner about where the power line crosses the highway. And we walked. It was probably about a mile and a quarter, mile and a half. I walked with my aunt. We walked, and I went up there that spring and I went through—the next fall I went there some before we moved down here. And I was to go to school down here. We had moved, and I was to go to school in the school here in Pelham which was where the present school is up here, and I was to begin after Christmas, that's when I was transferring. They had moved in some time in the late fall, November maybe. And, Christmas vacation, the school burned up, and this was the time that Danny Allen was the janitor. And Danny was a young kid in high school and he was helping his mother get a little income because she was a widow and he was doing the janitoring at the school. In some way, it was a wood furnace, and in some way he went up and filled it up and started it going, and it was going too hard and it burned down.

BJ: That was around 1918 then.

EK: Well, it must have been 1918, I think, that that burned. The building burned and they rebuilt the building just exactly like what had been, without any changed plans, they just rebuilt the building. But we had to go to school somewhere else for a year. (Where did you go then?) We went up to the West Pelham School which is now a house up on.....

- BJ:** Right. Okay, I'm finally beginning to get some of these schools straight. It seemed like there were a lot, and at different times in different places. Was there ever one in this direction?
- EK:** There was one somewhere down here. (Mr. Burrows mentioned that and I couldn't figure where that was.) Because Mr.,-- well, let me see if I can identify him for you—Mr. Frank Thornton who lived right at the top of what I call Thornton Hill in the little house on the right as you're going up the hill—he lived in that house. It had been his house. I don't know whether his parents lived there, but maybe they did and his nephew lived there with him, took care of him for as long as he lived. And Frank Thornton, as I remember him, was a little old man who didn't do much but work on the roads. When he would be working on the road out here, he'd most always stop and talk to us as kids. And he'd say, "I wonder what ever happened to the well out here. When I was in school, we used to come up here and get water out of the well, and it was the sweetest water I ever tasted." And it was somewhere right by my driveway. Now his statement was "We used to come up here and get water out of the well" so I think there must have been a school fairly close to this area. But I don't know where it was.
- BJ:** Mr. Burrows mentioned it just in passing, and I wanted to ask him about it, but he always says, "We'll get back to that." But he said it was before Harkness Road.
- EK:** Well, that's what I think from the way Frank used to talk about it. The nephew that lived with Frank would have been the age of my mother. And their children—I went to school with their children—they're about my age—most of them are dead now. Their grandchildren are living around here. I see them quite frequently and talk to them. So you see, he'd go back, he'd be like my great grand-father to current people around here and he was the one that told me this so it would go back quite a long while.
- BJ:** So when you came over here, you started school up there?
- EK:** When I went back to school, by that time, they had decided where to put us in school, and the little children—the first three grades, first four grades went to the Community Hall Building which was a school. And they went there because it was a shorter walk for them. And there was no amount of transportation for children at that time. They went there, and there was one girl lived up here on Harkness Road, Sylvia Saarinen, that had had paralysis and was lame. And she went there with them even though she was an older child because she couldn't walk as far as the rest of us. So that teacher taught her work for that year with the little people. The rest of us walked up to the level end of West Pelham, and went to school in that building there.
- BJ:** So it was just a year before you got back?

EK: It was a year before we got back in. We got back in the next fall. We started the next fall, I think, up there, but then we got back here.

BJ: About how many students were there all together in this school at that time?

EK: I don't know. At that time there were just the three schools in Pelham. There was what they called the City School. (That was this one?) That was the school they call now the Pelham Elementary. That's where the City School was—that's the building I went into when it was brand new. That's the one they knocked down to put up the Pelham Elementary. And then there was the East School which was straight over from Pelham Hill, straight down the hill about a mile. And there was the South School.

BJ: Was the South School the same as the Packardville School?

EK: No, there was another school where my grandmother went to school. It was down here on this road going down to Gate 8 close to where she lived, and she used to point it out. I could about tell you where it was on the road. I think that might have been the old Packardville School because Packardville was this little settlement that sat down in there in Pelham and Enfield and Belchertown. Used to call it Packardville.

BJ: So when you had the school up here were there two teachers?

EK: There were two teachers, uh huh. One had the first four grades and one had—when they had the fire here, then they put some kids into junior high school, which they hadn't done before. Before, they kept them and they went through the eight grades here. And then we went into Amherst for high school. And that year that we were in the two school buildings, there wasn't room for all of us in those two single buildings so they put the eighth grade in the junior high school that year. Because there were great problems the next year. Some of the eight graders didn't pass, and they had to come back out here which was kind of a comedown for them.

BJ: How did they get them into town?

EK: On the trolley. We had trolley cars come up here as far as around the corner to North Valley Road. They swung around there and went out to the top of where they went. That's how they got them to school. They put them on—they paid for their transportation. I don't remember—I think we were given tickets to give to the conductor. When I went in to high school, I went in on the trolley.

BJ: Did you complete high school?

EK: I completed high school.

BJ: I find that a lot of people your age never went on the high school so it must have been that your parents were very interested in your education or you were or something.

EK: My grandmother was. My grandmother was a Woman's Righter in long years back. My grandmother—and I think her mother before her [my great grandmother] was a mid-wife type of person that went around to all kinds of houses taking care of women when the babies were born and that sort of thing. They called her when somebody was sick to come and make poultices or fix up some sort of medicines or herbs for them so I think she was a little bit the same. She had thirteen children, but she wasn't stuck at home with the children/ She went out and worked around the neighborhood like this. And my grandmother, she was thirty-some when she was married. I was trying to think exactly, but I can't remember without subtracting it, and it's too hard for me to subtract it. But she was just over thirty when she was married and she had maintained her self by working for various ones in the community doing housework or doing things like this. And she was very interested in education. Her husband didn't think women should have any education. They had three daughters. He had the daughters help him. There was one of the daughters particularly that he had help him, that learned how to do the outside things. I guess all of them knew pretty well how to do outside things to help him. But when they got up through the eight grade, that was it! But he had cancer of the throat and he died after the oldest was out of the grade school, and had gone to Springfield and apprenticed as a seamstress to a cousin of my grandmother's—which my grandmother had arranged. This was all right for a daughter to go and learn how to be a seamstress. But she didn't do anything else for schooling. But my second aunt was out of school. My mother was still in eighth grade when her father died. And by the next fall, my grandmother had both these younger girls in secondary education! That's why I say she was from a back-hill farm—she'd gotten them out and into school. It was a difficult thing because there was no way to get them back and forth to school. My aunt went to Northfield to Northfield Seminary. I don't know how my grandmother ever got together enough money to get her there, but she did. She got together the money and sent her to Northfield Seminary. And my mother went to Amherst to high school. And in order to go, my grandmother found a job for her. She came into Amherst and lived with a family and did their housework and looked after their children. She went home usually on weekends—Sundays. That was the way she earned a place to stay in Amherst so she could go to high school.

BJ: And when you're talking about going home, you're talking about going way over...

EK: Back over across 202. And it was a long way home. Her mother made butter and cheeses and things like that, and sold them to people in Amherst that kept student boarding houses in those days. She supplied the boarding houses with butter and cheese and some vegetables—things she could make a cash crop out of. She

would come down with some of those things. That's why I say my grandmother was ahead of her time. She wanted to do things for her daughters, and her two daughters graduated—each daughter graduated in 1905, one from Northfield and one from Amherst High School. My mother went to Amherst High School and had very high grades. I saw her report card and she got all A's her last year in school. And she was very, very high. That year they didn't have a valedictorian. No valedictorian gave any speech. The person she was living with at the time got one of the school committee to say "No comment" at least when they put it to him that the reason they didn't have a valedictorian was that my mother would have been the valedictorian. (That would have been the first girl?) No, the first girl from out of Amherst. These Pelham kids weren't supposed to be bright. One of them would have been valedictorian—that would have been unthinkable! Even when I went to school, you weren't supposed to be so bright if you came in from Pelham or Leverett and then later Shutesbury. You weren't supposed to be quit so education minded.

BJ: It was just expected that you would go on. Just a matter of fact.

EK: Just a matter of fact, yes.

Side Two of tape

BJ: So you said your mother just expected you to go to college, and so you went to Middlebury. And, did you complete college there? (Yes.) What did you study?

EK: Math. Quite a lot of math and sciences. I'm more a realistic person than just a liberal education person. I never did like a lot of things in literature.

BJ: So when you got out of school then, what did you do?

EK: When I got out of school, I taught for a year. And I didn't like teaching at all. And then I floundered for three or four or five years. I helped my mother at home because she had a big load at home because she'd been a widow for a long time. She supported us—taking care of us, anyway, from the time I was twelve. My father died and there were the two of us to take care of. So I helped her here at home with things here. I got a degree from the University of Massachusetts in bacteriology—a Master's Degree. I never really used that. I went into social work after that.

BJ: I knew you did that, and when you started telling me about math and science and bacteriology—and then you went into social work. How did that happen?

EK: It happened because the federal government sent out a ----- money in the thirties. They decided to put money into social programs in the towns and the towns had

to have somebody to do the work. And so I got sort of a volunteer thing almost to start with. Doing some work here in Pelham, and after that I just kept on going. I was working with the Federal grants for old-age assistance to start with for older people. There had to be somebody to see that they were getting the right budgets and doing the sort of clerical work you need to draw up a payroll to pay people a Federal grant. And keep the accounts the Federal government wants you to keep.

BJ: And that was a new program?

EK: Yes, a new program, and the Selectmen in the town did it for awhile, but it was too big a job to try to do. It was asking them to do a big administrative job that they couldn't do and be part-time people.

BJ: I guess, in that case, you were dealing with your math skills. Was there not work for bacteriologists, that kind of thing?

EK: No, there wasn't a lot because, you see, I came out of college in the Depression. There wasn't a lot of workarounds anywhere in those years for this sort of thing. And I never was a very pushy person looking for such things. I never had the push my mother and grandmother had for doing things. I think I was more like my Grandmother Kimball who was sort of passive, but did the things she wanted. She didn't push into other things.

BJ: Probably at that time, a woman would have had to be pushy to be doing that.

EK: Yes, you have to push to get in and do things.

BJ: It still seems to be that way. So you did this work here in Pelham, and then....

EK: I worked here in Pelham doing work for them. At the time I went into it, my mother was one of the Selectmen. At that point, she had run for Selectman and was Selectman for several years. (Was that unusual to have a woman for Selectman?) Oh yes, very unusual to have a woman. But she had gone to the Caucus which they had like they have now, if you've ever gone to one. They wanted some people to run for offices so they nominated like they do now. Two or three or four names, and everybody they nominated for Selectman. All the men stood up and said, "I can't run. I want my name withdrawn." And so they'd put the name on the board and cross it off. Somebody nominated my mother and she said, "I made up my mind and I wasn't going to be like all those men and stand up there and say I couldn't do anything, so I kept quiet." And she got the position. And one of the male members of the Board never came to a Board Meeting after she was on. He wouldn't come and meet with a woman. And after three or four months, my mother insisted to the other male member that they had to have a three-man Board, and if he wasn't going to come to any of the meetings, they should ask him to resign. And so they did ask him to resign. He was pretty mad. I don't think he ever spoke to my mother again. His son lives in town, and

his son's a good friend as far as I'm concerned. But there was a time when— (Was this in the thirties?) Yes, late thirties. They appointed somebody else to fill this vacancy because you can do that. I think we could have appointed somebody else to fill the vacancy of treasurer this year! But they decided not to do it.

BJ: One thing I know when I was talking to Mr. Burrows, something came out about a man who had hung himself. They told me it was because he couldn't sell his property up on Arnold Road, I guess. They thought it was because he was so destitute that he hung himself. I didn't know whether that was accurate or not, but I thought how now older people don't have to be quite so destitute.

EK: That man didn't have to be destitute. He hung himself after there was Public Assistance. I think he was unable to adjust to being old and having somebody tell him what to do. He wasn't able to live by himself—he had no family. He wasn't able to live by himself and he lived with another family. He very much objected being told to come to breakfast and told to do this and told to do that. That sort of thing. The woman was nice to him. I know she was. She was a good woman. She took care of him as far as this goes. But I think he was just unable to adjust to the fact that he could live all right with somebody else. And the people he was living with, he felt above, I'm sure. He was upper crust, and they weren't. Therefore, it was hard to take. (So it doesn't have anything to do with the problem of money?) Not necessarily. He owned land up there. (I thought the way they spoke of it, he couldn't get rid of that land.) He wasn't able—he had enough up there to have bought himself most anything, but I think he couldn't get rid of it because he couldn't bear to part with it.

BJ: It's interesting because they thought he couldn't sell it, was destitute, and then a few years later that land sold for a lot of money.

EK: Of course it did. It's the land where all the places are up there now, all the houses up there. But I think he would have found it hard to sell to anybody by building lot.

BJ: As far as other older people, when you started on this program, did you find that it made a lot of difference for a lot of older people? Were they in really bad shape, some people, or how did you feel about that?

EK: I think many of them didn't any anything much to live on and they were glad to have this money. It was presented to them as a something that they had a right to have. It wasn't welfare—it was Old Age Assistance. They wouldn't have taken Welfare. But this was Old Age Assistance and they should have it. I think in the country towns, particularly, there was a —everybody when they turned 65, if they didn't have some sort of retirement, were encouraged to get on to Old Age Assistance because this was away of getting something for them to live on. I think there was a way of thinking in a lot of people's minds that this was a good thing to do.

BJ: Were there a lot of older people living by themselves in Pelham off in the hills at all or were they mostly with families?

EK: They were mostly by themselves, I would have said. There weren't many living with family or children of their own. Most of them were off by themselves or boarding with somebody like this man we were just speaking of that committed suicide. They were boarding with somebody else because of the fact that they were no longer able to maintain a home and take care of themselves. There were a few of them that had a home. If there were two of them, usually they could maintain a home, but if one of them died, then that would break up. An older person finds it very hard to maintain a house. To just do the physical things that have to be done to keep things going.

BJ: I want to go back to when you were younger. I noticed on the other tape when you were being interviewed, it seemed like you said you remembered the one time that you went into Amherst. There was some occasion or something, and I didn't know whether that was the only time as a child that you went in....

EK: This was before we lived here. When I was a child living over in North Belchertown. I remember the one time we went to Amherst with my father because he had some business over there, and I remember the one time going with him with a horse and buggy. It was an all day trip, and how very happy I was I could go. He bought my mother a pocket-book that day for a present, and brought it home to her. That was way back—I probably was telling that as one of the earliest things I could remember because I think this probably would have been when I was—I might have been five—I was really young.

BJ: Did you go into Belchertown ever?

EK: We went to Belchertown quite often because my father went Belchertown way. That was where he had been centered more. He had people who sold eggs and butter and things to people in Belchertown. He had a wood business, and he brought wood down to Belchertown so we went to Belchertown quite frequently. I would go with him when he was delivering things. I did a lot of this when I was a young kid.. I was with my father an awful lot, riding where he was going. I'd be out on the wood lot with him, and I'd be out delivering things with him. Or he'd take me to Belchertown. His sister worked in Belchertown, and he'd take me down and leave me with her. People where she worked they liked to have me come because I'd just sit down and converse with them like an old lady. And we would go to Belchertown to do our grocery shopping.

BJ: So, since your family was from that area over there, they were affected by the Quabbin, I would guess there were some stronger feelings about that being flooded and everything, or was that not so?

- EK:** Yes, there were strong feelings about it. I think the most harmful feeling about it was that anything was all right as long as you did it against the state. I think you develop a feeling like that when the state is uprooting you. And I think this is it—it's all right to cheat a little as long as you're only cheating the state. I think that's one of the most harmful things that people got out of it at that time. But there was this uncertainty of what was going to happen. You have to go back before my time to remember that they had this hanging over them.
- BJ:** Yes, I was always surprised by that too, when I realized how long this had been something that was a question.
- EK:** The legislature let it run until there was, I think, only a few months more they would have lost the right to take up that valley for water. It was a certain number of years—25 years or something like that they could have a right to come in and make a reservoir in there. And they got right up to the deadline, and then they started doing something. So it had hung over the area for a long time.
- BJ:** I guess that's one way, too, of getting people not to fight so much. If you just let it go slowly on and on....
- EK:** Well, you see, it disintegrated the towns. It didn't the towns where I lived in, but it did those valley towns. Nobody wanted to come in there and build up a good manufacturing business. The manufacturing and all those things went down, you see. They were kind of ghost towns even before they started actually putting in the reservoir. Because nobody wanted to invest money in there.
- BJ:** Was anybody in your family directly affected by it?
- EK:** My grandmother didn't live to be affected by it. Her two daughters, though, and the daughters had to sell the place where they'd always lived over there beyond Knight's Corner. They had to sell and relocate, because it had to be sold. They wanted to sell because if they'd left them, they would have been on the watershed. They would have been way off at the end of nowhere.
- BJ:** Did they have a choice? Could they have left their house there?
- EK:** Well, they left some, you see, because they left some up on Pelham Hill that partially drained that way. There was a big one on the corner across from the Town Hall and then there were two others that they left in there. On the south corner of that road, there was one right in the corner, and then one down over the hill a little bit that they left. They left four houses. (They did leave those. I thought they were gone.) They are now, but they weren't removed. They left people living there.
- BJ:** That Kingman tavern was one of the, (Yes.) So they didn't take that for the reservoir?

- EK:** They bought it, finally, but they didn't move people out of it.
- BJ:** So I guess they could have chosen to stay, but it would have been very inconvenient.
- EK:** Very inconvenient. You wouldn't have wanted to be way out a mile beyond the Shays Highway and the last house on the road type of thing.
- BJ:** I think so many times when Mr. Burrows will refer to that area as Pelham Center and now that's Pelham Edge! You know, it changes.....
- EK:** It is Pelham Center, as far as that goes.
- BJ:** Sure, but it changed the configuration of the town so much. You don't have anything on the other side, and I think that must have made the town more closely aligned with Amherst because the growth then was down this way. Do you think or not?
- EK:** No, I don't think it made it any more closely aligned to Amherst. I think it's got more closely aligned as it's grown down in this section, and many people are just out here as a bedroom. They don't have any particular interest in anything.
- BJ:** I know, I live on North Valley Road so that to go up to Pelham Center in the summer is no problem because I can cut through there, but in the winter time I don't go up even to the library very much because it means I have to come down here, go back up there, and come back. The town is hard to hold together because of the way the roads are. Now, were you aware of people, say, up North Valley Road and some of those father corners when you lived here or were they kind of off to themselves?
- EK:** No, I was aware of them. I was aware of the whole town probably more than most people because I had come from over in that eastern corner. And I knew that those areas were over there. The other kids I went to school with wouldn't have to know much about North Valley. They would have been with us because they went to school here. But the ones that went to East School and South School, they were separate, and there was a strong feeling for quite along while in Town Meeting among those that lived on the hill and the ones down here. The people down in West Pelham and the City were trying to get everything for themselves. They were a little bit like the professors of later day.
- BJ:** I know this is always referred to as the City School, so this was considered the City. Yet most of the buildings and things were upon top of the hill. How did this get the term City?
- EK:** Well, there was this place over here, the Boiler Trust Building over here. That's down by the pond. That building, you see, was a manufacturing building. There

weren't any other manufacturing places around. That was a very active, flourishing business in there—making fishing rods. You see, that was a very active, flourishing business, and what everybody in this part of town did. They worked at the fish rod factory. A lot of the people that lived here when I was a child had come here from England because they hired help from England at that point. When I was a child, they brought in a lot of people from England. A lot of them still live around here. Penns, that live just over the town line, his father came over here to work in the fish rod factory. His mother had died, and he stayed back in England. His father came over here and worked in the fish rod factory and married another woman that had come from England. Then they brought him over here. The son was in high school before he got over here. His wife's people had come over here—lived up where Betty Willson does now. They rented an apartment up there. When she was a little girl, they came over from Scotland to work in the mills. Quite a lot of people came in here from away to work in the mills, and that's why there was a little center because of that.

BJ: What about Orient Springs?

EK: Orient Springs was never open after I can remember. It was flourishing before the turn of the century when all these mineral places around were flourishing. People went out to the country to take the mineral water for a vacation and this sort of thing. And there had been those big hotels there, but they burned down long before I ever knew the place. Orient Springs was developed mainly when they were there because the springs were down back by the brook. And they built up little fountains down there where you could stop and get a drink. One would be sulfur and one would be iron and one would be something else you got out of that particular spring. They put paths down there.

BJ: I've been down there. It's beautiful.

EK: I don't know whether you can see where the springs were. They had them like little fountains, just coming up like little water fountains when I was a kid. But then, after that, it got to be a kind of a picnic ground like. And people would come out on the trolley and bring a picnic lunch and go up there and picnic. They would have fun and enjoy it in a kind of natural place. They had a little recreation place of some sort up in there, and I don't know who built it or why they had it, but the first school graduation that I remember was held in there. It was a big enough building to get everyone in. I think that was the year that the school had burned and there wasn't a school place to hold it. The schools never did have a big enough auditorium to hold a graduation when they had the eighth grade graduate. When we graduated, we graduated in what's the United Church now. They had the graduation in that church. At that time, the Town Hall up on top of the hill wasn't fixed up to hold any meetings in, just the meeting room upstairs. There was very little here for a space big enough. You had asked me how many kids went to school, and I hadn't answered you. I think there was probably about 50 went to this school up here. Divided into two rooms—maybe 30—over in the

South School they got up to as high as 40-45 at one time and they had all the grades.

BJ: Was the trolley built originally to go to this hotel?

EK: I don't know whether it was built out there for that. I think probably it was built—Gene Bartlett was one of the people that was an organizer of the trolley company, owned some of the stock. The trolleys came in, I think, mainly, to transport people around the area. In Amherst, they had a line that went up to Sunderland. If you went to Sunderland, you could walk across Sunderland Bridge to the South Deerfield side and there was a line you could take up there to go to Greenfield. They didn't cross the river, but you could walk over. There was a line that went to Northampton; there was a line that went to Holyoke. And there was this line that came out here. I think probably because Mr. Bartlett owned this fish rod factory that he was instrumental in having them come out here and keep this open so that his people that worked for him that didn't have transportation—and a lot of them didn't have transportation—could get into town and could do things. That's probably why they came out here and no further. I don't believe they were here at the time the hotels were here. I think the trolleys came in after the hotels had declined. But people used to come because they had discovered this was a way they could find a nice recreation place.

BJ: And the trolley stopped about when?

EK: Some time at the end of the 20s. They were getting where they were not running as many trips. There weren't as many people riding on them; there were more automobiles. When I went to high school, they were not crowded at all. Most of the time there was lots of room in them. My brother graduated from high school in 1930, and he went by bus to high school so the trolleys must have gone down enough so they weren't transporting the children. I don't know whether they had closed this line or not.

BJ: This was the end of the line?

EK: They turned at North Valley Road. That's why North Valley Road is so wide when you first go up. North Valley Road is quite a wide road if you ever thought about it—it'd quite a wide road beyond where Seitz lives—a little further. Then it narrows down again. That's where the trolley cars were, you see. They didn't turn around. They just went out there, and the pulled down the trolley thing that was run up onto the wire that gave them their energy to go. The conductor pulled it down and walked around the trolley and put it up the other way. And he walked around and got on the other end. You could run them from either end.

BJ: You used that a lot yourself going into town?

EK: We used it to go to school. We didn't go in town very often. But if we were going in for something, we go on that. People used it to go in to the movies in the evening and things of this sort. I came home once from Springfield with my father when I was little. We had gone somewhere and had come home as far as Springfield by train, and then we came home by trolley from there the rest of the way.

BJ: How many houses were there on Harkness Road besides yours?

EK: When we moved over here, there was the one where Thorpes live, the one where Peppards live, and the one where the Morses live across the street from the Thorpes—the high one—and the one where —it was the Hamilton place. I can't think of his name—the big yellow one. (Angus?) Yes, Angus. And the next one beyond the Peppards—the building was there, but it was not a house. It was a summer cottage. That was used by a school in Amherst for feeble-minded. They used that for a sort of recreation place. They used to bring them. They had some wealthy students who came here in Amherst for feeble minded. They were what we called retarded. They bused this place out here for a vacation spot for them. (It was a private school?) It was a private school, yes. On South Prospect Street in Amherst. And the next lower house, where the Yegians live, was one that Mr. Bartlett had built for one of the English couples that came over here. A Lawlly family lived there when I first remember. And then there was nothing beyond there until you got out to the farmhouse out there. It always looks like the road would go into the house. Out where South Valley comes into Harkness. That farmhouse was an old, old house when I moved here. There was nothing more until you got way out and turned the corner and went up onto Belchertown Road.

BJ: And that was all farmed between that old farmhouse and Belchertown Road?

EK: Mostly woods. There were fields the way they are now beyond the farmhouses, but then it was mostly woods all the way through there. And the road was very, very narrow. That little bridge, when you go down the hill beyond the farmhouse, that little bridge was so narrow you couldn't meet a car on it. And when I first came here, it was a dirt road all the way through, and you couldn't meet a car on it because my father was going somewhere with his brother and his brother being a little bit slower than we was did get here. My father started out to meet him, and the two of them met right by the bridge. They were both still a little bit angry with each other. They had a few words over which one would back up because they couldn't meet the way the bridge was. They had to back up. They finally decided that my father could back up to the farmhouse and turn around. There wasn't much place to turn around on the other side.

INFORMATION SHEET

Gladys Olds Reed

Born: June 20, 1899

Place of Birth: Ware, Massachusetts

Mother's Name: Lillian Marion Lazelle

Father's Name: Merton David Olds

Spouse's Name: Guy Haskins Reed, deceased

Date of Interview: March 7, 1980

BJ = Barbara Jenkins, Interviewer

GR = Gladys Olds Reed

Original transcript by Susan Cobbs and Barbara Jenkins

BJ: You were going to tell e how you happened to come to Pelham in the first place.

GR: I was teaching over in Prescott, and I met my husband-to-be, you might say, at a dance. We were married in August.

BJ: And he had a place in Pelham?

GR: No, we came over and lived with his parents for a few months. And then we moved to Amherst.

BJ: When was that about?

GR: It was August 18, 1919.

BJ: At the time you were teaching down in Prescott, was the issue of making Quabbin being talked about? Were you aware that they were going to flood that area?

GR: Not at that time. We hadn't heard anything about it at that time.

BJ: What was Prescott like when you were teaching down there?

GR: It was a small country town. There were two churches in it, the North Prescott one and the one we call South Prescott Hill. There were three schools. I taught in the school called Atkinson Hollow, but I boarded up in the other district, the North Prescott District.

BJ: You came from Ware. That's where you grew up. And you taught in Belchertown and you taught in Springfield after you were married. So Prescott was your first teaching job. What was it like to teach down there?

GR: I had supposedly gradfes one through seven, but I didn't have sixth grade. There was no one in that age group. There were only 16 children in the school.

BJ: Was it off by itself? You said it was in a hollow?

GR: No, it was right near the store. Down in Atkinson Hollow. There was a doctor down there. That was the center part of Prescott. The other part was down in Prescott Hill. There was a little store down there and a church.

BJ: Prescott Hill. Would that be the Prescott peninsula in Quabbin? (I don't know.) And when Mrs. Adriance talked about going down to Bobbin Hollow and then back up the other side, would that have been the other side of Prescott Hill?

GR: That would have gone into Prescott. Rattlesnake Gutter went over there. (Were there rattlesnakes over there?) Oh yes. They used to be over there.

BJ: So you taught in Prescott for how long? (Just one year.) You mentioned meeting your husband at a dance. I've heard a lot about the dances over there.

GR: This was a dance February 22. It was rather amusing. His sister-in-law—he was staying there, he was home on furlough—called up my landlady and asked if she supposed the teacher would go to the dance with him. So when I came home from school, I told her if he would come in and she'd introduce me to him, I would go to the dance with him. We started going with each other, and then we weren't married for a year and a half.

BJ: Because he went back into the service? This was the First World War. Was he stationed in Europe at all?

GR: Ho, he was already to go. He had everything all packed and was home on his furlough. Then the Armistice was signed. He had to go back, but he was discharged from Devens.

BJ: You said Prescott was a small town.

GR: It was a small town. There were three stores. There was one up in North Prescott and the Post Office was up there.

BJ: How did you feel when you found out that the place you started teaching was not going to be anymore, that it was going to be flooded?

GR: Well, it was rather sad, I think. To think about losing the towns, you know. People had to move out. Quite a few went to Granby, some went to Pelham, quite a few went east to East Brookfield, West Brookfield, and those places.

BJ: Do you remember much talk about it at the time?

GR: No, I only taught there one year. When I was home, we heard about them buying up about a mile above us and we wondered why they didn't come down by our farm, too. But it was for the cemetery, the Quabbin cemetery. We lived on that street. They bought down within three houses of us. My folks would talk about why they didn't come down as far as our house.

BJ: Did your family feel lucky they didn't have to move?

GR: I think so. (From my side of things, I always think that people didn't want to move, but sometimes I hear that people think they got good money and they were happy to well. Did you ever...?) Oh yes, they did. My husband's brother and wife over in Prescott did well selling their farm. They went to Granby. (So people like that might not have been upset as upset about it as we might think?) I think it upset the real elderly that had to move from their homes. Those that had

- lived there for years. His brother, you know, was right in the prime of life. It didn't upset them as much because they made a better move.
- BJ:** So then you came over to Pelham where your husband's parents already lived? How long had they been living here?
- GR:** I don't really know, but a few years. They had retired from the farm and bought this little place. (They were from Prescott?) Yes.
- BJ:** Their house is on Amherst-Pelham Road as you start up the hill. (It's where the Dorens live now.) It's not very far up from the school house. (Just about a mile.) It wasn't a farm then—it didn't have much acreage with it?
- GR:** It used to be a big farm, but the Boyden farm just above it had been taken off of that land, you see, and made a home for the son. That was the old Boyden place when Ed Boyden was married. (It's an old house?) Yes, ours was. I don't know how old it is. The doctor who lived there before Mr. Dore lived there checked back into the early 70s he told me. Then he lost track. (1870?) Yes. It was older than that, I think.
- BJ:** When you came to Pelham you came to teach where?
- GR:** I didn't teach right away. (So when you taught in Springfield and Belchertown that was later?) When I taught in Springfield, we had moved down there two years during World War II while my son was in the service.
- BJ:** I have to trace you. You moved to Pelham and lived there with your in-laws for just a year or so. Then you moved into Amherst, then you moved to Springfield during World War II. Did you live in Belchertown when you taught down there? (No, I lived in Pelham.) When did you go back to Pelham then?
- GR:** We were down in Springfield in '41 and '42 and then we came back to Pelham. The Superintendent of the Belchertown schools wanted me to come down there to teach so I did.
- BJ:** Did you already have children at that time?
- GR:** Oh, I had three. My boys were both in the service. My oldest wanted us to come down because he wanted his dad to take his job landscaping.
- BJ:** I'm getting confused. You're going to have to help me out because your children were little when they went to the Pelham school.
- GR:** You see, we were married in 1919 and we didn't go to Springfield until '41 and '42.

- BJ:** You said you only lived a year and a half up there with your in-laws, then you moved into Amherst.
- GR:** Then I didn't tell you what happened! (Okay, I think that was the part I didn't get.) You didn't ask me questions! My husband's father was taken ill, and we went out to stay with her because his mother was crippled with arthritis. He passed away so we moved out there, and then she went back to Prescott. She was lonesome. She wanted to go back to her early environment, you know. (Did she get moved out when they flooded the Quabbin area?) She had passed away. Then the brother sold and went to Granby. Then we were back in Pelham. My second oldest son was born after we came back to Pelham. The older one was born in Amherst. He was born in '21, Forrest. Warren was born in '23, and my daughter was born three years later. They were brought up in Pelham.
- BJ:** That picture of you with them on that double-ripper sled, were they young children then?
- GR:** Barbara was the youngest one of the three. Forrest was probably 12 or so. Warren was a couple of years later.
- BJ:** And you said you got that sled from your father?
- GR:** It was my father's. It had two sleds—one in front and one in back. It had a long, broad board between. No rails for your feet on ours—some had rails on the side. It had a bar across the front, and you put your feet on the bar and take a hold of the rope to steer it.
- BJ:** Was it a trusty thing to steer?
- GR:** No, it wasn't. That's why the boys didn't dare at the time. We used to steer it. I think I was steering it in the picture.
- BJ:** You said it went 40 miles an hour sometimes?
- GR:** It must have, it must have gone that fast. We'd get going so fast if you hit a little cobble in the snow, the sparks would fly!
- BJ:** Mrs. Reed, that was dangerous!
- GR:** It was, and this woman who was in the street down there—she was walking right in the path where we had to drive. I had to steer around her. I thought surely we'd be upset. She screamed and we screamed at her to please get out of the way. She told Dan Allen's folks how we tried to kill her!
- BJ:** You'd start out from where, then?

- GR:** Our dooryard, which is about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile down from the church. We used to get on there. One of the boys would give a good push. We'd go all the way down to Pickering's shop. It would be all of two miles.
- BJ:** Did you ever have any accidents?
- GR:** Never. (Did anybody that you knew of in town?) Not that I know of. I think we were the only ones around there that had one. (I got the impression because Mr. Burrows talked about one and Mrs. Adriance talked about one that they were more common.) They were older. (So, in a way, it was more of that period.) We were probably in on the end of the period when they used to have them because after we used to slide, I never knew of anyone from the Burrows or Adriances sliding on the traverse runner. (Traverse?) We called them traverse sometimes.
- BJ:** When you're talking about in the '20s doing that, there would have started to be cars out there and more activity, wouldn't there?
- GR:** No, it was still the horse and buggy days when we slid there. (Did you do this at night?) No, usually after school when the children came home. (What if a horse and buggy was ahead of you?) We sort of drove in the middle of the road. They'd hear us coming, because you know how children call. And they'd just get out of the road. We took a chance, of course. Our sled held ten people. (Did you take that many people down?) Oh yes. The neighbor's children. That picture was just of our own family.
- BJ:** I don't remember it that well. I just saw it in the book and thought I'd have to ask you about your wild and crazy times!
- GR:** It was dangerous, but my children weren't old enough to steer it, so I was the one.
- BJ:** What other kinds of things did you do? It sounded like you did a lot of things with your family.
- GR:** Oh, I skied with them. They pushed me off the terrace. Our house in up on a hill. In front of the house. Then I'd go down the road until I fell down! (How far was that?) Down by the barn. Then, I'd come back up and they'd give me another shove and I'd go down again.
- BJ:** Did you do cross country skiing?
- GR:** No, I just did there. I have done cross-country. I used to go swimming with them. We had a pool down in the Amethyst woods down there where the Orient Springs were. They had it dug out so they could even dive off the cliff. We used to go down there and take our lunch and swim and lie down and have a nap. My little girl was just a tot. Forrest would piggy-back her a ride home. (Did you cut through the woods?) Yes, every time we went down, I'd take these clippers and

clip the branches. We could go down from our own land, you see. Down through our pasture. We had a nice path down through there.

BJ: Who else would be swimming there?

GR: The children from the neighborhood—the Campbell boys, Teddy Boyden, and Allen’s boys up on Butterhill. The Harris children.

BJ: But now, is that the same place where the people used to come for the Springs?

GR: It was in the same brook, the same area. It wasn’t dammed. They just dammed it a little bit with stones. That’s the only place we had to swim at that time.

BJ: It sounds as if you did quite a few things together. Some summer things and some winter things you mentioned.

GR: I was a 4-H Leader almost from the time I came over there. 31 years. We used to go on hikes—“Quests of Spring” we used to call it. We’d take boxes and cans, and pick up everything that we could find offspring. I had girls and boys in some of them. I had sewing classes—those were all girls. In cooking classes, one time I had 18 and I had 9 girls and 9 boys. In the winter time we cooked outdoors on stones. We’d make a fire on top of the stone with little twigs and things, and when the stones got hot, we’d brush that off and put our baked potatoes on there and our hamburg on a piece of foil. Cook outdoors. Then we had a school lunch program. We taught them to pack a school lunch.

BJ: Let’s go back a little, to the school. I know you’re going to have more connections than that. Now, your children all started in Pelham School? (Yes.) There was how much difference between your oldest and youngest son? (Two years and three months, and then there were three years between my second son and my daughter.) So they were all pretty close together. What was the school like when your first child entered?

GR: It was a new schoolhouse because the school house had burned.

BJ: Okay, so it was after the schoolhouse had burned. That’s what I was driving at.

GR: Yes, we came there to live. My husband worked taking away the debris and getting ready for the carpenters to build the new school house. And then, of course, they demolished that and built the last one.

BJ: The school that was new then had what, two big rooms?

GR: Two little rooms. And one thing that we thought was interesting at the time, you know, the flies bother terribly in warm weather because they don’t roll up their windows, so Mrs. Ward and I ran a card party and raised enough money for

screens for that schoolhouse and the South School house and put the screen doors on it. And then, of course, they tore the schoolhouse down.

BJ: Was that after you started the PTA type things or was that just something that...

GR: Well, I imagine it was about that time. No, it would have been later, the PTA, yes, because it was when my oldest son was in Amherst to school.

BJ: Oh.

GR: The other two were still in Pelham. But I started that. You could look up the date.

BJ: Yes, I could actually. You said once before when I talked to you about the PTA, how did that get started? How did they decide they needed that?

GR: Well, I felt that, personally, we were just a drop in the bucket to go into Amherst to PTA. We had to go in to there. Our problems were not Amherst problems, or in other words, Amherst problems didn't deal with ours, you know. We were sort of lost in there. And so, ah, I talked with two or three—Sally Shepard was one of them and.. (Mary Robinson.) Mary Robinson. Seems there were a couple more. We met one afternoon at the schoolhouse and talked it over. They decided that they thought it was a good idea, so then I approached the Superintendent and we held a meeting in the evening and we elected Raymond Robinson our first president.

BJ: And you moderated the first meeting?

GR: Yeah, I moderated the first meeting. But I didn't want any part of being the president.

BJ: Why not? You probably would have done a good job of it.

GR: I didn't think—I was happy enough to get it started. And we all thought it would be nice to have a man to head it up. It would bring the fathers out.

BJ: Oh, that's a good idea.

GR: That was our point.

BJ: At that time, more mothers would be involved?

GR: Fathers were—we thought it would bring them out, and it did.

BJ: Before that, were parents involved very much in the schools?

GR: No, not too much.

BJ: I tend to forget that, you know, that there wasn't a phone there. I understand they didn't want a phone for awhile because they didn't want to be bothered. Somebody told me they thought....

GR: I don't know that.

BJ: It was somebody's interpretation. And, of course, cars weren't as frequent—just to jump in a car and drive down to the school, so I think that parents didn't know what was going on as much.

GR: No, well, they didn't have too many cars in those days.

BJ: Sure.

GR: Vernon Bray drove the school bus for awhile. It was just a Ford and he picked up the children. When my youngest one first went to school and I had to pick him up ever morning and take him out—he didn't want to go to school.

BJ: Really. What kind of school bus was it? Was it big or....

GR: It was just a Ford, just a car, a regular Ford.

BJ: Well, how many children would he be picking up then? Not very many, I guess.

GR: Oh, well, there weren't too many, you know.

BJ: How many children were there in a two-room school?

GR: I don't really know.

BJ: Approximately?

GR: Perhaps 20 or so in each room. There may not have been that many, you know. Varied from year to year. As the children grew, they went up to Pelham Hill. After they built that, the second schoolhouse, the Rhodes School, well they went up there for seventh—sixth and seventh grades and then they went into Amherst.

BJ: So when your children were in the City School there, was the school still down the hill in what—South School? Was that still there?

GR: Well, South School went out when the Quabbin was built. The new road, Daniel Shays Highway, went up through where South School was. And then, the one over the hill, down over the hill, was Bobbin Hollow. I don't recall because I had

no contact with that at all and I don't remember, but I think at the same time that went out.

BJ: And the South School, that was more down towards Packardville? There was a Packardville School, too?

GR: Well, what I call the South School.

BJ: Okay, I think I'll be taping forever and I still won't get the schools straight. I don't know what it is—it seems like there were more schools.....

GR: Some called it the Packardville School, some called it the South School.

BJ: I think that's the problem. I found out they called it differently.

GR: The Packardville Church was over there too.

BJ: So, what do you remember about the school when your children were small? Anything that they did in the school?

GR: No, nothing special, I guess. One thing that the children had to make a change was that they had a man for a teacher. And they always had women, you know, and they had a man who my daughter was young, you know—7, 8, 9 years old, they had a man teacher.

BJ: And was that unusual at the time?

GR: It was, at that time, you know.

BJ: A man always taught the older kids or something?

GR: They didn't really like it, you know, to have a man teacher. I guess they learned just as much.

BJ: You mentioned that the PTA raised money, or some of the parents raised money for some of the things. What else do you think the PTS did that hadn't been done before?

GR: Well, we discussed our own immediate problems in school that we never seemed to be able to do in Amherst.

BJ: What kind of problems do you remember?

GR: Well, I think they were more personal problems for some parents, you know, for certain children.

BJ: With teachers, say, or.....

GR: With teachers and things that didn't seem to go just right. They would feel free to discuss them out in Pelham where they wouldn't want to discuss them in Amherst before all the Amherst people.

BJ: Did teachers come to the PTA also?

GR: Oh yeah.

BJ: And so they could talk to them there.

GR: We would talk to them.

BJ: I could see that they would have made more difference when yyou just didn't get down to the school so often.

GR: Sure, we had to walk down, we didn't go to school.

BJ: And children from North Valley Road, way up there. Would they be coming down to the City School too?

GR: Yes.

BJ: There was a school at none time up there, but that was before this.

GR: That was before I came.

BJ: Yes, right.

GR: And there was a school just two houses above me. That little schoolhouse there.

BJ: And someone lives there now.

GR: And the first year that I was married, the other school was torn down, you see.

BJ: And they went up there?

GR: And they had to go up there to school, but that was before my children were old enough to go to school.

BJ: Let's say, if the teacher was doing something with your children, or teaching them in a way which you didn't think that they should be taught, reading or something, and now you have been a teacher too, did you feel you could go and talk about it?

GR: Why, I could have, but I'm one that didn't complain. I worked with my children if they wanted some help. Saw that they had all kinds of books to read, you know, as they came along, so I didn't find too many problems in the school.

BJ: And your children eventually learned what they needed to learn?

GR: Well, I felt that they did. And then they went on into Amherst after school to junior high and high school.

BJ: And then you taught later than you're talking about?

GR: Yes, I taught in Springfield when my oldest son went into the service. He wanted his father to come down there and he was working at Amherst College. So he went down because he liked the outdoor life and he had it there in the college. He worked on the grounds, you know. And then, after we came back, it was the year after we came back, after two years, it was in the mid-forties that I taught one year in Belchertown, And then they closed that school and they took them down to town, you know, down to the village in Belchertown. They closed that school.

BJ: What did you husband do?

GR: He worked on the buildings and grounds there. He was a landscape man. And that's what my oldest son went into. He wanted him to go down to Springfield.

BJ: I see.

GR: And my son finally bought the business where he worked. But we got lonesome for the Pelham hills.

BJ: You did?

GR: We only stayed two years. Barbara was in high school. And she was a third year member when she became a senior and graduated, we came back in summer.

BJ: When you say you got lonesome for the Pelham hills, how can you describe that more?

GR: Well, we lived on the hill. No, I think we liked the country. We weren't city people. And we lived on Florence Street in the city. And, if you went out, everyone was around you, you know. I said the hill, but I meant.....

BJ: Just the country.

GR: We were lonesome for the country.

- BJ:** I'd like to get back to the 4-H'ers. You took hikes, you cooked outside with them. It seemed like you really enjoyed nature and....
- GR:** I tried to teach them all sorts of things and I had almost any kind of a club you can think of at that time. I had garden clubs, I had flower clubs, and then we had....
- BJ:** These were the children? Part of 4-H?
- GR:** They were all 4-H. And then one club that we had, they had to build a border—a ten foot border. And I had borders all over the place because that was my son's beginning of liking flowers.
- BJ:** Flower borders?
- GR:** We had these flower borders. And do you know the stonewall? He built one there. Then he built one half way down our lot. One across. And then he went down about 10 or 12 feet and built another one. And he had them aside the hen house. We had borders everywhere. And all around the front lawn—part of the front lawn, going out to the road, went with the road. And now they have those trees there, but we had a border back even with the house. And that was where he started in his love for flowers. And the other one liked the garden idea. So, he had a garden. And he raised raspberries. He had—one project was raspberries one year, you know, a few years. He first went, I guess, to strawberries and then he had a garden, and then he went into chickens and he had goats.
- BJ:** And these were all 4-H clubs?
- GR:** All 4-H.
- BJ:** You mean, you taught goats and pigs.
- GR:** That was the only one. He had a goat.
- BJ:** I think I'm going to turn this over, so I don't run out.
- GR:** I was a leader for 31 years.
- BJ:** I was a 4-H girl too, although we had—one year you had cooking and one year you had sewing and one year you had home furnishings and then you started all over again.
- GR:** We had all those, but we had anything they wanted to do.
- BJ:** That's better.

GR: One year I had a knitting club; they never had had a knitting club and the little girl that lived next door down there, she made two sweaters. She was really a whiz, you know.

BJ: Did you have several different clubs in one year or you just changed clubs?

GR: Well, if we had accomplished everything we should during that year according to the Extension Service, we could go on to something else.

BJ: I see.

GR: But, like the food club, we worked outdoors in the winter. And then we cooked inside in the summertime and we had the lunch program. Teaching them to put up a good lunch.

BJ: Well, I can see then that wouldn't take—that part wouldn't take so long, you know, once you got done.

GR: Then we went into cooking.

BJ: I wish they had that now. It's just that so many women now work and they aren't there to do....

GR: I'm afraid that's what is the matter. I had volunteered, you know, to help them, even after I left out there, but nobody wanted to be a leader.

BJ: Yes, and they don't have firl scouts. I don't think they have Brownies this year, either.

GR: I don't think that they do, and one thing that we did, we cooperated with the Girl Scouts and any project that they passed in my club, they would pass them in the Girl Scouts—like cooking, they didn't have to take it in the Girl Scouts if they took it in 4-H, if I passed them. And sewing the same.

BJ: Would the same girls be 4-H'ers as Girl Scouts?

GR: Sometimes, yes.

BJ: 'Cause there weren't that many children?

GR: There weren't that many, you know. So they didn't have to do the same thing over again, you know.

BJ: You mentioned those boys being in the cooking club and I was kind of surprised about that, because I thought, well, maybe, you know, boys wouldn't be cooking

and they would say that was “girl stuff” or something, but that was not in your experience.

GR: They had a good time.

BJ: I bet they did too.

GR: Then I had a carpenter club. I had Emmet Bennets son and Mrs. Yeaghan’s son was on my demonstration team.

BJ: Oh, to go to fair?

GR: No, to go up to Extension Service. We used to go up to college and all around and I started them out to even plane their own wood. They couldn’t buy a planed board. They had to learn to plane it with a plane. Then they’d make bird houses and bird feeders and all that sort of thing. So we went up there for demonstration and after it was over, one of the professors came to them and asked, “We’d like to meet your leader.” Of course I was sitting back, letting them go ahead on their own and I could see those boys’ faces turning red.

BJ: Why?

GR: They were embarrassed because a woman taught them.

BJ: That’s what I thought you meant.

GR: I think, don’t you know, they had finished bird house and they started with planning the board, one would, another one was starting to build a bird house, so we couldn’t build all of one.

BJ: I know, I used to do those demonstrations too.

GR: I taught them all kinds of different planes.

BJ: So you’re knowledgeable about wood too, I guess.

GR: I liked carpentry.

BJ: What have you made—along the way?

GR: Well, with them, we made screens for their homes. That was to teach them how to miter the corners.

BJ: Where did you learn all this carpentry?

GR: Oh, I picked it up when I was a youngster. I built a henhouse of my own that would hold 12 hens.

BJ: Were you an outdoor person as a child?

GR: I like the outdoors, yes.

BJ: And your father taught you that, or you just started it?

GR: My Uncle Ed came over and gave me a little advice, but I did it all myself.

BJ: Great.

GR: The only thing he helped me with, he helped me put in the windowsill. I was small. I couldn't lift the 2 X 4.

BJ: How old were you, do you remember?

GR: I must have been between 12 and 10 because I went to high school when I was 13 and I stayed down in Ware after the first year, down the town. I worked in one of the mills in the office. I worked my way through high school. My father became ill and passed away, so I ah

BJ: You worked in an office when you were 14, 15?

GR: The mill office. The mill room, you know. I used to take the place of... There were 5 offices and I'd take 4 of them, but I never was the manager.

BJ: What does that mean, when you say office?

GR: Well, they had an office right in the center of this room, Mr. Studd's room, and they make underclothes. They cut out—Otis Co.—undershirts, drawers, you know. Otis Mills. One of my jobs was to make out the payroll.

BJ: And you were 14 or 15!

GR: 15 years old, I guess. I graduated when I was 16, but I was 17 the next day.

BJ: And you were working too. Where did you go to Teachers' College?

GR: I didn't go. I wanted to go to Northampton, to Smith College, but you see, my father was ill and so I took correspondence courses.

BJ: Oh, from where?

GR: New York.

BJ: And you could be a teacher if you took correspondence courses?

GR: You could, in those days, you know.

BJ: How long?

GR: Well, Alice Collis never went to college, she went up to Mt. Hermon, but the girls' school.

BJ: Northfield?

GR: Northfield, and that's just a high—graded as a high school, you know.

BJ: So how long did you have to take these courses to be a teacher?

GR: I think it was about two years.

BJ: And you were working at the same time, doing something else?

GR: No, that was right after I was in high school I took those, but I couldn't go to college. We couldn't afford it.

BJ: Right.

GR: That was the reason why we didn't go.

BJ: Well, it seems like you picked up a lot of knowledge along the way.

GR: I did. I took out the partition in my home there. I took out my daughter's and I took out the one down my sister's in Belchertown and I did all my own wood repairing around, and I also cut a doorway through what used to be my pantry and the dining room. I stuck ice picks in to see if they came through in the dining room or if it came in the closet. It did. When my husband came home, I had it all done, but hanging the door. I didn't have any door to hang. We had to buy a door.

BJ: Well, that's good.

GR: I like carpentry.

BJ: Do you think you would ever, like if you were younger, and thinking about working outside, would you think about doing carpentry for a job? Like, to make money?

GR: No, I never did, you know.

BJ: But, would you, do you think?

GR: I cane chairs now.

BJ: Now you cane chairs.

GR: I've done 47 chairs. I have one in the works now. I was taught caning in the Amherst Bangs Center.

BJ: Oh, for the senior citizens. Where did you pick that up?

GR: Back in I think it was '38—we went into some—my husband learned to do the other kind of seat. I've forgotten which kind right now. I have the chair in the bedroom and I took up caning. I learned to cane.

BJ: Mrs. Cushman talked about the Extension Service and the way it reached the town, and she had some coat projects she was involved in and things it seemed like, ah, you're talking about the Extension Service quite a bit too and the way it affected people much more than it does now.

GR: It doesn't today. You have to go. Then, we used to send a leader and the leader would learn the project and come back and teach it in the town and we had all sorts of things. I learned a great deal from them.

BJ: I guess now many women are working and don't do those kinds of things.

GR: They don't seem to. I guess they don't have the teachers. We learned to upholster. All sorts of things.

BJ: I think what you're saying, and I've heard that a lot—men talk about it, you're talking about it, you knew how to do more different kinds of things. Because you had to do more things.

GR: Than they do today.

BJ: Sure. I can't do upholstery, I can't carpenter, you know. I can, I can cook.

GR: They think I'm kind of odd. I do do a lot—I'm not bragging—I do do a lot of different things. And now, my neighbor across the hall, the water in the toilet was running. She said it ran for 2 hours and she couldn't contact the maintenance man here. So the woman upstairs told her to call Mrs. Reed, she'd fix it. So she called me and all I did was knock down the little bulb in the water.

BJ: Yes, I think I could handle that one.

GR: She couldn't figure that out.

BJ: Really.

GR: No. She called them up and she said don't have the men up. I had a plumber fix it. And they said, "Who's the plumber?" And she said, "Plumber Reed." So now I go around fixing the toilets and a woman down here said she wouldn't dare touch it. Imagine, they call in the help.

BJ: Costly business, that's why your rents go up and things.

GR: Sure it is. Mine goes up along with everybody else's no matter what I do.

BJ: You have to start charging.

GR: A lot of that's in the past. But I do a lot of things now.

BJ: Sure. Now, you took part in 4-H clubs and you did PTA kind of work. Did you do anything in politics, anything like that?

GR: No, I'm not a politician.

BJ: You're not a politician, that's one thing you're not. I found one thing you're not.

GR: I kept out of that.

BJ: You kept out of that, why?

GR: Well, I just wasn't interested. I was interested in the Woman's Club. I was president twice or three times.

BJ: What did they do out there?

GR: Well, the usual thing. Just meet and have a program, a business meeting.

BJ: Someone would come in to speak?

GR: Speak, things like that, you know.

BJ: Was that a large group?

GR: It was one time fairly good, but that dwindled down. I think it's gone out of existence.

BJ: I don't think it's there any more.

GR: Since I came in town 10b years ago, it's gone out of existence.

BJ: So the last ten years have made a big difference.

GR: It has, it has, very much so.

BJ: You mentioned being a reporter for the Amherst Record? For how long?

GR: 23 years.

BJ: And tell me about your black book again.

GR: Well, I had this little black book and anything that, why if I saw a car in the yard with an out-of-state number plate, I'd call them up and ask them if they had guests. They knew I was a reporter and all. And some would say, "Oh, we don't want it in the paper." Others would say, "She's from such and such a place." Who they are, you know. I'd put it in my little black book. When it came time to write it in my news, I had all these items ready, don't you know. And there was a Mrs. Fleming. He lives here in back of me now. He was in the hospital when I called up Mrs. Fleming. She said, "Nobody knows us, they wouldn't be interested to have that in the paper." "Well," I said, "you don't mind, do you?" And she said no. 'Course I was looking for news and so I put it in the paper that Mr. Fleming was in the hospital. And she called up and thanked me. She said so many of the people that he knew and had worked with had some to see him in the hospital. But he lived. Poor Mrs. Fleming passed away. He's remarried now. They live in back here. I enjoyed it and I kept that up until the first year I lived down here.. I still was a reporter but it was too much to go out every night up there, you know, to cover the area.

BJ: So you had to cover town meetings and all that?

GR: I had to cover all that. Committee meetings and all that from way out here.

BJ: Were there any good meetings that you can remember, that were peppy or whatever?

GR: No, I just forgot them all.

BJ: Really, nothing special ever happened? See, any of these arguments that you think are so big at the time and you can't even remember if they were so big, right?

GR: Well, I'm quite old now.

BJ: Well, I know, but I think it's interesting that people get so worked up about things that they don't remember that well later. Were they always battling about taxes? Like they are now?

GR: I don't think so much in the old days.

BJ: 'Cause they weren't so high?

GR: No.

BJ: Do you remember, as a reporter, or just as a citizen in town, any other particular issues that you had to write on several weeks in a row, or something like that?

GR: I don't know that I can remember the topics, what they were. Probably if I thought of it, I might think of something.

BJ: And you mentioned that you had to be careful to check about with people, not to put things in if they didn't give permission because maybe it was gossip that they...

GR: I didn't want to be a gossipy reporter and I didn't put anything in that was on the questionable side. I never put anyone in that was brought into court for drinking, or anything like that. It was in the other papers and I thought why stir it up in the little town of Pelham and make this one not like the other one and so on. And they say that boy, well, he's no good because he drinks and, why stir up trouble.

BJ: Was drinking a problem very often? It seems to me I heard that it was.

GR: It seemed to be the later years that I was out there. So I just kept on with that. I didn't see any sense, it was in the court news. Everyone knew about it so why bring it up again in the weekly. That was a weekly paper at the time. Why bring it up again. It was a sore point, I think. I like to keep friends with everybody. I didn't put those things in. One thing that I didn't put in was an engagement and then before they were about to get married, they broke up the engagement.

BJ: So maybe it was a good thing.

GR: So I was glad I never put that in because I never could seem to catch either one of them to verify it. I never put in anything I couldn't verify.

BJ: Did you ever get into any trouble for anything that you didn't put in?

GR: No, I didn't because you see, I verified everything.

BJ: That's right.

- GR:** And, therefore, I never did get into any trouble. When I, after I gave up being a reporter, the first year I was down here, I don't know where my little black book has gone to—it's packed away somewhere. But I had a lot of things in that little black book that I never had printed, you know.
- BJ:** Because when you asked, they would say not to put it in?
- GR:** Some of them didn't want me to and some of them I just couldn't catch the certain person that I had to and then the deadline would come and I had to give it up.
- BJ:** I suppose that would be something that would be great to donate to the Historical Society. Although, I suppose all these people who didn't want something put in, you know, but maybe they are gone by now, or something, because that would be really valuable because everything would be dated, right, and you'd know when things happened. Just these little items, you know.
- GR:** I don't know just where I hid it. It's packed away. I don't think I disposed of it. I know I didn't when I came here because I was still using it.
- BJ:** Must have been a big book!
- GR:** Well, it was a loose leaf and I'd add little leaves to it, but I probably had more than one. I don't remember the first year.
- BJ:** And you've been active in the church too, is that right? What kinds of things did you do?
- GR:** Well, I've been Trustee, school teacher for quite awhile. I was School Superintendent for 5 years, still active in the Guild although I don't hold an office. But I go and do my share.
- BJ:** Has the number of people who go decreased very much?
- GR:** Very much so. They were even .
- BJ:** Is that right? I didn't know.
- GR:** Ruth Gallagher came calling, said she'd be president, so it's reactivated again.
- BJ:** The Guild? (Yes, the Guild) When you said about closing it, you meant the Guild, not the church. (Not the church.)
- GR:** There were times when we had no Sunday School out there. When I was a Sunday School teacher, I had more than 100 children in Sunday School. Now I heard them say there's 20. Now, I went down to the school and I got a list from the principal or the teacher of all the kids in town. Then I contacted parents and invited them to Sunday School. I did start a program the Sunday before we

opened the Sunday School and had the parents come with the children. I had several Catholic children in the Sunday School. I talked with the priest. They didn't take them in town and he said it was all right, so the children came to our Sunday School. That was all right with me. It didn't make any difference to me. I'm not biased on religion.

BJ: That's interesting, because from what you hear sometimes from days farther in the past that the Catholic and Protestant thing was such a strong division and now you say that.

GR: I know it. About half of my dearest friends are Catholic. My closest friend is Greek. She goes to Holyoke to services. I go to Holyoke with her some Sundays—sit for two hours for the program and I don't understand a word of Greek. I tell her it's Greek to me. She wants me to go with her so I do. I tell the minister I went to church last Sunday, but I went to the Greek church and I don't know what they were talking about. I take an active part in a great many activities.

BJ: You have your health back with you—there, for awhile...

GR: I'm just lame now. My knee doesn't get any better. We have a craft club in town, and I'm the president of that. In Amherst, I think of it as uptown. And then I'm president of the Orient Club. That's a study club that was organized in 1899. It was a group of ladies up on Northeast Street. They had had a couple of meetings, getting together in the afternoon, you know, and then they decided they would form an organization as a study group. They looked out over the hills to Pelham, and decided they would call it the Orient Club. Up on Northeast Street you can look out and see the Pelham Hills. Now we have about twelve members. We have a very good group now.—quite representative of the town. I'm also secretary of a church group over in Ware, my home town. It's from Greenwich, one of the towns that was vacated for Quabbin. They meet once a year, the first Saturday in October. I've been secretary for five years. I never lived in Greenwich, but my husband did. He used to go. Of course, he's passed away and they put me in there as secretary. When nobody else wants it, I take it. I was secretary of the Golden Agers in Amherst. (You were secretary of the Pelham Historical Society, too. How do you keep all those notes?) I tell you, the doctor told me I could either sit in a chair and become an invalid or you can get up and get going. So I got up and got going.

BJ: Now that kind of thing you might think is personal, and why would that be on a tape—it's that kind of attitude. I know when I talked with Sally Shepard, I know she was affected by her ailments a lot, but at the same time, I had the feeling if I could be that lively when I'm 90 years old....

GR: She used to pass out, you know. She'd be over to the Golden Age and she'd drop on the floor. (She still had a lot of zip.) She did. I hope I'll have as much. I

don't know as I'll live to be 90 because I have heart trouble. I have to be careful. I was talking with the minister Sunday, and I said I don't know whether I should come to church or not. It's such an effort to hustle around on Sunday morning. I'm in such pain to get up and down as we sing, you know. I won't sit there; I make an effort to stand up. I'm on crutches quite often. I use crutches around the house. It doesn't hurt my leg so much because I don't have to put bearing on it, you know. It's a foolish thing. The doctor did it. Made me the cripple that I am. He broke the cartilage.

BJ: One of the things I try to ask people, I'm not sure how to word it exactly, how do you think values have changed since you were around schools and living in Pelham? I know it's bigger now, etc.

GR: I think we've lost the intimacy that we used to have with our teachers and in other ways too. Now, in Amherst, up here to the Bangs building, we're not close or friendly up there. The young people are running it, and they just don't pay attention to us. The elderly don't like it up there now. This craft club I'm president of, we had five members when I started it and I had built it up to 20, but now we don't have enough for a quorum of five. They're telling us what we can do. We've earned \$900 and they won't let us spend any of it.

BJ: I have to ask you something because you just asked me to turn this off, and I understand why you do. But then I think, these are the good parts. The reason why I want to leave things in sometimes is because there's such a tendency to say that these days back 30 or 40 years ago were just wonderful and everything's terrible now. You know, I hear some stories from people that show that things weren't so wonderful. People had problems just like you do now. That's the only reason I like to have things like that in because then I think it doesn't paint such a rosy picture.

GR: I don't think the Depression hit us. My husband was working for Amherst College. The colleges ran just the same. We didn't know it was the Depression. Of course we knew it, but we didn't sense it. It didn't hurt us because we had our cow and we had our pig—we had meat. We had chickens, hens, everything. We had gardens.

[phone rings—interruption and on to talk about crafts nowadays]

GR: One thing we're doing in our Crafts Club is making wool caps for the little Indian boys in the kindergartens out on the reservations. Dot VanAlshine up in Echo Hil is heading it up. I made 18 in two weeks. I have a box of them.

BJ: Back to what I was saying about things going on in Pelham or anyplace else back then that were not so pleasant or happy. You must have run into those sorts of things when you were reporting for the paper and then just didn't feel you could put them in. Is that so?

- GR:** I don't remember that we had too many troubles in Pelham.
- BJ:** Did people know about their neighbors? Would they have known what was going on?
- GR:** Oh yes, they were quite gossipy.
- BJ:** I think that's true of any small town.
- GR:** I think so. My next-door neighbor was very much so. (Can that be on the tape?) Yes, her son is still alive. All the rest of the family is gone. I don't mind that..
- BJ:** My grandmother was so gossipy. She was famous for this because she was on a party line, and she would leave her phone off the hook. If somebody rang up, she would listen to everybody's business. It didn't bother her that everybody knew she was this way.
- GR:** Her husband was town officer once. She'd been bothering—I knew she'd been on the line every time I called anybody because we were on a four-party line. So I called up to find out how much it would cost and it was so much a mile—15 cents every mile out—and she said, “Just a minute, I'm not positive, but Mr. Boyden is having a different telephone put in.” I said, “That's my answer. I don't need one.” They got off the line. I was telling a person something down near the school. That afternoon I went down to Mrs. Jones' and she told me this thing that I told my friend on the phone. Mrs. Boyden had heard it and she was a friend of hers so she called her up. I used to sew for the kids in town. I made clothes for a lot of youngsters. (Why?) Parents didn't sew, evidently. They hired me to do it. (Oh, I thought you meant on a give-away basis.) I couldn't really afford that! I had two jobs that I did. I made clothes for the children, and I cut the boys' hair of most everybody in town.
- BJ:** I think I need another hour to talk to you because you did so many things.
- GR:** My sons had never been to a barber until I was ill when Warren was graduating, and he had to have his hair cut. He had his picture taken—they could cut the hair in the picture, I don't see how they do it. It wasn't cut, and they took his picture, you see. But he did have to have it cut, and he had to have his father go with him to the barber's because he'd never been to the barbershop. Then he graduated from high school. I always cut their hair. Twenty-five cents. I didn't care if I got anything or not. The teacher used to say that she wished the kiddos looked like mine because I used to trim their every week so they looked nice. So I finally began cutting kids' hair. I've done a lot when you stop to think of it. You read all this junk?
- BJ:** I did and I feel we didn't get all of it. I may have to come back.

GR: I think I've been very socially minded. I've been in Grange. I'm a 67 year member of the Grange. That started out as an agricultural organization. I've been through the chairs in the Rebeckahs and the Eastern Star.

BJ: That's why I'm surprised out of all these things and being interested in offices, you were never interested in politics.

GR: I never was interested in politics. My husband was Selectman at one time. I go and vote. I feel it's my duty. I went up to vote on crutches the other day. I fall on these steps. I've fallen twice. The last time was three weeks ago. I fell down seven of them.

BJ: But you want to stay here?

GR: Oh, I like it very much. It's lovely in the summer time. I had flowers from the front door to the... Last summer I went to the hospital so I didn't have any flowers, only my early bulbs. The woman upstairs, young lady, asked Mrs. Wilson upstairs if she thought I would object to her weeding my garden. She said, "No, I think she'd love to have you." Of course, she didn't know I was going to stay all summer in the hospital. She came down and in about 10 minutes she went back up again. Mrs. Wilson says, "You didn't get all those weeds out in 10 minutes." She said, "No, I couldn't tell the weeds from the plants." Well, they were all weeds, you see. There were no plants. I'm going to have a man come clean it up. I can't get down and if I do, I can't get up. I'm a bit handicapped now.

INFORMATION SHEET

Mabel Lumley

Born: August 24, 1908

Place of Birth: Northampton, MA

Mother's Name: Rose Brinn

Father's Name: Arthur Brinn

Spouse's Name: Albert E. Lumley, deceased

Date of Interview: June 10, 1981

BJ = Barbara Jenkins, Interviewer

ML = Mabel Lumley

Original transcription by Alberta Booth

- BJ:** It's Mabel Lumley, but nobody calls you Mabel Lumley. Where does "Buddy" come from?
- ML:** Well, it's an old childhood nickname that followed me largely because when I first met Al, my husband, I was with a group of young people that I had grown up with in Northampton, which had always been my home and therefore Al heard them calling me Buddy, so he began, and it followed me to Amherst.
- BJ:** Did anybody call you Mabel?
- ML:** The older members of my family. It seems strange to me too. I always thought when I was younger it would indeed be kind of kinky to be called Buddy when I was a grandmother, and yet here I am. I am called Buddy. It would be just as funny to go back to Mabel at this point. I can't win on it.
- BJ:** You were born, or at least lived in Northampton?
- ML:** I was born and raised in Northampton, except for a brief period of living with my grandmother in Haydenville—my mother's mother and her large family. The first two years of my grade school were in Haydenville. At grade four I started in Northampton at the little South Street School that they're now talking about closing, and I went through high school and two years of college living there.
- BJ:** So you went to Smith College?
- ML:** No, I didn't go to Smith. I did a lot of work at Smith, however. In those days they took special students, not a lot; they took some special students. I was always musical in my early days. I sang a great deal and I needed the languages to go along with it. So I took those special courses at Smith, and I had some vocal teaching from the Smith faculty. A lot of good it did me, because ten years ago I had a dreadful bronchial thing that has ruined my voice, my vocal chords. I can't sing a note any more. Can't even stay on tune.
- BJ:** That's amazing. So where did you go to college, then?
- ML:** Northampton Business College.
- BJ:** Oh yes, I forgot.
- ML:** That was a two year course. They had a normal course, you see, for teaching, and that's what I did.
- BJ:** That's what you did.
- ML:** I did not teach—I didn't teach other than in their own night school, and some substitute teaching before I got a full time job. It was Depression years, you se,

and so one didn't pick up a job too easily. So I did a little of that kind of thing, but never a really steady daytime teaching job. I went to work for Pro Brush. And, I found that could make more money doing that than going out of town and paying my board and room somewhere, teaching.

BJ: So how did you meet Mr. Lumley, then, before you came to Pelham I assume, and that was....

ML: Oh yes. As I said, I was with some old friends that lived in my neighborhood and met him through an Amherst College student that I had known who had been one of his pupils here—one of his students. And he called one time and said could I bring this young faculty member over to such and such an affair that was going on, and that's the way it started. I met Al through him. And then we began dating. I think we went together about five years before we decided to be married and then we began looking around for a house. Those available were not too interesting to us, and Al had a friend named Charles Walker, a Pelham resident, who at that time was a superintendent for the Metropolitan Water Company. He had charge of the Quabbin area and the selling of the old houses, which had to be taken out or else razed completely. Those that were not sold to outsiders were bulldozed down into the cellar holes and covered up that way. There were none left standing. And this intrigued us, since we hadn't found any other house that we wanted to buy, and Al's summers were free. There was no summer school at Amherst College where he was teaching. Therefore, he gathered together two or three of his strong boys who wanted to earn a little during the summer, and we began looking at what was available. They started taking this house down.

BJ: Just what year was that about?

ML: This was 1939. This was about the tail end of this kind of negotiation with the Metropolitan Company. They had been selling some of these houses to various towns around here for some time, so the really choice examples of colonial architecture were gone. But anyway, Al wanted to do it. He loved to tackle big projects. So, never having built a house, he plunged in and did this. It was a wild summer. We were married in the middle of the operation. And I had to provide lunches, you see, for them—for Al and the people that were working with him. There was no way to get food in that area. It was already deserted. It was a lot of hard work, really, for him, but he seemed to enjoy it. When indeed we had the building all part and he had labeled the various timbers, which needed to be because, like a jigsaw puzzle, those would fit together in only one way. We rented a barn which was then standing on Venum Bray's property, up the road from him, and the makings of the house were stored in there until the following year when we did buy the piece of land finally.

BJ: Oh, I see.

ML: We didn't have land until then. No, we didn't have land. But we bought this from Mark Aldrich's mother, one of the old-time residents of Pelham, and her sister, a Mrs. Hubbard. Lota Aldrich and Mrs. Hubbard owned this jointly from their father. It was a piece of twenty-three acres. This was shortly after the hurricane, and therefore, there was a lot of timber in the woods back here, a good deal of it chestnut. So that winter before we could do anything about reconstructing the house, Al, again gathering some of his students—they had "bees" out there, splitting the chestnut for the rails that made the original rail fence out here. Much of it has been replaced since. I doubt if there are many of the chestnut rails still there, although Hugh Hawkins has a piece of the zigzag Virginia rail, five rails high, which this originally was. He has some of that over on his place. Al was very fussy about the meadows being mowed and the lawn and so forth, and he couldn't get a lawn mower underneath that type of fence, the Virginia rail. So we eventually replaced it with the upright posts and the two rails across. That's what we have now. Every year some rails have to be replaced. But, you have to remember there were no houses here. Dot Brown's place which is now owned by the—oh dear, what's their name now—next door, the big yellow house. Carol Angus and the Marie Yegian's place—they were the nearest neighbors. Everything else was bare until we got down to the Foote farm, the big dairy farm at the convergence of South Valley and Harkness.

BJ: That's about how far?

ML: Oh, a quarter of a mile. The following spring Al began to put this place up, and that was an all summer and into the fall job. In act, although we put some of our furniture, which was very meager, and we didn't have very much, up in the attic at that time, we didn't bring it downstairs, have floors in the living room until around Christmas. Of course, Al worked on and supervised the business of framing up to the point where it needed skilled carpentry inside. Then, of course, he was not equipped to do that. So we had a marvelous German fellow named Göllebenbusch who lived in Belchertown. He stayed with us right to the bitter end and did all kinds of things, like sanding the old wide board floors and the doors. There are a couple of them right here that you can see that are put together with little wooden pegs. There are no nails in them at all. We were able to get the hardware for the doors—these latches and H and L hinges, through a man up in North Amherst who had gathered up a lot of the latches and antiques and made the H and L hinges in a forge. He worked for the University, and I think this was a kind of work that he did there. But the latches are old ones; the H and L are reproductions that he made forty years ago.

BJ: Getting to be more antique than the...

ML: Yes.

- BJ:** You said that Mr. Lumley had never done this before, and I'm thinking as you're talking about it, what a task. And, how did he acquire those skills? As he went along? I can't imagine.
- ML:** I know. This is just the kind of guy he was. He set a task for himself, he read about it, and he did it. And, as I say, he loved big projects. I know that when we wanted to get a mortgage to go ahead with the building of the house, he went in to see old Mr. Hawley, whom all the natives would know. He was the long time president of the little Amherst Savings Bank, and it was little in those days. Of course, he knew him personally, but Mr. Hawley looked at him and said, "Al, what have you ever built before?" And Al said, "Well, I built a chicken coop once for my father." And Mr. Hawley said, "I think we'd better give you a personal loan." Later on, of course, when he got along to a certain point in the building, and they could see that something was going to come out of this, then we got a conventional mortgage. Gut, that was his original reaction. He wanted to help Al out, because he liked him. "I think we'll give you a personal loan," you see.
- BJ:** I can't imagine starting, and walking up to a house like this and knowing where to start on taking it down.
- ML:** It amazes me now to think back to this. I wonder how he, and we, really, had the courage, because it was a lot of work for both of us. That first summer when the house was going up, we had two of Al's students living with us. We were in a rented apartment.
- BJ:** I was going to ask where you were. Someplace in Amherst?
- ML:** In Bud Willson's place, over here, across from the Orient. It was owned at that time by a Mrs. Alderman. She was the mother of one of Al's academic friends at the University. He always officiated at Al's track whether they be at the University or at Amherst. So they were quite friendly. And his mother, who was quite elderly, was going out of town to live with a sister for awhile, yet didn't want to do anything about the house. We just moved into it, the way she moved out—had her furniture and all that—and that was our headquarters. But we bought from the George Taylors, an elderly couple (not the George Taylors still living in Pelham) who lived two or three houses down from here on Harkness—a little guest house, which is this brown shingled building right here, and moved it to here. That was one of the first things we did on the land, outside of putting the fence up. That was the first thing the winter before, you know.
- BJ:** Why did you put up the fence first?
- ML:** Because the lumber was there—the lumber was there.
- BJ:** Usually you put the fence up later, you know.

- ML:** The chestnut was down, and Al, like Abraham Lincoln, thought he could split that chestnut and make a fence out of it. So he did. That was the first thing to go up. Then we got this little cottage, and the boys lived, slept in that. They had their meals with us over at the apartment and that's the way we got along. Al used to let them take the car evenings and so forth, so they had a great time too. One of those boys teaches English up at Middlebury now.
- BJ:** Had you tried to get property specifically in Pelham, or were you looking at other places too?
- ML:** No, the only stipulation that Al made as we were looking around for property was that it be within a three mile radius of the campus, the Amherst College campus, as he wanted to be available to his students, didn't want to be that far off. And, of course, this is a little less than that, so it was ideal.
- BJ:** So anyway, you had it ready to—you were putting it up and were living in the attic, and what was all involved in...
- ML:** We didn't live in the attic.
- BJ:** Oh, you didn't live—oh, the furniture was in the attic. I had you up there like little rats in the attic.
- ML:** Right, they finished off in the house first a bedroom for us, and the kitchen and bathroom. So those were functioning. But I was crawling down in the morning over piles of lumber and equipment and what-not to get to the kitchen, and this was the way we sort of camped out here until things began to sort themselves out.
- BJ:** What kind of problems did you run into in trying to put it back together, or did it go fairly smoothly?
- ML:** No, I think it went well. Al had labeled things, and this Max Gollenbusch was a very competent man, and he worked well with Al, and, of course, Al worked along on the reconstruction until he had to go back to teaching in the fall. So that took us a long way. As I said before, there were no other houses here until we went down towards Belchertown Highway and past the Footes. Now, I was not a big city girl but I was a small city girl, and the living in Pelham was quite different for me. I had no neighbors, really, that I had any intimacy with except for Mary Foote, who was simply marvelous to me. She kind of took me under her wing and she brought me around and showed me places and things and people. Mary Foote gave me a marvelous start in the living in this town. She was a typical farm woman—capable, you know—milked the cows and did the necessary things around the dairy and was a good cook, and she taught me a lot. Our social life, of course, was largely centered around Amherst College and Amherst College, in those days in particular, was a very social place, so that not too much of my life centered in Pelham itself, as it became later. We belonged to the

Amherst Congregational Church there so I didn't get to know some of the Pelham people that well. But, wanting to get to know some of the Pelham people, I did go to the Pelham Women's Club which is no longer in existence, but was a very necessary function in those days. People were not so distracted, I think. You had not so many things to do in those days as you do now. I'm talking about thirty-five to forty years ago. I was active, and president a couple of times, of the Pelham Women's Club, which was a very nice thing.

BJ: Was it primarily a social....

ML: Yes, it was. We had a few functions for charity, you know, raised a little money—but, yes, it was social. And it had been started a few years before I came by a Helen Williams, wife of Reverend Paul Williams, who at that time, taught at the University, later at Mt. Holyoke College.

BJ: I think Mary Taylor mentioned that.

ML: Helen had started this because she saw a great need for the Pelham ladies to be able to get together in some outside-church group.

BJ: I can imagine then that people—women—were more at home during the day, and being up here scattered about the hills, it was a little hard to go to a neighbor's.

ML: Not everyone had two cars, right.

BJ: You just stayed home when somebody went to work. Now, did the Taylors come out about the same time?

ML: They were here before we were. I hesitate to say exactly how long—four years or something before we came. And, of course, George Taylor and Al were very very close friends. So that when Al found this piece of land within striking distance of George, this made him extremely happy too.

BJ: She indicated that it was kind of unusual for faculty families certainly to go out as far as they did. Now they were out quite a bit further than you were and stuck up there in the woods.

ML: About twice as far from the campus. Yes, and you know, it's been strange. When we came out here, there was no feeling of town and gown. At least, I sensed none. That developed later when more college people came out to Pelham. And then, for awhile, the feeling was very strong. I think it's tapered off, but the town and gown division was very strong at one time, most especially over the school situation. I can remember that some of the really old-timers when I first came, and I began going to town meetings, which were an experience for me, would get up and say, "Look, what was good enough for my father is good enough for these kids," you know.

- BJ:** I've heard that some in recent years, as a matter of fact.
- ML:** And this had a tendency to feed that feeling. We were supposed to be wealthy people. We were rich because we taught at the college. Actually, if they only knew how much my husband started out with—assistant's salary—it was pretty feeble financial support for building the house. That feeling, I think, started as more people came and there was more opposition to the old way of especially educating the kids.
- BJ:** Raising the taxes.
- ML:** Raising the taxes, sure.
- BJ:** I can understand.
- ML:** More children brought higher expenses into the school budget.
- BJ:** And people talk about higher priced property, and they expect more of other people that don't have as much, and I think it's a real issues. And, as you say, it may have tapered off some only because there's a balance more, you know, or maybe even now there are more newcomers, if you want to call them that, than there are old-timers.
- ML:** I think this is true now.
- BJ:** And one of the reasons I started this project was that I felt there was some division anyway, and that maybe people who were newer would have no chance to meet the people who had been around a longer time. You mentioned town meetings, and I'm curious because since they were new to you, maybe you can make some observations about them that some of the people who routinely go to them don't seem to remember them. They went to them, but they don't remember that anything ever particularly went on, and it's like me. I wasn't used to them either. So, what do you remember—your first impressions?
- ML:** Oh I remember my first town meeting very vividly. Of course, we used to have the town meetings in the upper floor of the old Town Hall, up at the corner of 202. It's a shame that we can't still, because it gave a kind of atmosphere to the whole process of democracy in the raw. Somehow or other we were carrying on a tradition. A charming building anyway. But sure, I remember that very vividly. I nearly exploded in the middle of it, when one of the old fellows got up and said, "Well, what I want to know is that when old Joe so and so died, why didn't the town do more for him than they did? They put him in an old wooden box. There was no lining in it. When they picked him up, you could hear him rattle from side to side. Now, that waren't right." Really, you know, it struck me like a bolt of lightning. I'd never experienced anything like this, you know. But, believe me, the selectmen that were sitting up there behind their table with their big volumes

began pushing the pages back and forth to find out why this happened. Obviously, this man was a welfare case, don't you see, and he had to be buried by the town. And his old friend there in the audience had felt the town hadn't done right by him. Well, they explained that he had been brought down to some hospital several miles from here, had died there, had to be brought back, and this had used up the funds, do you see, so that there wasn't much left to do with. But he got his explanation. And so it was with everything, you know. People, Lord knows they talk enough now in town meeting—but in those days, everybody had their say. Everybody had their say, and it was a very interesting experience, when I got used to it and could take it a little better.

BJ: That is interesting, that particular case. I've asked the question of several people what did happen to people before there were social agencies, before government was involved, because I'm sure there were cases of people not having enough money, clothes, food, whatever. Nobody seems to know.

ML: Ah, the town took care of its own. And this was a phrase that one heard time and time again. The town took care of its own.

BJ: But with some question of adequacy, according to this fellow who asked the question.

ML: Yes, of course. He didn't get a lined coffin, and all that, but he had been taken care of and this was the way. It was a Lady Bountiful sort of thing, you see, through the selectmen.

BJ: They would decide. Maybe if you had a need, you would go to the selectmen, for that kind of thing?

ML: Oh yes, one of the selectmen was in charge of that kind of thing and had a chairman, and I've forgotten how the division of work was—although my husband was a selectman.

BJ: That's right, that's right.

ML: Before the war, that is before World War II, he was a selectman—he was Chairman of the Board. And oh, I remember the letters, the appeals that came to do something for so and so who was housebound. And he was embroiled in one affair where a neighbor accused the lady who was taking care of a sick person in her home of abusing her, not doing an adequate job, and the selectmen were supposed to step in and do something about this. And, as a matter of fact, they did. They found, on investigation, that the woman did have bedsores. She was not really adequately taken care of. And so they moved her to a nursing home. Her home was closed up at that point. In other words, they were serving really as a visiting nurse, as some other social agency would do today.

- BJ:** I never heard that, and that's very interesting. The different roles. I think it was Mr. Goodell down here that had read some old book about Pelham, that way back if you....(end of tape)
Do you remember any other particular things from either his time as selectman or that period of time when he was involved with town government that were remarkable?
- ML:** No, I only remember that every now and again when someone had a gripe, they were inclined to write abusive letters to the selectmen. I'm not sure that's stopped.
- BJ:** Probably not.
- ML:** Other than that—that incident seems to be the only one that I recall at the moment. About this old lady down there.
- BJ:** So people generally were, as I have heard, taken care of by other people—sort of boarded out with people or taken care of in that way.
- ML:** Well, in the case of this lady, of course, they hired somebody to come in and take care of her in her home.
- BJ:** So the town was paying for that.
- ML:** The town probably was. There was a small welfare budget. Of course, in those days you could get someone to come in for five dollars a week—to have a home and look after you.
- BJ:** You mentioned the Women's Club. Were you involved in any other town affairs, particularly over the years, either social or governing, or anything like that?
- ML:** No, not me. Al was Moderator of the town after he succeeded George Taylor who had succeeded old Mr. Harris up on Arnold Road where the Greens live now. That was the Harris place. He had a very high voice that was kind of unusual and a rather colorful one, and I always told my dear friend George Taylor that he took all the color out of town meeting when he became Moderator. Of course, he was an excellent one and then, after his term, Al became Moderator, until he got tired of it. And then Van Halsey succeeded him.
- BJ:** Do you remember any major issues that came up over all those years in town meeting? You mentioned schools.
- ML:** The regional school thing was the big issue, and Al was very much for going into a region and for tying in with Amherst and Shutesbury, and I think at that time, Leverett, but Leverett didn't vote for it. Pelham did each time there was a vote. But it was a very, uh, acrimonious, really division within the town. People

- seemed to think they were going to lose all autonomy for their school, and protested on that basis, plus the fact that they felt it was going to be more expensive and all of this. And, I guess that has proved true, but...
- BJ:** Everything else has—well, I was wondering about that because it sounded as if people from here went into high school in Amherst all those years.
- ML:** They did.
- BJ:** So what actually was different? I think, as I remember, too, the superintendent came out here. So what changed?
- ML:** They had to build a new building. There was a new high school built at that time in Amherst. And it meant a big bond issue and so on and so forth. So proportions of the financial responsibility had to be worked out between the towns. And Pelham came out smelling like a rose on that one because Amherst was extremely eager to have those towns in with them. If they had not, Amherst would have had to do it alone. But Pelham got a very small portion of that thing to start with.
- BJ:** Before that, what did they do, pay tuition on each student who went to Amherst?
- ML:** Yes, exactly.
- BJ:** I see. That's what I wasn't clear about. And I wasn't sure—the relationship is unusual because I know from working up here part time in the school, you're part of Amherst, you get hired that way, you know, same superintendent, you use a lot of the same things. And yet, it's separate, you know, when it comes down to
- ML:** That's right. We have the same superintendent, but the curriculum was not completely integrated.
- BJ:** Did your son go to Pelham School?
- ML:** Yes, he did. Then he started Amherst High School, but we sent him later to Vermont academy, after a year here, maybe two years. I've forgotten.
- BJ:** When he went to school up here, then that was the building prior to this brick building.
- ML:** Oh yes.
- BJ:** In between the one that burned and....
- ML:** Right. The first two grades were here, and the fifth and sixth. First and second and fifth and sixth were here. Third and fourth were up at the Rhodes School. And he went through that process.

BJ: Do you remember—oh, excuse me, go ahead.

ML: You were asking a bit back about the controversies, and I brought up the school business as being one of the big things that was divisive as well. Of course, there was the business of the proposed dog track in Pelham which you probably heard about.

BJ: Only from Bea Smith, she mentioned that.

ML: Yes, well, somewhere along the line—it was after the war—there were three or four people—outsiders of the town—men of some money, though little prestige, had raised the question of getting a strip of land on 202, somewhere near that King Street area—several acres—and having a dog track there. This horrified some of us, though before the thing became public, our selectmen at that time, had already given approval, which put us in a bind. This meant, of course, they could have squashed it right in the beginning by not giving approval. It didn't need to come before the town if the selectmen had said no. But they didn't, and therefore, it was thrown in the lap of the people of the town, and Al was a great scrapper on this business. In fact, led the fight against the dog track. And, for days and weeks there were headlines in the local papers—literally headlines about this. And we had hearings, and the hearings were very emotional and heated, but in the end, there had to be a referendum.

BJ: I asked her and she thought there had been.

ML: There was a referendum, and gosh, you know, everybody voted. We got everybody—all the voters—out, as we say from under the stones to do this, and we voted it down by a good margin. Which led some rather sour people to say, “Well, it didn't need all—we wouldn't have voted for it anyway, you know, it didn't need all this ‘hurrah boys’ to have defeated the thing.” Which was a lot of malarkey because, truly, people would not have got exercised about it. Already the selectmen were selling their bill of goods.

BJ: Why did they want to have it?

ML: They wanted it because they had been told that, oh, the tremendous amount of taxes that these people would pay would be beneficial to the town. Plus the fact that it would furnish a lot of jobs. So that some of the people around there already had their dream of a very prosperous hot dog stand at the corner of, you know, 202, and all of this, was what they were going to make money on, as individuals, and the town was going to benefit tax-wise. Never thinking, you know, that we had to hire all that—the policemen and what not to police the area. I thought that, there was a wonderful, at one of the hearings, there was a wonderful expression that a chap who lived here at that time—his widow is still here—Murray Peppard—got up and said, “You know,” he said, “We don't object to the dogs;

it's those pups that come along with them that we don't want." I never forgot that.

BJ: It would be a different kind of setting if you had a large dog track like you have now in New Hampshire. I mean, that it would be completely different up here.

ML: Oh absolutely. It would have changed the town entirely.

BJ: Oh yeah, lots of traffic and different. Oh my, can't even think of...

ML: Well, Al at that time, too, was a member of the Massachusetts Crime Commission, which is not longer in existence, and he worked with a Dwight Strong who was the executive secretary of that commission, and they were a tremendous help in feeding us ammunition. And, it was something that we just didn't want to have in Pelham, and there was a big fight, a concerted effort to defeat it. That was quite a stir. Other than that, the town has been quite a tranquil one.

BJ: You know, I have asked that question of everyone, and really, people do not remember anything that happened. They all kind of go, "Weeel, I can't remember," and it's like at the time all these issues like you say, are very big, and even this dog track issue has only come up, and last night when I interviewed Bea again—I interviewed her two years ago, and the person lost the tape, and she mentioned that. And even she couldn't remember, "Did we vote, did we whatever," and it just shows you how things of the moment can seem so crucial and even, not that many years later, you just don't even remember it. It helps you get some perspective on things, I think sometimes. Now, one of the things that people say all the time is that there were no different ethnic groups in this town. It was very Yankee, and they could name *the* Polish person or maybe a couple of French people later, or a few black families. Now, what do you remember of that when you arrived—you're taking about '39, right?

ML: I think that was true, I think that was true. I was never aware—of course, back then we were not as aware of ethnic groups anyway. I was not, growing up in Northampton. There were a few colored families in Northampton, very few. They were integrated into the high school, and school programs, we didn't think a thing about it. They were not apart. In fact, I remember later on going to one of Al's professional meetings with him, and I was talking with a colored fellow whom Al thought a great deal of, who was at that time teaching in Hampton Institute In Virginia. And, in our conversation, he mentioned that somehow he knew that I'd lived in Northampton, and he said, "I have a friend who came from Northampton" and he said he came down to Hampton Institute to teach. And I remembered this chap—he had played football on our football, high school football team—and what not, and he said, he bused this phrase, he said, "He had a very difficult time learning to live down here" when he came to teach in

Hampton. In other words, here was his first experience really, of separateness, down in the South where he went to teach.

BJ: But certainly in Northampton you would have been aware of Irish neighbors or Italian neighbors, sort of like that, well, up in Pelham. It sounds like it was mostly Yankee farmers, been here a long time or from Vermont.

ML: Well, that's true.

BJ: It wasn't like Hadley where you had a lot of Polish people—stayed kind of set.

ML: And in the Market Street area of Northampton, this was where there was a concentration of Italian people. But, as far as going up through the schools is concerned, there was no separateness. And, of course, as an adult, most of my adult life has been here.

BJ: I think out in Pelham there weren't the jobs to bring in people from anywhere else, and most of the people here went someplace else to work, or maybe the fish rod factory, or maybe had to work out of town. It was not the place to come to. It wasn't good for farming, wasn't good for industry. And I think it was, I don't know who it was, Mr. Keyes maybe mentioned, "Well, it really wasn't—it was just a nice place to live" you know, there wasn't a lot happening up here as far as chance to work or anything. Had to go to Amherst.

ML: No, there certainly wasn't much opportunity here, if any.

BJ: You're going to be on the tape Duke.

ML: Stop scratching, Duke, Duke.

BJ: That's funny. This good microphone will pick up everything. You were starting to say after I turned it off that when you first moved here there wasn't anything here.

ML: We spoke about the lilacs, you see, which now this place is noted for. When we first bought the land there was nothing here. Every blade of grass up around the house, all the shrubs, the driveway, every stone, was put here by Al. There was nothing except meadow out front, and woods up here. And so, whatever he has crete4d on this place, he did himself.

BJ: When you say it was meadow....

ML: Down the first part there. Over a period of years, I think it had been used for pasture for people who lived nearby and who brought their cows in here. Because I remember down at the end of our meadow here was a little well. It was a very small thing, not more than a yard across and I don't think very deep, but nit was at

least a water hole where these cattle had had water. But, there was nothing. There was no driveway coming to the house, this was something that Al created. And then, wanting to expand more as far as the landscaping was concerned, he brought samples of our soil to the university to find out what in their judgment would grow best here—would do anything, because, of course, the soil was terrible. And they gave him—they named a few things, among which were lilacs. And, as we began to appreciate what he had put in—fortunately, he had started with some very nice varieties, which are still classics, and this made us realize that there were a lot more lovely lilacs that were possibly available. So he began writing to people who knew something about this. It was his way of doing things—he always studied what he was going to do—and there was a man up on the—in a little town near Tarrytown on the Hudson who was quite a renowned lilac grower, who was getting quite elderly, and wanted to dispose of a great many of his collection. Name was Rothman, and so, Al made a deal with him. He took his trailer up there attached to the car and brought back loads of these things, which was the main start of our collection. Since then, of course, he belonged to the International Lilac Society, went to the meetings, and we have specimens from most of the large arboreta around the country now. Of course, we won't be adding to it now.

BJ: It will take a lot of care. How did you work that out this spring?

ML: Well, we've got to begin to clip all those blossoms that came this year.

BJ: That's what you're supposed to.... Thank you, I'll go home and clip my blossoms. I wasn't sure.

ML: It's a tremendous task. And we'll have to hire kids who want to earn a little to come and clip blossoms. Of course, they've grown so high, many of them, in spite of the fact that Al tried to keep them clipped back. And this you must do in lilac culture, and most of the authorities say, massacre your lilacs.

BJ: Oh.

ML: So it is going to be a task. My son, James, is expressing a lot more interest in them than he did when his father was here, because I think he feels a compulsion to keep up the collection at this point.

BJ: I can understand that.

ML: So this last year we took up none at all of the little suckers. Al had a thing about grafted lilacs, he wouldn't have one on the place.

BJ: I remember he said that. I came out, you may remember, to take a picture for the Amherst Record at one point when they were having me do that and talked to him

a little bit, and I remember something about that, or else I read that in one of his interviews. I don't know which.

ML: Well,, you see, things like fruit and roses and what not have to be grafted pretty much to give any sturdiness to the plant. But not so with lilacs. They're very apt to die off at the graft. And, of course, if they send up suckers,, they're not true to the mother plant.

BJ: What do you do with a sucker?

ML: Now, with ours?

BJ: If one sees a sucker, what is one supposed to do? Because I have some....

ML: If you don't know that they're on their own roots you just cut it off.

BJ: Okay.

ML: Don't do anything with it.

BJ: And if they're on their own roots?

ML: If they're on their own roots,, they're true to their own plant. We take them up and pot them. Or put them in a little potting bed.

BJ: We've moved them, you know, sometimes over to other parts of the area there just to see what will happen. So, well, we're on the right track. I was finding blooms—we had two bushes that did not bloom. They're about three years old. I don't know if this is common or not.

ML: Yes, it is. You never can tell when they will blossom. We have big plants now out there in our little bed that haven't blossomed, and we have little bitty, less than twelve inches high that have blossomed. So when people say, well, how long do you think it will be before this plant will blossom, I cannot tell them. Well, we took up none of these suckers this year. But James is wanting to next year. The reason we did it was because Al couldn't bear to mow down these rare varieties. And it was a rather costly operation, even though we sold them for a little something, didn't begin to pay for what it cost to dig them up,, with help, buy the potting soil, buy the pots. But at least Al felt that he was distributing them. And this was kind of a thing with him.

BJ: Do you do a lot of gardening and this kind of thing, too?

ML: No, I don't. I don't have much of this in my blood.

- BJ:** It has to come in your blood, you think? What are your interests? You're interested in historical things, I can... Have you collected antiques and that kind of thing?
- ML:** Well yes, we have some pieces that are rather nice. That table aside you is a genuine Sheraton.
- BJ:** Beautiful table.
- ML:** But mostly, in large, they're just some family pieces that we made do, you know. We don't have a lot of choice furniture. But I was on the Historical Commission until I had an illness a couple of years ago. I thought that at that time our big project was landscaping the Town Hall complex up there, and I felt they needed all the help they could get, and they couldn't get any help from me for several months at that time. So I resigned from that. And I would say now they have a good, sound Commission, and it's the Society that I'm worried about. There's some awfully good people in it, but so few. And, if the Society goes down the drain, I don't know what is going to keep up the buildings, and the tradition of town.
- BJ:** I don't know—it seems kind of revitalized though to me, maybe in different ways. I think having the concerts and having people go into the building and see it more...
- ML:** Well, of course, Paul Berube is a marvelous leader, and he has all these wonderful ideas, and will, no question about it, spark the thing, but he doesn't have much time. I mean, already he has threatened that he didn't think he could do this next year, you know, be president next year. Well, who will be?
- BJ:** Yeah, well, there's a lot of that dull work that has to be done to really keep the thing going.
- ML:** There're not enough people that are active. There're a lot of people who express interest, you know, and oh, they'll say, "They've done marvelous things to the old buildings up there," and so forth and so forth, but they're not in there pitching too. Not that one needs to do a lot of work to be active in a little group like that. But at least they could come to meetings and carry a little bit of the load. And this isn't happening.
- BJ:** You feel it's different from when it was... When did it start, about fifteen years ago or so?
- ML:** I don't know. I wasn't one of the charter members. I'm not sure. Probably about that. It must have taken longer than that to reconstruct and renovate that old museum up there. Why, it was in shambles. Have you seen the old pictures?

BJ: I have, but it's been awhile. Some of these things I saw before I got as interested. I've only been—this is my fifth year in Pelham, so some of the things I saw when I first came here. Then, when I got more interested in doing things like this, I have to go back and look at them in context with things that I've learned.

ML: Well, the walls were down to the lathe, the ceiling was down on the floor. But the job that they did—and I was not par of that—I was not a member then, I didn't know really what was going on—we were still very much involved in the college—is unbelievable. People like Col. Foerster, Roy Hawley, and of course Bea Smith and those gals were on the scene. They did a tremendous job. Took the old pews that were all apart and put them together and painted them and put them back where they belonged. The building was a disgrace. They had boarded up the windows, and it was just an awful eyesore up there.

BJ: But they used the Town Hall all the time for things.

ML: They used it up until the school was built down here for the town meetings, and then, fortunately, we did have the school to turn to because the population had grown to the point where the town meeting could no longer be accommodated upstairs, for reasons of fire hazard, etc.

BJ: It's still nice to have it when they had it downstairs there back in the winter. It was freezing. Everybody was very cold, but it did give a different atmosphere to the meeting. There's something about sitting in the gym up at the school...

ML: It's very sterile.

BJ: And people were all kind of huddled there, and, of course, that was the business about fighting Proposition 2 ½ so everybody was either on one side or the other, you know, and it made you feel like you were participating more, I think. You had to keep your adrenalin going so you wouldn't freeze.

ML: Well, of course, when we had the town meetings upstairs, there were the two lovely stoves going all the time, and if you sat near a stove you cooked on one side, but if you had to sit near the wall, you froze.

BJ: I think somebody else mentioned that—the difficulty.

ML: But it was picturesque, and there was atmosphere. Well, we like to maintain the tradition of having one town meeting a year up there, but we must use the downstairs, and it's usually when they throw in an extra town meeting that, not the annual, that we can hold it there. And they've been in the fall when the frost was already on the pumpkin, and it was cold.

BJ: Sometimes they've been small because they're just a little extra meeting, but this one was a big one.

INFORMATION SHEET

M. Carlton Robinson

Born: July 22, 1916

Place of Birth: Pelham, MA

Mother's Name: Marion Richardson

Father's Name: Raymond C. Robinson

Spouse's Name: Ann Robinson

Date of Interview: February 16, 1981

BJ = Barbara Jenkins, Interviewer

CR = Carlton Robinson

Original transcription by Peggy Hepler

BJ: I guess that's what everybody says about you. I have to talk to you because you lived in the Kingman Tavern, or did you, were you born there, or ...

CR: Yes.

BJ: You were. Right there. It's right across, it was right across from the Town Hall.

CR: Right in that corner lot there by the stop light, on the east side of the road.

BJ: And I know somebody said it seemed too bad they had to move that because it really didn't get in the way of Quabbin or anything. What was the deal with that?

CR: Oh, I don't know. When my parents sold it to Quabbin they promised never to disturb it, but you know how things go, and a few years afterwards they sold it, and it was dismantled and moved. The Adrianses down there have the majority of it.

BJ: That's what I understand. They used it for a chicken house?

CR: It's used for a shop and a garage now, and the upper story's a hen house.

BJ: So you sold it to Quabbin with the agreement it would never be torn down, but you had to move out of it, was that the deal?

CR: Yeah.

BJ: 'Cause it really didn't seem to be in the way very much.

CR: It wasn't, and it was old and historical—a landmark. Originally it was an old tavern for the stagecoach stop between Northampton and Boston.

BJ: And you said you were born there. That was like what? 1917? '16?

CR: 1916.

BJ: I checked your age, but I didn't subtract right. And your parents, had they been from this area, or where did they come from?

CR: My father was born here in Pelham. My mother came from Revere, Massachusetts. My father was born down in West Pelham by that church, and his father came down from Poultney, Vermont.

BJ: What town?

CR: P o u l t n e y. Not Putney, but Poultney.

BJ: So you've been here quite awhile, your family.

CR: Yeah. My great grandfather moved down here from Vermont, my grandfather was born there. I don't know how old he was. So I have a great grandfather and great grandmother buried here in the Pelham cemeteries, besides great cousins, uncles.

BJ: When you lived in that house, had it been a private residence before your family took it, or had it been a tavern?

CR: It was always a private residence that Kingman, that built nit, it was his private residence, but he also operated it as a tavern and a stagecoach stop. And then he sol it to Willard Keith, K-e-i-t-h.

BJ: The other name was Cayman?

CR: The original owner? Kingman.

BJ: Oh sure, Kingman.

CR: And then my grandfather bought it from Willard Keith. So it only had three owners. It was built in 1798.

BJ: When you lived there though, was it used as a tavern anymore then?

CR: No.

BJ: So the Kingmans used it as a stagecoach place and a tavern, and the Keiths, did they use it just for their residence?

CR: Just for a residence. We only used it for a residence. My grandfather, that was my maternal grandfather and grandmother, that bought it, not my father's father.

BJ: The ones that came from Revere.

CR: They came here from Revere.

BJ: Oh, the whole family came, not just your mother. I see. What was their name?

CR: Richardson.

BJ: And somebody told me that there was a big dance floor up there or something?

CR: Up on the second floor, the second story, it was fifteen feet wide and about forty-five feet long. All one room.

BJ: Did you leave it like that?

CR: Yes.

BJ: What did you use it for?

CR: Well, we used it for family gatherings at Christmas and Thanksgiving. We'd have thirty-five or forty people for thanksgiving. And we used it for dancing. We never used it for a dining area, but we used it for dancing and parties. It would hold so many people.

BJ: I've heard that there were a lot of dances around, in different people's homes, parties; I think you did that a lot more.

CR: We used to have them there in that room, on a Saturday or a holiday. Not every Saturday I don't mean, but occasionally. Once or twice a year or something.

BJ: I'll bet that was a popular place.

CR: I had my party there on my sixteenth birthday, in that room. It had hard wooden benches around all four sides of it, except for the area occupied by the two fireplaces and a pass-through bar.

BJ: Did the house have a lot of rooms in it, other rooms?

CR: It had fifteen rooms. I think there were forty-five windows in it, eight fireplaces.

BJ: Did you live in the whole thing, did your family take up....

CR: Oh yes.

BJ: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

CR: I only had two sisters.

BJ: Wandering around....

CR: We had plenty of space to ourselves.

BJ: Yes, I'd say.

CR: My grandparents lived there after my grandfather retired. And we always had a hired man on the farm and a hired girl, we called them, to help mother with housework. So there'd be seven or eight of us all the time.

BJ: So that was a farm, then, that's what your father did?

- CR:** That was a farm.
- BJ:** How much land did you farm?
- CR:** Well, we had a hundred acres here with this farm and then over by Gate 11, no Gate 10 we had another farm there with a hundred acres, a little over a hundred acres.
- BJ:** Was that a large farm for Pelham?
- CR:** Well, yes, it was large. It wasn't all open fields, you know, that you could use for hay crops or produce. Half of it was pasture land and wood land.
- BJ:** Now, with the house being up here on the corner, did the land then go down towards the stream down there?
- CR:** The majority of it was on the east side of 202, which is the other side of 202. This land here was part of it. There were 13 acres on this side. This is part of the 13 acres.
- BJ:** So you sort of went around behind the church and the town hall.
- CR:** Behind the church and the town hall and across 202, and it went clear down to the Shutesbury Road, where you turn to go up to Shutesbury, where Jerome lives now. And it went down over the hill into Quabbin, and down this way a ways, east through the woods...
- BJ:** One thing I wanted to ask you to see if I could get straight in my mind, I know that 202 did not go straight like it does now, and I was trying to get some idea of what the road looked like. There was a Twig Hill Road, as I understand, that went...
- CR:** That's the next one on the right up here. Just beyond the filling station.
- BJ:** And it went down to Quabbin?
- CR:** It went down to Quabbin.
- BJ:** It connected, at that time it went to where, like Prescott?
- CR:** It went down into Pelham Hollow, and then you hit the other roads down there that branched north and south and you could also go across the river there, at a bridge, and go up into Prescott.
- BJ:** And then Twig Hill Road also went up into Shutesbury?

CR: And it curved back around north, and comes back and crosses 202 up here about a mile, and it wandered in and out by the old Poor farm.

BJ: Oh, there was a, that was Shutesbury's Poor Farm?

CR: Shutesbury's Poor Farm, yeah, just over the Pelham line, and it came out up on the hill that goes up to Shutesbury from 202. It goes up to Shutesbury Center.

BJ: It's no longer a road.

CR: Oh no. You can walk through it, and parts of it you can drive through now with a four-wheel drive vehicle.

BJ: It ran sort of parallel to Shutesbury Road, in a way.

CR: Well, no. The old roads, you know, they followed the path of least resistance. They'd go around a hill rather than over it, you know. Route 202 from Belchertown....

BJ: What was it like?

CR: Well, of course it wasn't Route 202 then. It was just a dirt road.

BJ: Did it follow basically the same....

CR: More or less. If you drive Route 202 now, slowly, you can see the old road. First it will be on one side of 202, right near 202, and then it'll be on the other side of 202. As I say, it wandered, like a cow path—followed around, which you can see an awful lot of it yet. I could show you. In fact, when was it, just two or three weeks ago, my wife and I were coming home from Springfield, and I showed her a lot of it. She had seen it before but forgotten where it was. You can see wide, flat places and stone walls, there was always a stone wall beside the old country roads, you know. And sometimes it'll be right on the edge of 202, within just a few feet, and sometimes you can see it over in the woods a hundred yards away or less.

BJ: Well, I know, I've walked down this road. What would have been the name of the road that went by your house down the hill?

CR: Well, we always called it Pelham Hollow Road.

BJ: And then the East School is about a mile down that road? Yes? Now, what else was down there? There was something, Boynton's store, is it called?

CR: That was right here, by the Gate.

BJ: Right up here.

CR: Right up here.

BJ: Okay. That's another thing I get into. It's my debates with some of the people who've lived around here for a while. They claim there was no store up here. There was only Wilson's store and the one down where Knight's is now. And I said I knew, because Mrs. Adriance said her mother was the postmistress for awhile, and things like that.

CR: This was a store and a post office.

BJ: Right up here on the other side of the tavern, say?

CR: Just the other side of our old tavern.

BJ: What else was up here at that time?

CR: Nothing for industry, or anything.

BJ: But like several houses, or

CR: Just several houses, farm buildings, barns...

BJ: Right up here toward the top?

CR: Yeah. There was three or four right across the street on the other corner of the intersection, and we had a house and two barns and two, three sheds, and just below us was the Boynton house, the man that owned the store and post office. He had a house and a barn, and right below it on the same piece of land was the store and post office, and that had a carriage house and a small barn with it. My father bought those buildings when Quabbin tore them down, and we moved them for our use, the store and the barn.

BJ: And then, like the school was a mile down; was there much between those houses on the corner and say, the school, or....

CR: There was only one house between Boynton's store and the school on that road. That was the old Ely place, where John Ely lived. And below that, a few hundred yards, was the school house.

BJ: Were there then quite a few families on down?

CR: Then down below the school there was only one more house, the Frosts that lived down quite a ways beyond, and below that there was one more house before you

came to the intersection of four corners down by the river. But there were about a, maybe less than half a dozen houses between here and...

BJ: So that school was down there; why was it down there then if there weren't that many families it was drawing on?

CR: Well, there were several families lived down by the river, down in Quabbin Hollow, or Pelham Hollow. But there were only two or three houses on the road between here and there. Originally, that school was right here beside my house. And pupils from down in Quabbin Hollow, Pelham Hollow had to come up here, which was two miles.

BJ: Okay, what period of time would it have been up here? When would they have moved it, do you know?

CR: Early 1800s sometime.

BJ: Early, oh. So when Sally Shepard's talking about going to school, she's going to down there. To the East School, not up here.

CR: She taught, she wasn't a pupil.

BJ: Yes.

CR: A pupil? Well, she might have gone when it was here, beside my house here.

BJ: No, her aunt taught there. At the time, when she was going to school.

CR: Where did Sally live at that time? Over here on 202?

BJ: Yes.

CR: She probably went down there after it was moved. Because it would be closer to where she lived than the other school.

BJ: Then she said that at one point it was too far for her to walk by herself before her sister started school, so then she boarded with her aunt down the hill, and went to the West Pelham School. It was interesting when she told me about that, because her parents didn't want her walking that far by herself. So then it sounded like people from about half way down went to this school and then farther the other way on 202 would have gone to that South School.

CR: I started to tell you when it was up here and the pupils had come up from way down in the Hollow, it was too far, and they'd complain, so they picked it up, bodily, and moved it one mile down, which would have been halfway between

- here and there. So some of these children had to walk also, but those others didn't have to walk so far.
- BJ:** When you were growing up, were there like sawmills and things down in Bobbin Hollow, or what was down there then?
- CR:** The Whipples had a sawmill down there which was operating. The charcoal kilns had been disbanded and they were still standing, but they weren't used in my time.
- BJ:** Those were where, exactly, again?
- CR:** They were up the north road from Pelham Hollow.
- BJ:** That it meant it was toward...
- CR:** Well, if I show you on the map, you can't hear it on the recording.
- BJ:** Right, that's right. But the north road would go north...
- CR:** ... toward Atkinson Hollow, and toward New Salem. And up that road there were the charcoal kilns. Whipples had a sawmill there, in use. The old bobbin factor was gone, then, just the foundation remained of it, in my time. Other than that, there were only farms there, small farms. Where people lived. There were quite a few houses down there on the river road on this side. There wasn't anything over on the other side of the river in Pelham Hollow except the remains of the Conkey Tavern.
- BJ:** Oh, that was on the other side.
- CR:** That was on the east side of the river. And then the road went up to Prescott Hill.
- BJ:** Did you ever do any sledding on that hill, like Mrs. Adriance talks about? And Mr. Burrows talked about zipping down there one time.
- CR:** Sure did. Yeah, we used to slide down there at night in the wintertime. We didn't slide too much on a dark night, but if it was a nice bright night, you know, we'd go out and sled in the moonlight. I can't remember if it was Ethel Cushman, which is Cushman now, she was Thornton when she was teaching school, or whether it was Wysocki girl, North Amherst, that was teaching there at that time, but she was staying at our house, she boarded there during the week, and we got out there one night, and got her out with us, and I don't know, I think she pretty nearly fainted, she got so scared. We used to go fast, it was nice and icy and hard.
- BJ:** How long a run is that?

- CR:** It's two miles. You can only go once or twice, you know, and a long walk back, hauling that big double rip behind you. You could only slide once or twice.
- BJ:** I know Mrs. Cushman mentioned she did board with you, so you had other people along the way?
- CR:** We had one other teacher, Wysocki girl, she was single. Can't remember her first name.
- BJ:** Did you go to school for them, as a rule?
- CR:** Yes. I didn't go to Ethel Cushman. Now wait a minute. Yes, I did. My first teacher was Georgiana Cook, who lived across the street from us. My second teacher was Ethel Thornton. Then the Wysocki girl came in there after Ethel.
- BJ:** What was school like down there?
- CR:** I don't know. All eight grades. 'Bout twenty-five or thirty children. One room. A wood shed and two outhouses.
- BJ:** Were you pretty much by yourselves down there during the day, didn't see too many other people?
- CR:** Only people going by occasionally, and at that time, of course, there wasn't much people going by on the road, much for traffic. Ah, you'd see a few, few automobiles, few horses and wagons, but we didn't see too many people all day long.
- BJ:** Do you remember much about school? Any special things that stand out? Everybody always laughs when I ask that question. It's funny.
- CR:** Well, I remember one thing I got chastised for severely. The superintendent was from Amherst, he'd come around once a week. He had an old Reo automobile. I never liked him. I don't think very many of us liked him anyway. He wasn't a hard man, but we just didn't like him. Well, he came late one afternoon before school was dismissed, and we, all the children, went out and we started to walk home, and there was a small piece of wood with a nail sticking in it, part of the firewood. I took it and I propped it right against his back tire, and he had to back up, he couldn't go forwards, because he was near the school. I was hoping he'd back over it, and get a flat tire. Somebody saw me do it, one of the other children, and they squealed on me. So, on his way back to Amherst that afternoon, he stopped at my house and had a talk with my mother and me also. I didn't do it any more.
- BJ:** How old would you have been?

CR: Let's see. I only went five grades there. I started when I was five years old. I was about fourth grade, so I was about nine or ten years old.

BJ: Old enough to figure out those things anyway. Now, you know Mrs. Partridge?

CR: Yes.

BJ: Every time I tell her that people talk about what they did as tricks in school, she gets very upset. She wants to know that people remember how they were taught, and I said nobody ever talks about that, they just talk about the trouble they got into. Do you remember anything about how you were taught to read or any of those kinds of things?

CR: No. Of course, a lot of it when you're a good eight classes in one small room, it's not so much what you're taught specifically, as what you pick up from the other children being taught in the other grades. Sometimes you learn a lot more. You're ahead of yourself actually,, 'cause you overhear what the teacher is teaching the other people. I don't remember exactly how I was taught. I was taught to behave myself.

BJ: You went to only five grades there. What happened then?

CR: Then I went down here to the city school, we called it.

BJ: Where the Rhodes Building is?

CR: No.

BJ: Oh, you mean all the way down.

CR: Where the new school is down there. But it wasn't that new school there then.

BJ: Yeah, I know. But why did you go down there?

CR: Well, my mother thought I'd get a better education down there.

BJ: The school was still down there.

CR: Oh yes, this one was still...

BJ: How did you get transported, then?

CR: Horseback.

BJ: You rode your own horse?

CR: My father bought me a horse and I rode back and forth every day. I kept the horse in Morgan's barn right beside the school there.

BJ: Was that unusual to change schools like that?

CR: Yes, I think it was unusual. I was the only one in Pelham that was doing it.

BJ: Were there children your age up here in this school?

CR: Yes. My mother just thought that I'd get a better education. I don't know why really. WE had pretty good teachers up here.

BJ: Your sisters stayed at this school?

CR: No. My sister's six years younger than I am, and at that time she was in Springfield with my grandparents. And, she only went to school in Pelham one year. She went down there with me, and then I had to switch from going horseback to taking her in a buggy. I used a buggy instead of riding horseback.

BJ: So you lived up here, and when did the business about Quabbin begin to enter into people's talks?

CR: They started building that in the early thirties—'31, '32 when they started the actual construction on it. They'd been doing surveying for years.

BJ: I know. Had you expected all along to have to move?

CR: Oh yeah, we knew we would have to move.

BJ: What was the feeling on your parents'...

CR: We sold the property five or six years before we moved out.

BJ: Oh, so you lived with this all the time, that you were going to move.

CR: We lived with it for years.

BJ: What did your parents feel about this, do you remember them talking about it or anything?

CR: Well, they didn't like the idea, but you couldn't fight it. There were only about one or two people that went to court about the settlement they got for their property. And they didn't get much more out of it than as though they'd have taken what they were offered in the first place. 'Course property wasn't as high then as it is today, you know. And, if they offered you a decent price for your farm, the best thing to do was to take it. So you didn't get robbed. No, you got a

- fair price. About the only one that fought it was Whipple down there, and the golf club over in Greenwich.
- BJ:** They were the only ones that fought it?
- CR:** They were the only ones that fought it and went to court over it.
- BJ:** Why do you thin there wasn't more sense that you could do anything about it?
- CR:** Well, in the first place, a lot of us couldn't afford to. You couldn't afford to hire an attorney and go to court, you know. You got along. In the thirties we had a depression, don't forget. And, if you're going to have any work at all, and anything for an income you felt fortunate. And you couldn't afford to squander it on a lawyer...
- BJ:** I've been interested in that because I think a lot of people today look back and think that there would have been a big fight. You know, like now if you put nuclear power plants in, everybody's jumping around and...
- CR:** Well, if that happened right now, it would be. Everyone would give them a hassle.
- BJ:** You thing there was more of a feeling you can't fight Boston then than there is now?
- CR:** I think so.
- BJ:** And I guess you've mentioned something that people have brought up. You got good money for your place. And maybe you were happy to get it, and...
- CR:** In that day and age it was good money, yes. There were a lot of people that didn't even put up an argument if they were offered anything for their old farm, or if they didn't have a farm, just a dilapidated house. They took the money and they moved out with no arguments at all because they had something to go somewhere else to live and buy a better house or something. Lots of people a lot better off from it.
- BJ:** Yeah, I think that's something that's hard to understand in retrospect. You know, looking back on it, everybody would have hated to have to move, but my sense is, as I talk to people, there were people who were happy to have a chance to get...
- CR:** There were some people who were very happy to move.
- BJ:** And your parents you think just kind of, you know, it'd been an idea that was around for awhile, and you didn't ever hear them talking about being angry about having to move?

- CR:** No, the only thing we were angry about was when they disposed of the whole tavern.
- BJ:** Yeah.
- CR:** We couldn't do anything about that either. We didn't have a guarantee in black and white that it wouldn't be torn down, we just had a promise—word of mouth—verbally that it would stay, you know.
- BJ:** Why did they need to tear down everything that was not involved directly in....
- CR:** Well, they tore it down to get rid of paying taxes on those buildings for one thing, and I suppose to stop the fire hazard, even though they bwer4e empty and abandoned, they could very easily catch on fire some night, on Halloween night or something.
- BJ:** Or they couldn't let people live there just, even though it was on the edge of the property. It just wasn't legal, or....
- CR:** The only ones I know of around here that lived on the property was, ah, Don Fennessey down here. He lived on the edge. Of course until Quabbin was completed, they let a lot of those houses out for rent that were above the water line. People rented them for summer places and year-round places even until Quabbin was fully completed and filled up. And then they put them out. They wouldn't rent them any more, and they sold them and tore them down.
- BJ:** They couldn't leave anybody in there, just, I suppose, it's a legal kind of thing.
- CR:** I suppose so.
- BJ:** Was there a lot more activity around up here when they were building Quabbin? Or did they mostly come in from the other side?
- CR:** There wasn't much more activity here.
- BJ:** No workmen going by or anything like that?
- CR:** Ah, several men from town they went to work over there for Quabbin, different kinds of jobs—laborers, foremen, get a foreman's job or a laborer's job, or some of them even went to work with their own trucks for the contractors that were working there.
- BJ:** I'm sure, like you say, during the Depression that was probably good for a lot of people.

CR: Oh yes, a lot of people got jobs. And there were some people who worked there up until the time they retired after they got a job at Quabbin. I went to work for them when they first started, cutting brush. I went to work in July. I worked half a day. I worked four hours, and I didn't like the foreman I had, and we were working in a valley in the hot sun and the dirt. I worked four hours and I quit. I worked until noontime.

BJ: How old were you then?

CR: Oh, sixteen or seventeen, eighteen, something like that. I forgot.

BJ: You mentioned that you went down to the school down here, then did you go on into Amherst?

CR: Then I went to Amherst Junior High School. And I went to Smith Vocational School in Northampton.

BJ: What did you do....

CR: I never went to college.

BJ: What did you do after you got out of high school, besides cutting brush for half a day?

CR: Well, different jobs here and there. I worked for Lane Construction Co., and I went to work in a garage as a mechanic, three or four garages. And then later in my life I went into machine shop work until I quit from that and went to work for myself as a builder an carpenter.

BJ: That's what you've done most of your....?

CR: That's what I still do.

BJ: I didn't know what you did.

CR: My father was a carpenter before me. I learned it from him and started in business. He and I started together, my father and I, but he retired. We went into business for ourselves, but he only stayed with me for a year and then he moved to Florida, retired permanently.

BJ: Now your father's name was?

CR: Raymond.

BJ: He was involved in the beginning of the PTA, as I recall.

- CR:** He was? Oh, my mother was.
- BJ:** Both of them were, or something.
- CR:** Probably Dad was.
- BJ:** I heard their name. I think Sally mentioned it, Gladys Reed, people like that, that they were very involved in that.
- CR:** Dad used to be Assessor, Selectman, Highway Superintendent here in town. Mother was real active in the PTA and she was on the committee when they built the new Rhodes School down here. Choosing the architect and type of building and so on and so forth.
- BJ:** Have you been active in town politics at all?
- CR:** I was for awhile. I couldn't take some of the guff. I was Assessor, Cemetery Commissioner, but I thought when I was Assessor and got into the building that I was rather in a conflict of interest. I didn't feel it was fair to some of my customers in town to go in and remodel their house, or build them a new kitchen, and then come around the first of January and up their tax rate, their assessment. I didn't feel it was fair. So I stopped being Assessor.
- BJ:** You mentioned getting a lot of guff. What kind of problems do you run into when you try to be a town politician here?
- CR:** Well, there are all kinds. There are all kinds. Some people are all right. Some people complain. And I was never one to take very much complaining.
- BJ:** Mostly in your role as Assessor, is that where it came up on the taxes?
- CR:** That's where I was bothered the most. I never had any trouble. The only trouble I had when I was Cemetery Commissioner was from one of the men on the Finance Committee. The first year I was Cemetery Commissioner I didn't spend all the money we had to spend. No, the first year, I went over about \$13. And the second year I saved about \$50. I didn't spend. And both years I heard about it from a man on the Finance Committee, I won't mention his name.
- BJ:** No, that's okay.
- CR:** So then I said that's enough of that. I resigned from that job. You try to do things right and you aren't appreciated.
- BJ:** It's kind of hard in small towns sometimes, I think, to be in government. People think they can tell you how to do things. And it's hard.

CR: I'm too independent to be a politician. Too independent.

BJ: Do you take part in town meetings and things like that?

CR: I haven't for a long time.

BJ: What was it like when you did? Are there issues that you remember?

CR: No, no particular ones. The only one I remember in particular was the year Life Magazine set a photographer out and I'm in several photos of that. They were just the usual, the same thing every year.

BJ: I get the feeling nobody can ever remember any big thing, it's just you know the same thing, sort of, going on and on.

CR: Nothing really big.

BJ: When you were up here, living up here, were you aware of the other parts of town way down like West Pelham? Did you pretty much stay up in this area? It seems like the town's sort of divided into lower and middle and...

CR: Well, it was divided, but at that time I didn't have many people up here for friends my age, when I was younger. I got to going down the other end of town, and I got to going into Amherst. I'd go into Amherst Saturday on my horse to go to the movies. Horseback. I'd tie her out behind the theater and go to the movies Saturday afternoon, and then come back home. And then when I got into high school and junior high, of course, I met a lot more people and had a lot more friends. I knew everybody in town, but...

BJ: How would you get to know them? Did you go to church, did they come to the dances, where did you....

CR: Well, we went to dances together, and went to school together some of us. Young fellows get out on Saturday night, and they get to know each other. And got to know the girls too.

BJ: When you're older.

CR: When you're older.

BJ: When you were growing up, you said your father had the farm up here. Were you pretty self reliant, did you grow and raise most of the things you needed or was it a specialized farm?

CR: No, it was just a general, average country farm. We grew potatoes and corn. Of course we didn't grind our corn, have it ground into corn meal, but we used it for

cattle feed and horse feed. We had a large garden, cut our own hay, and Dad worked also for other people in the woods, hauling cordwood out and working sawmills with the horses.

BJ: I notice a lot of people had other jobs. Was it pretty hard to make it just on the farm?

CR: Well, you couldn't make it just on the farm alone unless you had a big specialized farm like down on Harkness Road, the Foote's farm, when they had cattle, a dairy farm—then you could make it, but just a small, general farm, you couldn't make it. You had to do outside work. My father worked in the woods for years with horses, and then when I got old enough I went with him. My summer vacations, I'd work in the woods. One summer I went up to New Salem and worked all summer alone in the woods at a sawmill with the horses. And then Saturdays, I'd help my father in the woods. Holidays, when I wasn't in school. What is that, an hour tape?

BJ: A half hour a side. Half hour on this side and then I turn it over. So, do you remember, everybody wants to know about the hurricane. Do you remember?

CR: I sure do. We worked for months after the hurricane in the woods, getting pine timber cleaned up and hauling it to the sawmill. I was out in it, the day that it happened. I went down here to the Wills. Do you know where the Wills live?

BJ: No.

CR: At the end of North Valley Road?

BJ: Oh sure, yes.

CR: Right by Don Clark's. Well, just below there, below Virginia Davis', right on the edge of her land there was a sand bank there. And I was down there getting a load of sand that day that the hurricane started in the afternoon. And a hired man and I were down there with a truck and we got it loaded up and started home with it, and a big pine tree, just below Virginia Davis' had blown across the road. So we had to get out and hook a chain on it and pull it around so we could get by. And then we got up here, and the shutters were flying off the church, and I went over and tried to secure some of the shutters. The skylight on the roof of our old tavern, we had a big skylight up there, that blew off in the wind, and I had to get up into the attic and get that tacked on secure. That went on for hours, that was quite a wind. It did a lot of damage around here. Not so much to the buildings, I don't recall any building that was really damaged. It blew down thousands and thousands of feet of timber. Nice pine timber.

BJ: So there was a lot of work for you people who had to work with wood.

CR: We worked in the woods for months after that, cleaning it up.

BJ: Most of that wood was used for firewood or building then?

CR: Nope, for building. They didn't bother much with the firewood. They let it stay there. But the pine and the hemlock, the big logs, saw logs, they cut and hauled to the mills. We worked down there for Amherst Water Co., and we worked for M.D.C. up in Orange and New Salem.

BJ: By the time you were growing up, there were a lot of woods back again then. Earlier it had been cut off pretty much in Pelham, and by the time you were...

CR: By the time I was born and a youngster, it was pretty much grown up again. And even now, today, I can see fields we used to cut hay on that's grown up to woods.

BJ: Let's turn this over now.

SIDE TWO OF TAPE

CR: ... except for the part over there that was wet and swampy and bushy, and over there further, the next two lots over was all hay field, and you go in there and find trees, six or eight inches through. In my time, that's only in forty years. I mean. When it used to be a hayfield until now.

BJ: There are certain topics I'd like to cover, and then I'll get back to other things you might want to talk about too. One of the things the school is kind of studying and they wanted me to ask about were different ethnic groups in town, and my sense was that everybody was pretty much English, Scotch-English, you know. Most of the names of the people that I interview are. They'll talk about Vic the Polander, or like there was one Polish person, or one something or other. Was that pretty much, I mean, you probably didn't think about it that much.

CR: That was pretty much—it was Scotch and English, Irish, a couple of families maybe inbred with a little American Indian in them.

BJ: Really? I've never heard...

CR: We started getting an influx, several French-Canadians.

BJ: What period of time would that be?

CR: In the thirties, twenties. Twenties, thirties. And Vic the Polander, he was one of the first Polish people in town. And there was old Martin, he was a French Canadian. He came down from Three Rivers, I think and he built a log cabin over here on 202. And he lived there, he was alone there, a widower, but he had a

niece and nephew that lived a mile or so from him. And we began to get an influx of other ethnic groups. There was one colored fellow that lived in Pelham before I was born. He was a state ward, I guess, and he lived across the street over here. I never, I didn't get to know him. He had left town. He was a musician. He plays with the Philadelphia Philharmonic Orchestra. He came back a couple of years ago to visit. But it was pretty much Yankees. We called ourselves Yankees.

BJ: You did?

CR: Vermonters.

BJ: Yes, it does seem like there's a sense that several people came from Vermont as a I go along. My Keyes' family, for example, is from Vermont.

CR: It's surprising, even today, to see the difference in the accent. People here in Pelham, and just go up the road eight or ten miles to New Salem, and there's a big difference in the accent of the people.

BJ: Really? What's the difference? What do you hear?

CR: Well, they talk more Boston, with the broad 'a' up there or Vermontish—there's a lot of difference. You talk to people and you can tell that they aren't from around here in Pelham. Everybody seems more or less to have the same accent, speak the same, but....

BJ: It all depends. Some of the older people they sound different you know again.

CR: Do they? I suppose it's because I'm used to it.

BJ: I think that's part of it too. So you were aware of being Yankees. That was a term that you would use. Was there a sense that other people were moving in?

CR: Yes, and I think we resented it too.

BJ: Really?

CR: Yes, I really do. We didn't take to newcomers at all. You people, you yourself, you know that you have been here only a few years, are fortunate in a way that you were accepted. I'm not complaining, I don't mean that, but not too many years ago, when I was younger, a new person in town, didn't appreciate it at all.

BJ: Why was that?

CR: I don't know. Just stick-in-the-muds, I guess. You know, we didn't want to change. I think everybody's gotten over that.

- BJ:** Now I think that the new people are seen as just putting taxes up. Things like that. I hear a lot of talk, anti-professors, they're the ones that want things.
- CR:** Yes, there's that resentment also.
- BJ:** Were you aware when the town started to grow, or was it something that happened so slowly that you just....
- CR:** It just happened gradually. A new family here, a new family there. It really didn't start to grow too much until the last twenty years. In fact, at one time it went downhill, the population, that I can remember. A lot of people moved out and went to the cities to find work you know, better jobs and employment.
- BJ:** Was that a certain time that you can remember that happened?
- CR:** Well, that was around the Depression, the thirties and early forties. In fact, I did myself. A few years I lived in Springfield. Couldn't find anything around here for work that you could earn anything at.
- BJ:** Were you ever involved in working at the fish rod factory?
- CR:** No, my father was, and my cousins. I don't think my grandfather ever worked there. But my father worked there and my cousins worked there. One cousin even worked there after it went to Montague, after it left Pelham. He was on the road selling, though.
- BJ:** Your father worked there in the winter time, kind of thing? And then in the summer worked the farm? Or how was it?
- CR:** Ah, I guess Dad worked there before he was married. He was a young man then, when he worked there. Then after he got married, he ran that store down in West Pelham for awhile. That isn't there any more. It was right opposite the church.
- BJ:** Oh, the one they talk about Bud Willson's father having at one time or something?
- CR:** Yes, that place. That's been gone for years now. He ran that store for several years. I delivered with the horse and buggy. We delivered way down into Pelham Hollow, the groceries, and...
- BJ:** Still living up here at that time, or...
- CR:** No, he lived down there.
- BJ:** That was before you were around.

- CR:** That's before, just about the time I was born, I guess.
- BJ:** And he wasn't farming then at the time he had the store?
- CR:** Not at that time.
- BJ:** Now we're talking about different ethnic groups and so forth. What about town characters? It seemed like there were enough hills around here to kind of protect some people that lived off and didn't have anything to do with the rest of the town. Do you have any memories of...
- CR:** Oh, I knew two or three. Andy Goff, did George Burrows ever speak of Andy Goff?
- BJ:** Yes, but I'm trying to place how. I can't think. The name is familiar.
- CR:** He was single. He was quite an old man even when I was young. But I can remember him. He was a horse jockey, buy and sell old nags; and he made, not home brew, but moonshine at home. He lived down the old Cranshaw place; right across from Virginia Davis' place, there's a road that goes in by that old pine tree, that big pine tree, and it goes almost a mile in there.
- BJ:** Yes, that's my sense. There were some roads in there, and there were people stuck out there that I've heard about.
- CR:** He was a character. He'd go out and get drunk in the horse and buggy, and he'd pass out in the buggy and the horse would take him home. They found him down there one morning, dead in the house. Then there was Alban Niles—he was another man all alone. He lived in just a tar-paper shanty. He had his lieft arm cut off below the elbow here, but he worked.
- BJ:** He lived where, down in Pelham Hollow?
- CR:** He lived over here on King Street. A little shack there. He worked for my father a lot. He had a harness affair that he'd put on his arm stump, and he could use an axe, a hoe, or a scythe. He worked in the fields, in the crops, in the woods. He was a hard-working old man. Oh, there were other characters, but I guess a lot of us were characters.
- BJ:** You never know when you're going to become the character, right? I guess all the big stuff with George Shaw was before your time, right? Just right before.
- CR:** Right before.
- BJ:** Did you hear stories about that?

CR: Oh yes, I heard about it. I don't remember when it happened.

BJ: It was 1912 I think. So nothing happened like that in your memory. No big story.

CR: There was two or three murders in town that happened before I was born. Of course, Shaw's wasn't a murder, that was a suicide.

BJ: He killed his wife first.

CR: He killed his wife first. But I mean his own. There was a murder right here in the old Hotel Pelham. And there was another one down by the cemetery on the road that goes up to Mr. Lincoln.

BJ: What were those things about? I'd never heard about those.

CR: More or less three-cornered affair, love affair murders I guess.

BJ: Local people?

CR: Yeah, they're all local people. I don't remember their names now because it happened before...

BJ: I never have happened to hear about those. This Hotel Pelham, was that there when you were growing up?

CR: No, that had burned.

BJ: 'Cause Mrs. Adriance talks about that. So it's interesting, like she's, she was around ninety, and you're like about...

CR: I'll be sixty-five.

BJ: There's that range of years that really makes a lot of difference. Like a generation, almost, of things that disappeared in that time;. And you mentioned someone being a state ward. I understand that the people on the corner up here had state wards.

CR: Yeah, they had state wards. He was Carto. C-a-r-t-o. She was a widow.

BJ: She's the one that lived where Wickwires live?

CR: She had state wards for years.

BJ: And evidently someone down the hill, now I've forgotten, Davis, or something like that had some...

CR: I guess they had state wars too, Davis. Davis was more or less related to me by marriage. His second wife was related to be somehow, I don't know where. I can't remember. 'Course there was another Davis family from there also. Luella Smith is a Davis.

BJ: Oh yes. She told me she started out here—her family did, or something.

CR: I knew her father—well. Hen Davis. We called him Hen. His name was Henry. Tall and lanky. He was a good old farmer. A good man. Real good man. I can remember him and his oxen. Think that's the only pair of working oxen I've ever seen in Pelham in my time. Hen Davis's last pair of oxen...

BJ: And he lived down toward the Hollow?

CR: He lived down where that school was. There's a road that turns right before you get to where the school was. And he lived the first farm up that road. If you keep on that road,, you come back out here at Gate 10. Which is over the next gate.

BJ: What did he use the oxen for?

CR: Farming.

BJ: Plowing?

CR: Farming, plowing hay. He also had some, a pair of horses, but he had the oxen, I can remember them. Yeah, I can remember when they used horses to scrape the dirt roads here in town, smooth them you know with a road grader. And, o course, we didn't have town trucks then, or town snowplows.

BJ: What did they do about the snow?

CR: Well, you let it lay. More or less, and packed it down. You'd take a bobsled, or a woodshod sled that they used to use in the woods.

BJ: What kind of wood?

CR: Woodshod sled. Shod with wood instead of...

BJ: Shod, oh.

CR: S-h-o-d. Instead of having iron runners on them, they had wooden runners. You'd take a land plow, a walking land plow, and pass them on each side of the sled, and that would make a furrow width, about two feet wide, 20 inches to two feet wide, in each wheel rut. And you'd wlak your team of horses down through. Sometimes it would be clear up to their bellies, the snow, you know, and just poke

- along, and open it up a little bit. And each time someone else went over, it got a little better and a little better until the next storm and start all over again.
- BJ:** That's when you were using horses. What happened with the first cars. How did they do the roads then?
- CR:** Well a lot of the time you didn't use your cars when you had snow. You couldn't, when it was bad, with the first cars. And then the town first got a snowplow that they'd use on an old Ford truck.
- BJ:** When would that have been? Early forties, or later than that?
- CR:** Thirties. I think the first snowplow, the town didn't even own a truck, but they bought a snowplow, and they put it on other people's trucks. That was a 1932 Model A Ford truck. They had one pushing behind the other.
- BJ:** 'Cause all these roads, it would have been a lot to open up.
- CR:** There were a lot of roads, a lot of roads. A lot more than at the present time.
- BJ:** Yes, up where I am, Robinson Road, Brewer Road—those roads. People disappeared from those places and, you know... Why do you think so many...just the farms weren't enough to support people, so they went into town, is that what happened?
- CR:** I guess do. 'Course my great-grandfather, his farm was down where you live, above your house up there, on the high tension.
- BJ:** Oh really?
- CR:** Up the hill there, up near the high tension.
- BJ:** Well, was it like on the Robinson Road there? That's why it's called Robinson Road? Oh boy, I'm really bright today.
- CR:** Yes, that's why it's called Robinson Road.
- BJ:** That's Amaziah?
- CR:** Amaziah, yeah.
- BJ:** 'Cause I read through things last night, that's why some things are fresher. So his farm was right up there. I've walked up that road; there are rocks, huge rocks. I don't know how they got carriages or anything over those places.
- CR:** Well, they aren't boulders, they're more or less exposed ledges aren't they?

BJ: Well, I guess, yes.

CR: 'Course some of them are sharp drop-off. Well, they kept them filled in where they were too bad, you know.

BJ: Oh, is that... that's how....

CR: You'd have a big exposed hunk of rock for ledge and if the dirt got away from the high side of it, they'd fill in some more dirt and try to make it smoother.

BJ: Did he live up there when you were around?

CR: No, he died before I was ever born. I don't remember Amaziah. He's buried right down here in Johnson Cemetery on North Valley Road.

BJ: So there wasn't any farm up there or anything when you were...

CR: I've been up there plenty, but there was no farm left in my time. It was all tumbled down.

BJ: Was he the last one to live there?

CR: He was the last one to live there.

BJ: So what happened in that kind of land? It just wasn't profitable to try to keep farming it for people to take over there, or....

CR: Probably, Probably he died and his sons maybe didn't want to stay there any more or something. I don't know. I never inquired too much about it. I've read what I could find about him, but...

BJ: How far back up is that place? I think I've walked up...

CR: Well, it's about half way between North Valley Road and where it comes out on the Shutesbury...Buffam Road.

BJ: What else was up there? Were there other houses that you remember?

CR: I don't know really. I haven't been through there for years. I used to ride through there on horseback. The last time I was up through there was in a blizzard, hunting deer. That was several years ago. And I got turned completely around in the blizzard, I couldn't see anything. I knew where I was, but I ended up going the wrong direction. I thought I was going back to the Buffam Road and I came down to your house, down on North Valley Road.

- BJ:** I don't like those hunters back there, because I never know. They wander out of the woods and say, "Oh, here I am."
- CR:** I never saw it snow any harder in my life than it was snowing that day.
- BJ:** Was it a lot different? Do you think the weather's changing in the last...is there a pattern you think? Winters aren't as hard?
- CR:** Seems to me they aren't as cold, or as much snow. I can remember we had snowstorms... The first year after Rt. 202 was finished, they had a blizzard there, oh that was terrible. The snow was piled up ten and twelve feet out there.
- BJ:** When was that finished?
- CR:** When did they finish 202? '30, '33, '34?
- BJ:** So that was built about the same time the Quabbin was being...
- CR:** Yeah, they built that just before Quabbin. I can remember when the mailman used to come around with the horse and buggy. He used to keep a horse in our barn. He'd start from Amherst with one horse in the morning, and go half his route up the edge of Shutesbury, about the way the mailman goes today except he didn't have so many stops, and he'd get to our house and change horses and finish the other half of the route in the afternoon with a fresh horse. I can remember him coming along one day in the winter time up on what is 202 now, before 202, beside the cemetery, he tried to get around a snowdrift there; he went clear up by the stone wall and tipped over the sleigh and his mailbag all over the place. I can remember I went down there and helped him pick it up. I used to take care of his horse for him, that he had in our barn. I'd curry it and feed it. He paid me for it. One day I'd have one horse, and the next day I'd have another horse. He had three horses. And he'd alternate them, every other day, so that they didn't have to work, only one half a day in three.
- BJ:** It's a lot different now. What kind of things do you think are the biggest differences between when you were growing up and now?
- CR:** The biggest differences?
- BJ:** Yes.
- CR:** Well, the first big difference is electricity. We didn't have it when I was a child—until I was eighteen or nineteen years old, before we had electricity. 'Course you had it down below. But we didn't have it up here. And then, of course, the automobiles. I started young to learn to drive. I was only about twelve or thirteen when I learned to drive in the cow pasture. I got my license when I was sixteen. I don't know. Electricity was the first big improvement.

- BJ:** What did you use, kerosene lamps and things like that?
- CR:** Kerosene lamps and gasoline lamps. Aladdinlamp. You know what they are? That's kerosene with a mantle.
- BJ:** Like Coleman lamps?
- CR:** No, with a tall chimney—no air pressure in a kerosene Aladdin lamp. But it has a mantle. It throwas a nice bright light. There's no waste to it. We had one of those, and a Coleman gasoline lamp that you pump up pressure in. 'Course we used ice for refrigeration.
- BJ:** Did you cut your own ice? Or, how did you get ice?
- CR:** We cut our own ice. Down here in this little pond, down right across from the Adriances. That belongs to the Weavers. We cut our ice down there.
- BJ:** How did you keep it, or you just went to get it when you needed it?
- CR:** We cut it in the wintertime. A whole ice house full. Stored it. It was insulated, yes.
- BJ:** How did you insulate it? Sawdust?
- CR:** Sawdust. The ice house was about 15 feet square, I would say. And it had an inside wall as well as an outside wall. If you know the way a frame house is built today? They have studs which are usually 2 by 4, but now they're going up to larger ones so hat they can put in more insulation. We had a wide space between the inner and outer walls,, and that was packed with sawdust. And then you'd put your ice in there, a layer of ice. You'd leave about a foot or more around the edge of the ice between that and the wall, and pack that with sawdust and cover it all with sawdust. It would stay in there all summer long. It would keep. When you wanted a cake of ice for the ice box, you'd go down and get it out and wash it off with water—wash the sawdust off of it and bring it in and put it in the ice box.
- BJ:** How much would you have to have for a summer?
- CR:** Well, we had several cows and we had to refrigerate the milk. Besides, we had two ice boxes—one for food and one for milk. Oh, I don't know. Ten or fifteen tons I would think offhand. I never really... We'd go down there for a week in the wintertime, when the ice was cut to be thick enough. Yeah,, I would say ten or fifteen tons of ice.
- BJ:** Now, since everybody had to have ice, were there enough ponds to go around? How did that work?

CR: Well, a lot of people didn't have ice. The only ones that I can remember up here was our family and the Adriances that had ice. The rest of them would once in awhile buy ice from you, if you'd sell them some, you know, one cake. They kept their milk and perishables, butter, down a well, you know—an old shallow well. They'd put their butter and milk in a bucket and drop it down the well; of course, not in the water, but down to the water level where it was cool. And some had springs, with a house shelter over it and keep their perishables in a spring house.. That's what the Kindahls have there now for a water supply, is a spring.

BJ: Oh really.

CR: It's a beautiful spring. A nice spring house that he built over it. But we had ice.

BJ: That's interesting. I've never heard that so thoroughly described. That was interesting. Now with your food preparation—your mother canned a lot?

CR: Yes, she canned. We canned meat, you know—cooked the meat in the jars, all kinds of vegetables and fruits, and of course she didn't buy so much fresh stuff then. You only bought what you would use up right away and then we had a butcher come around once a week, twice a week, two days a week, with a truck, an insulated box on the back, and buy your meet and fish from.... Fish on Fridays only, but I think he came Wednesdays, Tuesdays and Fridays. Shumway, from Amherst. You know where Shumway's Paint Store is? Well, his father operated a meat route here in Pelham for several years.

BJ: So you didn't depend on your cattle or hogs for meat?

CR: Oh yes, we used it for meat also, but we didn't slaughter them until cold weather—you know, late in October or something.

BJ: But there wasn't any way to keep it.

CR: Nah. We didn't smoke, but we canned. We had the lard, that keeps well in jars. We didn't kill too much for beef. Once in awhile. We had one or two pigs every fall we killed. Once in a great while a veal. But mostly we killed pork.

BJ: You mentioned moonshine and cider. I've heard an awful lot about hard cider and all kinds of things in Pelham, and I kind of get the sense that there were some hard drinkers up here at one point.

CR: Well, it all depends upon how much you call hard drinking.

BJ: I don't know. Somebody said that every house above Shaw's had a still, or every house on North Valley Road had a still.

CR: There weren't too many people had stills.

BJ: Oh, I don't know....

CR: Actually, I don't know of any still in Pelham. There might have been some and I didn't hear about it. But you could buy it in Amherst. My father sold it down there in that store.

BJ: Really?

CR: Sure, in Pelham. He wasn't supposed to, it was illegal, but he did.

BJ: Who made that?

CR: He bought it in Hadley.

BJ: He bought it in Hadley.

CR: At the old Hadley House, the old Hadley Hotel.

BJ: So that was like corn...

CR: No, that was good distilled liquor he bought. It came from, I don't know, Kentucky or somewhere.

BJ: Oh I see.

CR: But that's where he bought it. And he'd go over with an express wagon and get a load and bring it back and put it down cellar in the store. A lot of people he sold groceries to also bought liquor from him.

BJ: That was during Prohibition?

CR: Oh yes. I don't know of any stills, actually. There might have been, but...

BJ: Maybe that was before your time.

CR: Well, it wasn't hard to come by, I can tell you that. You'd buy it in the Amherst.... I never got any from my father, because by that time he'd stopped operating the store. These dances they had around Saturday night, you could always go out in the yard and somebody had an automobile out there with all the booze you could buy in it. Five bottles or

BJ: Prohibition didn't work too well.

- CR:** No, it didn't work too well. Only for the bootleggers. It wasn't hard to come by, not at all.
- BJ:** Maybe, I think what people were talking about were people making their own, like hard cider, or things like that. Was that during your time too?
- CR:** Most every farmer or so-called farmer had cider. We had eight or ten barrels every year. We'd let some go to vinegar, to use the year round at home in canning and foodstuffs. And two or three barrels of hard cider. There was always somebody around looking for hard cider. And we'd have a barrel while it was still sweet. We always had cider in our cellar. Well then, in the winter you'd have hard cider and vinegar, and then in the fall, you'd have sweet cider, 'till it started to get hard. You could get very, very drunk on hard cider.
- BJ:** What you said, what did I mean by hard drinkers, it just seems like several people have mentioned that that was something that went on, or they talked about it a lot, and I just got that sense that up here there was more. I don't know.
- CR:** Well, of course there was some that wouldn't touch it, you know, unless they drank it in the closet. But it wasn't like it used to be two hundred years ago when everybody drank ale or beer or hard cider,, you know. They thought nothing of it, even the young children I guess had their beer. 'Course that was long before my time. By then it had gone just the other way. You weren't supposed to drink it, but you were doing it anyway, you know.
- BJ:** Always something, some other way to be, right? Were your family church goes up here, or not?
- CR:** My father was never much one to go to church. I joined this church here and therefore I still belong to that one down in West Pelham. I took care of this church for years as janitor of it when I was young. Kept it swept and in the cold weather I'd have to go over early in the morning and start the two wood stoves. Rang the bell. My mother went to church every Sunday.
- BJ:** Did most people in town go to these churches? There weren't that many Catholics or other religions?
- CR:** There were very, very few Catholics in town then. We had this church here, we had the one down in Packardville, and one down in West Pelham. And the one over to Rt. 9, over Dwight's Station. Dwight, that was...
- BJ:** Was that part of Pelham?
- CR:** Well, it wasn't part of Pelham, but all the same minister these four churches. That's really in Belchertown. It wasn't the same minister necessarily all the time, the four churches, but most of the time it was. I guess this United church had

their own minister later on, all the time. We had a minister that would have a service here in this church and then go to Packardville, and then later on in the day go down to Dwight. I'm not too much of a churchgoer, really, myself. I went when I had to when I was younger, because I was compelled to.

BJ: When did this church actually stop having services?

CR: Yeah, it had to be forties. I was trying to think who the last minister was we had here. Can't think of his... I think was maybe the last minister we had here, full time. And they left here in the thirties and went to Africa, somewhere. Paul Mitchell must have been the last full-time minister we had here. I guess we had several come in from outside, every Sunday, for awhile. I can't remember. It must have been in the forties the last....

BJ: It just got small enough it seemed to join with... down here.

CR: Yeah.

BJ: I asked you how it was different, and you said that carpenters have a lot of power tools, and builders—now that you didn't have. So you had to do things a lot differently when you started out.

CR: You bored a hole by hand with a brace and bit, or drill with a metal bit, a breast drill. You sawed by hand with a hand saw, you planed by hand, with either an old wooden block plane, or smoothing plane, or you had the metal planes, but you still did it by hand. You sanded by hand. Today you'd pick up a power tool and pull the trigger. I couldn't get along without mine and accomplish anything, you know. It takes an eternity to do things by hand.

BJ: You started out though. I'm sure when you started things were all done pretty well and carefully. It seems like a lot of houses now, because of the expense of things get put together pretty shoddily. Like I'm looking at your floors. They're nice floors; you just don't see floors like this in houses very much anymore.

CR: You don't see oak floors, hardwood floors very often.

BJ: No, you carpet over some plywood, or something like that.

CR: Wall-to-wall carpeting over plywood. Oh, I think people took more pride in their handiwork back then. It was even friendly competition in the woods, you know, among loggers and wood choppers, to see who could put out the biggest day's work. Now today you go in with a chainsaw to cut logs and you haul them out with a tractor, a power machine. Back in those days you went in with a cross-cut hand saw,, two men, and axes, and you hauled them out with horses. Today you can do as much work in one day as you did back then in a week.

- BJ:** A lot noisier.
- CR:** So therefore you get more money for it. Earn more money. And, of course, today the wages are much higher too. You don't work for 50¢ anymore a day, at least I don't know of anybody who does.
- BJ:** I don't know anybody who does, either. If they do, they better find something else, I guess.
- CR:** Back when I was a youngster or child, and even when I got older and started working in the woods, you'd haul eight or ten logs on a sled or a wagon with horses. Today they go in with a truck with three axles on the back, one axle on the front, and they load them by power, with power tongs. And they heap them up and put on ten or fifteen thousand feet on a vehicle and walk away with it in fifteen minutes where you put a thousand feet back years ago on horses and wagons. And be all day, practically doing it.
- BJ:** You talk about doing things faster and making more money and being easier. Do you think you lose anything as far as earning a salary is concerned?
- CR:** No, I don't think you lose anything as far as earning a salary is concerned.
- BJ:** No, but in anything at all?
- CR:** House construction is not what it should be. Once in awhile a good house is built right, a custom-built home. Most of them are built properly, but the ones they build for speculation, I wouldn't buy any of them. I built this one myself.
- BJ:** I was going to say, did you?
- CR:** And I rebuilt it after it burned in 1962, so actually I built it twice. But it's a good home. It has oak floors, you know, complete ceramic tiled bath, and...
- BJ:** You're still building then, today? What kind of building work do you do?
- CR:** I do restoration, remodeling, custom-building homes, additions. I do small jobs too. Remodel new baths and new kitchens, new cabinets. I build my own cabinets, I don't buy them.
- BJ:** That's another thing. The cabinets now are...they just don't make it any more. Even when you pay a lot.
- CR:** That's true. You have an odd-sized space today to put a cabinet in, you measure it, and you divide it up into the number of cabinets you want, and you build your cabinets to fit. I know of an incident that happened a while ago. I saw it myself. They bought cabinets all manufactured, and you just set them in and screw them

to the wall; the closest they could come to it was an inch too big. A brand-new home. I don't know whether the people that owned the home ever have found it out, but I saw the fellow who started them. He cut out a piece of wall to fit the cabinet in. And then fixed the wall around it. 'Course today most of your homes are sheetrock, dry wall. This home is all plaster.

BJ: Looks nice, too.

CR: Needs to be washed and painted now.

BJ: Looks pretty good to me. I see a bullet here on your key ring and I see your guns over there. You're a hunter then.

CR: I'm a hunter and a fisherman. I have several guns of all kinds. Just an empty one.

BJ: Good.

INFORMATION SHEET

Sally Shepard

Date of Birth: 1889

Place of Birth: Pelham, MA

Mother's Name:

Father's Name:

Spouse's Name: deceased 1945 SS:

Date of Interview: June, 1979

BJ = Barbara Jenkins, Interviewer

SS = Sally Shepard

Original transcription by Barbara Jenkins

- SS:** I was born in Pelham, and I was born in my grandfather's house which was also my great-grandfather's house. You go south a mile on the Belchertown Road-202-and it would be the first entrance to Quabbin. I don't know the number of that entrance. It would be down there, not even an eighth of a mile. It was a very large house. It had eight fireplaces in the main part of the house, and a large brick-oven fireplace in the kitchen—huge fireplace.
- BJ:** When would that have been built? Do you have any idea?
- SS:** My great-grandfather was a lawyer. He came up from Bridgewater in the late 1700s or at the first of 1800.; I don't know exactly the date.
- BJ:** What was your family name?
- SS:** Ward. But my great-grandfather was a Kingman. My grandmother—his daughter—had married a Ward.
- BJ:** Why did he come up here from Bridgewater? (I have no idea.) Did he practice law in the area?
- SS:** I don't know as you would call it law. He collected bills and did that sort of thing. I had a lot of receipts, I think, that he had from people he had collected for. I don't know what else he did, but he had a mammoth farm. He had one large barn and then a cow barn. The land extended from that road there way down to where I think the next gate is in to Quabbin. But it was back from 202 so it wouldn't be on 202. And, as I remember it as a little girl, it was open land. Now it's forest.
- BJ:** I have to remember that when they talk about the land being able to see various places. I think, how did they see all that way? Was that the area where people burned wood for charcoal? (Oh yes, they burned that.) I think Evelyn Kimball said that her great-grandfather, I think it was, came up from Palmer or that direct to burn charcoal through that area. You then lived in the same house with your....
- SS:** Yes, I was born there, and we lived there until I was three years old. My father built a house—it was almost across from the first entrance to the Quabbin area now. (Right across from the Meeting House?) No, you go from the Meeting House toward Belchertown one mile and that's the first entrance to the Quabbin area I'm talking about. It was down that area that our house was built. (Down where the Fish shop is, Gate 8) No, it wasn't down that far. I think there are two gates before you get to that one where you go fishing.
- BJ:** Was your father a farmer then?
- SS:** Well, yes. He was a farmer, but he was a wood and lumber dealer.

- BJ:** Was there a sawmill down in that area that he was connected with?
- SS:** No, he bought wood lots and had a sawmill on the wood lot. People came in and sawed the lumber. And then he sold wood, cord wood. People burned wood in those days and that was a good paying thing.
- BJ:** Did they move the saw mills around, right? (Yes.) I've talked to several people whose relatives one way or another worked for that kind of thing. Mr. Campbell whom I interviewed was talking about coming back from his honeymoon, I think, and something had moved. They were up in Shutesbury or somewhere working. Was your father right around the area—he didn't have to go that far away?
- SS:** He bought right around Pelham and Shutesbury and Belchertown, right around that area. He had men chopping wood for him, some cord wood. I think he used to pay about 75¢ a cord to have it chopped, and he would deliver it in Amherst for four dollars and a half a cord. It's about \$60 or \$70 a cord now.
- BJ:** So, even though that area was cleared, there were a lot of other areas that were still timber? (Yes, oh yes.) Would it have been virgin timber, wood that never had been cut?
- SS:** Yes, I think so. Quite a bit of it. I don't know, I should.
- BJ:** You said you were born, in what year? (1889) And you were three when you moved? So where did you go to school then?
- SS:** Well, when I first started going to school, my aunt taught in the Pelham Hollow School. (What was her name?) Ward, Sarah Ward. And I would go up to Pelham Hill with my father—he was carrying the mail at the time—and walk from Pelham Hill down to the schoolhouse. My aunt and I would go. And then at night we would walk home the other road—not through Pelham Hill, but past where my grandfather lived. I did that for probably half of the year, and then my aunt was transferred to West Pelham and I came over there and lived with her.
- BJ:** So you would still have been pretty young though?
- SS:** I was about six. And I went over there for the rest of the year, at the West Pelham School. (That was when it was in the Community Hall?) Oh no, it was before that. It's a house now. Up near the church. (Where Mrs. Nutter lives?) I guess so, if that's an old school.
- BJ:** I guess that's an old school. I always get confused. I guess they used that again when the schoolhouse burned down.
- SS:** No, when the schoolhouse burned down they used the one right at the community Hall. The school I went to in next to the West Pelham Parsonage.

- BJ:** Where did your aunt live when she moved down there, and where did you live?
- SS:** We had a room. Let's see, where was it? It was the other side of the parsonage, the west side of the parsonage.
- BJ:** So you rented a room. Was that unusual for a child to do instead of keeping going...
- SS:** Oh. I think so. I really don't know why. I think my folks didn't want me to walk the mile alone because there was only one house between our house and the schoolhouse up on Pelham Hill where I would have had to go. And the next year my younger sister was old enough so we started to the South School. That school was where the second gate is going towards Belchertown, I think right under—the high tension comes across there. That's where the schoolhouse was. (Was it on the Quabbin side of the road?) Yes, on the left-hand side of the road.
- BJ:** How many students would there have been in your school?
- SS:** Oh, I don't think more than 15 or 16, something like that. There were more in West Pelham, and not any more at the East School.
- BJ:** What do you remember about school still today? It's interesting to find out what people remember.
- SS:** Well, one thing that I do remember is that I learned to read from a chart. It was probably a yard wide and a yard and a half long. All of the words were up there—"I see a cat," and "I see a dog," and "I see a boy." Down the one side there was a list of words like *cat* and *boy*, the words that were in these sentences. And we had to keep saying those over and over and over and over. This went on for weeks and weeks. Finally this sheet would be turned over and we would get on to another sheet, but I doubt if I ever got on to the other sheet for six months! It was a ridiculous way to teach a child to read. You couldn't get along fast enough.
- BJ:** Were you reading on your own, in addition, do you remember?
- SS:** No, you couldn't. How could you read if you couldn't? (I mean just picking out words and things.) No, now you have phonics and things, but then you didn't. You just read by sight. You really had to learn those words.
- BJ:** would there have been many your age learning to read?
- SS:** Oh no. Many years I had no one in the class. All the way through until I left to go to high school.

- BJ:** Did that mean that you would be instructed by yourself on that chart or would different levels of children....
- SS:** Oh no, the teacher would instruct us. Of course, we had all grades in one school so you would get perhaps five minutes reading a day or some thing.
- BJ:** That's what I meant. So let's say there was this chart, so since you were a beginner....
- SS:** You could look at it all day long if you could get anything out of it.
- BJ:** What do you think would be an ideal way to have learned reading if you could do it over again?
- SS:** Well, I think I would do it in phonics.
- BJ:** Did your children have more phonics approach when they were in school?
- SS:** They had more of it, but not as much as they should have had.
- BJ:** It seems like it goes back and forth, every generation. I was surprised to hear you say it was all sight reading because they usually talk about back in the days when it was "phonics."
- SS:** I don't think phonics had ever been heard of at that time.
- BJ:** Did your aunt being a teacher help you extra?
- SS:** I don't think she was particularly interested in how fast I learned. I think I was her niece and I should sit up and I should be quiet and I should be a good girl.
- BJ:** That must have been a little tough, being the teacher's niece. She didn't go back to the South School, though. She stayed down at West Pelham?
- SS:** No, she was at the South School. I went two years to my aunt in the first place. Part of the year at the East School and part of the year at the West School. Then she went back to the South School and with my grandfather and grandmother. Their health was failing. She was living there.
- BJ:** So she didn't teach you all the way? (She taught me the first two years.) Do you remember who your teacher was after that? (I don't remember what her name was.) Do you remember any particular things about school that you really did like?

- SS:** Well, we had some of the teachers who were very interesting, and I think everyone learned a lot from them, and then we had some...(that might as well not have been there?) That's right!
- BJ:** I ask everybody what they remember from school. You're the first person, because as I said I keep interviewing those men, that talked about school work. They all talked about the trouble they got into. Now, was that true that the boys got into trouble and the girls were better students or how is your memory?
- SS:** Oh, I don't think so. I think probably I got into just as much trouble as anybody else!
- BJ:** That's good to hear. I was a little bit worried. I thought all these girls wer sitting over there in the corner!
- SS:** I can remember when I was going with my aunt the second year. There was a hole about like that—square cut—in the desk, and we had a spelling lesson and I didn't know how to spell a word so I got down and peeked through the hole. I just put the words up under there and peeked through the hole. You can imagine how my aunt liked that!
- BJ:** Did you get punished?
- SS:** Well, I got talked to plenty when I got home. But I'm afraid I treated her as badly as she did me. One time I made her go to school with one patent leather shoe and one gun leather shoe. I left a right and left shoe for her to wear, but I hid the other two. I hunted everywhere for them, and I couldn't find them. When she got home, they were sitting in the middle of the bed! (Did she talk to you then?) Sure she did.
- BJ:** You mentioned your younger sister. Did you have a larger family with brothers and sisters?
- SS:** Yes, I had two younger sisters and one brother. I was the oldest.
- BJ:** So you went through the eight grade in the school out there or how far? (Eighth grade.) And then did you go on? (And then I went to high school.) In Amherst?
- SS:** I came in the first year and lived with my grandfather in Amherst and went to Amherst High School. The next year because my sister was ready to go, we moved to West Pelham into the house on South Valley Road that the Cary's live in now. And we went in on the trolley car.
- BJ:** What was it like to move from that one part of Pelham to the other? Was that a big change?

- SS:** Of course. It was like moving to a city.
- BJ:** Did you like it or not?
- SS:** Oh, I liked it.
- BJ:** When you were out there more on your own, you played with your family more? You didn't have that many neighborhood children.
- SS:** I never had a playmate, you know, anyone except my younger sister. She wasn't interested in playing outdoors. She liked to be around the house all the time, and I was just an outdoor girl. So I used to play by myself. I had an old dog that I played with. I used to work in the barn and help my father. I was really an outdoor girl. I worked around the farm.
- BJ:** And there wasn't an attempt to make you be a "lady" or something like that—that wasn't a problem?
- SS:** No, that wasn't. Of course, I had to do dishes and things like that. I had to learn to cook and I had to learn to sew. (that was sort of a given that a girl would learn to sew?) Oh yes, we were all taught to sew and cook. This was a must. And of course, in those days, the women had so much to do. It was nothing to live in those days like it is now. You had to make everything from scratch.
- BJ:** I think just doing the wash was a major operation.
- SS:** My mother would be washing when I went to school in the morning, and she'd be still washing or hanging clothes out when I came home at night. Women really had to work!
- BJ:** What was the procedure at that time for washing clothes?
- SS:** Scrub board. (And then the wringer was next?) The wringer that went on the tub was next. And then there was a washer that came out that you turned the wheel, something cranked, we washed that way. And then the electric washer. But that didn't come out till, I should say, in the teens—'19 or something like that. I didn't have one until 1920.
- BJ:** So you used a wringer?
- SS:** Well,, I sent mine to the laundry. Had the wet wash. I used to send wash in and it would come back wet and I'd hang it on the line. If it came back dry, it would be so wrinkled up that, you know, you couldn't iron it. (You sent it into Amherst?) Yes, my husband would take it to Amherst to the laundry. It would come back wet. Of course, in the first place when my first son was born, I did all his clothes by hand. Well, I did the baby clothes by hand anyway. But we had to boil

- everything, you know, in the boiler and all this kind of thing. It's different than it is now.
- BJ:** Did your mother do a lot of the food preparation—canning and things like that?
- SS:** Back in those days, you didn't can. You didn't can vegetables—you canned fruit. You canned tomatoes and any kind of fruit. But you didn't can any kind of vegetables. (Because it wasn't safe?) Because they didn't know how, I suppose. That came out in about World War I, right around that time. That was the first time I learned how to can anything—in World War I.
- BJ:** So you didn't have those things during the winter? You had root things like turnips...
- SS:** They used to keep them in sand in the winter. Cabbages they kept in a cold cellar. Of course, they'd have to peel off the outside leaves. Potatoes, carrots, beets. We never had green things in the winter. Never had any lettuce or celery. We'd have celery at Christmas and at Thanksgiving time. And we'd have oranges at Christmas time and Thanksgiving time.
- BJ:** How did you get them in? Did they send them from...
- SS:** We'd get them in the market. They'd get them in at Thanksgiving and Christmas time.
- BJ:** You said you never saw a grapefruit until you were fourteen? (That's right.) Where were you? Did they bring them in here then?
- SS:** No, my father bought one down street somewhere. Bought *one* and brought it home. Nobody knew what it was or how to eat it! We peeled it and all had a bite of it.
- BJ:** I wanted to go back to what you said when I had the tape recorder off. You said you were the bad one in the family, huh?
- SS:** I think I got into as much trouble as anybody did. (What kind of things?) Oh, I don't know. (You mentioned a couple, so you must have them in mine.) I really don't know, but I was always getting into something.
- BJ:** You were the oldest, so does that mean you led the others?
- SS:** I don't think so. I was three years older than my sister, younger, seven years older than the next one and twelve years older than my brother.
- BJ:** I guess we sort of got talking. I had you in high school and staying with your grandfather.

SS: I was in high school and lived with my grandfather one year. Then my folks moved down to West Pelham. Then we went in on the trolley car. (That's right.)

BJ: That trolley car seems to be a center for a lot for people. They will mention that for getting into town and out and doing all sorts of things. Then, did you finish high school?

SS: Yes, I finished high school and I went to Bay Path after high school. It was a business college, and it had a teacher's training course in it. That's what I took, but I didn't teach commercial work. I taught grade work. I didn't teach around here. I taught in Greenfield. I was teaching in Greenfield when I was married. I taught in Chelsea, Vermont first. Then in Hazardville, Connecticut, New Britain, Connecticut. In New Britain, Connecticut I just taught mathematics, and I didn't like that. I loved the mathematics, and it was the easiest place I ever taught, but I had to teach one class in mathematics. It was the same thing for every class that came in and it was monotonous.

BJ: It sounds like there was either a strong interest in education in your family or was that unusual and you were seen as being smart—a lot of people didn't go that far in school then.

SS: No, I don't know. (So that was kind of regular to go ahead and go on?) I think so. (Were there many women your age that went on at that time?) Oh, out of class in high school, I think there were probably six that went on to college. I think three of the girls graduated. The boys went. There were more boys that went. Of course, there were more boys in the class. There were twice as many boys in high school in my class as there were girls. (About how many were there all together?) 40.

BJ: Had you wanted to be a teacher all along or were there some other tunkgs you thought you might want to do?

SS: I don't know as I had planned coming up with what I was going to do. I don't think I had. (So how did it happen?) I don't know. I'm sure I don't know. It seemed to be the logical thing to do, I guess. I lived with an aunt and uncle in Springfield and that's where I went. It was only a one year program then.

BJ: And then you went to Greenfield—or you went to those other places before you ended up in Greenfield. How many years did you teach?

SS: Let's see. I graduated from high school in ough-eight. I graduated from Springfield ough-nine and I was married in '15.

BJ: Did you meet your husband in Greenfield?

- SS:** No, in Amherst. Actually, he lived in Pelham. Originally, he came from down near Milford.
- BJ:** And did you teach after you were married? (No.) Did people, did women teach after....
- SS:** No, not many women worked after they were married, unless they had to, until the second World War. And then there was a scarcity of teachers and they all went back to work.
- BJ:** It seems the Second World War marks a change in a lot of things. And where did you live after you were married?
- SS:** On Harkness Road. It's the house that the Peppards have now. That's where I lived during my married life. My husband when I married him had a clothing store, men's clothing store. It was really a college men's clothing store. Here in Amherst. The war came along and everyone went into khaki and all this sort of thing. The students all went into the army. (what was that word you said?) Khaki, khaki uniforms. (Oh, khaki, I have trouble with difference in accents sometimes.)
- BJ:** This is the First World War you're talking about now? (Yes.) That wasn't very long after you were married then.
- SS:** And then he was postmaster in Amherst. After we got rid of the store.
- BJ:** He didn't go into the service?
- SS:** No, my husband was older than I. I had a step-son.
- BJ:** And then you had children of your own?
- SS:** I had two boys and a girl. One boy I lost just before he was six years old. He had meningitis.
- BJ:** Did that come from measles or something first?
- SS:** No, he was never well. He had pneumonia when he was little—bronchial pneumonia, and it left him with asthma. And he had eczema. I couldn't find any milk that would agree with him.
- BJ:** That was one of the things I had down here—medicines and trying to take care of children. Do you remember when you were growing up, did you see a doctor or was that only for emergencies?

- SS:** The doctor we had in our family when I was growing up came from Enfield, and if anyone was sick and we had to have a doctor, my father would have to drive to Enfield and get the doctor and drive back to Pelham. So my mother and father acted as doctors. (What kinds of things were they able to do?) they took care of most everything unless it was really serious. (What were some remedies?) Castoria was a strong thing in those days. For most everything that ailed you. And catnip tea if you were coming down with a cold—strong catnip tea. Hot lemonade. And if you had a cold, they would put skunk's oil on your chest. I don't know where they got it even.
- BJ:** Did people sell things like that?
- SS:** I think they must have. My father didn't catch skunks!
- BJ:** Did they come around and sell it?
- SS:** No, I don't think so.
- BJ:** What would a doctor be called for?
- SS:** Well, I had pleurisy once and we had a doctor. An injury, of course, if anybody got hurt or badly cut or anything like that. Pregnancy. They were always taken care of at home. (Were there midwives that helped out then?) They had people—I suppose you could call them midwives. They were just people who went around taking care of pregnant women.
- BJ:** By the time you were having children, you would go to a doctor in Amherst?
- SS:** Yes. By the time I had children, they were always born at home, but I had a trained nurse, you know. A regular nurse.
- BJ:** Now, when you lived out where you did initially, were you likely to go toward Enfield or Dana and Greenwich and those places than to come to Amherst?
- SS:** Part of the time my father drove mail—he carried mail from Amherst to Pelham. So we would do our shopping in Amherst or on Pelham Hill. There was a store on Pelham Hill at that time. But the grain—when I got old enough and I think all the time we were living there, my father would go to Enfield for grain or Dwight Station, because that was nearer. And then when I got old enough to drive, I would always go for the grain. I'd either go to Enfield or Dwight Station, more apt to go to Dwight Station. Because I was young, if I met a team with railroad ties on it or something like that, they would always drive out as far as they could and I would get by them. They could wait until I got back onto the road before they would go on. They knew my father and would see that I didn't tip over or something. And so that's where I usually went.

- BJ:** Since your father went in and out of town, you probably felt more connected with Amherst living way up there than maybe some people did who lived up there. Maybe they didn't get in to Amherst that much or not?
- SS:** Oh, I don't know that I went to Amherst so much myself. See, I would go to Enfield or Dwight Station. Dwight Station, really. (Dwight Station—I don't remember hearing about that before. How big a town was that?) Well, it wasn't a big town at all. It was just a store right on the railroad track. The grain would come in right there. There was a store there, but nothing as large as Pelham Hill.
- BJ:** I can see what you meant a while ago when I asked whether Quabbin had affected your family's home because by that time you had moved in, but what had happened to that house you grew up in? Was anybody living in it at the time?
- SS:** No, I don't think anybody was living in it. It burned eventually. I don't know whether somebody burned it or somebody was living in it or camping in it or something.
- BJ:** But the area where you had the house is in watershed property, but not...
- SS:** The house that my father built was on the west side of 202, so it's still standing. (Which house is that?) It's the house that's not quite down to the first entrance to the Quabbin area as you go south I don't know who does live there now. It was not a large house. It was just a small house. My great grandfather's house was on the road that they went into Quabbin. That was on the left hand side of the road. That burned before it was taken over. (It's not under water now?) No, it was higher up on the hill.
- BJ:** Do you know where the cellar hole is for that house?
- SS:** I think the cellar holes were filled in, but I think I know about where it was. There was a stone there that I could find it by.
- BJ:** By the time you had your children, was the discipline you were using with them a lot different than it was when you were a child?
- SS:** Of course. It was different because when my children were growing up, there were some other children around. Where I was brought up, there was nobody to play with except just ourselves. My children were brought up where other children could come in.
- BJ:** Do you think it made you more self reliant to be on your own or was it lonely or both?
- SS:** Oh,, I never was lonely. I never remember being lonely. And I think in many ways you don't have a chance to get in all that mischief. You can get into

- mischief around the house, but you can't do other things. You don't learn from outside people all the bad things. We didn't have any chance to, and I think that's good.
- BJ:** The family influence could be stronger then, on you longer. (Yes, that's right.) Were your family church-goers? (Yes.) To which church?
- SS:** We went to the Pelham Hill church. It's now the museum. It was the Congregational Church. And when we moved to West Pelham, we went to the Methodist Church. My father had been a Congregationalist man because he was brought up, up there. My mother was Methodist, anyway.
- BJ:** Were you involved in church activities a lot as a young person?
- SS:** Oh yes. Always went to Sunday School and Church. But I fell away from the Methodist Church. I am now a Unitarian. (When did you become a Unitarian?) When I was living in Greenfield. (Was that any kind of problem for your family?) Oh no. (They believed in free thinkers?) Um-hmm.
- BJ:** I don't know why, but just the way you smile once in awhile, I think you take pride in being a free thinker and being independent.
- SS:** I am that way!
- BJ:** I'm sitting here thinking if I can be 89 and be as spirited as you are, that would really be great. I know it's hard for you, like you say, you lose your eyesight and that takes away a lot.
- SS:** You lose your eyesight and you can't get around and you have angina and you have all sorts of things.
- BJ:** When you moved in here, you had still been living on Harkness Road at that point?
- SS:** Oh no. My husband died 34 years ago and I went to work outside this area. I moved right away from here. Then I came back in 1962. I came back to Amherst.
- BJ:** What did you mean a while ago when you said I was five years late?
- SS:** I meant that I have forgotten a lot and I am slow in thinking.
- BJ:** So where did you go when you left the area then?
- SS:** I went to Hartford, in the first place. I was companion and secretary to a wealthy woman down there until she died. And when I came home, I tried to get

something up at the University and I couldn't Oh, I could get filing or something like that, but that would drive me right up the wall! I knew I was going home to take care of my mother, and I went down to Belchertown and worked in the Belchertown State School. Right in the hospital part, so I got good hospital training for ten months. Then I went home and stayed with Mom until she died. Then I went to Boston. I'd always been interested in psychology and psychiatry and what makes a person tick so I went to work at the Boston State Hospital. I worked on the wards for about a year and a half. And then I went into the Nursing School office and worked there for the rest of the time before I retired.

BJ: At the time your husband died, that was 1945. You were probably a little better prepared to go out and get a job than some other women would be because you had taught., but was it still hard to get a job at that time? (Oh no.) That's right, it was during World War II.

SS: Well, he'd been dead a couple of weeks, and they offered e this job in Hartford. As soon as I could get things straightened around so I could go, I went.

BJ: That was a big move to go down there, wasn't it?

SS: Yes it was, naturally. I had to do something, and I had this chance and I went. It worked out very nicely. I've always had good places to work and good places to live and I've been happy at what I've done.

BJ: Would you think you would have been happy if you would have just been at home all these years and not had all these other jobs? That would have made a big difference.

SS: I think I've been happy moving around and doing other things. I think it's good for you to get out and meet people and do things.

BJ: When were you involved—I laugh because this business about the PTA doesn't seem to be a very big part of what you did at all. You did all these other things I never heard about. When were you involved with the PTA?

SS: Whenever the PTA started. (50 years ago.) Oh yes, 51 years ago. I think, at that time, I must have been on the School Board. I was on the School Board in Pelham for 16 years.

BJ: It sounded like you were interested in education. You were in it, and when your children....

SS: I was civic minded, I'll say that. There wasn't anything that went on—used to guide the girl Scouts out there. My daughter went into Amherst when she first started in Girl Scouts, but then there were some other girls who wanted to go. I

met with the people in Amherst and they didn't want to take in so many so we started a scout troop out there. We never had Brownies out there.

BJ: Mrs. Reed mentioned when I interviewed her for the Amherst Record last year that one of the reasons the PTA got started was that the Pelham parents always had to go into Amherst and then they didn't have enough say in things. Is that the way you see it too or was that her opinion?

SS: I thought there was a need of it in Pelham. I thought there was a need to get the parents together.

BJ: Some of the people I talked to mentioned that things could go on at school, and parents didn't really expect to hear about them. They expected it would be taken care of at school, either discipline or whatever it was, and that parents, because of transportation or whatever, didn't go into school so much. It was more separate. They would let teachers do what they thought they should do. Is that the way you saw it, say, earlier when you were at school, and had things begun to change more when your children were in school?

SS: Of course, things did change more. I think there were a lot of reasons for that. I think back when I was little and in school, of course the schools were quite a distance from the homes and the mothers were very busy. You couldn't expect a mother to be washing for a family of six and going visiting schools and things like that. Doing civic work—that was impossible for women back in those times. And then, gradually, as things got lighter for them, they got interested in civic things and came into school things more—everything more, I think.

BJ: I hadn't thought of that aspect of things. That would really make a difference.

SS: That made a big difference.

BJ: Now a lot of women work outside the home so are busy, but because of transportation you can stop by school...

SS: Sure, you have automobiles and it's entirely different than it was. A horse and not transportation at all except your feet.

BJ: How did it go when you started the PTA?

SS: I think it went very well. There was one thing, though, that was in that PTA report that I read that I didn't much care for, and that was that Mr. Raymond Robinson was the first president of the PTA. It came out in the paper that Gladys Reed was and her picture was in the paper.

BJ: That was a mistake, because she never, ever claimed that. She kept saying to everybody, "I chaired the first meeting. I was not the first president." And she

- said this and she said this, and yet, there it was. I was really disturbed because I had written that article, and when it came out—I think that was the last thing I ever offered to that paper because it got so changed around and so chopped up and almost unrecognizable. I just got very upset.
- SS:** Mr. and Mrs. Robinson were very active in that PTA, and I felt really sorry about that.
- BJ:** I think I had put in the names of the people—I could show you the original article which the PTA has and the one that went in the paper. It wasn't just that they cut—they sometimes cut it so it didn't make sense. Did you see changes that came about in the school because of the PTA?
- SS:** I think that parents were more school minded. They knew more about the school. But I don't know as I saaw much change *in* the school.
- BJ:** So that the parents' roles did not affect so much what went on during the days?
- SS:** I think so.
- BJ:** This is when I change the subject all together. But, several times when I talk to people there are references to events which are not such good events, but everyone remembers them. One of these was the George Shaw affair. Do you remember that? Was that in your time?
- SS:** Oh sure. I was in Amherst at the time. I heard the explosion. (Oh you did too.) And my father—I think the daughter called my father and he had started over, and he was half way over to their place when the explosion went off. He went on until he saw, well, Mr. Shaw—part of his hand and some other part of his body and then he turned around and he went back. You know, perhaps there was nothing he could do.
- BJ:** That seems like one of those events that people have all their different versions of. Was that the kind of thing that everybody in town would be talking about?
- SS:** Well, of course, because a thing like that doesn't happen in a town like that. You know, it's a bit unusual. Mrs. Shaw had gone away and Mr. Shaw didn't know where she was. I'm sure he didn't have any idea where she was. Then she came into town to stay, and he found it out.
- BJ:** Most of the people I've interviewed seem to have Yankee names—people that have been around for a long time. And then, every once in awhile, somebody will mention someone who lived up in a little house—it seemed there were other ethnic groups in town, but it was pretty much Yankee. Is that the way you remember it?

- SS:** Oh yes. There were no...it was all Yankee, the town as I first remember it.
- BJ:** Would it have been hard for other people to move it?
- SS:** I don't know. I think it would. I think it would be—I think it would have been hard, probably.
- BJ:** A couple of times people have mentioned a couple of black families living there. Do you have memory of that at all?
- SS:** When I was a little girl, up on Pelham Hill there was a family who lived in what was the old parsonage right across from the church, and they had four little colored boys, always had four little colored boys about the age of—well, they'd be anywhere from the age of 10 to 13, I think. They were state children. They would always be in Sunday School and church. (They were taken care of, this family that was there.) Yes. And then there was another white woman—she was with this colored man. And that was down in West Pelham. And I think those were the only colored people that were ever in town that I know of.
- BJ:** In that Miss. Brewer's report, she talks about some family up there on the part o North Valley Road that goes by the Cook-Johnson cemetery—there wouldn't even be a house up there now. And I've never heard anyone talk about them. Mr. Burrows talks about somebody from the Bias family.
- SS:** Bias, yes. The one down in West Pelham was Bias. And I think they lived on King Street at one time. That's a road that's abandoned in Pelham now. They had a little colored girl there. She was my age. She went to school in West Pelham the same time I did.
- BJ:** And I know there was somebody known as Vic the Polander? So I thought there must not have been very many Polish people.
- SS:** That was the only one I know of. He lived on—I think it was a pubic road at one time—it went about half way from Mrs. Taylor's roadway (Utter Road) to the top of Pelham Hill. It went to the right and it came out on Highway 202 above where I lived. When I was in Amherst in high school, I used to walk out at nights—on Friday night—and I used to go up through there. This Polish family lived in there, and my father, I remember, stopped me from going through there. He told me he didn't care how many times I walked to Pelham, but I must walk up Pelham Hill and down that way.
- BJ:** You mentioned a Polish family, so it was more than....
- SS:** Yes, there were quite a lot of Polish people. There was this Vic and, I don't know, there was a man—I think there were 2 or 3 Polish men and a woman.

- BJ:** The only one I've heard about, if I have this right, was this Vic's sister was married to a Rhodes. (Yes,, she was married to a Rhodes.) And I thought they lived up there somewhere, and I never knew where that street was. You say it went from the Taylor's street around...
- SS:** No, you go past the Taylor's street, and then you go up toward Pelham Hill.
- BJ:** Across from Virginia Davis'?
- SS:** Well, there is a road that goes through right straight to their house from Virginia Davis' straight to where they lived. But this other road I used to take went off the road where you go to Mary Taylor's and the bridge. You know where the bridge is up there going to Pelham Hill? It went right up through there, went right straight through past their house and right out on to King Street and right down to 202. Well, I guess they drank, and it was wild up; in there, and my father just didn't want me to walk through there.
- BJ:** I got the impression there were these little outposts where people were back living there, but were not part of the town society. It was back in the hills then, and I'm sure North Valley Road and Buffam Road and those areas had places like that too. Were there French people at all in the community at that time?
- SS:** I don't remember any French people.
- BJ:** We're coming about to the end of the tape, and I know you don't cover 89 years in one tape. I covered some of the things I either wanted to have confirmed...
- SS:** When you're talking to somebody who has always lived in a town in the same place, you naturally get some different ideas than if you talk to somebody who had moved around a little more. It was like that book that Browning wrote, *Ring in the Book*. It was, I think, the views of seven different people.
- BJ:** Is there anything else that you might have thought of that you wanted to talk about?
- SS:** Nothing that I know of that I can think about. Life back there was very different than it is now—the way you lived, what you had to eat. Everything was different.
- BJ:** I was thinking the other day when I was doing something, that if it took as much work to do everything as what I was just doing, I think making jam or something, you would appreciate it a lot more. It would make your attitude a lot different.
-]
- SS:** Yes, of course it does.

INFORMATION SHEET

Beatrice Irene Smith
Born: March 19, 1908
Place of Birth: North Prescott, MA
Mother's Name: Lizzie Kazar Smith
Father's Name: Justin Smith
Marital Status: Single
Date of Interview: June 9, 1981

BJ = Barbara Jenkins, Interviewer

BS = Beatrice Smith

Original transcription by Barbara Jenkins

- BJ:** This will be a unique interview! You're the only person who got interviewed once and then the tape was lost. It's almost a year later, I think.
- BS:** A year! It must be more than that. You mean two, don't you?
- BJ:** I don't think so, or maybe it was fall when I did it.
- BS:** It's a long time. Yes, things were in blossom. I think it will be two years this fall. It's been a long time.
- BJ:** That's interesting. She lost the tape last summer when she went to move, and I thought I gave it to her that spring, but maybe I gave it to her in the fall. She had it a long time—I thought she was working on it.
- BS:** It seems as though... I have to look at that picture out there. It seems as though there was some salvia. (I don't think it shows in that picture, though. It just seems as if it's weeds nor grasses, I should say.) I didn't have any salvia last year.
- BJ:** I think the first thing we started out with before and makes sense to start off again is to explain how it was that you got to Pelham. I think you're one of the few people I have interviewed that had to move out because of Quabbin. How did that all come about?
- BS:** We came here in the fall of '29. Not too many families had left the Valley at that time. I'm not just sure why my father was anxious to get going except for the fact that probably he realized that he could not continue farming the way he had been. He and I were carrying on the operation ourselves—120 acre dairy farm. (And how old were you then?) Twenty. And he was sixty-four. So, you see, it was about time for him to be taking things a little easier. I think for that reason probably. Then too, he didn't know how soon other farmers would be selling, and of course, the milk market would be out of the question. We were shipping milk to Springfield. (It would be out of the question because....) There wouldn't be enough for the company to afford to send a truck to pick up the milk.
- BJ:** You told me, as I recall, that you have moved into that area.
- BS:** I was born in Prescott and moved to Greenwich from Prescott. That was sort of a surprise move, I think. I don't think my father intended to sell his place in Prescott, but one day this gentleman came along who was visiting some of his relatives nearby. He was from North Dakota. He was visiting with my father and he was quite taken with the farm. He said to my father, "Would you like to sell this place?" And my father said, "Sure," half jokingly, you know. So the gentleman said, "How much would you want to get for your farm?" My father thought for a minute or two and gave him a price which my father thought was high enough so he certainly wouldn't consider it, you know. But he was back in a

day or two, and said he'd like to purchase it. There wasn't much my father could do at that stage.

BJ: So it was just a verbal agreement then? (Yes.) And your father felt he had to honor it?

BS: Yes, yes. He was that type of person. We had no place to go that first winter, so we lived in the Prescott parsonage. The following spring my father probably contacted real estate dealers, I don't remember. Then we moved to Greenwich to this farm.

BJ: What year was this?

BS: Let me see. I think I was nine, so it would be in 1917.

BJ: I remember I said to you that I was surprised or questioned your moving to Greenwich because it obviously wasn't apparent that people were going to have to move out of the Valley or you wouldn't have moved there. Is that the way you think too?

BS: I think, yes. Of course, this had been talked about for many years. But as far as being a sure thing, I think everybody thought,, "Oh, that won't happen. It may not happen at all." He just took a chance, I guess. He was taken with the farm and with the ease with which he could work. There were no stones—it was all level area. It was a very easy farm to work. Real level. No stones, no hills. As far as a child was concerned, it wasn't much fun. No hills to slide on in winter. We did have an ice pond on which we could go skating.

BJ: Did you tell me you were an only child? (Yes.) I think it's interesting because you said in 1917 you could move in the Valley and think maybe it wouldn't really be flooded. But, by 1929 you're saying that while people hadn't moved out so much yet, they knew they were going to have to.

BS: It seems as I remember in 1927 legislation was passed that they were going to take the area. You only had a certain period of time in which to get out. The last people to leave, the last town meeting, the last school graduation was in 1938. (In Greenwich?) In Greenwich.

BJ: I know Mr. Hunt showed me the "lasts" of all those things in Enfield because he had a scrapbook from there which was very interesting. How did your father feel about that when he had just made this move and then had to move again?

BS: I don't remember too much about it. Of course, we were all upset about having to move. It was a lovely area. We lived right between the two lakes—Greenwich and Quabbin. It was a very pleasant area, right on the edge of town. I could easily walk to school, elementary school that is. High School I attended in Athol.

- They called it the “Rabbit.” The train from Springfield to Athol. They called it the “Rabbit” and I understand the reason they called it the “Rabbit” was when it first started, hunters use to travel on the train and they would allow them to get off wherever they wanted to go rabbit hunting.
- BJ:** I thought it was probably called the “Rabbit” because it made little hops.
- BS:** Well, that’s another version, probably. Take your choice. That’s one story anyway.
- BJ:** You said you were all upset. What did that make you do? Anything legal, or...
- BS:** No, I think some people sued for more money. But that was kind of fruitless, really. There wasn’t much you could do. Try and get more money from the state.
- BJ:** So the state offered you a price....
- BS:** That’s right. If you didn’t feel you could accept it, I suppose you could take action.
- BJ:** I’ve heard different versions from different people. Some people have indicated that their family or people they knew were actually happy to get the price they got and to get a fresh start. It was the Depression and things weren’t going too well and they could get out of there. Then others seem to have been very upset about it.
- BS:** I think age entered in there. The young people—well, myself for instance, I wasn’t personally too upset about it because I had no intention of continuing on in the line of farming. (You didn’t? And now here you are farming again.) I liked it, but as a business I didn’t think that was the greatest. And, as I say, my father was 64 and getting where he realized he couldn’t continue with it too much longer and he’d like a smaller operation.
- BJ:** How did you pick to come here?
- BS:** I just don’t know. We looked at places in Athol, Ware, Belchertown. We came here to Pelham and I guess the size was probably just hat my father wanted. The acreage of the land—five acres.
- BJ:** I have to say on the tape because people listening to us won’t know where we are. It’s the corner of South Valley and Amherst Roads. Where did it go then?
- BS:** Back to the property then owned by Arthur Jones and westerly to the property owned by John Seitz, Raymond’s father. Since that time, some property has been

sold, a small area on which Donald Ward built a house now occupied by Dorothy Thayer, which took out an acre. I have four acres left here.

BJ: You had mentioned that you had gone to school in Athol and it seemed like you would have had more connection with Ware, Athol and that direction than you would have with Pelham when you were growing up. Did you ever come up this way much?

BS: No, we never did. Always traveled Athol, Ware way.

BJ: I've talked to more people now that lived down there than when I talked to you last, and I think I was surprised when you said you went to Athol because now with Quabbin there it's so divided and it's a long way over there.

BS: That was the nearest high school. We went there only two years. At the end of two years, Belchertown had built a high school so we were all transferred to Belchertown. It was much nearer and we were transported by bus. So I had two years in Athol and two years in Belchertown. I was graduated from Belchertown High School.

BJ: Even though Pelham was next door, just as Belchertown and Ware were next door, it doesn't seem to have the connection that those other towns did. Do you know why that would have been?

BS: No, I don't really.

BJ: Was it because they were bigger centers—like you might go to those towns to shop?

BS: Probably, yes, I guess so. Northampton would have been the nearest place comparable to Athol or Ware in size for shopping.

BJ: And the part of Pelham that did border on all this was sort of more wilderness in a way. (That's right.) Except there were those mills down there. Did you ever go through Pelham Hollow and that area? (No, I never did.) How far was it from where you lived to there? I'm just trying to get some idea of where you didn't go.

BS: We didn't seem to come this way. I really don't know why. (Was it only 5-8 miles? Yes, much nearer than these other places. But not as much business, not as much to draw us this way.

BJ: So when you moved up here, it was your mother, your father and yourself? (Yes.) And what kind of farming operation did your father do?

- BS:** Very small operation. Just a small dairy and poultry. Had two cows and a horse. I don't remember how much poultry, but I know he sold eggs to fraternities at Amherst College. He drove a car.
- BJ:** And you started working at the University then?
- BS:** No, no. I decided I needed a little more education so I went into the poultry business too. I raised broilers and pullets to get a little money to attend what was then known as Northampton Commercial College. I attended that college for two years, and then went to the University. I didn't attend college right away after I came here. I started work at the University in 1934.
- BJ:** You say you didn't attend college right away. You were working here with your various things.
- BS:** Yes, I was assisting the Director of the U.S. Forestry Service at his office at the University before I went to college, and the U.S. Forestry Service was transferred to New Haven. I was invited to go down, too, but decided not to. That was when I decided I needed a little more education to get something better. When I was graduated from Commercial College, times were a little rough—1934. I was the twenty-first person interviewed for the job. I went to work in the Farm Office, and I'm sure the reason I got the job over these other people was that I knew farm terms from my previous experience on the farm. I always felt that way.
- BJ:** I'm going to ask you something. I don't know whether anybody else has any interest in this, but I do. I can remember when I was growing up and we always had Sunday dinner chicken. This was in the Midwest. Chickens were so good. My mother always got them from somebody on the farm—a lot of people raised chickens. There was a big debate on who to get them from and all that. Over the years, it just seems as if chickens have lost flavor absolutely. I'd like to get a chicken that tasted like something. Am I crazy or is that true? What kind of things did they used to do with chickens that they don't do now?
- BS:** Well, back then you had chickens from your own place, did you? (No, but from people around.) They wouldn't have been in the store. So right from the farm to you. (You think it's in the process or in what they feed them? What did you feed your chickens?) I imagine mostly corn. It was raised on the farm.
- BJ:** Well, I don't know, but I really do miss the flavor of chicken.
- BS:** That makes me think to back when I lived in Prescott. When we lived in Prescott, my father had a fruit farm. He raised fruit and pork for the Athol and Orange markets. So I was brought up eating pork. That doesn't taste like it did back then on the farm. My mother used to bake pork and pack it down in a big jar, a big crock. She put in a nice, thick layer of lard and let it cool. She had this pork baked, and she'd put in a layer of baked pork, then another layer of lard, another

layer of pork and another layer of lard. So that at any time during the year, if company came, she could go down and take out some of that port and heat it, and it tasted just like it had been baked the day before. It was very simple.

BJ: So she baked it and then put it where it was cold.

BS: Down in the basement, in the cellar. You didn't need anything cooler because of the lard. It was surrounded by lard, thick layers of lard.

BJ: It was probably real bad for your health, but tasted really good. All that lard.

BS: Of course, after it was heated, all that lard came off. Oh, was it good. I was brought up on pork. My father ate a lot of port and lived to 88.

BJ: I think if you exercise and all those things which we maybe don't do as much now, then it's all right.

BS: Back on the farm we had plenty of vegetables to go along with it, and that was important.

BJ: That's just one of the changes over the years—eating and diet habits. What kind of changes do you notice?

BS: I think a lot of people eat much more junk food, so-called. Quick foods, you know.

BJ: What about methods of preparation?

BS: That differs considerably, of course,, because back then Mother did a lot of canning. Today it's freezing which is much easier certainly.

BJ: Did you do much of that sort of thing or were you outside more?

BS: I was outside quite a bit although I'd help some in the house. I'm sure that my mother would liked to have had me in there more. She had a large house—8 rooms and a bath. (This was in Greenwich?) Yes. For three people? (Laughs)

BJ: And when you came over here, it was more her size?

BS: Yes, and easier. Over there we had no electricity, you see. (You came here to electricity?) Yes. (So, it was not the matter of time, but the problem of electricity reaching out that far?) Yes, I think so. (That was in 1929 that you didn't have it.) So, you know, that was quite a joy for all of us. Quite a treat.

BJ: I was talking to Marian Wilson the other day and she said when they got it, she turned every light on in the house and went outside to look at it. I was thinking of

what that would have been like. Do you remember anything special you did with your electricity that you couldn't do before?

BS: No, I guess I don't remember. Except that we were able to have hot plats and waffle irons and that sort of thing that were fun to use. We also had an electrically operated washing machine which made housework much easier.

BJ: You had a cook stove before?

BS: Yes, wood.

BJ: And kerosene for reading?

BS: Kerosene lamps, yes. And also Coleman gas lamps and lanterns which gave more light, of course. I studied a lot to a Coleman lamp.

BJ: Did you read more when you had electricity?

BS: Oh yes, I'm sure.

BJ: There are things I should ask you. There are things I tend to forget to ask people and I've been trying to ask things I don't generally ask because it isn't maybe something I just would think of. I thought I would ask some about the farm techniques of that period. You mentioned your father doing some dairying here in Pelham and milking cows. I tend to forget, but children would not even know how you did it then. If they go to a farm now, they see how it's done mechanically. Could you milk a cow too? I'm sure you could.

BS: Well, I never was allowed to. That pleased my mother because she didn't want me to get the habit of milking because I probably would have had to do it, you know. But my father said he didn't want me out there fooling around trying to milk because the cow probably would go dry.

BJ: You think that was pride on his part—that only he could do it a certain right way?

BS: I haven't any idea. He may have said that just because he didn't want me to do it any more than she did. I don't know.

BJ: So you never learned the technique. I was going to have you give secrets about techniques for milking cows.

BS: Well, I know how you go about it. (It's tricky though.) Yes, it is tricky. You have to start in with this thumb and first finger up high and tight. You pull, sort of close your fingers gradually.

BJ: So you could have done it.

- BS:** Oh yes, I tried it a little bit. And I presume probably it was true that that sort of thing might affect the cow if you didn't do it right.
- BJ:** I think that's just one little thing., but it's typical of how so much has become mechanized. It's a skill that's lost and maybe we don't need it, but the day might come where we'd need to be able to do it. I was talking to someone who was comparing the amount of time it took to cut wood then than now. It's just an incredible difference.
- BS:** Yes, all these chainsaws and wood splitters. Nothing to it.
- BJ:** Was there anything else particular about farming methods that you can think of that were perhaps routine for you, but would be kind of surprising for people now?
- BS:** Certainly it's done differently. Today all hay must be baled. Back then, there was no baling. You just loaded the loose hay. I had the job of using the tedder which was a kicker. A tedder that stirred up the grass. Threw it up in the air. (When you were mowing hay?) After it was mowed and dried awhile, then you needed to go over it with a tedder. It had prongs in the back that whirled around—kicked really, kicked the hay up in the air, loosened it., you know. Kicked it up there so it was light and the air was able to go through it and dry it faster.
- BJ:** And you'd still leave it on the ground at that point? (Yes.) You went through it with, what, a horse and a tedder?
- BS:** Yes, and then when it was considered dry enough, we raked it with a horse. And rolled it. My father used to roll it with a rake. He'd get it at the end and roll it over a couple of times to the size he thought he could handle easily ;pitching it on the wagon. That sort of a system made the hay hold together so that the pitching operation was much easier. (Otherwise you were just pitching it up loose?) Yes, and it would be scattering all over the place.
- BJ:** I'm trying to think. I guess you shock oats and things like that. You don't shock hay.
- BS:** No, oats and rye and corn shocks.
- BJ:** So you grew hay and you left that loose hay up in the barn?
- BS:** Yes, we had a hay fork. Drove into the barn, backed in as I remember it, backed the wagon in. Then there was a hay fork operated by a horse. There was this fork that was fastened to the ridgepole of the barn. Came down onto the wagon. That big fork could take a huge load of hay. The other end of the rope was fastened to

the harness of the horse, and you led the horse out into the yard. AS soon as you led the horse out into the yard, this fork of hay would go up into the loft. It would get to the ridgepole, and there would be some sort of mechanism that you'd pull another rope and it would shoot it over into the bay. Anyway, it was unloaded.

BJ: And he didn't do any of that kind of thing here?

BS: No, this was very small. All pitched into the bay by hand.

BJ: You would buy it from somebody else—you didn't grow it?

BS: Yes, we grew it out here. Enough to take care of the two cows and the horse.

BJ: What else did you grow here?

BS: That's it. (And a garden, I presume.) Oh yes. (You had to buy your feed?) Yes.

End of Side One

BS: Yes, going back to Greenwich, the chief operation in Greenwich was agriculture. There were grist mills, woolen mills, blacksmith shops—small operations. In the winter time, there was quite a large operation in the harvesting of ice on the Greenwich Lake. Around 100,000 tons of ice was harvested every winter and shipped by train to New York and New Haven and Hartford, Connecticut. The Greenwich Lake was right close to the railroad track so there was a siding into the lake. It was easily loaded onto the cars and shipped to Connecticut and New York.

BJ: Did you cut ice for your own purposes?

BS: We had a small ice pond on our property for our use.

BJ: I know that some people have talked about doing that and described how you kept it, etc. But then they also said that a lot of people just didn't have ice. They would keep things down a well or in the basement, so people didn't all have iceboxes, I guess.

BS: Yes, we did. As I say, we had an ice pond of our own and an ice house.

BJ: When you came down here, you didn't need it, because you...

BS: We had electricity.

BJ: You had an instant switch, didn't you?

- BS:** Sure did—in more ways than one.
- BJ:** You mentioned before that because when you moved here, you went to school and then worked at the University that you weren't really involved in Pelham that much. You would come back at night.
- BS:** That's right. I didn't spend much time in Pelham, really. When I was here in the evenings, I was busy helping in the operation—gardening and that sort of thing.
- BJ:** So you didn't really start to get involved in the church or any of those things until later?
- BS:** Well, I was somewhat involved in church and in 4-H work. I had 4-H clubs—I had a canning club. (You were a leader then?) Yes. (Right away in the early '30s?) Yes. (What other clubs did you have—you mentioned a canning club?) Let's see, what else did I have? It seems as if I had another one. Oh, I guess cooking, yes.
- BJ:** Were you involved in 4-H the same time that Gladys Reed was because she talked about being a leader for a long time?
- BS:** Yes, she was. I didn't—I wasn't working with her anyway. Whether or not she had another group at the same time, I don't know. (Maybe it was a little later.) Yes, that could be. I think maybe.
- BJ:** How was it that you got involved in 4-H as a leader?
- BS:** I don't really remember. (Was 4-H pretty active then?) Yes, it was. I'm not quite sure how I got involved in that. It was so long ago.
- BJ:** When you came to town, was it—or how was it compared to being in Greenwich as far as towns? What kind of differences, what kind of similarities?
- BS:** Well, of course, we were nearer neighbors here. I think my mother enjoyed being here more than she did being in Greenwich probably due to the fact that she had a smaller house to look after and there were less farm operations going on—no hired men to have to cook for and that sort of thing. People were very friendly in both towns, as far as that goes.
- BJ:** You didn't find it hard coming in as a new person? (No.) Were there several other people moving I from that area? Oh, you said you came a little earlier.
- BS:** Yes, we did. People were very friendly around here, we felt. We were really quite pleased at the reception.

- BJ:** Did you get involved in the church right then?
- BS:** Quite soon. We visited various churches. I remember going to the Packardville Church which was in operation then, we went to this church, we went to churches in Amherst trying to see which one we liked. We finally came to the conclusion, I guess that the one nearest home was the one to go to.
- BJ:** I was going to ask how you made that decision. Were the churches around quite different?
- BS:** Not really, no.
- BJ:** Was the church at the top of the hill still going?
- BS:** No, not for regular services, no. (But Packardville was?) Yes. The ministers in Packardville mostly were Amherst College students. (Mr. Towle did those churches up there when he was a student at the University.)
- BJ:** You're involved now in—I always have to get the initials straight—the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.
- BS:** I'm presently treasurer of the Hampshire County MSPCC.
- BJ:** Now we have a lot of agencies to watch out for people. Do you remember what it was like in terms of people's needs back in the '30s because that was a hard time? There must have been people who were in trouble a lot. How did things get taken care of then?
- BS:** I guess I don't have an answer for that.
- BJ:** Do you think it did or didn't or do you have any memories about it?
- BS:** No, I don't know of any people that were hard put—I don't know. I didn't know of any at the time. There may have been.
- BJ:** Was the church ever involved in things like that that you know of?
- BS:** Not to my knowledge. Not to any extent. We have helped out various people at different times by small amounts to help them over the rough spots.
- BJ:** How did you get involved in the MSPCC?
- BS:** I became involved many years ago. I'm not quite sure whether I know how either. I guess through a lady who used to live on Harkness Road who later moved to Amherst. She worked in the First National Bank. At that time, there was an East Hampshire Branch and she was treasurer of it. When she decided not to do it any more, she contacted me and asked me if I would be willing to take it

over. She knew I was interested in figures. That started way back too. I'll have to tell you the story about, how that came about. (Yes, do.) This jumps around to Prescott now. (You know what I noticed, you have roots there and that's what's important, too, you know. Okay, back to Prescott.) In Prescott I lived next door to the schoolteacher, and I was the only child in that area, so it was a matter of transportation costs, you see. It was decided that I could ride with the schoolteacher seeing as how she lived up the street a ways, which I did. Well, I wasn't too happy about it because she drilled me on the multiplication tables—going and coming. Every single day! I used to say, "Oh Mother, couldn't you carry me to school?" But, no. However, I got those multiplication tables down pat, and I'm sure that sort of set me off for my future because from then on arithmetic was simple. I had no problem with it, had no problems with math—loved it! So when I went to college, I took up bookkeeping and accounting. Then when I went to the University, that's what I did.

BJ: So that's how you got into this organization, as treasurer?

BS: Yes, I was interested in figures and after a time I was assistant Town Treasurer. I was Town Treasurer while Barbara Hamilton was over in Europe. (That was five years ago?) Longer than that—6 or 8. At the time we had the V.I.P. luncheon up here at the school this spring, when I talked with the children, I told them my experience with the teacher and the multiplication tables. I told them that sometimes when your teacher asks you to do things that you really don't want to do, perhaps it would be a good idea. You might gain from it, after all.

BJ: What did they say to that?

BS: I don't think they were too sure about it.

BJ: Were you interested in that whole social issue of the Society for Prevention to Cruelty to Children? Or was it more that you thought you could help out because of your knowledge of figures?

BS: I was always interested in the health and happiness of children. I always loved children. I liked to work with them. That's why I had 4-H clubs, I guess. I used to teach Church School. I always liked children and working with them.

BJ: What does the Society do?

BS: We have many cases referred to us. In fact, this past year we had two from Pelham. Child abuse. We send social workers into the home to talk to the parents and try to straighten things out. Some times, of course, it goes into court which we don't like, you know, if we can possibly help it. But we work with some cases as much as 14 months. Now this past year, we've had what we call the Second Century Campaign. We were out to raise \$125,000 for preventative measures. We want to have programs go out through the communities, and have programs for parents—speaking programs and explain to them various things. Try to prevent some of this child abuse. Get at the core of things before they happen.

- BJ:** Do you see a change in that? You've been it quite a long time now—do you get more cases?
- BS:** More cases, more cases every year.
- BJ:** Do you think it's that people know more how to report it?
- BS:** Yes, I think they are. Teachers are reporting it more. Doctors are reporting it more. So many broken homes. I don't know.
- BJ:** Let's just say, not specifically about anybody here, but who would report these things—teachers in Pelham or parents or neighbors?
- BS:** Teachers, neighbors—yes, neighbors. That often times happens. It's very confidential.
- BJ:** You think here in town—I was thinking back in the '30s—I think of that as a time that it was a highly difficult period for a lot of people. Yet you don't have any memory of that and you're not the only one. I ask that question and people just don't seem to have a good sense of anything happening. If people were in trouble, they must have kept it to themselves.
- BS:** I guess—yes, I guess. I think probably.
- BJ:** Of course, I don't know that I would know if people were in trouble now. If somebody asked me about it 20 years later whether there were people in trouble in Pelham, I don't know whether I would know either. (Yes, I know.) More so when I taught at the school certainly than just being in town. You mentioned being Assistant Town Treasurer. Were you involved in any other town government? (No.) Did you go to Town Meetings? (Yes, yes.) Do you remember any specific issues that caused everybody to jump up and down?
- BS:** I can't think of any right at the moment. Except back when they were talking about having dog races. (Oh, tell me about that. I don't think I've heard anything about that.) Several years ago now, they were talking—I think it was off of Daniel Shays—now I can't think just where it was they wanted to have a dog track. (Like ten years ago, say?) More than that. People were quite disturbed about that, but that never went through. (Did they have to vote on it or didn't it get to that point?) Yes, it seems like they did. I've forgotten really. They had discussion groups on it. Whether they actually took a vote on it—they must have.
- BJ:** Did the trolley still come up here in 1929?
- BS:** Yes, it did, but I don't believe it ran much more than a year. It doesn't seem like it did—a year or two after I came here. It went out to Orient Springs, just beyond the Ray Seitz place. It turned around right up here.

BJ: What was Orient Springs like when you moved here?

BS: Not too much different than it is now. There wasn't anything going on over there. There was still a swimming pool over there, but no activities.

BJ: Did people come up there then on Sundays to picnic still?

BS: No, that had stopped.

BJ: So that had stopped. Was it owned privately then? Is that why?

BS: Yes, I think it was owned privately then. I'm trying to think. Did Alice Woods live there then? I'm not quite sure. She did soon after we came to town.

BJ: The fish rod factory, when did it stop? (Can't tell you.) Was it still going when you moved here?

BS: Yes, yes, I can remember. Well, this house was badly in need of repair when we came here. That is, minor repairs like painting and papering. I can remember working in the dining room there, peeling off paper and seeing the workers go home from work in the evening. Several people went past here to work at the fish rod factory.

BJ: I did talk with Mark Aldrich and he told me the dates. I just don't have the material in front of me. It was some place in the early '30s I think when it closed.

BS: Yes, I think so. It was quite an operation for a while.

BJ: Seems like everybody I talked to in Pelham worked there some time or other. You never worked in the fish rod factory, did you?

BS: No, that's one thing I didn't do.

BJ: You're on the Historical Commission now. (I tried to get off the last time my term expired, but it didn't work.) You've been interested then in the history of the town, is that why...

BS: Since I retired really. I didn't do anything about it before. I just didn't have time.

BJ: You're a pretty active retiree. I saw you buzzing around on your mowing tractor the other day. I was amazed.

BS: What a time I've had with that! I mow quite a bit, but it seems like I mow about half the area and then—pop, off goes the belt. Finally put a new one on, and I'm sure the trouble was the fact that it had stretched.

BJ: Are you pretty mechanical? You can do that sort of thing yourself?

- BS:** No, not that sort of thing.
- BJ:** People talk a lot about there being more town spirit back, say, 20 years ago. Do you feel that's true or how is it different?
- BS:** I don't know. It seems to me that there's pretty good town spirit right now. Don't you think so? (I think so, but I didn't want to weight my question.) The success of the bake sale. Everybody in town, it seemed to me, contributed to that, just about. I thought they did a beautiful job. Then the Historical Commission started out with a budget of \$2,500—an appeal for \$2,500 for the landscaping project at the Hill—and we have about \$1,400 to date. (That's about what we earned all together from this oral history project.) I think that's a pretty good response from the townspeople.
- BJ:** I do too, and the number of people that were involved in this project is tremendous. I think also that these concerts at the top of the hill—and just the feeling that that things are going on. Of course, people have had to rally around the school a lot as it gets smaller and you wonder what's going to happen. You wouldn't say, then, that those were the good old days and that now there's no spirit and things like that?
- BS:** No, not really. Of course, several years ago there were more local dances maybe, something going on here at the Community Hall every week-end—dances and card parties, whist parties every week.
- BJ:** About what period would that have been?
- BS:** Up through the '40s, maybe mid-'50s, I don't know.
- BJ:** What do you think changed that?
- BS:** Oh, the use of the automobile, more cars. More young people having cars, interested in movies in Amherst, school activities in town.
- BJ:** What about television?
- BS:** Yes, television, yes I think that too. That enters in quite a bit too.
- BJ:** I just saw last night that there was some sort of poll in which they asked the people what gave them the most personal pleasure. Did you see that? (No.) Families came first, and then television was second. It really bothered me. That's probably why I'm still talking about it now. Over friends or work or any activities, recreation, hobbies.
- BS:** I know it. I have mixed feelings about television because the majority of people today don't do anywhere near as much reading as they used to which is too bad really. Sit and watch television. A lot of things aren't worth watching.

- BJ:** I remember when you first got it thought. You couldn't go out and do anything. Everything stopped. You couldn't get people out to things.
- BS:** That's even true today with some people. They have their pet programs. I can't see that.
- BJ:** When you were first here, was it pretty much all Yankee names? Were there other ethnic groups?
- BS:** No! (That was a definite NO) When I came to town, I guess you've heard this before, everyone was related. It was true. The Joneses and the Wards and the Thorntons and the Pages. Those families made up most of the town, really.
- BJ:** And yet, that didn't make it hard to get into?
- BS:** No, I didn't find that it did.
- BJ:** Do you remember any distinctive outsiders? Like living off in the hills or anybody that you would call town characters or anything different?
- BS:** I guess I didn't know them, if there were.
- BJ:** Pretty much English, Scottish. (Yes, that's right.) We're getting to the end here. I think I've covered most of the things. One of the things I wanted to ask you about, not just about Pelham, but about small towns because you've lived in several small towns. There's some feeling that people are more charitable to each other in small towns and there's some feeling that people are not in terms of gossip or being hard on their neighbors. What's your experience been living in various small towns, not just talking about this one?
- BS:** As far as Prescott was concerned, I was nine when I left Prescott, I don't remember much about it. I didn't have very near neighbors as far as children were concerned that I could play with in Prescott. When I moved to Greenwich, there were several children around and I enjoyed jmyself much more there. All the towns in which I have lived have had friendly people. We were accepted everywhere we went, as far as I know.
- BJ:** You like living in a small town then?
- BS:** Yes, I do. I don't know. Somehow, from what I hear from friends who live in Amherst, for instance, their neighbors don't know what they're doing, they don't know what their neighbors are doing. If there's an illness or you have an accident or something, no one knows anything about it while out here in the country, somehow it seems like there's someone to help you.
- BJ:** You inow your neighbors right here. You go back and forth? (Yes.) Right across the street is the trailer park now. What was that like before it was a trailer park?

BS: It was just a field. (How long has that been there?) That was in.... I know my mother was quite concerned about that. My mother died in '56. I think it was about '54 or '55. She didn't want a trailer park across the street, but we weren't asked whether or not we objected. It just came in, just like that. (You didn't have any kind of zoning?) No, I guess maybe that was the start of zoning. (That's interesting. I wonder when that did start.) I don't know, but I wouldn't be surprised if it was soon after. (Other towns probably had it then, like Amherst, the bigger towns, do you think?) Yes, I think they may have. (Now you would have a meeting and all.) Oh yes, sure. My mother was quite concerned. It seems to me that we wrote a letter to the Selectmen—I don't know what brought that about. I'm sure we wrote a letter to the Board of Selectmen—never had an answer one way or the other. (Was that Dan Allen's property?) Yes. (that's a long time to have had trailers there. Do most of the people stay there for a long time? I go by there and I think, I don't know who these people are.) Originally, they were students. So they weren't there for too long a period. But, now they aren't. With the exception of the Karch's and, what's the name of the people over there, the Keegans, they are all single people. (You do get to know them, though?) Somewhat. Of course, I know Bob Doubleday. I've known him all his life. He's the son of my father's best friend. They were buddies before they were married in Prescott. When we left Greenwich, they moved into the place we vacated, and then when they left Greenwich, they came to Pelham on Jones Road. The first trailer is occupied by a Zimeny girl; her brother first lived there. He moved out last fall and his sister lives there now.

BJ: You mentioned they were first for students—specifically connected to the University?

BS: Yes, that was the idea. They had this trailer park for students. The University didn't have anything to do with it, but it was for students.

INFORMATION SHEET

Mary L. H. Taylor

Born: July 26, 1898

Place of Birth: Hendricks County,, Indiana

Mother's Name: Emily Clark Henderson

Father's Name: William Henry Henderson

Spouse's Name: George Taylor

Date of Interview: October, 1979

BJ = Barbara Jenkins, Interviewer

MT = Mary Taylor

Original transcription by Barbara Jenkins

After the initial part of this tape, volume is very low and sometimes inaudible for about two minutes. Approximately the first half of the first side is of generally low volume, but the rest of the tape is of normal volume.

BJ: The L is your middle name and the H is your maiden name? (That's right.) You moved to this area because your husband came to teach?

MT: He came to teach one year at Amherst College, and six years we lived in Amherst, then one year in Cambridge. During the Depression. And we found we were paying the highest rent in Amherst—we were in Shays Street paying \$65 a month. We would have liked to buy the place. The Springfield owner hadn't done anything except take the rent for a long time. The garage was falling down. He wanted \$18,000 which was an enormous amount at that time. That house was one of the best on Shays Street. Anyway, we didn't buy it. Then we lived in a double college house on Woodside Avenue two years on Orchard Street to 1936. Then we came out here. One reason we were interested in Pelham—the first year we were here we didn't have money enough for a car. We'd come out here on the streetcar and walk around Pelham. But when we first came here to live, we were the first faculty family to come way out in the country. And, at that time, if people in the country had enough money, they went to town. Lots of us then had maids. The reason we had maids—now you have a babysitter once in awhile, don't you? How much do you have to pay for any evening of a babysitter? (\$1 an hour.) A dollar an hour, that's very cheap. Anyway, we paid \$5 a week board and room and uniform. They had Thursday afternoon and Sunday afternoon off. (this is when you were in Amherst?) Yes, South Amherst. And here a little while when our children were little. When we came out here, they were aged 2 ½ and 6.

BJ: You were renting and living in Amherst before you moved out here? (Yes.) So you knew the area pretty well? (Yes.) You said you took the trolley—that came as far as where the fire station is?

MT: Yes, it went up North Valley Road and turned around. (They turned the car around?) I think they turned the seats around. At least in the summer. I don't know about in the winter.

BJ: Then you hiked around Pelham and got to know the area. What was this place like?

MT: It hadn't been used for a farm—from now—for about 100 years because the land up above here was so hilly. They didn't know anything about contour farming which would have saved soil running all down hill. They just made the furrows up and down, and the soil ran down. It was only a few inches of soil anyway. But because it was a nice old house with a view, it had been used as a summer place for faculty at Harvard and the University and Amherst College. We found it because we came out to tea at Professor Manthey-Zorn's who taught German.

There were some other interesting people who had it—the Romers, of course, you know. Have you talked with Mrs. Romer? (No.) They had this. They could have bought it. They had a choice of buying this or the place they bought. They preferred this view, but there would only be eleven acres. With theirs, there was something like 200 acres. They have a nice view and setting anyway. A better place for a garden and things. And so they bought that. Then they brought in parts of houses from the Valley that had been taken down and made a big back porch, a lovely study added to the porch, a big back porch, and paneled their house inside with wide boards. And another person who lived here who was very interesting was a Professor Waugh. I suppose the most famous department, as far as being famous all over, from Massachusetts Agricultural College was the Landscape Department, and Professor Waugh was the head of that. His son, one of them, was the famous sculptor, Sidney Waugh. One of his other children was a famous economist. He used to have some of his classes come out here. They had the project of each landscaping this place. You should have seen what they would have done to this place! They were going to terrace it all. It was going to be really elegant.

BJ: But they didn't ever do it? (It was just a plan—a classroom exercise.) At that time, were those people mostly using it for summer? (Yes.) So nobody was out here in the winter.

MT: There was, at one time, people who lived here all year round. The man and his wife kept the place for Dr. Perry. Dr. Perry was, as I remember it, the leading surgeon in this area. He had this for a good many years. He brought in what I suppose was the first pre-fabricated building in Pelham. It was a little guesthouse that they had at the end of this house at the end of the ell. They lived there in the summer, and then in the winter they lived in the house which had a furnace and bathroom, but no electricity.

BJ: When you moved out here, did you use it just for the summer for awhile? (Oh no.) You came with the intention of living here? (Yes.) What year was that? (1936.) What prompted your final decision to move out here?

MT: Well, we were crazy about the place, and the Taylors and the First National Bank could afford it so that's how we got it!

BJ: I've heard you telling about how it was a bargain.

MT: Yes, I think \$3,600. (That was eleven acres plus the house, right?) Yes.

BJ: Was that a normal price or was that a particularly good price?

MT: The price of forest land about that time was something like \$15 or \$17 an acre. We had to buy a lot down in front of us to save our view when they developed Bray Court, and we paid almost twice as much for two-thirds of an acre as we did for all 11 acres and a house in 1936.

BJ: So you had the two children when you moved out here. I've heard that the road at that time was deep dust.

MT: They had just black-topped it. I'm writing a thing now for a Pelham history on transportation in which I'm taking about when they did various things. Our little road, though, was a gravel road. One time when we had a cloudburst, the whole hillside was a waterfall and it made a hole deep enough—just a little this side of the main road—to put the town truck in. So they had to fill it up and all that. After that, they blacktopped it to save them money. They're wonderful—when we're here, they plow it and sand it.

BJ: Did you see yourself as venturesome in moving out here? Is that one of the reasons you wanted to do it?

MT: Well, I don't know. I was raised on a farm until I was five years old. My father always owned farms, and so I never thought of it being a great adventure.

BJ: I was just thinking that it wasn't the typical faculty-wife thing to do. You didn't get into town that much, did you?

MT: We had two cars. We wouldn't have lived out here without two cars. We've had two cars all this time and one garage. The garage is way up farther. It was built by Dr. Perry who only used it in summer. We would have had to pay a lot extra to get it plowed out, and besides it's not big enough. We use it for wood and all kinds of things. And so we've always left our cars out. It doesn't seem as important to us as most people who have been raised in town to have a garage/ Some people have a garage as big as their house!

BJ: Have you added on to this house at all?

MT: The two rooms and bath upstairs. It was attic before. One part of it was sort of arranged so that you could have two rooms. One part has a hard pine wide-board floor like most of the rest. The other part had chestnut flooring. The ell was made later—not by us—it was here when we came. It has, you see, the narrow boards. Upstairs in one room it's pine and in the other room it's chestnut. The house was furnished as a summer place. We had three chests. I found them invaluable to have at the foot of beds. You can keep all sorts of things in them. You can put the bedclothes back to air them, you can sit on them, all kinds of things. One of those was chestnut. And you know the chestnut blight that killed the trees—it was some years before we came to Amherst, which was in 1929, 55 years ago. I would say 70 to 80 years ago probably. There is an old tree up in the corner—we are surrounded on three sides by Amherst Water Company land. We own down to the road on this side. Out here on this side of the brook, our place goes up and theirs goes on. Then the whole length of it this way and the whole length of it that way is Water Company land. That chestnut tree was killed by the blight. There are, all through here every once in awhile, little chestnut trees. I've never seen them myself, but I understand there are a few of them that sometimes

have a few chestnuts. Then they usually die or don't furnish any more chestnuts. I'm not sure. Anyway, you never see big chestnut trees anymore.

BJ: Where were your nearest neighbors then?

MT: Just Brays down below here in the winter and the Romers in the summer. The Romers are about half a mile away. Our children and the Romer children played together all the time. They had made a path from about where our postbox is—they made it through the woods over there and they called it the "Boulevard." We have a bell that you can hear for two miles. It was on my grandfather's lead cow on the prairies of Northern Indiana, and we could call them when they were up at Romers. We use that to call people to dinner once in awhile if they happen to be in the study or further away.

BJ: Your children went to which school?

MT: Pelham school. They always went to the lower school. The first few grades were down below, and the upper grades were up above. (Where the Rhodes School is.)
[edited section]

Electricity cost us \$75 to have it put on and almost as much to have it taken off for a few days at Christmas, you see. So we built this little outhouse in the garage. During the war there were thousands of trucks that went by here when they were getting ready to take them across seas to land first in South Africa and Morocco and then France. [edited section] I remember that it was very hard for us to get out on the road when those army trucks came one right after another day after day.

BJ: Where were they going from and to?

MT: They were going from out west some place and they were getting ready to go to some ports to go abroad.

BJ: This then would have been a main road?

MT: It was one they used anyway.

BJ: The turnpike wasn't built at that time.

MT: No, but Route 9 was and Route 2 was. I suppose those would be more disrupting than to go on this road. That was after the Shay's Highway was built.

BJ: You mentioned your children playing with the Romer children. How was it for your children to get to know the other children in Pelham? Were you considered outsiders?

MT: They got to know them in school, and, of course, they had friends in town. There were a number of faculty children whose parent we knew well, and they had children, just their ages. [edited section]

BJ: So you never felt there were local people and you were the new people.

MT: No, no—although we weren't considered, of course, as belonging to Pelham. I don't thin we ever will be and either will you! One thing I might tell you that I think is interesting—when we came, Mass Aggie had about 500 students and Amherst College had about 600. There were very, very few people who taught in either one of them that came from west of the Hudson River. They were considered a little different, you know. I came from Indiana and George came from Wisconsin. I'm interested in the migration of people. I'd be interested in how your people got to Iowa. (I'll tell you later.) Some of mine were the first white settlers on Nantucket. I think you might be interested. About that time they were hanging Quakers on the Boston Common. Some of these Puritans were very sure that God had sent them and told them what was good and what was right and everybody else was wrong. Thomas Macy and his wife, who had come from Salisbury, England to get more freedom—that's why I'm telling you this—because that's why a lot of the settlers came to Pelham. The first settlers that came to Pelham came to get more freedom economically and politically and religiously. So Thomas Macy and his wife harbored a Quaker in a heavy rainstorm and at that time in 1667 the Church and State were together—the minister and the constable—and told hem that if they ever did such a heinous thing again that they would be thrown bodily out of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Well, they weren't getting the freedom that they had come for. While they had built up Salisbury and then were some of the chief people, head of the selectmen in Amesbury where there's a famous Macy house. They had heard that there was a small island down some place off Massachusetts where there was nobody but friendly Indians that might be a possibility of going to where you could have your own freedom. They weren't Quakers and never did become Quakers, but their children clear down to me became Quakers. He had a cousin named Mayhew—now there are still Mayhews on the Vineyard (related to pe9ople here in Pelham. Mrs. May was a Mayhew, I understand.) Yes, she was a Mayhew, she comes from the Vineyard. So Thomas Macy went down to see his cousin and went over and took a look at Nantucket. He went back and got his family and stayed all winter with the Indians. I've never been able to find out how they lived. I've always heard that they did, and I've seen it in several histories, but I've never known how they lived. They lived there, and then they took in various people named Coffin and Starbuck and Folger and Hussey and Swain and Barnard and Coleman and Gardner and they inter-married with ours. A lot of those people are relatives of ours. Then they got so in 1771 just a little before the American Revolution they went to North Carolina where there were already Quakers. By the way, Whittier's poem, "The Exile," is a long poem about Thomas Macy going to Nantucket. It's too long and it's not quite accurate, but it's still interesting, especially to the descendants. I think sometimes nothing is uninteresting as hearing about other people's ancestors! Then in 1800 they

thought that their children were getting—they had prosperous plantations by that time—but they thought their children were getting mixed up with the slave owner's children and they would lose their ideas and ideals. So the whole Quaker meeting decided to leave and go north. They went to an uninhabited part of Tennessee and cut the trees down and made cabins and planted corn and things in between the stumps. They pioneered, and stayed 20 years and then that got to be slave country. Then they went to Indiana, and had stops on the underground railroad. That's how I happened to be born in Indiana. This bell that you can hear for two miles was on a lead cow in northern Indiana.

- BJ:** I think these are very interesting stories, but I guess I feel I have to somewhat limit you on this tape because it needs to be about Pelham. I always hate to do that because there are other interesting stories. I am struck by the fact that perhaps because your family set out for new places may have influenced your wanting to live in out of the ordinary places.
- MT:** Now you see they went to Massachusetts from Salisbury to Nantucket, to North Carolina, to Tennessee, to Indiana, and back to Massachusetts. Then our children were born in Massachusetts.
- BJ:** When you came out here, you said you had the two cars and did that mean that you went into town a lot yourself then?
- MT:** I was one of the people who started the League of Women Voters. I did quite a lot of public things. For example, when Roosevelt came in at the bottom of the Depression, he had to try all kinds of things. He had the AAA for agriculture, and the NRA for the businessmen, and then they threw a small sop to the consumer. In about 200 of the 3000 counties in America there were Consumers' Councils. We had one for this county in the People's Institute in Northampton. We had several very able, interesting secretaries who were paid by the WPA. College graduates and one whose husband had been the Superintendent of Schools in Amherst. We looked up all kinds of things, and Nader, I'm sure, has used some of our material because it's come out in just the form that we got it. So I was over there quite a lot. But we had maids, you see.
- BJ:** Where did the maids come from?
- MT:** They were country girls, always. No town girl would work in the country. Country girls liked to work in town. (So somebody from Pelham would be the maid?) Yes, or Belchertown or New Salem or some place. (They lived in here?) Yes.
- BJ:** Did that somewhat set you apart from other people in Pelham who would or would not have had maids?
- MT:** Well, there were a few people who did have. Now you have babysitters. Everybody has babysitters. Not only that, but you have daycare centers and other ways when you're gone. One thing, I have never bought a pound of butter since

the 30's because at that time the dairy interests were so strong—they're still strong, too strong—that they kept all margarine from being colored. But we looked it up and we found that not one pound of butter came into Massachusetts that wasn't colored. But they wouldn't allow any color, and finally you got so you could have these little tablets that you could color the margarine which was a lot of trouble. It was years before all the states, the last states got rid of no color in the margarine.

BJ: Was this a salaried position or a volunteer?

MT: Mine was a volunteer position. The secretaries were paid.

BJ: Did you do any volunteer work in Pelham at that time?

MT: I did work in the Women's Club. It was started before we came. It was started by one of my best friends who lives in California. We had a little house down on Martha's Vineyard and we got that because of our friends down at Mount Holyoke, including Paul Williams. He was man for religious education for the Protestants at the University or State College as it was called at the time. Then he was for years at Mount Holyoke. They lived out here a few years. I think where the Hamiltons live, just off Amherst Road—that's the place. The front yard goes down to that little street. (That's where that Miss Brewer lived that wrote the history of North Valley Road, but don't quote me because I get a little confused.) The Women's Club was started by Helen Williams whose husband was the minister out here. She thought it would be a good thing to have the women get to know each other. My mother started the Women's Club in our town in Indiana because there was a lot of infighting between the Protestant churches. There were only Protestant churches, but there was in-fighting between them. She thought if you could get the women to know each other, that would help it,, and so she started the Women's Club. When the Amherst Women's Club had some kind of an anniversary—75th or something, ten years ago or so—they put out a little booklet and they told the history of it. They said it was started for exactly the same reasons, to help get better feeling between the church women and to get the whole town more unified.

BJ: Did that happen here in Pelham, do you think?

MT: Yes, I think it did. I'm very sorry they don't have a Women's Club now. I was president of it for a number of years.

BJ: Did they have projects, or what did they do?

MT: They had some, yes. They would make money for the projects for child care and all in the county. There were various things. They still ask you for money for projects. Have you ever been asked for money for, well, for various social service things in Northampton, but it's for the county?

- BJ:** I was wondering since you were a Quaker and not involved in the church in Pelham, was the church a community center so that those who didn't go to that church felt somewhat outside?
- MT:** I don't know. We went to the church sometimes. We offered to join, but they said we would have to take our membership away from the Quakers, and we wouldn't do that. There wasn't a Quaker Meeting at that time in Amherst, but we belonged. They said we'd have to do that so then we went to town and found another church that we enjoyed. Now there is a Quaker Meeting in Leverett. We went to the Unitarian Church. We tried different churches and liked them the best. I go three-fourths of the time to the Quakers and one-fourth to the Unitarians, and George does the opposite.
- BJ:** Sally Shepard said you used to have discussions about all this.
- MT:** Isn't she a wonder?
- BJ:** Yes, I'm halfway through typing her interview, and I know she's been in the hospital.
- MT:** She's out now. I've seen her since she was out, but she's had to lose twenty pounds because of her heart. She has an infected foot which is better now.
- BJ:** I want to get that finished so I can take it over to her. I really enjoyed her.
- MT:** We're old friends. Her husband was the Postmaster for Amherst. [*Tape was turned off and she continues on something else*]
- BJ:** You wanted to tell me a story about joining the church.
- MT:** Several years after, they came to us and said the rule had been changed—that they found they could have us even if we kept our membership in the Friends Meeting. We said, "Sorry, too late." I told them that in church the other day, and George said it was rude and I shouldn't have done it. I'm more bull headed of things than he is. He's more of a gentleman than I am of a lady. I have one daughter that's a lady, and one that's like me. But it's more fun.
- BJ:** Why do you think that's more fun?
- MT:** When I came here from out West, I had been to California several times, which was three times as far, but I'd never been east of Ohio. I'd understood that people were very formal, and I found that was true. You were only supposed to talk to the people to whom you were properly introduced. I found this very boring. Of course, we were lucky in that we had friends all ready for us. We had a whole faculty ready to be friends of ours. But I knew some people who came who didn't know anybody, and they said it was the coldest place they ever met. Now that has been changed a great deal. There are many more people from out West, and I think television has changed people so that they are more outgoing than they used

to be. They see people from other places doing things that are outgoing and informal. I decided that it as very boring to be only able to talk to the people to whom you had been formally introduced. Now, in Indiana, the bus drivers and everybody talked to everybody, and we had fun. Didn't they do that in Iowa somewhat? (I think.) I decided I would live the way I'd lived before, and if I saw somebody interesting or that I wanted to talk to, I could always think of something to bring up. Some subject they would be interested in—a bag that looked as if it come from Greece, you know, all kinds of things. In 55 years, how many times do you think I have been out down, that is, I have been snubbed by people when I started to talk to them? (Probably zero.) Four times out of 55 years. I've met the most interesting people that way.

BJ: Do you know most people in Pelham?

MT: I used to. I don't know now. There are many more and I have been gone so much. When you're gone in the winter—after George retired at 70, he retired after teaching 41 years at Amherst in American Studies, American Economic History—he'd been head of American Studies also. He had a job for four years in Delaware. There are two Economic History libraries for scholars in America. One is the famous Huntington Library in California and the other is the equally famous one, the DuPont Library in Wilmington. He was the senior resident scholar there for four years. So we were gone during the time that they fixed the upper part of the church. The Historical Society fixed it up for the museum. Then we've gone away in the winter most of the time, and we go away for a month in the summer to Martha's Vineyard so we're not around as much. But I really miss the Women's Club because I think you knew many more people.

BJ: Were you ever on any town committees?

MT: I was the oldest person on a town commission (Recreation Commission) until last year. I was gone so much that I didn't think I should be on any more.

BJ: Were you on any when you were younger?

MT: They didn't have commissions. They didn't have any of that kind of thing at all. I think one of the reasons I was put on the Recreation Commission was that I felt there should be some town recreation place. So every time there was a town meeting, I'd ask where the town park was, trying to embarrass them into getting a town park. The first answer that they gave was, "Well, we don't need a town park because we have the Page's place where they play ball." And I said, "All right. Fifty percent are females, and they don't play ball, do they? And about 80% of the rest of the people are not in that age group, and they don't play ball, do they? So what good is that to most people?" And so I was put on the Recreation Commission.

BJ: I've heard about that place where they play ball. It's been many years,, hasn't it, since they did that?

- MT:** Not too many. I think after Bert Page died, because I think they played in his back yard, wherever it was back there.
- BJ:** I wanted to ask you—the building of Quabbin must not have had very much effect on you?
- MT:** It was built after we came here. It was in the process. But before we came to Pelham, we use to go down and go swimming in the west branch of the Swift River. Also we turned then at the bottom of this hill and went by the place where the foundation of the old Conkey's Tavern was. There were some lakes up there where we swam also. Then a number of us had a group of liberals who had a meeting from Smith, Mt. Holyoke, the University and Amherst. They were in history and religion and philosophy mostly. We had a diner meeting once amonth, and we rented a house over there in the Quabbin on North Prescott which is now a peninsula. I had a wonderful time three weeks ago on Sunday. I went in there on that peninsula and saw where that house had been. I went in with the Swift River Valley Historical people on the bus. We at on the—we saw all these places. We saw, for example, where Al; Lumley's house had been taken down and taken in to Pelham. Al and a friend of his from Michigan and George lived here in 1938 while I took my 75 year old mother and 5 and 9 year old children and drove to the far reaches of Colorado. When we went over to see cliff dwellers, you could see into four different states. They lived here and worked on taking down this house. They took it apart, and they didn't save the outside nor the roof, but all the timbers and they marked them carefully. It was very hard getting the pegs out—it was put together with wooden pegs as this house is. You've seen the pegs upstairs, and you've seen the pipe marks so you can tell how many people put up this house when they had the house raising, and how many people held these hard wood sticks in their hands with two heavy nails at the ends and pushed up on the beams.
- BJ:** Why did this group meet down there?
- MT:** It cost us \$60 a year, and there were twelve families. For \$5 a year we could brag we had a summer place. We furnished it from our attics and cellars, and we had beds and cooking things. We cooked over a fireplace. They had five fireplaces. We even snowshoed in a couple of times in the winter. They didn't plow the roads, of course, because there was nobody living there.
- BJ:** When you were involved with that area, had they already made the decision to flood that area?
- MT:** Oh yes, they had bought all these places—hundreds and hundreds of places. But they hadn't taken the houses down yet. That was one of those houses that we rented from Charlie Walker who lived out here for years. We went to see him in Greenwich. Now the place where their house was and their mill by the dam is way under water, you see, hundreds of feet under water.

- BJ:** What is your memory as far as people's feelings about the building of Quabbin?
- MT:** We didn't know very many people who—there are a number of people in Pelham. I hope you've gotten some tapes from them—the Doubledays, for example, were prominent over in the Prescott area. It was an interesting thing. We would talk about serious matters—we were interested in trying to make the world better, and so even 45 years ago we believed in social security. We were called Communists because most people didn't know the difference between a liberal who wanted to make the world better, but keep our democracy, and the Communists who wanted to throw over everything and let a few men run the place. The people who called us Communists because we believed in Social Security—now you couldn't take their Social Security away from them with three horses and a mule and a calculator, could you?
- BJ:** People here in town called you that?
- MT:** Oh yes, and in Amherst too. They thought that we were way to the left. Those things that we talked about and were interested in—social care, Medicaid, and a lot of things that have come in that we advocated. And more consumer control and not having the big companies have all the power.
- BJ:** What I've noticed when I talk to the people about the development of Quabbin is that people didn't really feel they could fight Boston.
- MT:** Yes, yes. One of those who fought hardest though was the father of the Frosts who live up here opposite the old Rhodes School. He had a little sawmill down someplace. I think on the way down that road that goes steeply down the hill by the church. He fought them for years, and he got a much bigger price than evidently it was worth because he fought them for so long. He made beautiful chairs and tables, good reproductions of old ones, and we asked him to make that armed ladderback we have in there by the fireplace—he fireplace that has the nine foot stone hearth. That's where they did the cooking. We asked him to make one of those, but he was too busy fighting the Metropolitan Water District. Finally he just up and one day brought it in. After four or five years, he brought us the chair we'd ordered. I think some people were—naturally you would be upset if you had to get out of a place that had been in your family a long time or that you particularly loved.
- BJ:** Were there any other issues that you remember from the period when you came out here that were big town issues that got everybody all up in arms?
- MT:** I can remember a very small town issue! When the town had fewer people, when we were practically the only people from Amherst that had come out here, we were having a Town Meeting up at the old Town Hall. The stoves were running hot, everybody was having a nice time, and they didn't really want to go home. They'd had something to eat and everything up there. And so we had a long discussion about how much bounty we should have on porcupines--25¢ or 50¢.

That was a bog question. Of course the school—building the school was a big question. We were in favor of it from the beginning, and if it had been built the first year instead of the third year, it would have cost about half as much. But it seemed to take Amherst or Pelham—it took Amherst three years to decide and to vote in favor of buying the Amherst Water Company. It took them a long time to build the first high school.

BJ: Were there other women here in Pelham who were part of the League of Women Voters?

MT: I was the only one, and then Buddy Lumley belonged. Now there are several people. Two of them are quite prominent. One of them is Mrs. Carlson, Lois Carlson down here, and the other one is Kay Moran who was the President.

BJ: You mentioned the Women's Club and being on a commission in later years. Did you see much of other people in the town in those first years you were here? You mentioned you would go to Northampton and work; it sounded like you socialized with people from Amherst.

MT: The people that I knew best were through the Women's Club. Then we would get to know their husbands, and get to be friends in that way.

BJ: Is that how you got to know Sally Shepard, for example?

MT: I guess so, although Sally belonged to the Unitarian Church.

BJ: I know you've gotten very interested in the history of the town.

MT: I used to teach history, you see, and I've been a history buff all my life. Would you be interested in hearing me sing a little song about the way they used to teach history when my mother was a child? If you don't mind the voice—I have lost a whole octave in singing because I don't sing much. I heard her sing this and I learned it because I liked it. They taught a lot of things by singing, and one of them they taught was geography. They taught the capitals of the states by this little thing.

“State of Maine, Augusta. On the Kennebunk River,
State of Maine, Augusta. On the Kennebunk River.
New Hampshire, Concord. On the Merrimac River,
New Hampshire. Concord. On the Merrimac River.”

Of course, I think that's a very good way to teach often because I remember more French and German because of the songs I remember than I do any other way.

BJ: Were you happy with the school here for your children?

MT: Yes, we were. We had very good teachers, and of course, all that time we've had the same Superintendent of Schools that they had in town. There was a time when we weren't happy in the schools because of some restrictions. Now they didn't have a telephone in the schools, and one of the members of the school board said he didn't want the teachers spending a lot of time talking to the interfering parents. And one of the teachers didn't really want it, but when they had a child that had fits—there are better ways of saying that, but I can't think of it right now—they had to phone every once in awhile in the middle of the day, about every day, phone her home or somebody. So they had to rush over to the neighbors and all. They finally had a telephone put in the school. There were some, what we considered benighted, practices like that.

BJ: It's interesting because I've heard that parents sort of gave authority to the schools to do what they wanted. They didn't know that much what was going on. Primarily it was hard to get in to school. You couldn't just drive in there so easily or you couldn't phone. But it's interesting that they didn't have a phone on principle. Can you imagine now—because parents are at school all the time and they're phoning all the time.

MT: Of course, there were two schools then. There had been six before they had school buses. They didn't have any school lunches. We always had to fix lunches, but I don't know that it did them any harm to take lunches.

BJ: I have to fix lunch all the time because she doesn't like the school lunches. I think we're about to the end of this so we'll have to stop here.