

Hartford Agricultural Oral History Project
 Interview Transcription Summary
 May 14, 2012
 White River Junction, VT

Interviewer: Kaitlin O'Shea
 Interviewees: Gary Clay

Location: WRJ Town Offices
 Time: 1:00pm

KO: Kaitlin O'Shea
 GC: Gary Clay

The Hartford Agricultural Oral History Project, the 2012 segment, is funded by the US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, for the Certified Local Government Program of Vermont's annual program under the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act. Previously, Hartford's agricultural oral history has been documented primarily through volunteers, often with interview recordings and transcriptions occurring at separate phases with different people. In 2009, additional historical research was provided through the 2009 Vermont Barn Census. The purpose of this agricultural oral history project is to document the history of local residents who grew up or worked on a farm in the Town of Hartford. The Town is comprised of five villages: White River Junction, Hartford, Wilder, Quechee and West Hartford, in addition to several smaller hamlets.

Time & Topics	Edited Transcription
00:00:01	00:00:01
Introductions	<p>KO: Today is Monday May 14, 2012. I am Kaitlin O'Shea and I am interviewing Gary Clay for the Hartford Agricultural Oral History Project. Thank you for meeting with me, Mr. Clay.</p> <p>GC: You're welcome.</p> <p>KO: Let's start by – tell me about your family, your mom and dad, and whoever lived on the farm.</p>
Family farm; 1942; horses; Jerseys	<p>GC: They bought the farm in 1942. They moved there in October. I was nine months old, so I don't remember. And the first three years, Dad farmed with horses. He had three horses, three workhorses. And in '45, he bought his first tractor. It was an old Farm-all H. He milked about 20-25 head of registered Jerseys. That's all he ever believed in was</p>

<p>Family, brothers; 170-180 acres; hay loader; 1950s; brothers ran the farm while Dad worked; milk in cans; didn't switch to bulk tanks; cow auctions</p>	<p>Jerseys. Back then farmers got paid more for the butter fat content in milk than just pounds in milk. Holsteins give a lot more milk but it's a lot lower fat content. How far do you want me to go?</p> <p>GC: Well, I had one older brother, one younger brother. Farm had about 170 acres, 180 acres. And we hayed, like every farm, with an old-fashioned hay loader until 1956. Farming was tough. My father went to work nights at Cones shop in Windsor. My oldest brother and I kind of ran the farm before and after we went to school. And then he bought a baler, the small square bales – not the big round ones they have now. I left home in '62. We got married. And Dad farmed a couple more years. We shipped milk back then in the milks cans, the kind you see in antique shops now. About the early '60s, they made farms change over to the bulk tanks they have now. He wouldn't change over. He was older and didn't want to do it and spend the money. So he went out of dairy farming. From then on he just raised a few head of beef. In the fall, he'd sell them. There used to be auctions in Thetford, Vermont every Monday night and he'd go up to and they would and buy a couple calves. Bring them home. He loved the calves. Nurse a cow until they're too big. And then they got bigger, and they were too big, and he'd sell them. They got bigger in the fall and he'd sell them. Then in the spring he'd start all over again.</p> <p>00:03:08 – 00:03:13 [Recording unclear]</p>
<p>00:03:14</p>	<p>00:03:14:</p> <p>KO: Where were your parents from?</p>
<p>Parents, married 1937; Windsor; Plymouth Union; father's career; farm 1942</p> <p>Decision to farm</p>	<p>GC: My dad was born in West Windsor and my mother was born in Plymouth Union. They were married in '37. She went to Windsor High School. He went to Windsor, but he dropped out in eighth grade to help on the farm, on his folks' farm. Then he went to work at what is now West Leb Feed and Supply. Back then, the brand of grain was Sunshine. Sunshine Feeds it was called. And he worked a couple years, and he a chance to manage his own store in South Royalton. So he took that and moved to South Royalton. And that's where they lived when I was born in January '42. Then they bought the farm and moved there in October '42.</p> <p>KO: Do you know why they decided to farm instead of have a store? So once your parents bought the farm, did they have the store anymore?</p> <p>GC: No, no. He resigned from the store. He didn't own it. He was a manager. At West Leb, he was just an employee. At South Royalton he was a manager. But, nope, he grew up on a farm and he wanted to farm.</p>

<p>Sunnybrook Farm</p>	<p>I wasn't very close to my dad, but he cut out for farming. He did what he was meant to do. He loved it. I wouldn't do it, for all the tea in China. But that's he should have done.</p> <p>KO: What was the name of your family's farm?</p> <p>GC: Sunnybrook Farm. I don't know if you can read in those pictures or not. But, the end of the barn used to be painted in big white letters on the end of the barn.</p> <p>KO: Oh it looks like it is.</p> <p>GC: It's probably faded. All the years he owned it, he lived there 58 years and he never repainted it. But when I looked at the barn was red like every barn in Vermont and in big, white letters it says, "Sunnybrook Farm."</p> <p>KO: So your family does not own the property anymore?</p> <p>GC: Yes. When Dad died he left the farm to my younger brother.</p>
<p>Brother currently farming</p>	<p>KO: Oh, okay.</p> <p>GC: He doesn't farm. He might have – I don't know – five to ten head of beef cattle. He doesn't ship milk. He doesn't really farm. He just tries to keep the fields open. And his son, my nephew, I wouldn't be surprised if he tried farming. I don't know it. Now farms are much bigger. I don't know if it would be reasonable to try to do it. And it's very steep, very hillside farm. But my nephew loves it. Maybe he'll try to start it up again someday.</p> <p>KO: That'd be nice to keep it going.</p>
<p>00:06:07</p>	<p>GC: Yup.</p> <p>00:06:07</p>
<p>Farm location; Naming of roads</p>	<p>KO: So where is the farm located? We're in downtown White River Junction].</p> <p>GC: It's about halfway between West Hartford and Quechee. It is on West Hartford-Quechee Road. It's about two miles from West Hartford. It's on the right. It sits down in the hole. It's on Clay Road. The town went through in the '70s and named all the roads, and they named it after him. So it's Clay Road.</p>

<p>Development on Clay Road, construction</p>	<p>KO: Is that why so many of the roads around here have seemingly family names?</p> <p>GC: I think a few of them do. At the time there was only two houses on the road, but now there's five 'cause I built – the family, they come up here from Boston. They bought a lot of land on top of the hill. Lightning hit the house and it burned. I'm a contractor since '71 and I built them a new house. And they had four children. And each of their children have houses, so now there's five houses on the road.</p> <p>KO: Oh, wow. All one family on the same road?</p> <p>GC: On the top of the hill, it's all one family.</p> <p>KO: Oh, that's nice.</p> <p>GC: There was two boys and two girls and each one, their parents left them a certain amount of land when they passed away. And they all built a house.</p>
<p>Farm responsibilities</p>	<p>KO: Neat. So you said you and your brother ran the farm when your father was working, and you ran it before and after school. What did you have to do? What were your responsibilities?</p>
<p>Chopping woods; care of the heifers; hay bales; grain the cows; molasses; cow's sweet tooth</p>	<p>GC: Well when you were real small, let's say 5,6,7,8 – somewhere in that range – your job was: We always burned wood, that's all you burned back then. Your job was to split the wood, bring it in the house, fill up the box. As you got a little older, you had to take care of the young stock, the heifers as they call them. Grain them (feed them), hay, and as you got older, your responsibilities increased till you could help milk. You put the hay upstairs in the summer and in the winter when the cows were in the barn you had to throw down 10 bales, 20 bales, whatever it took to feed them. Sometimes your hay would get rained on before you got in the barn. The moisture turns it brown. If it gets too much moisture it gets musty and moldy. Cows don't like that. And so a lot of times we'd buy molasses in 55 gallon barrels. You mix it with hot water – I don't remember, maybe 5:1 water to molasses) and take a water pan that you use to water the garden and you water the hay. Every animal has a sweet tooth and they would just love it.</p>
<p>Dehorning the cows</p>	<p>KO: Oh wow!</p> <p>GC: Yup. And we all went through high school. Your job was, you had to get up before school and depending on what age, whether you took out the heifers or you got the hay down and grained them, or every Saturday you had to clean the bullpen. The bull, you usually had one bull in a pen by himself. Saturday you had to clean him out, let him out and get him back in his pen. Bulls can be dangerous. Dad always dehorned most of our cows and bulls. It seemed a little bit cruel at the</p>

00:10:12	<p>time, but it's better than cows squabbling and one cow kills another cow by sticking a horn into it.</p> <p>00:10:12 - 10:17</p>
<p>Haying in the summer; fishing; hunting</p>	<p>In the summer time, in good weather, you had to do the haying. Us boys, we had a big flat field and when we weren't haying, we played baseball for hours and hours. We were all pretty good athletes and I was brought up to love baseball. Working first, but if you had time, you played baseball. There were three brooks on the farm. Most every year brought square tail trout and stocked the brooks and we fished. Of course we got spoiled because you could just drop you line and get a fish. My kids grew up doing that and they loved it.</p> <p>Hunting was a big thing. Every fall, Dad and my brother especially lived to deer hunt. I liked it, but not as much. I guess I was the black sheep of the family. Every farm has woodchucks. They dig holes in the field and they do a lot of damage. Driving along a tractor or a rake and wheel drops in a hole, you break it. So every farmer has always encouraged to shoot as many as you could shoot. And we used to have a hunting contest. People were more receptive to hunting back then. Every animal was worth points. The harder it was, the more points it counted. We'd do it all summer through deer season. It'd be my dad and younger brother against me and my older brother. Whichever team had the most points, the other team took them out to dinner. It was a challenge, it was fun.</p>
00:12:35	00:12:35
<p>Fences; stone walls</p> <p>Fixing the fence</p>	<p>Fences could be a problem. Dad had problems with a couple of the neighbors and fixing the fence. In most cases the rule of fence, in the 17th, 18th, 19th centuries, if land had a fence, the person above the fence was responsible for fixing it because most fences were stone walls. Stone [rolls] down hill and not uphill. When a farmer was poor about making his fences, it used to cause some bad feelings. He'd come down to the house. He was a good enough neighbor and said he'd fix the fence, but never would do it.</p> <p>KO: So did you have to fix it instead?</p> <p>GC: Oh yea. Dad was pretty good about maintaining his fences. He had his faults, but that wasn't one of them. He kept his fences, not perfect, but fixed up. You could have a windstorm in the spring and all of a sudden your cattle would be out and you could go check around through the woods and the wind blows a tree over and flattens a fence. The cows find it pretty quick.</p>

Dogs on the farm	<p>Another thing that was essential was a dog. We always had border collies and they were worth their weight in gold. You could open the gate and tell them to go find the cows, and he'd find them all. I guess by smell. He'd bring them up to the gate. It saved a person a lot of work. We had some fields that went up Clay Road, where the five houses were. He took the place of a man. One person would go stand up by the gate for the night pasture. But the dog would bring them down the road for you. So one person could handle all the cattle.</p> <p>KO: Did you have to train the border collies to do that?</p> <p>GC: When we bought the farm there was one already there. I don't know who trained him, but somebody spent a lot of time with him. When he was along in years Dad's cousin who lived in Baltimore, Vermont raised him. The old dog had [fathered] a litter of puppies and he got one of the puppies. I think he was just smart. My dad didn't have a lot of patience and didn't spend enough time with him. He ran out of patience. Like any kid or puppy, they have to learn. But he was good. And they still had him [when I left home].</p>
Cats on the farm	<p>Cats. Every farm has cats. People used to drop off cats that they didn't want. There weren't any humane societies back then. And if you had a female cat, pretty soon you had 15-20 cats. Just back then in the '40s and '50s, nobody had their cats neutered or spayed. They didn't bother. I heard my grandfather talk about doing it himself. It's pretty cruel the way they used to do it. But when you get too many cats, you had to dispose of some.</p> <p>KO: Did you have to feed all the cats? Or were they just feral?</p>
Rabbits on the farm	<p>GC: No, I guess I remember they were domesticated, but if you have a female they have 2-3 litters per year. Once my oldest brother brought home two rabbits. He kept them penned, and I guess he had them two years and pretty soon we had 30 some-odd rabbits. And about the end of June, they got loose. All of them. And they leveled the garden. They couldn't have done a better job with a lawnmower. And Dad, that's the way he was, he shot every one of them, skinned them, and put them in the freezer. That winter we ate them. Life was so much different. It seems crueller now, but that's the way life was. Life was harsh.</p> <p>KO: Well, at least you ate them.</p> <p>GC: But you don't like eating your pets. And rabbit meat is excellent meat. It's healthy and it tastes good. But that's just one thing that I can remember that we did. It was a lot of un.</p>

<p>00:17:56</p> <p>Mother – housework, helping the farm; hay fork</p>	<p>00:17:56</p> <p>KO: What did your Mom do?</p> <p>GC: Mom, like a typical housewife, kept house. We were very slack or lazy about helping. We threw our clothes down. We didn't help. She got the meals. Before they had bale hay, they had a wagon and drove up to the end of the barn. You look up at some barns and there's a trap door at the end and there's a track sticking out. The old hay fork came down and you took a clump coming up. We had a tractor on the trailer, so we'd pull they hayfork up with a car. Mom always drove the car and pulled the hay up. She raised a garden. She used to help with chores at times. She was a good worker. And then in 1955 she had a bad nervous breakdown. Until my folks divorced, and even afterwards, she was the State Hospital in Waterbury, a lot.</p>
<p>00:19:20</p> <p>Mother's illness</p>	<p>00:19:20</p> <p>She suffered from depression until the day she died. She'd go up there for a few months and improve a lot, and then come home and go downhill.</p> <p>My dad is my dad and my dad is a very hard person to live with. He never struck my mother, but he was very verbally abusive, I guess.</p>
<p>00:19:48</p> <p>Family – brothers</p>	<p>00:19:48</p> <p>KO: Did you say you had a sister?</p> <p>GC: No sisters.</p> <p>KO: Older brother, younger brother.</p> <p>GC: One four years older, one four years younger.</p> <p>KO: And your younger brother is the one who has the farm?</p> <p>GC: Yes. He has a few head of beef and he works part time as a contractor.</p> <p>KO: And what does your older brother do?</p> <p>GC: He's retired. He was in sales all his life. He loved sales and he was good at it. He went to work in the '50s for a company in Portland, Maine.</p>

	{Brother's job experience & brothers' families}
00:22:19 Left the farm, married, 1960s Reasons for farming – hard life	00:22:19 GC: I left the farm in '61, got married '62. I worked in a grocery store for 5 years. Got done there and went to work for a contractor, used to be here in town. In '71, went to business for myself and still am. KO: So farming wasn't your – you weren't made for farming? GC: I liked to eat, but no. Both my brothers enjoyed it and I did my share. Like I said I didn't get along very well with my dad and didn't like the way he treated my mother and couldn't wait to leave home. Maybe that was part of it. I would go back in summer when dad was older and was there by himself. He kept a few beef cattle. I'd go up in the summer and help him get in the hay because it's a hard job for one guy, an older guy. But there's no way, I want to farm. KO: It's a tough life, I imagine. GC: People who farm do it because they want to, not for the money. It's a hard life. Even now it's a hard life. Your pay-per-hour is not very good. In a way, there's a freedom. Of course if you're a dairy farmer, you've got to get up and milk 7 days a week. But then you can sit in the house and read the paper, whatever you want to do. Most people have to go to work. Still per hour, it's a hard life.
00:24:10 Farm for family consumption Maple sugaring experiments	00:24:10 KO: So you had dairy cattle, a garden – was the garden just for self? GC: Yes, just for family consumption. Raised our own beef. Butcher our beef – maybe two per year – for family. Always had deer meat. Most of them shot in season. Dad was never one to shoot out of season but if he needed to feed a family, he shot them. KO: Did you do any maple sugaring? GC: I tried it one year. We had an outside stone fireplace and we used a couple of Mom's cake pans or cookie sheets and we burned them up. We made maybe a gallon. We never had a sugarhouse. I don't know why. We had a lot of maple trees. At times we had chickens, but for our own use. There was a good size apple orchard when we moved in. It must have 35-50 apple trees and varieties. On good years we'd pick what we wanted and store them and we might have 25-30 bushels leftover and we'd try to sell them. Back in the '50s there wasn't a lot of

<p>Supermarkets; William Finley; town closed on evenings; Bellows Falls Coop. Creamery; milk check</p>	<p>traffic on that road. You might 5 cars in a day, now you'll see 5 cars in 10 minutes. We used to sell some apples. That's the only thing I can remember selling. Dad must have sold beef to somebody, but as far as fruits and vegetables, that's all I can remember selling.</p> <p>KO: Did you have to come into town to buy a lot of groceries?</p> <p>GC: Around here there weren't any supermarkets. There was a store in West Hartford, which is still there. They just reopened from Irene. Back then, a guy, William Finley, owned it. The West Hartford post office was in the same building. Dad would buy all his groceries there. Back then, stores were never open on Sundays. The only evening any store was open was Friday night. Pretty much closed on Saturdays. Milk went in cans. On the south side of Windsor there used to be a creamery. There was one in Bellows Falls called Bellows Falls Cooperative Creamery. And farmers owned it as a co-op. And they'd pay you once a month. The milk check used to come in the 21st of every month. So dad would charge his groceries the whole month and the 21st of every month he'd pay it off. I don't know if that's how all families did or not. You had to make your money go a month.</p> <p>KO: Who did the bookkeeping, your mom or dad?</p>
<p>Family bookkeeping; planning ahead; farming organization</p>	<p>GC: Dad. Mom was better educated, but Dad – didn't trust her or wanted to do it, but Dad did the books. Dad was an excellent worker. He wasn't a very businessman. He made things hard for himself where he didn't plan ahead. Like haying – you got to have 2-3 good days in a row. He probably had 45 acres of fields that were hayed. He was so concerned that he might mow down 4 acres. He wanted to make sure he would get those 4 acres in before he mowed down more. Haying goes on for a month. And as you get down acres, you work till night to get it in. But he wouldn't. Hay dried out. Hay, as it gets into July, your hay, grass gets tougher and cows don't like it as well. He just wouldn't get it. He was very conservative about taking a chance and mowing 15 acres and getting done haying in 10 days. He'd mow 3 acres and take 30 days to hay. I'm not saying it was wrong – just the way he was.</p>
<p>Breeding cattle</p>	<p>The farm next door – there was a small farm between us and the people from Boston who bought on the top of the hill. I think it had 48 acres in it. And it sold for \$400 in the late '40s. \$400 I'm sure was a lot of money to a family then. If he bought then he could have handled another 15 head of milkers easy. But he was very conservative and wouldn't spend the \$400 to do it. And as time went on, now a farm has to have 500-800 herd cow. Back then we milked about 26-28 in that range. Farmers tried to breed their cattle to have their cows [calve] at the end of September. You got more for your milk in the winter months</p>

	<p>than the summer months. And a cow milks for about 10 months and as 10 months go on, she gives less and less milk. At 10 months you try to dry her off – stop milking her – so she’ll put on weight. In the meantime, she’s pregnant. She she can recover and get in shape [to have her next calf]. But milk was higher in the winter so you try to have your cows fresh in the fall.</p>
00:30:50	00:30:50
Gutter cleaners; sawmills; hay	<p>GC: In the wintertime they stayed in all the time. That means you have to clean the gutter night and morning. Now they have gutter cleaners where you just push a switch. Then you had what they called a [litter] carrier. It ran on the track behind the cows, and you shovel onto the carrier, and you roll it out and you pull a string and it dumped. That’s where it was done. Back then there was dozen of small sawmills around. Farmers got their sawdust from the sawmills. As life progressed and building increased, they found a lot more use for sawdust and shavings. They make plywood with it. And a lot of sawmills went out so it got hard to find sawdust. And then it got expensive because of supply and demand.</p>
Use of hay & sawdust in barn	<p>KO: So what did you do without sawdust?</p> <p>GC: You usually found some. You could use hay. If you had hay that got rained on a couple times, it went from being a light green to almost a black. And then it was mulch hay. And that’s all it’s good for. Then there weren’t a lot of buildings so you might use that for putting it under the cattle, bedding to make it a little softer on the concrete. It helps soak up some of the urine in the gutter. But as sawmills got scarcer and sawdust got harder to get, it went from being dry sawdust to logs 2-3 days before you got it. And green sawdust has moisture in it and didn’t do the job nearly as well. But you had to take what was available.</p> <p>KO: So that probably added to the expenses for sure?</p> <p>GC: Sure.</p>
00:32:55	00:32:55
concrete floors in barns; milk cans; refrigeration of milk cans	<p>KO: Was the floor of the barn concrete? I know at one point standards changed.</p> <p>GC: Our floors were all concrete. All the walls in Dad’s barn were wood. Over the years, he built an addition. The first 3-4 years, the milk house was probably 75 yards from the barn. We used to have a sleigh to take those milk cans, and they probably weighed 100 lbs a piece. And</p>

Barns on farm	<p>the coolers back then were recessed in the floor. And they had refrigerators and coils around, which would form 3” of ice water and kept the water cold, kept the milk cold. But Dad got sick of that, and built a milkhouse attached to the barn so he didn’t have to drag it down. And he put a metal roof on that. At first, I think he put metal roof on the other two barns.</p> <p>KO: So you had three barns total?</p> <p>GC: Yup. The biggest barn, the one in the middle, and then that one.</p>
Milking when power went out; using tractor	<p>KO: Did you milk by hand or did you have machinery?</p> <p>GC: We had milk machines. If the power went off, which it did quite often in the country, you’d milk by hand. And then we bought a tractor – Farm-All International Utility and they put the valve on the intake manifold. That would sit in the barn and idle and that would run the milk machines. You need power. You left the door open and it saved milking by hand. But we didn’t do a lot of milking by hand. Only when the power was off.</p> <p>KO: Did it take a lot longer?</p> <p>GC: Yes, a lot longer. It was a very hard job. Gives you a good grip, but a very hard job.</p>
Electricity; party line telephone	<p>KO: So you had electricity out on the farm from the beginning?</p> <p>GC: Yes, as far as I can remember, we had electricity. We had a phone line, a party line. There was 4 houses on one line. You pick it up and the operator would say “number, please” or you pick it up and your neighbors would be on the line. You’d have to wait for them to be done before you could call. There weren’t any cell phones. It was a black phone. It didn’t even have a rotary dial for a long time. You picked it up and the operator would say “number, please” and you’d give her the number and she’d punch it in.</p>
Neighbors & community	<p>KO: Were you friends with your neighbors?</p> <p>GC: Yea, except for the neighbor that wouldn’t fix his fence. We had great neighbors. And people back then went back and forth a lot more. Now people are so busy and so wrapped up in their own lifestyle. But most everybody farmed then and had a farm one size or another. At times, we didn’t raise corn every year. But one year we raised corn for the cattle. We never had a corn harvester to chop it up. Then they had a corn harvester and wrap up a bundle of stalks. Our neighbor had one</p>

<p>00:37:10</p> <p>12-15 farms at one time (1950s)</p> <p>Small dairy farms</p> <p>Interstate</p> <p>Windsor Brown farm</p>	<p>and they'd come down help us for a day. And we'd help him in return. They'd swap work. If one farmer had equipment that another one didn't, they'd help each other. We had good neighbors and everybody seemed to get along. I don't remember Hatfields and McCoys fueds.</p> <p>KO: How many families, or how many farms, would say were in your community?</p> <p>00:37:10</p> <p>GC: Well on that road, the West Hartford-Quechee Road, about 4.5 miles, I'd say there must have been 12-15 farms. There's no operating farms now.</p> <p>KO: Not at all?</p> <p>GC: No. And back then they were all small dairy farms. A couple of them raised sheep. 2/3 of them, the fields are full of houses. I've contributed to that. I've been a builder for 41 years and I built a lot of houses on that road. And every family had one car. My mother didn't drive until I left home. She drove to pull the hayfork up in the yard. But as for driving on the highway, I guess I was 19 or 20 before she had her license.</p> <p>KO: So did you leave home before the interstate came through?</p> <p>GC: I left before the interstate came through. The interstate went through here about the same time. The first interstate came through here in '61, '62, and that's about the time that I got married and left home.</p> <p>KO: Did the interstate affect the farm at all?</p> <p>GC: Nope, came nowhere near it. The only farm that it did have a big effect on was right up here where 89 and 91 cross – the Brown Farm, used to be Windsor Brown's Farm. It just destroyed that farm, right through the middle. I remember he was very vocal about it. I remember them filing a lawsuit, I don't know how it turned out. His farm, he adjusted to it, because he built the new Howard Johnson's – well now it's Hampton. And I guess he knew that with two interstates crossing, it would be a good place for a restaurant. He did very well for a long time,</p> <p>KO: Good planning on his part.</p>
<p>00:39:29</p> <p>Thoughts on being a builder</p>	<p>00:39:29</p> <p>KO: How do you feel about being a builder and a contractor and building where there used to be farms? What's your take on that?</p>

	<p>GC: I like to build. That's how I make my living. I don't want to see all the fields full of houses, but I can see both sides. We talked about how hard a farmer works and how little money he makes. All of a sudden if he decides to sell, he can make a lot more money selling building lots. I hate to see all the fields full of houses, but I guess I feel that if people ask me to build a house, and I didn't build it, probably somebody else would. I enjoy. I go stock car racing a lot and I enjoy going to Plattsburgh, NY. I enjoy going to Rutland on Route 7 because there are still a lot of farms on that road. I'd still like to see open fields because that's what Vermont has been. But there's going to be less and less of it. Every year there's less and less farms.</p> <p>KO: People need a place to live.</p>
Why farms disappear; deer on the farm	<p>GC: People who farm all their life, get so old that they can't do it. Not a lot of young people do it. There's a lot more money and easier life, so not a lot of young people get into it. So they start selling off land and they build the houses. There's one field on the West Hartford-Quechee that has 33 acres in it. In the 60s when we had too many deer, you'd come home from a date or something and turn your cars sideways and turn your headlights off, it wasn't anything to see 40-50 deer in the field, 8 or 9 buck. It was just loaded. We had way too many deer. But as the farms went out, we had less and less deer. For the amount of posted land, farms have been built up – I don't think the state can maintain any more deer than we have.</p> <p>KO: So there was more hunting and deer?</p>
Hunting	<p>GC: Yes, most everybody hunted back then. It was almost like a national holiday. Come deer hunting, everything stopped. Of course there was a lot less to do. Nobody had television. No computers. No video games.</p>
TV; 1950s	<p>KO: Did your family ever have a TV while you lived at home?</p> <p>GC: Yes, I still have it. My mother saved up her pennies and for Christmas 1955, she bought a television, a round screen, black and white. Only has channels 2-13. No UHF. And I still have it. It still works. When Dad died nobody wanted it. I don't know why I kept it, but I did. Then you only got 3 channels. I got channel 3 from Burlington. We got channel 8 from Poland Spring, Maine and we got channel 6 from Portland, Maine. Fair. It was pretty snowy. The picture back then – the quality – everything was black and white. No color. And TV channels used to come on at 1:00, 2:00 and there'd be a couple soap operas, American Bandstand and then maybe some shows in the</p>

	<p>evening. And 11:00 at night, it went off the air. At the rest of the time they had what they call a test pattern. There'd be an Indian head or something on the TV screen until it ran the next day.</p>
00:43:55	00:43:35
outside entertainment: community supper, dances in Hartford, roller skating, basketball, baseball	<p>KO: As far as outside entertainment, my folks once in a while would go to dance. Once in a while we'd go to a community supper. In West Hartford there used to be place by the river, by the park, there used to roller skates 3 nights a week and a dance on Saturday night. My brothers didn't do that much. I used to roller skate a lot. That's how I met my wife and it's lasted 50 years. That was about – we lived so far from school, like 14 miles from the high school. We were good athletes. We all played baseball. And basketball, but Mom had a breakdown by the time I got into high school. And Dad told me I could only go out for one sport so I picked baseball. Mom didn't drive and with running the farm, he didn't have time to cart us back and forth so it didn't happen.</p>
School	<p>KO: Which high school did you go to?</p> <p>GC: Hartford. I moved here 9 months old. I never left town. I've always lived in town. I guess it's just roots.</p>
00:45:02	00:45:02 {Recording quality here decreases – likely due to heating system in building, subtle background noise}
Other farming families	<p>KO: Did you – you lived in West Hartford, did you know the farmers over in Quechee? Jericho?</p>
Eastman; Schaal	<p>GC: We knew Harold Eastman, of the Quechee Fells Farm. He was a good guy. He used to raise a lot of apples. I remember one night my neighbor and I walked over there – must be three miles – each bought a half gallon of cider and walked home. We knew the Eastmans. There was a family, Schaal family who used to live in Quechee and we knew them. Quechee Fells Farm was a beautiful farm. They had beautiful stone walls and it was a nice farm. There son went to school to me. He was born and one leg was like 1 ½” shorter than the other. He had an operation to try to stretch his leg. I guess it helped him. But he always limped, and I always felt bad. Well things were pretty crude in health care then. There were some farms in West Hartford. We had two uncles that lived in Royalton. They both farmed. Dad had four brothers and three sisters, and they all lived on a farm, either Windsor, West Windsor or Brownsville. That's what most everybody did.</p>
00:47:08	00:47:08

Childhood home	<p>KO: Do you know when your house was built, your parents' house?</p> <p>GC: I don't. When they remodeled it – the beams in it were hand hewn and the nails were square cut nails. I don't know. I would guess – well, we tore the walls apart. Sometimes they used newspaper for insulation. And we found a 1901 newspaper. I'd say mid 1800s, maybe after. I'm no authority. Typical farmhouse: big, no insulation. Heated with wood.</p> <p>KO: Did you have a woodstove or a furnace?</p>
Heating the house	<p>GC: We had a wood furnace in the basement. The old big steam radiators. We had a woodstove in the kitchen. Mom cooked on a woodstove. We cut our own wood. There was probably 170 acres on the property, over 100 was wooded.</p>
00:48:28	00:48:28 {Volume quality back to normal}
Chopping wood	<p>GC: You cut your wood in the winter when things are slow. Pile it up. Let it dry. Burn it next fall.</p> <p>KO: Did you store the wood – looks like there are some woodsheds in the back.</p> <p>GC: No that's a tool shed. Tractors and balers and mowing machine were kept in the shed. There was an old stone bulkhead and wood was thrown down the basement. Some of the wood for the kitchen stove was kept in the old woodshed, before the house was remodeled. Most of it went into the basement. And it had a big old steam furnace with radiators.</p>
Hay storage; silo	<p>KO: What about all of the hay? Where was that stored? On top of the barn?</p> <p>GC: Yes. You can see the little square door near the peak. That's where one hayfork was. There's one on the other barn. Once we got the baler, we got the conveyor and you can see there's a little door. And you'd bale the square bales and put them back on the conveyor and one or two would get them in the barn and pile them up. All the hay was stored upstairs.</p> <p>KO: So no need for a silo?</p>
Barn remodel	<p>GC: There was one, but it was in the back of the barn. It was right behind this barn. There was two when he moved there. He remodeled the barn in '45 when he moved the milk house down to the barn. That one was torn down. It was in good shape. I don't remember that, I was</p>

<p>Corn/ensilage into the silo</p> <p>00:51:19</p>	<p>only 3. The other one was there after I left home. I don't remember when that was torn down.</p> <p>KO: Was it used for anything?</p> <p>GC: Yup. Used to put corn in it. Ensilage is the right name. Corn used to be on bundles. Then you go along on a wagon and you get to the silo, and you have what they call a blower. You have the conveyor belt. Throw it in, grind it up and blow it up a pipe into the silo. That was state of the art then.</p> <p>00:51:19</p>
<p>00:51:41</p> <p>Farmers in nearby area: Fog, Howard, Wendell, Clifford, Tappin, Cole, Eastman</p> <p>Neighbors & friends</p>	<p>00:51:41</p> <p>KO: There's a question I wanted to ask about your neighbors. Do you remember names of other families who were your neighbors?</p> <p>GC: Yes, the next going towards West Hartford was Fog, Frank Fog. And then the next was the Howard Brothers – Ralph and Ernest. And the next was Wendell Fog. And the next was Clifford. Going towards Quechee the first farm was Wheeler. Then was Tappin. They had sheep. And then there's the Cole Farm. And the next farm was Eastman, Quechee Fells Farm. Have you been there – that's where the ski tow is now. Ski area. That's about what I can remember.</p> <p>KO: And there were kids your age on some of the farms?</p> <p>GC: Yea. The people next door – the closest house, he didn't farm. He was a mechanic in a Ford garage. George was his last name. They had two boys and two girls. The two girls were older than I am. The two boys younger. One boy is deceased. The next farm – I left that out – was Shaddock. I don't know if they had children or not. They were gone before I can remember. The next farm was Fog – they had six kids, three girls, three boys. The next farm was Howard. I don't know how many children. Within a mile each way, there was probably 10-12-14 kids, all two years older or two years younger than me. There was a summer home up the road. They had a good sized beaver pond and we used to go up and shovel that off and skate on it during the winter time. If you got 3 or 4 people to shovel it, it wasn't too bad. It was worth it.</p> <p>My best friend grew up on the road. I was best man at his wedding. He was best man at my wedding. Last I heard, he was in Alaska. I don't know – haven't heard from him in years. The first three years I went to school, we used to go to school in a four door sedan. There were only six of us. A neighbor, I don't know what kind of deal he had with the town. This was back in the '40s. And he would drive us to the grammar</p>

<p>School bus</p>	<p>school – the one it used to have. And then when I was in 4th grade, a schoolbus used to pick us up.</p> <p>KO: A big school bus?</p> <p>GC: The big yellow ones, like now. The driver’s name was Lad Carbee. It was a 1954 Ford. A very fair person. If you got out of hand, he’d punish you and you’d deserve it. They could back then. But you usually deserved. He wasn’t unreasonable. I remember once some kid threw something and bounced off the mirror to his head. He stopped the bus and said, “I don’t know who threw but I know it came in the last 3 rows on each side. If whoever did it and owns up, he’ll get off and that’s the end of it. If the person doesn’t, then you’ll all get off and walk.” And he wouldn’t own up to it. And kids, you don’t rat on each other. So we all got off. And we threatened to end his life if that ever happened again. I guess you learn from it. But we all had to walk.</p> <p>KO: Was that a long walk?</p> <p>GC: I don’t think he’s unreasonable. I would have done the same thing. He was a very man. He bought that brand new bus the second year. The first year he had an old Chevy. He bought that new Ford and leased it to the town. There was a sign: no eating or drinking on the bus. Like a new car, you take care of it. And one night – my allowance was a quarter a month. Just before the bus got there, I bought a popsicle for 5 cents. And I went to get on the bus and he pointed to the sign and then I remembered it. I said I’ll sit in the front seat next to you and I won’t spill a drop. He said, no, if I make one exception then I have to make others. And a nickel was a lot of money to me. He said you got to throw it away or walk. I threw it away. Probably my face was that long all the way home. But when I went to get off the bus, he handed me a nickel. You don’t forget things like that. He says, “Remember, no food or drink on the bus.” He was a very fair man. Years later when I was a businessman, I put storm windows on his house and I mentioned it to him. He didn’t remember it, but a little kid remembers it and he gave me back that nickel. I’ll always remember it. A very fair man.</p> <p>KO: That’s a good story.</p>
<p>00:58:10</p> <p>Visiting with neighbors & family</p>	<p>00:58:10</p> <p>GC: People used to go back and forth to houses a lot more than they do now. You go visit your brother-in-law or sister-in-law or parents more than you do now, because people are so wrapped up in their lives now. We were close to my mom’s brother in Royalton and we used to go up there a lot. They had a boy about my age. We were very close. But some houses you enjoyed going to, you had kids your age. Some houses</p>

	<p>you went because you had to. You didn't enjoy it. Then grandparents were just as good as you do now, but you didn't have the relationship with your grandparents in the '40s as you do now. I have seven grandkids and I grew up with all of them and enjoyed every minute I could. Back then you didn't do that. My dad's dad was blind most of his life. He couldn't see. I think back now – I marvel at him. He never ever once complained. He took what life gave him and made the most of it. He talked an awful lot, but he'd sit there all day. Back then they didn't have Braille. I guess they had it, but it wasn't common around here. I remember when they came out with vinyl records – a 16 RPM record, 16/3 and it was a talking record. Stories would last for hours and hours. Some guy would narrate the story. And he loved that. He'd sit there hour after hour. You can't read – there's no television. Must be a long day. But he took it well.</p>
Grandfather	<p>KO: So he couldn't farm if he was blind.</p> <p>GC: He farmed until his eyesight got so bad. I'd guess he farmed until probably when he was 50-55. After that, he couldn't farm. He used to raise chickens and sell the eggs and try to make a little money. But as far as cattle he couldn't. By the time he was 60, he was completely blind.</p> <p>KO: This is your dad's dad?</p> <p>GC: Right. It can be hereditary, but my brothers and I were checked and we don't have that gene. Maybe today it could be prevented, but in the '20s, '30s, '40s, they didn't know what they know now.</p> <p>My mom's parents farmed a little. Made most of their money selling Christmas wreaths, thousands of them. And they'd truck them to Boston. The money would have to last the whole year because Christmas was only coming once a year. But that's what they mainly did. They were married 74 years. That's a long time.</p>
01:01:56 Interstates effects on farm	<p>01:01:56</p> <p>GC: I'd say the biggest thing that killed farms was the – probably the interstates had a lot to do with it. People could see a different lifestyle and all of these stores and gas stations sprung up. People could see how you could make a living so much easier. That brought the value of land up. People said they'll beat their brains out for a year and make \$4,000 or sell the land and make \$10,000. I think that started the demise of it. And it just got worse and worse and worse.</p>
01:02:44	01:02:44

Changes in Vermont	<p>KO: So you've seen rural Vermont kind of completely change, haven't you?</p> <p>GC: Yea. Have you gone up through Tunbridge? That used to be the farming town. Everything in Tunbridge was a farm, I swear. But slowly but surely everything is houses and less farms.</p> <p>KO: Did you ever come into White River Junction when you were living on the farm? Or was everything available in West Hartford?</p>
Groceries; Briggs Store	<p>GC: No, just our groceries. If you needed new shoes – every fall when you went back to school you got new clothes and new shoes – across the river here there used to be a clothing store, Briggs Store. Good Store. It was open days and Fridays probably till 8. You couldn't buy on Sundays. Hardly anything was open on Sunday. Everyone went to church back then. That's why church service was at 10am. Farmers had time to finish their stores to get to church. And then the store in West Hartford was limited on fresh meat or fish (not very common then) there used to be a store on Main Street in West Lebanon and we'd shop there some. But there wasn't any Price Chopper or Shaw's or Hannaford. There just wasn't around here.</p> <p>We'd come into White River to the doctor or dentist. There was two stores in West Hartford, but it was limited – canned goods or cereal. If you wanted ham or fresh haddock, you had to go to a bigger store. Even then you had 1/10 the variety you have now. They couldn't keep stuff as fresh.</p>
Family cars	<p>KO: What kind of car did your family have?</p> <p>GC: Chevrolet. The only thing my father would drive was a Chevrolet. The first car I can remember was a 1940 Chevy I think he bought in '42. And he drove that to '49. Bought a brand new Chevy. In '51 bought brand new Chevy. In '54 bought a brand new Chevy. '56. And that's what I mean. He probably went 2,000 miles a year because there was no interstates. And you didn't go many places. You worked all the time. And yet he'd trade cars every two years. I said he worked very hard, but he was a not a good businessman. That's a good example. You could probably buy a car back then for \$1,000 but still. He probably only earned \$3,000 a year. Why trade cars every 2-3 years? I don't know. They didn't even get broken in. Well, the '54 he traded it because my oldest brother totaled it. But the rest of the time, hardly ever driven. He just wanted a new car. And farming was pretty good then, and he was making a lot of money. And he was spending it as fast he was making it. He was conservative. No foresight. It would have been a lot better to spend \$400 on the farm up the road, because in a few years it was worth</p>

	<p>\$20,000. I don't know why people make the decisions they make. He wouldn't buy anything but a Chevrolet. He wouldn't bank anywhere else than the First National Bank in Windsor. I don't think it's there anymore.</p>
<p>Milk check</p>	<p>Like I said, the milk check come the 21st of the month. He'd drive to Windsor, put the check in the bank. And we'd go to my grandparents who live in West Windsor and have dinner and come home. The only time we avoided it, if it came on a school day. Back then banks were only open 9-3, not Saturdays and Sundays. There weren't any branch banks, just one main bank and that was it.</p>
<p>Going out to dinner – special occasion</p>	<p>No such thing as McDonalds or Burger King. We'd go out maybe twice a year, as far as going out to eat. April 9 was my folks' anniversary. And if you know Lebanon at all – take Route 4 – there's a garage called Flanders & Patch – right across the road where they park their pick-ups to sell. There was a restaurant there called the New Bridge. And that's where we went April 9. Once in a while we might go out on someone's birthday, but we just didn't have the money. Quite often every fall we'd the hunting contest and we'd go out after that. At least farmers didn't. We hardly ever ate out. There [were] restaurants, in White River and one or two in Wilder. But just a different lifestyle.</p> <p>KO: Well it's expensive now, I imagine it always was.</p>
<p>Bulk tank effect on farms</p>	<p>GC: Even today, I don't know that farmers eat out a lot. You don't have much money. It's a tough life. In the '50s when Dad went to work, that's when he bought the second tractor and baler, we hayed two extra farms that year. For two years in a row we did that. It didn't pan out.</p>
<p>Expense of switching to bulk tanks</p>	<p>We didn't get the results he wanted so we stopped doing that. And then my oldest brother got married in '55 and stayed home till '57. Then he went out on his own. Dad stopped working at the shop. Three-four years later I left home and he went back to one farm. And that's the time they were changing over to bulk tanks. That kind of finished it.</p> <p>KO: Because that would have been expensive to switch over, correct?</p>
<p>Other required improvements to farms: septic systems; better hygiene</p>	<p>GC: Not just that. But you had to build a whole new milk house because it wasn't big enough for a bulk tank. So you had to tear that down, build a new one. Buy a bulk tank. [??] When we farmed we took milk out of the pail and lugged it up to the milk room and dumped it into the can through a strainer. But when you put the bulk tank in, it was a lot better hygiene wise. The less handling, the less dust or cow hair floating around. It went from milk machine straight to the pipeline. By then he was old enough so it was going to involve spending a lot of money. Like I said, he was quite conservative and he just wouldn't do it. So he</p>

<p>01:11:15</p> <p>Changes in the 1960s</p>	<p>got out of it. It was about that time, up until that point, your home sewer dumped into the brook. You didn't have septic system. But the state was making everyone comply and you had to put a septic system in. But he wouldn't change over to the bulk tank. If he spent that money, he'd have to get more cattle and he was old enough so he didn't want to do it. So he didn't.</p> <p>01:11:15</p> <p>KO: So the septic was about the same time, you're saying?</p> <p>GC: Yup, a lot happened in the '60s that way.</p>
<p>01:11:25</p> <p>Refrigeration & electricity; appliances in the kitchen</p> <p>Meals & food at home</p> <p>01:14:14</p> <p>Slaughtering</p>	<p>01:11:25</p> <p>KO: What about refrigeration? Oh you said electric coils?</p> <p>GC: We always had an electric refrigerator. In the garage we had a couple ice boxes like you see in the movies. Now they're worth a fortune. We had a refrigerator. We didn't have an electric toaster. You toasted your bread on a woodstove. No such thing as air conditioners. Hot water came from the boiler. That hasn't changed a whole lot, except people don't use steam anymore. As far as appliances: mom never had a blender. I guess she had a handheld mixer. She had a waffle iron.</p> <p>KO: What kind of food did your mom make? What did you eat on a regular basis for dinner or breakfast?</p> <p>GC: Most any meal was potato and meat and a vegetable. We didn't have a lot of dessert. Pretty basic. Sometimes mashed. Didn't bake a lot of things, I remember. Boil potatoes. Gravy. Beef. Venison a lot. Once in a while we'd raise a pig. We didn't have pork a lot. Once in a while, chicken. Most meals were potato. Steak is a big treat, but when you raise your own beef, it's pretty common. On your birthday, if Mom was home. She always made a cake. A pie once in while. Cookies often. Didn't do a lot of baking. She didn't have time. The washing machine was the old ringer type, run your clothes through it. That took time. Never had a dishwasher. She was a decent cook as I remember. Average. Even a housewife, it was a hard life for everybody.</p> <p>01:14:14</p> <p>KO: So you had to slaughter your own cows and pigs?</p> <p>GC: Yes. It wasn't enjoyable, but it was something you did – a way of life.</p>

<p>Freezer for storage</p> <p>Canning</p>	<p>KO: And your dad taught you how to do that?</p> <p>GC: Yup. And the younger you were, you got the more dirty jobs. And the older you get, the better you got and you got the more enjoyable jobs. You didn't know anything else. Every fall we'd do that. Between my brothers and dad, we used to get 1,2,3,4 deer a year. Same procedure. If we raised chickens, there again, when you're little – you haven't seen how farmers do chickens. Just lay the head on the chopping block and cut the head off. And the chicken would jump as high as the ceiling, run around for a minute and minute and a half before they finally die. And when you're four, it's scary.</p> <p>KO: I think I might be scared now if I saw a chicken without a head.</p> <p>GC: That's the way it was done. About the early '50s, Dad bought a huge freezer and we used that a lot for vegetables and meat. I'd say he bought it about '51, '52 and that freezer lasted until 1999. Dad died in 2001, and it lasted up two years before he died. It was International Harvester who made it. They used to make trucks. That was used a lot. Used to pick a lot of berries. Mom had some cultivated raspberry patch. She loved raspberries. You'd freeze a lot of berries and have them in the wintertime. You couldn't buy 1/10 of the produce you can now. Didn't have the technology and the way to get to market. So if you had any year round, you had a freezer and do it yourself.</p> <p>KO: Did your mom can anything?</p> <p>GC: Yea, used to can a lot. Some things couldn't be frozen, but she would can. A lot of times she canned before we had the freezer. That was common practice back then. One year we raised a couple pigs and butchered them. Mom made the lard. You took the fat and boil it, and you could smell the stuff in the house for 5 years. Never did it again. It was awful.</p>
<p>01:17:40</p> <p>Favorite memories</p>	<p>01:17:40</p> <p>KO: Do you have some favorite stories of you and your brothers from when you were younger?</p> <p>GC: As farm as farming?</p> <p>KO: Just living on the farm, things you boys used to do.</p> <p>GC: I don't know. I was a lot closer to my oldest brother than my youngest brother. We got along pretty good for the most part. We'd</p>

<p>Hunting with brothers</p>	<p>fight once in a while. My younger brother is a lot harder to get along with. No I can't think of anything offhand, not anything that stands out.</p> <p>I can remember I was 15 and my brother and I had been hunting. We were walking in the woods and talking. We looked down and it was raining and a deer came through. Back then you could shoot spike horns. You did not have a fork on one side. He had binoculars. He said it had horns. And we pulled out and both shot, and we both hit it. And I think both shots would have been lethal, but his shot was better than mine. And he told me to tag it. And he said, this will be your first deer. And that was thoughtful. You remember stuff like that.</p>
<p>Not attached to farm</p>	<p>I guess I can remember many – I can't think of any special story. I go by the home farm now to do a lot of work for the people I built the houses for. I don't know why, I just don't have any sentimental value. I guess I'm not a good son. I don't know. I never had any. I go by and it's just another farm. I'm glad the fields have been kept open and not full of houses, I just have no sentimental value.</p>
<p>01:20:00</p> <p>Holidays</p>	<p>01:20:00</p> <p>KO: What about holidays, did your family celebrate Christmas, Easter?</p> <p>GC: No. We used to go to church every Easter and Christmas. My dad was Ebenezer Scrooge II. He didn't believe in Christmas. Mom made sure we had something for Christmas. Dad didn't believe in Christmas. I don't know whether because he was conservative, didn't believe, didn't want to spend the money or didn't ask.</p> <p>But on a farm, most holidays are just another workday. Cows have to be milked and hay has to get in. Fourth of July, hay has to get in. Christmas, Thanksgiving usually buy a turkey. Holidays for the most part weren't that special.</p>
<p>01:21:30</p> <p>Hired help on the farm</p>	<p>01:21:30</p> <p>KO: Did you ever have hired help on the farm?</p> <p>GC: When us kids were small. When dad moved in, I was 9 months and my oldest brother was 4.5. Until we got to be 8,10,12 and could do stuff, I can remember them having two or three hired men. The first one I remember was a young lad, 20 or 22. I just barely remember. He left probably when I was 5 or 6. Then he had one that was from Nova Scotia, a nice young man. In the summertime and we were in the barn throwing a tennis ball around. The main barn has fluorescent lights and no shades. I threw the tennis ball and cleaned off two of them. My</p>

	<p>father didn't have much sense of humor that way. Very strict. Jerry, the hired man, told him he did it. He said I was throwing a shovel around and hit. Because he liked me and he knew Dad would give me heck. You remember things like that.</p> <p>The hired man, the last one he had, came walking in the yard one day. This guy was middle-aged, from Quebec, and Dad hired him. He was a good worker when he worked, but he had a drinking problem. Dad didn't like that around the boys. So he didn't last that long. After 1949 or '50 when I was 8 and my older brother was 12, we could do stuff. Then there were no more hired men as I remembered it. Dad would swap work with the neighbors. He'd help them 2-3 days and they'd help him 2-3 days.</p>
<p>01:23:54</p> <p>Jobs on the farm; graining cows</p> <p>Naming the cows</p>	<p>01:23:54</p> <p>KO: At what age did you start doing the same work that your father would have or your older brother?</p> <p>GC: Oh, I'd say my older brother probably got pushed into it younger than we did. I'd say by 14 you had to know how to milk each cow. Different cows get different amounts of grain. Grain to a cow is a very rich food to us. It's good. It's a lot of nutrition. But it's very rich, and you give them too much and cows get something called mastitis. And it's in their udder and the milk turns curdly and it's no good. I'd say by 14 or so you had to do the man part. You had to know how much grain eat cow got and how long to milk each cow. A good cow then would give 80 lbs of milk per day. You milk cows twice a day – we always did – 5:00 in the morning, 5:00 at night. Some cows would give all the milk in 4.5 minutes. Some cows would take 7 minutes. It's just something you had to learn, like some people eat faster than other people. I'd say 14-15 is when you had to know that stuff. By then time you were 10 or 11, you had to drive a tractor. This is why farm boys are good drivers. By 16 we had driven many miles, not on the highway, but a lot.</p> <p>As you got older, you got more responsibility. I guess that's life.</p> <p>KO: Did you name all the cows?</p> <p>GC: Yup. People would visit and say they all look the same, but they don't. They don't look any more alike than people. I remember all farms, but our farm, in the main cow barn where we milked – there was 26 tie-ups. Each cow would go to the same thing every night and every morning. In the summertime you let them out during the day to eat and you bring them in to milk them, and bring them out at night when it's warm. Come morning or evening, you got them in.</p>

Stanchions	<p>You put their head in, it's called stanchion. They always went to the same one. Once in a while you'd get a new cow or new heifer and it would take her a couple weeks to learn. But other than that, you opened the door and they all went to the same one every day, every night.</p> <p>KO: That's amazing.</p> <p>GC: You wouldn't think cows are that smart, but they are.</p>
01:27:15	01:27:15
Dehorned cattle	<p>GC: Like I said before, we de-horned our cattle. Most cattle, they have a lot of breeds now that are interbred so they don't grow horns. In the winter, Dad used to borrow the neighbors de-horners. One person would hold the head sideways and with the horn sticking up, you took them and cut it off. You had to cut it off into the head a bit. If you didn't, an ill-shaped part of the horn would grow back. And it seemed awful cruel and blood squirt[ed] everywhere. You did it in the wintertime and let them out so it could bleed out. And it would clot in a little while. But on snow, it looked like a war out there. But you did it in the wintertime because there weren't any flies and it would heal up in time they went out with the flies.</p> <p>I remember two cows got in a scuffle once and one cow killed another cow, drove a horn right into her intestines and killed her. So I guess that was less cruel than letting the cows kill each other. Just one unpleasant thing of growing up on a farm.</p> <p>KO: So nowadays cows are bred to not have horns?</p> <p>GC: I don't know about all breeds, but what we call white face heifers that we use for beef – see them out west – they're bred now so that they don't grow horns. I don't know, I've gotten out of farming so much in the last 40 years. They were making big strides. It probably doesn't last more than a couple months, but it probably is an awful thing when they first cut them off.</p> <p>KO: I would imagine.</p>
Value of cows	<p>GC: Just putting a big thing and cutting off your arm. Most every farmer did it. Once in a while a cow would be sick and die. You just had to dig a hole and bury it. If she was old, you usually tried to sell it for beef. By the time they're 10-11, most cows are over the hill. If a cow eats \$200 worth of food every year, you want to get \$300-\$400 worth of milk. As they get older, like people, you can't do as much when you're 25. They're eating more than giving back, so farmers</p>

	<p>would sell them. And if you had a younger cow die – once in a while a cow will eat hardware. They’ll eat most anything – swallow a barbed wire. And it gets into their stomach. They have magnets, things to stick down a cow’s throats and inject that magnet into her stomach. Over half the time the cow will pick up that nail that was in there, and it will stay there, but it won’t bother her. But if it gets caught and passes through her intestine, it kills her. To lose a cow in her prime is like throwing away a 1/6 or 1/7 of your year’s income.</p>
<p>01:31:10</p> <p>Hardest parts of farming</p> <p>Challenges of farming</p>	<p>01:31:10</p> <p>KO: What do you think is the hardest thing about growing up on a farm?</p> <p>GC: What was the hardest then or now?</p> <p>KO: Well, did you think then and what do you think now?</p> <p>GC: I guess the regret I have now is that I would have liked to have played more sports in high school and have more of a social life in high school. I didn’t have a bad life, I just wish I would have been a little closer to school and work less hours. But as far as then, I guess the two years we hayed three or four other farms was as hard as anything. You started the 1st of June and you were still haying until you went back to school. Every good day you hayed. When it rained you didn’t. But that’ll get to you. At the time, it only lasted five minutes, in the wintertime the cows stayed in all night. Most of them laid down. They say a cow doesn’t sleep. I think they do. Most of them lay down. The gutter behind them is where they go to the bathroom. They stand there all night. Then in the morning you go in and wipe the udder off and put the milk machine on, and all of a sudden she wraps that tail around your face. It was a fact of life. You hated it. It didn’t last but 30 seconds, but you couldn’t wait to get to the shower. Once in a while you’d have a cow that didn’t like to be milked and she’d kick you as soon as look at you. We had a cow once – Dad bought an Asher. I don’t know why he bought an Asher. He always had registered Jerseys. And she had horns. She wasn’t dehorned. She had a calf. Like any good Mom, she was very protective. She had a calf out there and she wasn’t about to let us take that calf. And I bet that night I worked two hours to get the calf 200 yards. One would run and grab the calf while the other one distracted her. Then she’d see you and take after you. You’d have to run and the other guy would get the calf. You’d finally get to the fence. Dog or cat or cow, a good mother is protective. Deer, they all are. She was overly protective, and she had her horns so she could hurt you.</p> <p>KO: Did you ever get hurt on the farm?</p>

Injuries on the farm	<p>GC: Minor stuff. Once in a while a cow would step on your foot. During milking once in a while you'd get kicked. You'd step on a nail. Minor stuff. Once my brother and I were playing ball. And a line drive, he broke this cheekbone. Typical – boys who grew up on the farm – you were rough, and you didn't go to the doctor unless you absolutely had to. Dad didn't believe in it. When I was 12 we were picking apples in the fall in October. Dad's brother came up and we were horsing around and throwing apples. And he threw one and it hit me right there and it laid me out, right in the bottom of the stomach. Didn't think much about it, but woke up that night and oh my stomach hurt. Went to school the next day. In four years I hadn't missed a day of school. Back then you used to get a certificate if you didn't miss a day of school and I thought that was cool. By 10:00 the teacher called Dad and told him to come get me. Something was the matter. So he took me home and got so I couldn't stand up straight. It was my appendix, but Dad didn't believe it. Said you just go the flu or something. The next day they were going to Hartland to a Jersey sale. He said we'll swing by the hospital and have the doctor take a quick look at it, but I'm sure it's nothing. And the doctor says, "Sign this release. His appendix is about to rupture." So they took me and caught it in time. But as I said, unless you were awful bad off, you didn't go to the doctor. I think it was too extreme, but now I think it's too much the other extreme.</p>
01:36:36	01:36:36
Lessons from the farm; benefits	<p>KO: Well, although you say you're not a farmer through and through, what do you think growing up on a farm taught on? Are there times you reflect on anything in particular?</p> <p>GC: I think it helps you be very responsible. Well then, you learned a little bit of everything. You learned a little bit of wiring, mechanical work. You had to do a little bit of everything because people didn't just run to the garage. You learned how not to waste your money. You didn't have much. You made it last your whole month. Except for times, I wish I had lived closer and had a chance to take part in more stuff at school, also there's a lot of things: you see calves born, rabbits born. You don't always get a chance to see that. You see a lot of wildlife, nature. You spend a lot of time outside, which I like. Every spare minute I had, I was building something in the woods. Dad said from the time I was five, I should be a builder and that was what I ended up doing.</p> <p>It's a lot of hard work, sacrifice. But it had it's advantages, too. I'm not sorry that I grew up on a farm. I'm glad I don't have to farm now, but it wasn't bad. One of the worst things was after Mom had her nervous breakdown, she probably spent 6 months of every year at Waterbury</p>

<p>01:39:37</p> <p>paved & dirt roads</p> <p>Joe Ranger</p>	<p>State Hospital. And because I had taken an interest in learning how to cook, I didn't have a choice. When I got home from school I had to get the meals. I enjoy it to a point, but when you're forced to do it, you kind of resent it. I still did it. I don't cook much now. It taught you a lot. To be responsible and plan ahead.</p> <p>01:39:37</p> <p>KO: So the roads were not paved then, correct?</p> <p>GC: The West Hartford-Quechee wasn't paved in the '40s. Probably in the mid '50s. Route 14 was paved. Route 4 was paved. West Hartford-Quechee wasn't. I can remember wiping out on my bicycle before it was paved and after it was paved. And pavement hurts a lot [more] than dirt. I'd say mid-50s that road was paved. Clay Road, the one that goes up and dead ends to those houses have never been paved. That's a dirt road. That's funny, because the home farm, half is the Town of Hartford and half is the Town of Pomfret. Dad paid taxes to Pomfret and Hartford. For the longest time, the Town of Hartford would maintain the first half and Pomfret would maintain the second half. And after a while, the towns smartened up, and Joe Ranger Road, there was an old hermit who lived up there and his name was Joe Ranger. The road was named for him. He lived up there for 50, 60 years. And that road – same way, part is the Town of Hartford. Part is Pomfret. I don't remember which is which, each town would maintain one. Like I said he lived there. Nice enough. Filthy. And he used to walk down through the farm, which saved him a mile and a half walking the road. And I don't know why, but the original border collie we had never liked him. I don't know if it was his smell or if he struck him with a cane. By the time he got to our yard he'd walk out of our yard [backwards] because that dog would walk behind him and growl. He never bit anyone, but the only person he never liked was Joe. Of course Joe was a nice old guy, but he was filthy. Chewed tobacco. His face was full of dirt and tobacco. Doesn't make him a bad person, but it was the only person that dog didn't like. Never liked Joe.</p>
<p>01:42:34</p> <p>Bringing his children back to the farm</p>	<p>01:42:34</p> <p>KO: Well is there anything else that you would like to add? It doesn't necessarily have to be related to farming, but anything you would like to add to your interview is fine, too.</p> <p>GC: Well, when my kids are small – I got married in 1962 and had kids, three kids in three years. Three girls. And in four years had a boy. They used to love to go up there. They thought it was a big deal to look at calves. By that time it wasn't a dairy farm, but he would go to the auction, buy calves, sell them. They thought it was a big deal. We used</p>

<p>Barn maintenance</p>	<p>to raise a garden up there. We didn't have a spot at home. Then I bought the kids a couple Shetland ponies, a mother and her colt. We kept them up there and they'd ride on weekends. That they enjoyed. They used to love to fish up there because you were almost guaranteed a fish because Dad put trout in the brook every spring. The kids used to like to go up there.</p> <p>Dad thought my oldest daughter could do no wrong, and the other kids were just kids. It shouldn't be like that, but it's just the way he was. I guess as good an upbringing as anyone. I don't have any big complaints. There's some things that have advantages. Some disadvantages. I have no sentimental value. My brother lives there. He did a lot of work to the house. I helped him fix it up. He remodeled it completely.</p> <p>Back then, people took care of their barns. The barns made money. The house you let go. You didn't do anything with the house unless you had to. If the roof leaked, you put a pail under it. Your income came from the barn, so you maintain the barn. When Dad remodeled in '55, he never – the end he tore of. For years it stayed that way – like studs. I think many part of why Mom never got better was because you'd come home and it was pretty depressing, to see bare studs for 9 years. Hard to clean, hard to take care of them. I don't know how much that had to do with it. It was grey. And in '64 after they split, Dad remarried and finished the house. That part I wasn't particularly happy about. If it was good enough for my mother, it was good for her. I guess I have more good memories as a kid than bad.</p>
<p>Parents</p>	<p>My father was strict. He didn't beat us, but he used his belt on us sometimes. This way you didn't get in trouble. Mom was a great mom but had no discipline. It was always, "Wait till your father comes in." That was no good because then you start to fear your father coming in.</p> <p>KO: How long did your Mom live?</p> <p>GC: Mom died 20 years ago, this year. She was 74. Dad lived to be 84. Mom fell and broke her hip. And was in the hospital in the operation and got an infection and died from it. Dad lived 10 more years. He worked every day of his life. He probably would have another 10-20 years. They said he had the respiratory system of a guy who was 50 because he worked so much. But he never got anything checked and he died of colon cancer. Two of his other brothers also died from it. So it's prevalent in my family. That's what he died from. He had 82 years of good health, but then they found it, operated and told him that they [did not get] it all. They took what they could take and he lived two more years.</p>

<p>01:48:07</p> <p>How parents met</p> <p>How he met his wife</p>	<p>01:48:07</p> <p>KO: Your parents were born in the 20s?</p> <p>GC: 1916, both of them. When I think about, women couldn't even vote then. That was 1918. Mom was born in December, Dad in November, 1916. And they met at a dance back in the 30s. They used to have a lot of barn dances. My mom's folks – the ones married 74 years – they used to play in bands. She played piano. He played banjo. They met at a dance. They got married April 9, 1937.</p> <p>KO: They were pretty young when they married.</p> <p>GC: They were both 21, no 20. They wouldn't have been 21 yet. Oh, I was 20 when I got married. My brother was 19 when he got married.</p> <p>KO: And you met your wife roller-skating you said?</p> <p>GC: We went to school together. She was two years behind me. We never really hit it off at school. When I was a senior, she was a sophomore. Back then there was only three years of high school. Grades 7,8,9 was junior high. I don't know, I guess seniors didn't socialize with sophomores. And in West Hartford there used to be a place to roller skate, and we started roller-skating together. That was August 1960, and two years later we were married. Another month and a half, it'll be 50 years. Four kids, seven grandkids, good health, good business. We're a good family. I'm so lucky. My four kids all settled within 20 miles of home.</p> <p>{Discussion of families close and far, family members in college; military draft – flunked Army physical. }</p>
<p>01:54:35</p>	<p>01:54:35</p> <p>KO: I think we've covered a lot of ground here. So unless you have something to add. I thank you very much for your time.</p> <p>GC: You're welcome. I don't know how much I helped.</p> <p>KO: You did. Every family story is important, and everyone is either a different farm or a different decade.</p> <p>{Discussion of who has been interviewed: Eastman family}</p> <p>{Explanation of what the project products are.}</p>

<p>01:56:45</p> <p>Schools</p>	<p>01:56:45</p> <p>GC: Schools, the Eastmans probably told you, but when we went to school it was in Quechee. And the 1st and 2nd grade were in one room, and the 3rd and 4th in one room, and the 5th and 6th in one room. And that was it. Then in 1954 they opened the new junior high school. 7th, 8th, and 9th were there. I remember going down my first year scared to death because up until then you spend all day in room. Then you change classrooms. To a shy country boy that was a big step.</p> <p>The 1st and 2nd grade teacher, a great lady. When you were in 1st grade, you would no wrong. But if you were in 2nd grade, and there was a competition she always took the 1st grader side. I guess there was nothing wrong.</p> <p>{Discussion of cats at home}.</p>
<p>01:58:25</p>	<p>01:58:25</p> <p>GC: I guess I've done a lot of talking today, and I guess I was supposed to. But both of my brother, my [oldest] has been in sales his whole life. And my [younger] brother has the gift of gab as they say. I've never been much of a talker. In fact, my grandparents thought I didn't like them because I didn't talk much. It just wasn't my way.</p> <p>KO: Your brothers did all the talking for you, I guess.</p> <p>GC: Well I got a good wife, of 50 years. She's a talker. I guess opposites attract.</p> <p>{Discussion of family members talking}</p> <p>KO: Well you've done an excellent job talking today. Thank you very much.</p>
<p>01:59:41</p>	<p>END OF INTERVIEW.</p>