

Hartford Agricultural Oral History Project
 Interview Transcription
 May 6, 2012
 White River Junction (Jericho District), VT

Interviewer: Kaitlin O'Shea
 Interviewees: George Miller, Linda Miller

Location: Miller Road
 Time: 12:00 pm

KO: Kaitlin O'Shea
 GM: George Miller
 LM: Linda Miller

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	TRANSCRIPTION
00:00:01	00:00:01
Introductions	KO: Today is Sunday May 5 – no, Sunday May 6, 2012 – and I am Kaitlin O'Shea and I am interviewing George and Linda Miller for the Hartford Agricultural Oral History Project, and we are at their home.
Family history	So, to start, I guess tell me a little bit about how your family ended up here. GM: From the beginning? KO: If you want to. If you want to record that. GM: We've actually done quite a lot of genealogy. Linda's researched it quite a bit. My grandfather bought this farm in 1906. He came from Binghamton, NY. We believe it's Binghamton.

<p>Buying the farm in Vermont</p>	<p>LM: But he only came by way of Binghamton. He was actually from in Canada.</p> <p>GM: They were in Stanford Station, Quebec. Somewhere along the line he and his wife were married. He was born in 1876. I think.</p> <p>LM: Somewhere around there. I'd have to look, George. I'm lousy with numbers.</p> <p>GM: Anyway, he came here on the train. And the story was – my grandfather told me – that he had sewed the money to buy – all the money he had – in the lining of his jacket. So when he came here, he walked up from the train station that's downtown White River-</p>
<p>Family story</p>	<p>KO: -okay-</p> <p>GM: -and the farm was for sale and he bought it with the money that his wife had sewn in his jacket. So it's been in the family for a little over 100 years.</p>
<p>George Nelson</p>	<p>KO: Oh wow.</p> <p>GM: There was one, year-and-a-half section where they had sold it, moved to Florida, and then came back from Florida. And on the way back his wife (George Nelson's wife) died in Connecticut.</p> <p>LM: In Hartford, CT.</p> <p>GM: In Hartford, CT and she ended up with tuberculosis. They moved south-</p>
<p>George Nelson; Marjorie</p>	<p>LM: -for her health-</p> <p>GM: -for her health, I guess. But at that time, that was 1925 I think. Spring of '25.</p> <p>LM: And they actually ended up in Orlando and there was so much boom that there wasn't enough schoolrooms. So George's grandfather, and he had a twin sister Marjorie, they couldn't go to school down there for that timeframe.</p> <p>GM: So he didn't go to to school during the winter.</p> <p>LM: But then they ended up coming back like George said. They got as far as Hartford, CT – she was ill – they said she'd caught-pneumonia-</p> <p>GM: -she died of pneumonia-</p> <p>LM: -she was hanging clothes on a Tuesday and she died like on</p>

Bertha Miller	<p>Saturday. She had compromised lungs anyway. They tell the story where she used to sleep out on the front porch for like two years. She slept winter, summer, everything.</p> <p>KO: -for the fresh air-</p> <p>LM: -she didn't want to infect her family, I suppose.</p> <p>GM: We didn't find out – actually from a neighbor that was the same age as my grandfather. My grandfather would always say she died of pneumonia. He was always afraid to catch pneumonia because that was what his mother died of. But this neighbor that lived the next farm down said, oh no, Bertha Miller, she had tuberculosis. So I don't know whether my grandfather was-</p> <p>LM: -blanked it out or something-</p> <p>GM: -blanked it out or didn't realize it at the time. He wasn't that old. He was 10 or something when she died. Or it was kind of a hush, hush thing in those days. So, anyway, we learned from a neighbor woman that she actually had tuberculosis.</p>
George Nelson's family	<p>LM: But then George Nelson – we always say George Nelson because he's George – George is George. So, George Nelson ended up coming back to Vermont and he had four daughters. Four daughters and-</p> <p>GM: -three-</p> <p>LM: -four daughters and a son.</p> <p>GM: -yea-</p> <p>LM: And so his oldest daughter had already gotten married and she was here in Jericho, and they came back and this place ended up being for sale again.</p>
Chet & Hazel Miller	<p>GM: So he knew what the farm was, so he bought it back.</p> <p>LM: And then when George's- so he needed a wife, right, because he had these little kids and he was a single farmer. And his sister-in-law knew this woman who was a widow and she contacted her sister, and ironically I think it was her sister. And the woman came down from Canada, in Montreal, and she had a daughter. So the woman, her name was Annie, and Hazel came down and Annie got married. So Hazel now lives in the house with here stepsiblings. Turns out that Hazel and Chet, George's grandfather, fall in love and they get married.</p> <p>GM: So he married his sister.</p> <p>LM: Stepsister.</p> <p>GM: Step. I always tell it stepsister.</p>

	<p>KO: We'll clarify that.</p> <p>LM: But I think she was 13 and he was 12 when they got married.</p> <p>GM: No, no.</p> <p>LM: The grandparents got married. Your great-grandparents got married. So Annie and George Nelson got married.</p> <p>GM: When my grandparents were 12 and 13. They didn't get married at 13.</p> <p>LM: No, but your grandparents got married at like 19 and 18 or something.</p> <p>KO: Okay.</p>
Chet & Hazel Miller	<p>GM: Pretty young, yea. So then they – my grandparents Chet and Hazel – after they got married went to work for another farm for a year, not far from here. And then came back the year later and went to work for his father, I guess. And it was too long. He actually bought it from his father. Must have been in his late 20s, something like that. He thought that his father would stay and live with him sort of thing. But he ended up moving to Enfield, NH and bought another smaller farm.</p> <p>LM: -George Nelson-</p>
Milk cans to bulk tank; 1960s	<p>GM: -and he ended up dying there fairly young-</p> <p>LM: -yup-</p> <p>GM: -63 or something. So then my grandparents farmed here. My father was born in '35 and they farmed here until – well anyway. Somewhere in the '50s, after the war, dairy farming was a big boom around here. Everybody needed more land because they added more cows. The whole shift from milk cans to bulk, and they had to put in tanks. That was in-</p> <p>LM: -60 right?</p>
Hazel Miller	<p>GM: They put it in '62. So a lot of farmers went out. Elderly guys that just didn't want to spend the money. But my grandfather was in his mid 40s, I guess, so he built the milk room and they expanded and milked cows for – well they owned this farm for like 60 years before they left it to Linda and I when he passed.</p> <p>LM: But George's grandmother was an integral part of the milking. She was – she farmed right along with him. She was every bit the same as he.</p> <p>GM: She was hard-</p> <p>LM: -but she was this little bitsy thing. She was 4'11 or 4'10 or when she died. But she was little.</p>
Chet & Hazel	<p>GM: She was little, but she'd tell you what she thought of you if you</p>

Miller; Joyce & Raymond Miller	had a problem. She was a French Canadian, just working class. She worked hard.
1950s, 1960s	<p>LM: I think you were going to say – so, George’s mom and dad when they got married, they also lived here with Chet and Hazel. Joyce and Ray also lived here as well. And then it became apparent that they also needed to have a house of their own, so Chet had already bought that property down on Bedell Road and that’s where they ended up moving down there.</p> <p>KO: Okay.</p>
Lack of indoor plumbing and electricity	<p>GM: So my folks bought the house off him and somewhere along the line, they decided that my father couldn’t really work with my grandfather. As a young man, they couldn’t get along. Just too many differences, I think. So my father went to work as a mechanic down in West Lebanon. He worked out and had five kids and worked for peanuts probably. This is late 50s, early 60s and Vermont was really poor. It was a big spell. The land values –</p> <p>LM: -it was before the interstates-</p> <p>GM: -it was before the interstates-</p> <p>KO: -yea-</p>
1960s	<p>GM: -when we moved into that house, some of my first memories is having a bath and my mother would heat the water on the stove. Now, we’re 53, so this is stuff that most 53-year-old people they took for granted. They lived downtown; they had indoor plumbing and hot water and electricity.</p>
	<p>LM: And George remembers, this house didn’t get indoor plumbing till 1963.</p> <p>KO: Really?</p> <p>GM: ’62.</p> <p>LM: Yea.</p> <p>GM: ’62, I think.</p> <p>KO: Oh my goodness.</p>
Electricity in Jericho District	<p>LM: And electricity was – they were one of the last farms to get the electricity up here, because if the farmer down the hill said yes, only if he said yes, you had to have x amount of cows, whatever that number was –</p> <p>GM: - to get an extension-</p> <p>LM: -but that guy wouldn’t do it. So George’s grandfather was stuck. So they had kerosene lanterns up until, what was it?</p> <p>GM: 1941, I think they got electricity. A lot of farms just down the other side of the hill here, the Jericho District as its called, they had electricity in ’38 or earlier. Because the electric line came up that way.</p>

<p>Hauling ice to cool milk</p>	<p>There were several farms that the guys were young enough and they could put their cows together and they could get it to this guy and the next guy wanted it and he had ten cows. And they could move it along. So that side of the hill had electricity. Well it was the wrong direction to bring the electricity here, so the old codger next door, as my grandfather would say. He was an old man and there's no way. He didn't want electricity. He didn't need it. So he was a stick between electricity and my grandfather.</p> <p>KO: Oh my goodness.</p> <p>GM: And Grandpa was a fairly young man so he was starving for it. So he'd come to find out that they came to the farm, which is kind of on that side of the hill. He agreed to it so he got electricity and it came up this way rather than coming up over the hill this way. But it was 3, 4, 5 years longer without electricity. So when they get to these houses, they simple wired them with one light in a room and maybe a plug in. But by that time they were milking more cows and they needed – my grandparents talked about hauling ice to cool the milk. They'd go to West Lebanon with blocks of ice, case of ice and-</p>
<p>Model T Ford</p>	<p>LM: -and the sawdust-</p> <p>GM: -and bury them in the sawdust so they'd keep. So when they got electricity, it simplified everything. But of course you needed all the extra stuff to go with it.</p> <p>KO: Yea, wow.</p> <p>LM: So their first car, I think they had Model T.</p> <p>GM: Model T.</p> <p>LM: Model T. Because obviously nothing was paved, right? So they would get maybe a quarter, maybe a half mile up the hill and they'd have to park the car down there and walk up because the mud would be so deep. But there's a second way that you can get – this is actually a town road that goes back down through –</p>
<p>Peddling butter</p>	<p>KO: -oh, okay-</p> <p>LM: - We now have cheese business, so if you do that MapQuest or Google maps or whatever, it used to tell people to go up through Runnels Road because it truly was a town road. But right now there's nothing there. It's just our pasture.</p>
<p>1940s, 1950s</p> <p>Milk, potatoes, apples, butter</p>	<p>GM: It's a mile of unmaintained road in between.</p> <p>LM: Right, so, literally sometimes because they road would get – there was so much more traffic going Jericho Road, they would end up going down that way. What year was it that they were doing their peddling butter downtown?</p> <p>GM: It had to be in the 40s and 50s.</p>

Maple syrup	LM: So they would actually take butter down to White River and they would sell it to custom stores. There was a progressive market down there.
Sugaring	GM: They would buy what they would sell. So they had to market everything. They made primo(?) milk and grew potatoes and had apples and mainly sold butter.
	LM: And maple syrup. GM: And maple syrup.
	LM: So they worked hard. ??? That year it was 700 hundred?
Hill Farming	GM: Of 1,000 taps, they made like 700 and some odd gallons. So it was a super year. But they would sell the syrup to the same customer. IF they had a butter customer, they'd buy syrup, too. But then it simplified it when they went to bulk milk. They didn't have to market anything. The creamery would buy the milk. Then they found out, the same dairy business that goes on today, they pay you what they want to. So it changes pretty dramatically. That was a progression of the dairy business. And now we're all hill farms. It's not the easiest land to use. It's all rolling –
	KO: I noticed that.
00:13:44	GM: It's picturesque, but it's kind of dangerous on a tractor. And I tell people that we farm here because we own it, not because we choose. It's not that my great grandfather bought 100 acres of river land. They all used to think, I guess, that the hills are more fertile. Well it wasn't too long that the fertile land ended up in the White River, washed down the hill. So now we still milk 60 cows and use land from, I don't know, 15 different landowners. It's a little bit here and there.
Pigs, chickens	
Herd; George decides to be dairy farmer	00:13:44 LM: But the reason why George - once Raymond was doing mechanical work. George got to be - They started having pigs on the farm, so they would raise pigs and they had chickens, of course and whatever. Some animals. But then George, when we were in high school, we were sophomores in high school. He was what, 15 years old? 16 years old? 14?
	GM: I was young.
	LM: He says Dad, I'd like to become a dairy farmer when I graduate from high school. So he says to his Dad, I'd like you to buy some

<p>Grandfather; Family working on the farm</p>	<p>animals. So his father bought 13 heifers, calves. It takes two years for them to calve. You raise them for 15 months and then you breed them and then they calve. And we graduated in June and George started milking in July, down at that farm. We started with a herd of 13 and now we're up to 60-ish.</p> <p>KO: Wow.</p> <p>LM: But that was all on George's doing. Otherwise.</p> <p>GM: No, well. LM: No, it's true.</p>
<p>Butchering pigs; food – never went hungry</p>	<p>GM: Yea, well. My grandfather was a dairy farmer so I liked cows. And my uncle had a dairy farm, so same thing. I'd rather like working with the cows. I was interested in the dairy part. When we first started though, when we were young kids, we all wanted calves to take care of and stuff. My father bought a few and we actually kept them at the other barn. In an old barn that my grandfather owned. It was kind of, like, my grandfather was like, "If you want something from me, you'd better ask. You don't assume anything." So, we asked him if we could fix up the old barn and raise a few calves, so he okayed that. But it was all kind of his stuff and anybody that wanted a part of his stuff, better be asking. He was that way, with my father as much as anything. We had a few calves and then gradually we had some pigs and we'd sell little pigs – my father. My mother worked. She did just as much barn work as my father did. Way more, actually. Generally he worked as a mechanic and us kids would take care of the animals, the pigs and the heifers and such. So we always had a few animals to start. By 1969 I think, we built a small barn of our own. My father only owned an acre of land out of 80, the house and one acre. So we built the barn on that one acre and we started just kind of expanding. We started making our own hay, using some small fields that nobody else did. We had thirty some odd prude(?) sows. So we sold 400 or 500 little pigs per year for income. And my father started –</p> <p>LM: He started butchering.</p>
<p>Creamed corn; baking</p>	<p>GM: He started custom slaughtering pigs. And beef for other people. And then one day he came home and he told my wife and my mother, he said he quit his job as a mechanic. And she said, "What are we going to live on?" Which was pretty ballsy at the time, for him having five kids still at home and to quit his job because he just kind of got fed up with it, the mechanic work. So he slaughtered pigs and sold pigs. We kind of just eat ?? to live with five kids. We never went hungry.</p>

<p>1976; 1985; grandfather's accident in the woods</p>	<p>LM: That's because your mother was very creative.</p> <p>GM: My mother was creative, yea.</p> <p>LM: She had a garden.</p> <p>GM: One can of creamed corn and everybody got a little dish, 12 oz, spread it out. And she always baked. There was five kids, so seven of us. That pie was cut into 8 pieces and my father got two.</p> <p>KO: Yea.</p> <p>GM: We had enough to eat, but we were always kind of a skinny bunch. That picture right there.</p> <p>LM: [Shows picture] That's George's dad.</p> <p>GM: That's all five of us kids.</p> <p>KO: Cute.</p> <p>GM: So anyway, like Linda said, we expanded. And then eventually started milking in 1976. But that was separate. My grandparents farmed up here. And then it was '85, so my grandfather was working in the woods. He had a tree lodged in between another one. So when he cut it, it knocked him down flat and he was trapped under the tree. So it broke his pelvis. It messed him up.</p> <p>KO: Oh geez.</p> <p>GM: He was 73 at the time.</p> <p>LM: But his wife knew something was wrong. Whenever he went into the woods, he always said where he was going. She was baking a pie and she couldn't hear the chainsaw. She was so astute. So she went up to the woods and found him. We had our son –</p> <p>GM: -she could see him.</p> <p>LM: - our son was two weeks old.</p> <p>GM: -ten days.</p> <p>LM: She came knocking on my door, "Oh my god, Oh my god, Grandpa's under the tree." Under is how she...?</p>
<p>Grandfather's farm</p>	<p>GM: We got to him. He was conscious. The rescue squad came. By that time, my grandmother had been itching for him to sell his cows anyway. They were milking about 20 and just –</p> <p>LM: She was milking too.</p> <p>GM: She was milking too. And they were in their 70s and it gave them a really good excuse to sell the cows. He just couldn't do anything. He</p>

Nearby family members	<p>was messed up for – oh, he was in the hospital for – LM: -a month. GM: A month.</p> <p>KO: Oh wow.</p> <p>GM: And he just went from a big husky man to frail in no time. So they sold the cows. And then we started keeping, our herd was expanding. He let us keep our young stock up here and took care of the rest of his heifers and the rest of the stock he had. He sold his last animal and he let us use the land. We helped him hay. He still sold his hay.</p> <p>LM: But he got back.</p> <p>GM: He got back on his feet. He was really fine after that.</p> <p>LM: But before that, before we were able to use this farm for the young stock. Right at the corner of Jericho Road and Jericho Street, those two barns side by side there, we rented the one that looks like it's falling apart now.</p> <p>GM: It is falling apart.</p> <p>LM: Yea, it is falling apart. That's where his young stock was. So tell her the story about the young stock-</p> <p>GM: Oh, yea. So we had the 30 animals up there.</p> <p>LM: We were in high school.</p> <p>GM: So I was freshman or a sophomore.</p> <p>LM: No, I didn't start dating you until we were juniors.</p> <p>GM: But I took animals for like two years. ?? Winter and such and take care of the animals. But to back up a little bit. We started haying more and more land. My two uncles that lived here. No, I should back up a little more even. When we were really little kids, my mother had two sisters. So they married two local guys as well. So all three sisters married guys that grew up together, were friends and knew each other. All lived within a two mile radius.</p> <p>KO: That's nice.</p> <p>GM: It was nice. We had 13 cousins. And of course we would get every hand-me-down. Everybody had hand-me-downs. And rags. Whatever, we were clothed. So we were all pretty close. And then both my uncles</p>
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00:23:41	<p>bought farms away from here, and they sold and moved. So it was this really big void for all of us kids. But my mother as well.</p> <p>LM: So the guy you might next door, Andy, his mother and George's mom are identical twins. And they were more close. They would just finish each other's sentences close. So that just broke her heart that her sister moved to the other side of Vermont. She's in Orwell, Vermont. And the other sister is in Benson.</p> <p>GM: So they wrote weekly.</p> <p>LM: Weekly. They would write a letter each week to each other.</p> <p>GM: They were too cheap to call on the phone. They were. In those days, long distance calls cost money. So when they were moving, I can remember the plan was, one of them would call person to person. Say I answer the phone, and she says, "This is a person to person call for Joyce Miller." And I'd say, "She's not here." My aunt would say, "We got her here George," and click before the operator would never shut it off. So they would never connect them. But for that little brief second, you could hear her voice because she would respond. "She's not at home." "We're here." And didn't have to pay for the phone call.</p> <p>LM: But because they moved to towns side by side on the other side of the state, Jeanne (Jeanne was the older sister by two years). She would write one week to Joyce, George's mom, and Joyce would write back to Jeanne. Jeanne would share that letter with Janet. And then the next week, Janet would write to Joyce. And then the next week it would go back. Janet and Jeanne only had to write every other week. Joyce had to write every week. They had those letters for 40 years.</p>
1960s-70s; farming out of business or expanding farms	<p>00:23:41</p> <p>GM: So, the same thing, they were saving 20 cents so they could share a letter. But that's how frugal they all were.</p> <p>LM: I think that they had to be. They had no money.</p> <p>GM: They didn't have much money. So where was I?</p> <p>LM: That's why your cousins, your one cousin lived in that farm. The farm to the right of those two barns.</p> <p>GM: So when they moved, in that period of the 60s, early 70s, there were several other farms that went out of business. It allowed Dad and us to use a lot more land. There was more land available. At one time</p>

00:2536	<p>there was 12 or 13 farms up here and everybody was going to battle for any piece of land that came up for sale to add to the property. Then in mid 60s, the biggest farm up here, in '63 I think, so it allowed somebody else to expand a little bit. Then another family sold out.</p> <p>LM: So the story about the expansion, can I tell the story about Reynolds(?) farm? GM: Yes. LM: Yes? I didn't want to reveal anything. So George's grandparents had the opportunity to buy the neighbor was going to lose their farm because they hadn't paid their taxes. It must have been a year or two.</p> <p>GM: Must have been the bank too. LM: They were going to foreclosed on. But the rule would have been that George's grandfather would have had to kick them off.</p> <p>GM: The bank wanted him to buy it. But he said, if I did, I would have had to throw him out. And he just couldn't do that.</p>
Neighbors	<p>LM: He just couldn't do that to a neighbor. They had – he could've gotten it.</p> <p>GM: He could've gotten it for not much money. In the time, it was probably in the 30s or something. So if you had a little bit of money in the 30s or credit, you could have cobbled up a lot of land.</p>
Ostler Family	<p>00:25:36</p> <p>LM: But the same thing. Tell the animal story, the Shoreham worker story.</p> <p>GM: The next door neighbor- LM: The old codger. GM: The old codger. Well, he didn't like me much. He was a really stern old guy. My grandfather being a young man. The guy was trying to tell him what the to do. But he had rented like 20 acres for a pasture because the old man didn't have much of any animals left. But that farm came up for sale. He had paid him like \$100 for rent for this pasture for the year. And he wanted, I think it was \$1800 for the whole 100 acres. He said, I'll give you \$1700 and I already paid you \$100 rent. You put that towards it and makes it \$1800. So my grandfather got ticked it.</p> <p>LM: So they missed out on an opportunity to own and extra 100 acres for \$1800 for \$100. GM: For \$1800 for \$100, because he had already paid the old buzzard \$100.</p>

Expected to be	<p>KO: It's the principal of the thing.</p> <p>GM: It was. So he didn't buy that land and then somebody else bought it that wasn't a farmer, which happened to a lot of the land up here. But when we were growing up as kids. So when my cousins all moved away, we actually became pretty close to our next door neighbors. A German family came here in 1950-</p> <p>LM: Eight.</p> <p>GM: 1958. So after the war. Here's this poor Vermont family that gets exposed to European culture. The husband, George Ostler is the name, his mother – no her mother lived with them. She couldn't speak a lick of English. She was all German. And the boys were like George was a few years older than I am. Thomas was two years younger. We started hanging around and playing with those guys. But they were next door neighbors. You'd go over there and Grammy Wolfe would be yakking in German. And we didn't have a clue what was going. But it was really quite an advantage for us to be exposed to be a different culture. No other Vermonters were. Typically that didn't happen.</p> <p>KO: Vermont was like a little bubble, right?</p> <p>GM: Oh it really was, yea. So we hung around with those guys. So we started having animals with them guys.</p> <p>LM: {Showing photographs} That's what that one was I think. Right?</p> <p>GM: Right. So that's George. He was kind of our leader. George was creative enough. {Browsing through photos}. George would hold ski meets. His father was a skier – well, he was a Dartmouth ski coach and he helped coach the Olympic. Come to find out years later, he would have been on the Olympic team, but the Germans were excluded from the 1940 Olympics. So he would have been on the German ski team. He had been a German soldier and was in the mountain division because he could ski. He was quite a character. Skiing was in the family. George, the older one –</p> <p>LM: He was the ring- he was a smart guy.</p> <p>GM: He was a smart guy. So he would say, all these kids get together. We'll have a ski meet. We'll have a jumping contest, cross country trails, a little slalom. So he did this and his mother takes a picture. We went off this jump and it was this high. And actually I was one of the better jumper because I was gutsy enough to go fast and I was just a scrawny little gus(?). So that's George and he'd be measuring and keep all the records. So we'd have kids from downtown come up in the ski</p>
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<p>home for chores</p> <p>00:31:03</p>	<p>meet. In between the whole thing we'd be over the Ostlers doing whatever, softball, whiffle ball and at chore time – that was like 4:30 - my mother would holler out, "Boys! Chores!" And we're like, "Oh shit, we gotta go home." And we would. We could hear her hollering. It was us boys and my mother would help in the barn. But Dad at that time he was still working out. We did all the chores. We'd feed him, clean him, everything. We were expected home every time. There was no, "I'll take care of it."</p>
<p>Pigs</p>	<p>KO: Five more minutes.</p> <p>GM: We might have stretched a few minutes out of it, we didn't stretch much. But you always – farmers tend to give their youngsters as much responsibility as they want. So if you want the responsibility of having animals, it's you're taking care of them, I'm not. That was pretty much dad's philosophy. It wasn't his job to go feed the cows.</p> <p>LM: Tell her about Mortimer.</p> <p>00:31:03</p>
<p>Childhood home; Bedell Road; Ostler Family</p>	<p>GM: Oh yea, when we started having pigs, we bought a boar to use as a breeding herd sire, as you call them, later on. But he was small so we had to keep him separated in a separate pen. I'd go in and he was friendly like a dog. His name was Mortimer. He ended up, I could put a leash on him and lead him around. I'd put this harness on him, because he'd slip a collar. You couldn't put just a dog collar on. I'd lead this pig, it's like Arnold on-</p> <p>LM: -Green Acres.</p> <p>GM: -Green Acres. You probably never saw that show, but they had a pet pig. And this guy, Old Mortimer, he kind of went where he wanted to. I'd have him on a leash on lead him around. It was pretty funny. If we were over to the neighbors, it was like, you guys were expected home to do chores and you better be getting here. And my mother would ream us out.</p>
<p>Maple sugaring; 1976; sugarhouse fire</p>	<p>KO: When you talk about where you grew up, that's down on Bedell Lane?</p> <p>GM: Bedell Road, yes.</p> <p>KO: Okay. And the Ostlers, they lived next to you?</p> <p>LM: Bedell Road.</p> <p>GM: Down Bedell Road.</p>

<p>1952; sugarhouse</p> <p>Current farm; Valley View & Jericho Hill; dairy farm; cheese making</p>	<p>KO: Okay.</p> <p>LM: So when George was – how old were you when you decided to start making maple syrup with George?</p> <p>GM: 1976. So that was out of high school.</p> <p>LM: So think about it. We were young. He was only 17 when we graduated from high school. So, at age 18, because he turned 18 – he and George Ostler decided they were going to make maple syrup. So they went and bought, silly, they bought the operator and they bought all kinds of equipment. They boiled once and the sugarhouse burned down.</p> <p>GM: the sugarhouse burned. It caught on fire.</p> <p>LM: Luckily a neighbor happened to be a bus driver and he was going up Jericho Hill.</p> <p>GM: By that time there was no saving it. It was already gone. We had put it in an old existing building on the Ostlers old farm. So that burned totally. Well.</p> <p>LM: They had made 6 gallons total.</p> <p>GM: But we had spent like \$2000, \$1000 each. Or \$3000 because old George kicked in too. So we just lost our life savings on this thing. Come to find out George Ostler’s uncle was the insurance man. And he said, oh no, the contents of the building were insured. But the building wasn’t. So we got insurance money to buy another evaporator. So we went over to Grimm in Rutland. We were all long faced. We just lost, it burnt down. The older salesman says, “Cheer up boys, it’s not the end of the world.” We’re like, oh yes it. We were kind of ticked off at his response. We bought another evaporator and with the help of my father and other people, we built a temporary sugarhouse for that season and finished. And we went on to sugar for a number of years. And then Thomas, his brother, came into the partnership. And George was an attorney so it was easy for him to make money somewhere else. And we all got older and families and ended up a few years ago, Thomas and I split up the partnership. And then we started sugaring on my grandfather’s property.</p> <p>LM: So that sugarhouse is – remember we said George’s grandfather did make syrup a long time – so in 1969 they stopped making the syrup down there.</p> <p>GM: ’65.</p>
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	<p>LM: 1965 they stopped making the maple syrup here. So they had sold the ?, but the building was in great shape. So George – how many years did we start doing that? Four years? So George ended up getting another evaporator and we're doing it here. But George's dad remembers actually helping to build that sugarhouse in 1952.</p> <p>KO: So currently the two of you own this farm, which consists of cows, maple sugaring and cheese? LM: And cheese, yup.</p> <p>GM: And we lease the other farm from other folks. So it's 60 cows there. The cheese part, Jericho Hill, is LLC, but the other part is a sole proprietorship, Valley View Farm is a milk production farm.</p>
Reasons for cheesemaking	<p>LM: We started making cheese in what year? GM: '07.</p>
Milk prices; marketing	<p>LM: See George didn't think he was busy enough. KO: I know how that goes.</p>
Farmers markets	<p>GM: Part of it was – I don't know if I ever told you – a good close friend of ours in high school ends up getting cancer, I don't know. I think it wasn't too long ago. We were 40 something. He had a tumor on his spine and he died. At the time I just had this feeling, you don't have a lot of time here, so do as much as you can. But now several years later, we're like, "Eh, shit, maybe we work too hard." Maybe you try to do too much.</p> <p>LM: And also milk prices at that time were just taking a nosedive, so there is money if you make cheese. The amount of milk that you put into it, you get a lot more money for that milk.</p> <p>GM: a lot of that comes with the marketing thing. It's very much a full circle where farmers peddled the butter and the potatoes and so forth, marketed their own stuff. That was kind of a simpler time. And then they went to the bulk milk where they didn't have to market anything. They were just solely producers. And then by making cheese and stuff, you go around. So now you have to be the marketer, too.</p> <p>LM: And the syrup that we make. GM: And the syrup. We found that that's the hardest part of the cheese making. That and too much work and not enough time.</p>

LM: So what we've decided to do. I do all of the marketing. We were doing the Norwich farmers market, the Hanover farmers market and the Lebanon farmers market at one point. But Lebanon just wasn't lucrative. It was on a Thursday afternoon and I'd have to get out of work and then we ended up hiring someone to market it. It's the next community to Hanover and it's just the strangest thing. They would buy \$4 pieces of cheese. They couldn't seem to afford the \$7 pieces of cheese. They just wouldn't.

GM: In Hanover.

LM: We were just weren't frankly selling. It just wasn't worth it. We stopped doing the Lebanon Farmers Market after two seasons, I guess. And then I was doing a winter market there, but again, it just was not the right clientele. So we've been doing the – the Hanover market went into effect five summers ago. This year is the first summer that I'm only going to do it once a month. A lot of Dartmouth students take in lots of samples. You give away a huge amount of samples, but you don't make it –

GM: They're grazers, not buyers.

LM: And when their parents come for whatever event, then I sell lots of syrup. But that's –

KO: -not enough-

LM: But the Norwich farmers market is a boom.

GM: That's a weekend, that's a Saturday. People go there to shop.

LM: Right.

GM: That and those people, \$20, they pull the 20s out. Other towns just don't have that money to spend.

LM: Right. But it's a very established farmers markets and that's great. So I sell, yesterday the first farmers market for the season outside. I'll sell every Saturday through middle October, end of October. It's a lot of hours. And we also sell to the local co-ops, the smaller White River coop. And then because there's another coop there, the Hanover market coop just opened another White River coop. So then they sell at the Lebanon coop instead. And then we've had some country stores that we've tried to get into. Again, like George said, the problem is you have to contact them. "Hey, do you need some of our cheese? Do you need some of our cheese?" We don't have the time to do that. I work at Dartmouth Hitchcock full time. It's easy for me to drop the cheese off at the coop, it's right in my backyard. But for me to go to the Tunbridge Country Store—

KO: -the leg work-

LM: They've had it at times. Even Dan & Witz. Or the Sharon Trading Post. We've had it in the Taftsville Country Store. But it's a lot of work.

<p>Cheese business; Vermont Cheese Council</p>	<p>KO: I bet.</p> <p>LM: to get to market. We actually were very blessed. We had both a business plan and a marketing plan. We had grant money from State of Vermont. They were wonderful. The State of Vermont is just fabulous. First we did the business plan to see if that was going to be a viable thing to take on. It was. If we had followed the business plan, it would have been great. And then again, we had this wonderful marketing plan. We got great ideas for our marketing plan. But then as we got into it, year three, we went, "Huh, this isn't what we want to do."</p> <p>GM: We're coasting.</p> <p>LM: We're coasting right now with the cheese business. So I was the secretary of the Vermont Cheese Council. I just got off the board a couple months ago. What was nice about that, we were in the know. We knew what was going on in the State of Vermont. Vermont cheese is fabulous and it's just booming, so that's great. We just have to figure, what do we want to do. Right now George is the cheese maker. And his sister, lucky for us, she has a flexible job and she works in the V.A. So she takes time off. When we make cheese, she helps George. And another sister just retired from Corell (?) and she comes up and helps as well and that's been great help.</p> <p>GM: When we make.</p> <p>LM: When we make, and we've only been making in the fall because, again, George has got to work everything else he does, he's got to work cheese in the middle of it. And because we have such good cows, he only has to use the milk from 7 cows to make the cheese that will last us the whole year.</p>
<p>00:41:38</p> <p>Cheese making process</p>	<p>KO: Oh wow.</p> <p>LM: For the way we're marketing for now.</p> <p>KO: Do you make the cheese on the farm?</p> <p>GM: Yup.</p> <p>00:41:38</p> <p>LM: Cheese house just down the road.</p> <p>GM: ??</p> <p>KO: What's involved in the process of cheese making?</p>

<p>00:42:43</p> <p>Cheese making process</p>	<p>LM: So tell her how you got the recipe and stuff.</p> <p>GM: Well to start with, actually a friend of Linda's father is originally – his son came to Dartmouth to go to school.</p> <p>LM: My father is from Minnesota.</p> <p>GM: The Minnesota cheese makers. He played football, so Linda's father stayed there, so when he graduated some other player –</p> <p>LM: from Minnesota got introduced.</p> <p>GM: Got introduced and came to play football at Dartmouth. So Linda's father would say, you know, if your folks want to stay here when they visit. And they passed on another one.</p> <p>LM: My father would literally go over to Buddy Tevon's and say, "I say in the newspaper, you have a kid from my hometown and I'd like to be introduced, please."</p> <p>00:42:43</p> <p>GM: So? From his hometown. He knew his grandfather or something.</p> <p>LM: My father went to high school with his grandfather, this kid's grandfather. It's a tiny little town.</p> <p>GM: He said, my father makes cheese. He works for a big cheese plant in Minnesota. He came out and we got to meet him. He said, we'll send you a recipe and you can start making cheese. So anyway, the process of cheese making is clean milk and fresh milk. So you put it into the vat, heat it up, add a culture, let the culture work for a time period. ? to coagulate the milk. Cut the curd in the little cubes. Heat the curd and stir the curd to expel the whey. And then drain the whey. And then you have the curd to either put in the molds or dry salt and different kinds. We make a Colby. Put the salt in with the curd and then put it in the mold and press it. It's a long process. It's like a 6-hour process from start to finish. Part of the problem with our cheese making was we never quit our day jobs. If we had quit our day jobs, then you'd have to make a living doing the cheese making. But we never quite dared to or didn't, so it's really too much work for us to keep doing too much of the work. We squeezed in a month here and a month there and made enough cheese to age some to have some to sell. It's not a daily run business.</p> <p>LM: So the reason why we make a jack is because of the alliteration. The name of the farm is Jericho Hill Farm, so it's a Jericho Jack. And the "k" – I did some research – and the "k" sound, people really</p>
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<p>00:46:14</p> <p>Multiple</p>	<p>remember it. And again with marketing, so Jer-i-cho Jack. People remember that.</p> <p>KO: Yea, it's easy to say.</p> <p>LM: Right. So once we got the Jack. A Colby is a very similar cheese. It has the same four ingredients. So we ended up making jus the plain Jack and the plain Colby. And then we got to thinking, we had some cheese that we wanted to smoke, make a smoked Jack. So the next thing, we said, oh let's make a pepper jack. And let's make a – we had a cheese maker that we hired for one year and she was from a Scandinavian country and they used caraway. So we made a caraway jack and cocoa pepper jack. We just sort of trying it out. We just started with a parmesan. So we've got out there a little bit of changes. I think our Colby is probably the best of the cheeses we make.</p> <p>GM: Yea.</p> <p>KO: How much can you make at one time?</p> <p>GM: Like 130-140 pounds.</p> <p>KO: Oh, okay.</p> <p>LM: It's a raw cows milk cheese and the State says you have to use that milk by 72 hours.</p> <p>GM: 72 hours.</p> <p>KO: Okay.</p> <p>LM: So every three days you can make the cheese. And because the cows are pretty high producers, you can have about 1300 pounds of milk. We'll make about 100 pounds of cheese or a little bit.</p> <p>GM: It's about a 10% yield.</p> <p>KO: Okay.</p> <p>GM: 1200 pounds is like 100 gallons. So it's a fair amount of cheese. If you were to make that everyday, then you'd have to have someone to keep selling it.</p> <p>KO: Then you'd have to quit your day job.</p> <p>GM: Yea.</p> <p>LM: I would.</p>
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<p>incomes to support a farm; expenses</p>	<p>00:46:14</p> <p>GM: And that ??</p> <p>LM: That's where the money comes from. It's not off the farm.</p> <p>GM: Not totally off the farm.</p> <p>KO: I've heard that living in the state you have to have multiple jobs, which I do, my husband does.</p> <p>LM: Truthfully, farmer friends that we have. Almost everybody has, the wife or somebody works off the farm.</p>
<p>Difficulty of Vermont farming; stewards of the land; making ends meet; land availability</p>	<p>GM: And the ones that don't-</p> <p>LM: Are the ones that are really struggling.</p> <p>GM: -can struggle because they don't have health insurance. Or if you buy health insurance, privately-</p> <p>KO: -it's expensive-</p> <p>GM: -unbelievably. It's upwards of \$1000 per month for a family. That's a lot of money.</p> <p>LM: And it's a job that you need to have health-</p> <p>KO: -oh yea-</p> <p>LM: -it's such a dangerous job so you've got to protect yourself.</p> <p>GM: That's a problem with Vermont farming. At least, the hill farms. If we were to be really successful with the cheese business then we might be able to make a living off of 15 or 20 cows on this hill farm. So the state, they see it as a way to continue the hill farms. Otherwise you stand back and look at it and this place would probably be better off for house lots. You go up on the hill, beautiful views and such, so keeping this land in agriculture. That's kind of our goal. My grandparents left it to Linda and I because I was the farmer in the family.</p> <p>LM: And George has two brothers and two sisters. But he chose to just leave it with us, because, I think – I feel strongly and I'm sure you do, too, George – that we're like stewards of the land, right? You can't take it with you. But we want it to stay as a farm. We want it to be.</p> <p>GM: They'd given my father and mother the land around the other farm. So they didn't need it to go with this. They deeded that over to them. So he had given my father a pretty big portion anyway. He knew if he left this farm – my father was an only child. So if he had left it to my father, then it wouldn't be too many years and his estate would have to be split up five ways. He was from a family of four sisters that if – if it's left to</p>

<p>Cooperation with neighbors</p> <p>Rural Vermont,</p>	<p>one person, it's simple, as long as you can keep the hard feelings and the jealousy out of it. But if he had left it to my father, it wouldn't have been long and it would have been split up in five ways. And knowing one could possibly buy out the other four, you'd never make a living farming. It's just too hard. There's just not enough money. So that's the problem – well, the dairy farming here where you don't have easy access to a lot of land. The big farms now that milk more than 1,000 cows, they've got land all over the place. If you go to New York, the farms have land all surrounding the farm and milk lots of cows. And here we don't have to travel very far for the land, but it's just the same to take the mower and drive three miles and mow 10 acres and then run 3 miles with the tether to spread the hay out. And then run three miles with the rake to rake it up. And 3 miles with the baler. And then bring the loads of hay back. It all takes time-</p> <p>LM: And fuel.</p> <p>GM: And fuel. If it were all close to the farm, you're just going out there to get 10 acres and back, where it's all spread out. That's the tough part.</p> <p>LM: We've been very fortunate because some of the neighbors that we have, have been well enough off that they –</p> <p>GM: -they allow us to use it.</p> <p>LM: Well, it goes both ways because George keeps their land nice.</p> <p>GM: One neighbor says, "I appreciate what you do." I say, "I appreciate you letting us use your land to add to our business sort of thing." Without that, we would be able to purchase feed somewhere and operate on a smaller parcel of land. But then you don't have a place to put your manure either. I couldn't afford to pay the taxes on all of the land that we use. We are fortunate that in the immediate vicinity, a three-mile radius, we use all the land that we need and we're able to sell surplus hay, too. We're lucky in this area. We basically don't have too much competition in this area. There's other neighbors and they use other land.</p> <p>LM: For hay.</p> <p>GM: For hay. One guy sells a lot of hay and another guy has beef and uses a little bit of land. But we're friends and I don't try to steal any of the land he uses and he doesn't bother me. It's kind of a cooperative effort. If you drive around the whole of Jericho, the biggest portion of it is still opened and used. It's green, unlike some parts of the state where it's grown up to trees because nobody uses it, no farmers and stuff. So</p>
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<p>Dairy farm count in the state</p>	<p>put it in those bulk tanks. Remember those old milk cans? They had to stop using the milk cans.</p> <p>GM: For sanitation problems. KO: Oh right, okay. GM: For bacteria.</p> <p>LM: These guys didn't want to put in the money.</p> <p>GM: They didn't want to put the money into it. Kind of the younger farmers did. That was their only future. You either do this or we're not going to pick up your milk anymore.</p> <p>LM: But we also had a herd buyout.</p> <p>GM: That was '85, 1985 I think it was. There was too much production nationwide of milk and one of the strategies was to buy these dairy herds, pay them so much - they'd put in a bid. Say they made one million gallons of milk. If they put in a bid of one dollar, they'd pay them \$100,000, but you'd have to slaughter all of your dairy cows.</p> <p>KO: Oh wow.</p> <p>GM: So you're young enough – when were you born?</p> <p>KO: 1985.</p>
<p>1985 Farm Bill</p>	<p>LM: Our son was, too.</p> <p>KO: Oh really?</p> <p>LM: So there was a lot of animals – that's when a lot of dairy farmers went out of business. I mean why not, it's pretty decent money to stop milk.</p> <p>GM: So probably early '80s, there was probably 4,000 dairy farms in the State of Vermont. Now there's only 1,000. 1,200 maybe.</p> <p>LM: I think we just dipped under 1,000.</p> <p>KO: Oh wow.</p> <p>GM: So this whole herd buyout comes out. They pay the farmer for the milk. And this was part of the Farm Bill, the '85 Farm Bill. And that was a strategy to reduce the surplus milk nationwide.</p>

Milk prices	<p>LM: And the small farmers, those little guys that were milking 20, 30, 40 cows had given up. They can't make enough money on those small, small, small herds.</p> <p>GM: So that was a way for them to get out. But they had to slaughter their dairy animals for beef. So to take those dairy animals out of production and they had to stay out of business for like five years. But a lot of funding came from other dairy farmers who actually paid into the government to expend all that money. So if you were an elderly person who wanted to get out of farming, didn't care if your animals went to slaughter, here's a year's amount of production money. And you got the money from the cows when you sold them. But they were going to retire anyway, so they got those people out of business.</p> <p>LM: But there were younger farmers. We have a friend who was also struggling.</p> <p>GM: So they-</p> <p>LM: They got out. But everybody had to do a sealed bid or something. You didn't know what your next door neighbor was –</p> <p>GM: And they only wanted to take so much milk off. It's typical government stuff. It's all well thought of, but never actually-</p> <p>LM: -in practice.</p> <p>GM: Or practical. So to get that number of animals off: say they wanted to get, I forget, how many billion pounds. They said we need to get rid of so many cows. So the sealed bid, and some of the advice was don't bid too high if you want to the government to take them, if you really want out. We heard this one story: this guy bid like \$6 a hundred and another guy bid \$15 a hundred. They took him both. So this guy basically took-</p> <p>KO: Oh that's terrible.</p> <p>GM: He took half as much as he might as gotten. So then the guys that took 15 thinks, "Ooh, shit, I'm doing alright."</p> <p>LM: And he was.</p> <p>GM: He was. It was a good deal. So that a very temporary solution that took like nearly five years. Those were all Reagan's years. I don't want to get political in here.</p> <p>LM: Don't get him started.</p> <p>KO: It's all right.</p> <p>GM: So it took a number of years for the milk price to rebound and to</p>
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<p>00:59:53</p> <p>Costs of farming; value of farming</p>	<p>actually work. Then it worked for a while. Then they started changing the milk pricing system from the Chicago mercantile to the Future's Buyers and stuff. Since then it's been peaks and valleys. So the price of milk, last year, actually averaged like \$20.35 a hundred for the entire year. So we made some pretty good money. Had some money to spend, some money to upgrade. But two years prior to that it was somewhere around \$13 a hundred.</p> <p>LM: And it costs us \$16.50 a hundred. Otherwise we lose money.</p> <p>GM: So we lost a ton of money. We basically struggled. I paid my help. We paid our bills. But without Linda's job we would have had nothing. So you had to go into these kind of – a friend of mine calls it survival mode – where you spend the absolute minimum to operate and just hope that the price of milk rebounds. So that was '09 was horrible. By last year, '11, was high and people were feeling better.</p> <p>LM: So we ship to AgriMark, which is the Cabot brand name. KO: Okay.</p> <p>00:59:53</p>
<p>Milk prices; shipping milk; costs</p>	<p>LM: Okay. So we go to these meetings, where these really smart people are. What the farm does is, we really contribute to the local economy because we buy fuel, we buy feed.</p> <p>GM: We spend a lot of money.</p> <p>LM: We spend supplies, and on and on and on. We keep all of those places in business. And so now all of a sudden, if the farmer doesn't have the money to spend, guess what happens. The off-shoot is really very scared.</p> <p>GM: On our farm, I'll tell you we grossed over \$300,000 last year. Our net income was like \$7,000. We spend a lot of money so we have depreciation. But luckily we didn't have to live on \$7,000.</p> <p>LM: But he works 80, 90 hours per week. KO: Oh my goodness.</p> <p>GM: But all of that money that the \$300,000 grossed went to equipment guys, fuel dealers. It's really a big contributor to the local economy. People think, the local farm, how much do they make? Well, my grandfather would say, as a farmer you handle a lot of money.</p> <p>KO: Makes sense.</p> <p>GM: You handle \$300,000, but how much you got left at the end of the year, that's the most important thing.</p>

<p>Farmers during WWII</p>	<p>LM: But it's those, the peaks and valleys. The valleys are too hard. People cannot stay. Every time we're shipping milk. When we say a hundred, 100 pounds of milk is what they pay you on. It's an archaic system. You're always 100 pounds of milk is always what they pay you on. Which is like 8 ½ gallons?</p> <p>GM: 12 ½.</p> <p>LM: 12 ½ gallons.</p> <p>KO: Okay.</p> <p>LM: but everything is done at this 100 weight.</p> <p>GM: My grandfather tells during the war – he actually wanted to do go into the Air Force. He wanted to buy a pilot, but he was about 40 years old I think. So he was on the old side of WWII.</p> <p>LM: No, he would have been in his 30s.</p> <p>GM: He was born in '14.</p> <p>LM: Right. So that was '40.</p>
<p>01:02:59</p> <p>Family stories</p>	<p>GM: Well anyway, the governor said we need all the farmers we have, so they didn't take any farmers. If you were on the farm and you were crucial to producing food – he said actually with the milk price, they were shifting in cans – but he would a subsidy check equaling what he made off his normal sales of milk. So he basically, they paid him twice for the milk. The subsidy was again like doubled his income. So during the war he made pretty good money by staying home. He had saved him money and bought government bonds to support the war effort.</p> <p>LM: And he also worked out at Cole-Blanchard (?), right?</p> <p>GM: Yea, at times.</p> <p>LM: During the war. That was the one and only time I think that-</p> <p>GM: -he worked off the farm. So that was when rural Vermont was rural Vermont.</p> <p>1:02:59</p> <p>LM: So I'll tell you a cute story. The reason why George's grandfather even existed was because George's great grandfather, George Nelson and Bertha, they only had daughters. They had three daughters. So George Nelson said to Bertha, "I need a son." Of course. Right?</p>

House built 1895	<p>KO: Right.</p> <p>LM: So she says, “okay fine, I’ll have another baby but you’ve got to buy me some stuff.” So she said you’ve got to buy me a side board. You’ve got to buy a sewing machine, and you’ve got to buy me –</p> <p>GM: -a ringer washer-</p> <p>LM: -a ringer washing machine.</p> <p>GM: And so he did.</p> <p>LM: So that piece of – that sideboard right there, that’s the reason-</p> <p>GM: That’s the reason my grandfather was born.</p> <p>KO: Oh neat.</p> <p>LM: And on the back of the sideboard it says, “Mrs. Jeanne Miller, White River, Vermont.” That’s all it says. And it was from Chicago.</p> <p>GM: Chicago, Illinois, yup.</p> <p>LM: So we think it was Sears probably.</p> <p>GM: Sears or Montgomery Ward.</p> <p>LM: But that’s how it came. It was literally – so after his grandfather died, we gave George’s brother Chet-</p> <p>GM: -the treadle sewing machine.</p> <p>LM: That was the sewing machine.</p> <p>GM: But anyway she had twins.</p> <p>KO: Oh wow.</p> <p>LM: But he was born here in the house in the bedroom. And his sister came out first, Marjorie, and can you imagine – oh my gosh.</p> <p>GM: They didn’t know she was going to have twins either.</p> <p>KO: Oh my goodness.</p> <p>LM: And then Chet came second. He lived literally: he was born in that bedroom at the end of the house. Chet and Hazel got married at the end of this porch. And he died re-roofing – we have little garage – and he</p>
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<p>Inheriting the house</p>	<p>died on top of the roof. KO: Oh my goodness.</p> <p>GM: 81 years old.</p> <p>LM: But his life, those three events of his life, happened, the triangle is this tiny.</p> <p>GM: Fifty feet.</p> <p>KO: When was this house built?</p> <p>LM: 1895.</p> <p>GM: I think.</p> <p>LM: 1890, I think.</p> <p>GM: It was rebuilt. There was a farmstead here. I think it burned somewhere along then.</p>
<p>House renovation</p>	<p>LM: So when inherited it and his grandfather died in '95. We inherited it then. We had a hired man then and we had him come live in the house for two years. And then George's cousin, ironically, George's dad and mom, happened to go to Orwell. Next door neighbor Andy, had this conversation and George's dad, Ray, had this conversation, and said, "You know, I'd like to retire. What do you think about, if you – Andy was farming over – why don't you come over and work with George. And Andy said yes. It was just sort of off the cuff. And that was just after Christmas. And literally, we had Christmas – we were living next door – we had Christmas at our house and our kids, we had no intention of moving here, and all of a sudden in a week we were like, oh my god, Andy and Joyce are going to come. So George called and we talked. Andy and Joyce were going to come over here. The house was in bad, bad shape.</p> <p>GM: Disrepair.</p> <p>LM: It was in really poor shape. And again – GM: Wiring. LM: The wiring, the lead paint. They had little kids. And we were like, we can't have kids in this house with lead paint. In the end I said to George – I had a computer program – I said, I want to live in that house, but we're going to do some major renovations. So literally what you see is not. The only thing that stayed the same is those doors. All of the floors in there – not this one – but all the floors in the rest of the house</p>

and the banister going up the stairs, are all the original and everything else you see.

GM: Well it was all plaster and lath. We ripped that out. There was not an ounce of insulation in here. The kitchen is a lot different. There used to be a water tub from the wells out back. Water came in and just filled this 30 gallon crock. It would run underneath the house. We had some old pictures of that. But it was in pretty disrepair sort of thing. But when we were remodeling the house we found a board underneath the stairwell where the guy, it had two names of the carpenters, and it said "stairs, closet and stairs." They had come in and built and put in the stairs and a walkway in the closet underneath the stairs. So a guy we had, a carpenter, a friend of ours, he wrote his name on the board, the back of the board and threw it back in.

KO: Nice.

LM: Where he found it.

GM: So we didn't gut the whole entire house. How cheap Vermonters were, and cheap – I like frugal – the floors in the living room were gray paint. Painting floors for a time period was the thing to do. So I told Linda, why don't we just repaint the floor. We don't need to sand it down. My grandmother always had linoleum, a big piece of linoleum-

KO: Oh yea.

GM: And it was painted around the edge, come to find out. And we picked that linoleum up and that's all they did. They painted right around the whole room. The whole inside was perfect.

KO: Nice.

LM: And it had been protected all those years by that linoleum.

GM: Tar paper and linoleum. So it's like they painted just under that linoleum all the way around.

LM: But what you're seeing – all the woodwork – most of it 99%, came from trees that we had cut.

GM: It takes an unbelievable amount. We tore off all the door casings because it was all lead paint. The funny thing was, my grandmother, when her mother died, they had some money from the estate I guess. And she had woodwork painted. But the back side of that cellar door had not been painted. And there was one coat of paint. It was not like

	<p>one after another. It was one coat. And there was none where they didn't see it. They didn't paint. So that's how kind of frugal people were. And the house when we remodeled it, all the drawers and stuff, today you'd find coins from everybody. Actually the kid that lived here the winter that worked for us, he'd empty his pockets all over the floor. Outside of his change, we found one dime in this house.</p> <p>KO: Oh wow.</p> <p>LM: Grandparents did not have coins in their pockets, clothes.</p> <p>GM: They knew where every penny was and it was in the bank. It wasn't hanging around the drawers. So it had fallen down underneath one of the thresholds in the upstairs. So it was like an 1898 Barber dime, worth like two bucks.</p> <p>KO: Well, percentage wise, that's a lot.</p> <p>LM: It was. We gave it to our nephew.</p>
<p>01:10:25</p> <p>Miller farmhouse; heating the house</p>	<p>GM: He's the one that found it. But yea, that's how frugal people were. They knew where everything was. You see all the old television shows like The Waltons were Olivia hid her egg money. There was no pennies or dimes left laying around. They saved every bit of it.</p> <p>KO: Sounds like my house now. My house was built in '28 and –</p> <p>GM: -Where you live now?-</p> <p>KO: Mmm-hmm, Waterbury. And it was the same family who owned the house and there was one coat of paint for 83 years.</p> <p>GM: Right.</p> <p>LM: Yes.</p> <p>KO: One of the rooms was repainted, but the paint was still pretty good.</p> <p>GM: Because it was lead.</p> <p>KO: It was most definitely lead, yes. And it was chipping in a couple places like the bathroom and the bedroom and I had to scrape that off. We just painted over it and sealed it.</p>
<p>George's grandparents</p>	<p>1:10:25</p> <p>GM: They didn't have money. Certainly wasn't in excess.</p> <p>LM: When George's grandfather - George's grandmother died first. So George's grandfather literally lived in the house and if you – not a single drop of insulation in this house. If you left a glass of water on the bedside stand, it would be frozen the next morning. He would sit here,</p>

<p>Father as a mechanic; repairing farm equipment</p>	<p>we finally, later in his life, we had him put on these little propane heaters in the house. Before that he had one pot-bellied wood stove in the living room and they had a kitchen cook stove right and it had a little fire box. And they'd have to get up in the middle of the night and feed those little fires.</p> <p>GM: It was cold.</p> <p>LM: It would be cold. And he would sit in that living room with his down vest on.</p> <p>GM: He would say, "I'm wearing my feathers." He was. He would sit there and it might be 59 or 60 in here, because that's all he knew. When my grandmother was alive, she was the one that tended the fires. The woodshed was out there and she was back and forth. They'd burn, I don't know how many cords, and it wouldn't be overly warm in here either. But she was the one that tended the fire. Grandpa might have dropped a piece of wood in if he was feeling cold, but that was her job sort of thing. That's what she did. Same with my mother. My father never went down to the cellar to put wood in the furnace. Seldom. It was my mother's job. It was what she did.</p> <p>So back to my grandmother. In 1961 had a radical mastectomy, had breast cancer. They took muscles and everything</p> <p>KO: Oh god.</p> <p>LM: They didn't know any different. They didn't know anything else.</p> <p>GM: I remember going to see her. It was in Lebanon, NH where she had it down. From that she rebounds and she milked cows, bailed hay, drove tractor. And she was so short legged that she'd stretch out to reach the clutch. And my grandfather would get mad, what are you jerking the clutch for? What else is she going to do? She's like the size of a 10 year old, short.</p> <p>LM: She cut off the tip of her finger. She had no tip of her finger. She was fixing a mower bar, right?</p> <p>GM: A mowing machine. She flipped it up and it slides down. There were sharp sections-</p> <p>LM: -teeth-</p> <p>GM: -teeth, so it would slide down always about an inch. Well she had her finger and when flopped it up.</p> <p>KO: Ouch.</p>
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<p>01:15:18</p> <p>One-room schoolhouse in Jericho; 1920s; time capsule</p>	<p>LM: She was a trooper.</p> <p>KO: Sounds like it.</p> <p>GM: Oh she was tough.</p> <p>LM: Boy was he meticulous with his equipment.</p> <p>GM: He was a fussy ol'-</p> <p>LM: And George said sometimes if he would be repairing something, he would pick up that wrench and he'd be putting it back.</p> <p>GM: Of course my father was a great mechanic. My grandfather wasn't very mechanical. He was just lucky that he treated everything, he increased everything. He was just lucky that seldom did anything broke. And if it did my father could be there to fix it. My father could fix anything. He was a tremendous mechanic.</p> <p>LM: It was innate.</p> <p>GM: He just could. He'd be tinkering on, fixing the tractor. He'd set the wrench down and my grandfather would pick it up and put it back down in the toolbox. And two seconds later my father would be, "where'd my wrench go?" "Oh you weren't done with it?" This, that, and the other thing. That was what my father knew and my grandfather didn't know. The only advantage he had over his father, you know how the pecking order goes. It's like, I'm the mechanic here. Leave my shit alone. So he had put the wrench away, and he'd get ticked off. The last time they were fixing a tractor of his, it was skipping. It wouldn't run right. It was a gas tractor. So my father had valves done. He did all kinds of stuff. The only thing that he could be wrong with it, he said, was if the timing's off on the tractor. Did this tractor run backwards at one point? And Grandpa says, "Oh yea, I stuck down there." He said he'd come up and it stalled and it ran backwards, you know. The motor turned backwards.</p> <p>KO: Oh yea.</p> <p>GM: And twisted the cam shaft gear so it wouldn't time. It has be in perfect time for the valves and the spark and all that. He says, "Oh yea, that happened down there." Why didn't you tell me this? Hours of just racking his brain as to why he couldn't get this tractor to run.</p> <p>1:15:18</p> <p>LM: [Show photograph] This was George's dad. He was the little</p>
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<p>Road widening; driving a tractor</p>	<p>blonde in the middle right there. He was the last graduating class in the one-room schoolhouse.</p> <p>KO: Oh, is that the one I drove past?</p> <p>GM: Yup. LM: Yup. KO: Oh, okay.</p> <p>LM: So George's grandparents went there as well.</p> <p>GM: In 19- LM: In the '20s.</p> <p>LM: The story goes that – I think it was your Dad's class or I think it was your grandfather's class – GM: Oh yea, my grandfather's class- LM: There is a hidden time capsule supposedly over there. We could never find it. The community club still uses that building. They put a ball jar with their names or something in this jar.</p> <p>GM: So, it would have been in the '20s that they would have done that. My grandfather thought that they buried it in this one place. They widened the road, so it very well is underneath the road. But as far as driving, I was going to tell this story. When we started to expand I would have been like 12 years old, we would drive from the other farm up to the hayfields out here to cut the hay. I always said the driving age in Jericho was 12. I'd be driving this one ton truck. The first year I looked through the steering wheel, not over the dash. I couldn't see over the dash. I was a little shit when I was 12. I was probably 80 pounds. So I'd be driving and here comes a car. Of course there was very little traffic up here at this time. So I'd slowly pull over and almost stop. The cars would go by and keep going. The car would keep going. We'd drive this truck to pick up hay and then I'd drive it home when I was 12 years old. There were no cops that ever drove up here. It was rough, most of the time it was unpaved most of the way. So if you saw a police officer come up here, it was "yea, I saw a cop car up here. Yea." It was once a year. Now, hell, they come up daily. So the driving age was 12.</p> <p>LM: They literally – the farm kid had to help drive tractors. George knew, gosh, by the time he got into driver's ed, he could teach the driver's ed teacher a thing or two.</p> <p>GM: So, driving, that was the responsibility that farm kids took. Whether it was right to give it to them – In the news today or recently, a couple kids got hurt on four-wheelers or motorcycles. They were under</p>
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<p>01:19:02</p> <p>Seasonal operations on the farm.</p> <p>Wintertime; daily schedule.</p>	<p>age. They were like 12 years old. And the father is getting in trouble for having let these kids operate a motor vehicle. But this is stuff that farm kids have done for years and years. And you just basically hope and pray that nobody gets hurts. Sort of thing. The difference with my grandfather and father is that my grandfather would never let him drive a tractor. He was 20 years old before he would let him. But, yet, my father would, if we were able to drive a tractor and you go break hay, if you were 12 and you could drive, then go to it. That was probably one reason my father and grandfather did not get along. My grandfather would not extend the trust. “You’ll get hurt, you’ll get hurt.” Maybe it’s because he was the only child.</p> <p>KO: Oh maybe.</p> <p>[Horn beeps outside.]</p> <p>LM: Who’s that? KO: What was that? GM: I don’t know. LM: Oh, somebody’s in your truck George.</p> <p>GM: I just ? the dump truck yesterday.</p> <p>LM: George’s brother Chet’s son Nick is also working on the farm with us. GM: Part time.</p> <p>1:19:02</p>
<p>Milking cows; cleaning barns; help on the farm</p>	<p>KO: So you do so many things on the farm, can you tell me what’s seasonally different? You do the cheese in the fall.</p> <p>GM: Well in the wintertime, actually, it can be the quietest time, because if you get through chores from getting up and feeding the cows and milking –</p> <p>LM: -so start your day. What time do you start your day?</p> <p>GM: I go to the barn about a little before 7. My cousin actually gets there about 6. He cleans the barn. I come and feed the cows. We both milk. We bed the cows. Feed them again after we get done milking about 10 or so. Go back at 1:00 – in the wintertime – feed them again. Go back at 4:30, 5:00, clean the barn again. Feed the cows again. Milk. Feed them when we get done at 8:00 at night. Hay them. And then come home by 8:30. So we get chunks, a few hours in the winter. It’s great, you come home, sit around. My wife’s working, so I get time to hang out. So in the wintertime, if you condense the hours that I work, I might</p>

	<p>wheelbarrow right into his 70s.</p> <p>LM: But he had to – literally – he had to climb the silo, shovel the silage down into a bucket or something. Then he had to take that, go into the barn, and shovel it into the barn and shovel it again to the cows. So we have an electronic feed car-</p> <p>GM: -a motorized feed car.</p> <p>LM: So that George has that much less. But even that, George’s elbows hurt, his shoulders hurt.</p> <p>GM: It wears on you. Years and years of just –</p> <p>LM: -shoveling-</p> <p>GM: -hard labor. You wear out after a while. That’s – my father now, he’ll be 78 in a couple weeks and he’s really just all worn out. He didn’t work the barn chores type of stuff that I did sort of thing, or his father did. But he always worked. But he was always heavier. He was a big man. He weighed like 350 pounds. He always worked when he was that big. He custom slaughtered pigs and beef and stuff like that.</p>
Valley View Farm	<p>LM: But he also. So George and his dad were partners at Jericho Valley View. But George’s dad did all the crop work and whatever-</p> <p>GM: - and equipment-</p> <p>LM: -and equipment.</p> <p>GM: And always repaired everything. If something broke, this is broke, snap. He’d get right in there and fix it up. And now that he’s not able to, it’s like snap and George doesn’t do it quite as fast. And not nearly as good.</p> <p>LM: But he can still go in and say to his dad, “Dad what do you think?”</p> <p>GM: So I can still go in and say, “Well how do you fix this?”</p> <p>LM: Do this.</p>
Working with Raymond Miller (father)	<p>GM: Eh, do this. But now he won’t offer to come out because he’s all worn out. But his memory now still is, “You remember when I put a clutch in that tractor in 1980?” Shit, I don’t remember that. I don’t. He remembers stuff I don’t. So anyway, with our family aging, what my cousin, I, my mother and father used to do – my cousin and I do. My mother still helps a little in the barn. She’s 78, too.</p> <p>LM: She calves.</p> <p>GM: She’s 78 and getting pretty frail, too.</p> <p>LM: She washes.</p> <p>GM: There’s this one heifer that she’ll walk by. The damn heifer will grab her – she wears a light coat – the heifer grabs her by her coat and yanks her by her coat. The heifer pulls her over and yanks her off her</p>

<p>01:25:0</p> <p>George & Linda's children</p>	<p>feet. Pulls her over. She's struggling to get away. So that's the whole progression of your family aging. We're now doing what used to be shared by four people is now, the work is now being done by two.</p> <p>01:25:09</p> <p>LM: So for us it's a bit sad. We have two children, Alex and Hannah. Hannah is a schoolteacher in Truell, Massachusetts. And her boyfriend is a fisherman off the Cape Robinstown. So since there's no oceans in Vermont, they're not coming back. And Alex is in Stamford, Connecticut, and-</p> <p>GM: - he has a business degree from Sacred Heart.</p> <p>LM: So he's right now working in Long Island City – I don't know if you've ever heard of it.</p> <p>KO: Oh yea.</p> <p>LM: Yea. Anyway, that's where his job is. We hoped one fine day that he would come back. He's a wicked smart kid and he's charismatic. And we really hoped that he would come back and do the Jericho Hill marketing.</p> <p>GM: He can run that cheese business and be great at it.</p> <p>LM: We know he's never going to want to milk no cows. That's not his –</p> <p>GM: No, he's never a kid to play in the manure. If I were to wear one of his shirts or something to the barn, he'd get pissed. "You wore my good shirt to the barn?! What's going on?!"</p> <p>LM: They helped on the farm a bit.</p> <p>GM: Oh yea. He's proud to be a farm kid and I think he's proud of what I do and he respects it. But he wouldn't be into that.</p> <p>LM: It's amazing to me, he could literally come back and he's milked cows before-</p> <p>GM: -probably not till he was 21.</p> <p>LM: Right. He worked for us – so called worked for us – and poor George, he'd get up here. One summer.</p> <p>GM: 11:00.</p> <p>LM: 11:00 in the morning and George would have to roust him out of bed.</p> <p>GM: He's a 17 year old kid and he went out, would play around party late at night. He and his buddies would go out at 10:00. You probably were the same way. Young people tend to go out late, come in late.</p> <p>KO: I stay up late.</p>
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<p>4-H</p> <p>01:29:26</p>	<p>GM: He would come up at like 3:00 in the morning. So I would expect him, maybe get up like maybe get up like 10:00 because I get back from the barn and he could help me do this. 10:00 and he is still sound asleep.</p> <p>LM: So he helped hay mostly.</p> <p>GM: He put in hay. Boys fight. Yet, he's grown. Here's one of the most profound sayings I've ever heard – for me. “When I was 16 years old, I couldn't believe how stupid my father was. When I was 21 years old, I couldn't believe how much he had learned in five short years.”</p> <p>KO: I've heard something like that before.</p> <p>GM: That's how I treated my father and I'm sure that's how Alex treated me. But there was a drastic change in our son from, well, he was a tough kid. He wanted to do stuff. It was his way or it was a battle. But by the time he was 21, he was a different person.</p> <p>LM: But both of our kids did 4-H and the thing that was the killer: Alex is very charismatic. He would always do well, no matter what he does, he does well. Hannah would work hard on her heifer and she would clean it, and she would work and work and work. And she would win the fitting.</p> <p>GM: She might come in second. He would come in first.</p> <p>LM: He would just go in and not really put much energy into working with the animal.</p> <p>GM: He did well.</p> <p>LM: And he always did well.</p> <p>GM: He would – a lot of things he did, he did well, it's like, “Oh I conquered that. And he'd move on to something else.” So he would have been a great farmer. Hannah, too. If they wanted to be, because they have that. Alex would work really hard at his sports. He was a good athlete. He would play hard on the football field or the basketball court. But as far if, go cut a cord of wood and sell it, “Hell just give me the money and say I did.”</p> <p>LM: But now he would do it. He would come home and do it.</p> <p>GM: Now he would. But in his teens he wouldn't. So I think he still-he's proud to be from Vermont.</p> <p>1:29:26 {REMOVE} – 1:29:48</p> <p>GM: He's proud to be a Vermont kid.</p>
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4-H; Eastern states	<p>LM: Same thing with Hannah. Her college essay was 4-H. She actually went to Eastern Sates. I think that's what changed with Vermont farming. Here we are, the next generation and we really feel like Nick does work for the farm There's no way he could take this farm over. It's just too long, too many hours, too big. So I think that the face of Vermont is going to change.</p> <p>GM: Even more so.</p> <p>LM: Right. There's a few farm families, and I think that they've got the kids that are staying in the farms. I don't see that continuing long term. The State of Vermont-</p>
Dairy farms in Hartford today	<p>GM: Well in the Town of Hartford there are only two active dairy farms. There are other farms, vegetable farms –</p> <p>LM: Horse farms-</p> <p>GM: -horse farms and so forth. But there are only two active dairy farms-</p> <p>LM: -in the whole town.</p> <p>GM: In the Town of Hartford.</p> <p>KO: Oh, I didn't know that.</p> <p>GM: Yea.</p> <p>KO: Including yours, or do you consider yourselves Jericho?</p> <p>GM: No, no. We're all Hartford.</p> <p>LM: So Jericho Street, Jericho Hill, Jericho Valley View, we consider it one. I guess legally it's two farms. And then Mike Luce has the third farm.</p>
Luce Farm	<p>GM: Richard Luce. So there are only two active. Like the Town of Hartford, it was a rural town. And then this probably brings to light that there was actually more going on than just being a railroad town. Downtown White River was a railroad hub. You know that. But there were a lot of farms. Agriculture actually had a big part in the Town of Hartford. It's not really well documented at all. You look at the town history and there's not really very much about the farms.</p> <p>KO: There's a lot about the mills.</p> <p>GM: The mills and the railroad. But this Jericho area or the Quechee area or the West Hartford, West Hartford, Quechee, different parts of the Town of Hartford had a lot of farms.</p>
01:31:45	01:31:45
Wintertime	LM: So back to your question though, what else does he do. That's sort

<p>activities; sugaring</p>	<p>of his winter months. And then spring, he starts in February – he’s getting himself all geared up to do- GM: -sugaring- LM: He’s pretty bored by then with winter. GM: Right. LM: He loves sugaring because it gets him outside again. GM: So we put out pipe line and start sugaring. You sugar probably about two months, from February through April. Well, yea.</p> <p>LM: This year, less. GM: Yea.</p> <p>KO: That’s what I heard.</p>
<p>Spring chores: fence fixing; plowing; maure spreading; planting corn; chopping silage; October</p>	<p>GM: But that’s a window of time. And then we go right from cleaning up sugaring to fixing the fence and getting your animals outside and plowing and spreading manure and planting corn. Right from there you go from planting corn with hopefully a window of a couple weeks before you start haying. You can get some other projects out of the way. We’ll basically chop silage and hay right into October. And we chop corn into October.</p> <p>LM: We’ve been hiring a guy lately to come and chop our corn. GM: Custom Chop. LM: Custom Chop. He can do what George would take days and days- GM: He can do it in like five hours.</p> <p>KO: Oh wow.</p>
<p>Chopping silage with other farms; October, November</p>	<p>LM: Because he’s got a big enough chopper and he’s got- GM: He works for big farms. They could probably chop 100 acres in a day if it were right around the farm. This 15 acres that we use away from the farm, it’s 8 miles away, so he can chop it, bring it to our bunk. We pack it down in part of a day. So then getting everything cleaned up from haying and corn chopping, in late October, maybe early November, then things start slowing down. Then there’s not too much more than chores.</p>
<p>Cheese making; December</p>	<p>LM: So that’s when we make cheese. GM: Now we make cheese in the month of December. LM: Because you know he had so much time off now, all of a sudden.</p> <p>KO: Sounds like it.</p> <p>GM: So the month of December we made cheese pretty much.</p>

Christmastime	<p>LM: Just before Christmas we stop because of the holiday. And then that's it and it starts all over again.</p> <p>GM: Farms, like the holidays on a farm – I remember when we were kids, we would come up to my grandparents for Christmas Eve. That's our immediate family. Dad being the only child, we'd come to my grandparents. We'd have to wait for grandpa to get down with chores before we could open presents. He might get done milking and he's hurrying along because Grandpa loved Christmas, too. Then he'd be feeding his cows. He always fed them grass silage. We'd be helping push this huge buggy along and he's shoveling. Then he'd come up to the house and he'd wash up a little and we'd start opening presents. But it always revolves around the farm, Christmastime.</p>
Holidays	<p>LM: So today that happens to us. There is no holiday off. So my kids – literally – George would get up extra early on Christmas morning to do the barn chores. So my kids, literally, I have pictures of them sitting at the kitchen door waiting for Daddy to get home. We would allow them to get into their stockings so they had something to play with. But literally-</p> <p>GM: I'd get home about 9:00. I'd come in the driveway honking the horn. Even today when they come home, they both get home for this Christmas, they would actually come down and help me do chores. We'd rush around and get ready and open our gifts and stuff like that.</p> <p>LM: But then.</p>
Animals come first	<p>GM: The dairy farmers, they're the guys that don't get to see the whole football game. The Superbowl, the second half, comes at chore time. Your animals come first.</p> <p>LM: But on Christmas, what happens now, of course. We'll do all that. We'll have some coffee, open our gifts and then we have a big brunch here, just the four of us: Hannah and Alex and George and I. And then my dad just lives downtown White River, so we all pack up and go see my dad. And then we spend just the afternoon, until about 4:00, because guess what? We've got to come back and start chores again. So there's this narrow sort of –</p> <p>GM: And he we rush it all in. We cram it all into the day.</p>
Vacations	<p>LM: So up until about four years ago, George? We never took a summer vacation, ever.</p> <p>KO: How could you?</p>

<p>Family meals</p>	<p>LM: Right. So our daughter lives in Truro, and it's just a lovely place. Our friends George Ostler and his wife Paula, they rent a cottage and so one year, they said, just come up. So we literally took just three days off that time. That's literally, George, in the entire time we've been married-</p> <p>GM: We've been away at times.</p> <p>LM: But if you've added it all up, just when the kids were little, I said, George, you've got to get home before 8:30 just one night per week. So every Saturday night he would get home by 6:00. So that was the night off was 6:00.</p> <p>GM: I didn't milk. My father would milk.</p> <p>LM: Because, we never had family meals except Saturday nights. But the kids couldn't wait until 8:30.</p> <p>GM: We would always have breakfast together.</p> <p>LM: Right, that the was big meal for us.</p> <p>GM: Not the family meal though.</p> <p>LM: So we would get all excited, hey, we've got Saturday nights off. But he still worked the entire day Saturday.</p> <p>GM: Well, maybe midday.</p> <p>LM: Right.</p> <p>GM: The older I get, the less I like to do on weekends. I do the bare minimum sometimes.</p> <p>LM: But if you add it all up, I bet you totally, totally, George have probably had a couple hundred days totally where you didn't work in your whole 30 some odd years.</p> <p>GM: Yea.</p>
<p>01:37:51</p>	<p>01:37:51</p> <p>KO: Wow.</p> <p>LM: So when we got married, we got married in October, because of course we had to plan it around chores.</p> <p>GM: Corn chopping.</p> <p>LM: Yea.</p> <p>KO: I hope you had that day off.</p>

Family help	<p>LM: He did. GM: We did. LM: And we did go on a honeymoon, because I said to George, we'll never get away again if we don't go away. And then the following year – because my grandmother wasn't able to get out to our wedding – so the following year on our wedding anniversary, I convinced him, we had to go see my grandmother. He says, see- GM: In Minnesota. You lied to me. We've got a week off. We've been going ever since.</p> <p>LM: We have gotten away. Every year we've get away for about five days.</p> <p>GM: We're lucky because my father would help. My mother would always help me milk. My father seldom milked. But the difference was, growing up, my dad would never say, "go take your girlfriend out, I'll do chores." Never did that happen.</p>
Dating in high school	<p>LM: I remember when we were dating in high school. GM: I would have to find someone to fill in for me. LM: And they hand milked by the way. GM: Well. LM: When you were little. GM: When we started shipping milk. LM: Right, so, George would come. He'd have to have milked six cows or something.</p> <p>KO: How long would that take?</p> <p>GM: Oh three-quarters of an hour. LM: If he was really in a hurry. GM: I was a teenager. I was in a real hurry.</p> <p>KO: How long should it take?</p> <p>GM: Oh it might have been like an hour's worth of chores and milk. And it was at that time – before we started shipping milk – to feed the calves and feed some pigs. But a lot of time if I wanted a night off, you had to find someone to milk for you.</p> <p>LM: He had two brothers, so he could convince one or another to milk.</p> <p>GM: So we've always had family close enough. We've generally had time to get away. Well she's very tolerant [Linda].</p>

<p>Vacations</p>	<p>LM: We go away now. GM: In the summer. LM: George could never – I mean, what are you going to do? Sit around for five days? What do you mean? With George Ostler there, at least he has someone to visit with. The first year was a little painful because god, I think he had more Frisbee games with people I don't think he knew on the beach because he had to. Football games. Something.</p> <p>GM: But now I enjoy vacations to just sit around. We've been fortunate that we have been able to go away to different places. That's with the family. And a lot of people pitch in and we have a lot of help from my brother-in-laws. And my sisters help. They're proud to be farm kids. Linda and I, we've never excluded any of my brothers and sisters from the farm. It was left to us, but it's the family's farm. And they come to help. My sister Norma, she's awfully proud that she helped me sugar this year for the first time. She's retired. She put 38 years with the government. She's going to enjoy herself. It's fun to spend time with her. And she still thinks of herself as a farm kid.</p>
<p>01:41:27</p>	<p>01:41:27</p>
<p>Sugarhouse</p>	<p>LM: But she really did. Thank god for her. First of all, the sugar house was the cleanest it's ever been.</p>
<p>Lessons from the farm; feelings about being a farmer</p>	<p>GM: All five of us kids, we've all worked hard. We were taught how to work. We were taught on the farm. If you want something, you'd better work for it. That's kind of how I feel about being a farmer and being able to live on this nice place at the end of the road. If I wasn't a dairy farmer, I couldn't afford to own it or to live it. Then we'd be forced to sell it. Tax-wise, it's in current use so the taxes are less. And in current use, if you're an active farmer, the taxation on all buildings are exempt. So we pay top dollar on our house, which is a fairly modest house, so we still have the tax bill the same as any other Vermonter. But yet our farm buildings. The total appraisal – it's high. But if we weren't an active farm we probably wouldn't be able to live here. So to work hard, that's the payment we have to be able to live here.</p>
<p>Neighboring development; land use</p>	<p>LM: Yea.</p> <p>GM: So in some, a very wealthy person lives on the place. It's happened a lot in other towns. They develop this estate and build this huge house and fancy stuff. But no one else is welcome unless I say. Our neighbors come over and we tell them, it's your place as well as ours. They come down and they walk their dogs. We're happy to have them do that. A lot of people with this estate, they don't want people or neighbors. You're no longer allowed. They're going to be so jealous that they have to</p>

Hunting	<p>protect their property from local people who have walked on it or lived on it or maybe even their families owned it prior to yours. That happens a lot when the land is sold. If we were to sell it, we'd sell it to the highest bidder.</p> <p>KO: Right.</p> <p>GM: But what are we going to do with that money? You don't get the satisfaction of owning the property or being able to say, "I don't like you, get the hell out of here" to hunters. And the hunters, generally, I'll let most anybody hunt if they come and ask. A lot of them come and ask but never hunt. But that's almost their test. "Would you allow me to hunt." Yea, if you're careful and don't do anything stupid. Leave it the way you found it. It's fine. They're asking permission o see if you would allow them to hunt, even if they never take you up on it.</p> <p>KO: Interesting.</p> <p>LM: George doesn't, George of course has so many hours in the day to be able to hunt too, right? But of course, George's way of thinking is that if the deer is stupid enough to stand in the corner-</p> <p>GM: If you're looking at me, I'll go get my gun and I might shoot you. But when were kids, Alex-</p> <p>LM: Our son Alex. The way Alex hunts is literally – I'll tell the story – on youth day, Alex was here and literally, it was just at the end of the lawn and he shoots his first deer and it was what? It was how many points? It was a big deer.</p> <p>GM: Five pointer, I think.</p> <p>LM: That was his first year of hunting. So he's got his deer, so two years go by and he chooses not to hunt. Why would he? He's already accomplished what he needed to accomplish. Then one of his buddies said, Alex, let's go hunt. And they were probably 16 or 17 at the time, when he got that next deer. It doesn't matter. So they're sitting up in lawn chairs at the top of this hill, right? His buddy is talking on his cell phone. And Alex turns around and there's this big buck.</p> <p>GM: A six pointer comes up behind him, so Alex turns around and shoots it.</p> <p>KO: Oh my goodness.</p> <p>LM: Sitting in the lawn chair!</p> <p>KO: He's a lucky kid, huh?</p>
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Cash poor Vermonters	<p>GM: He's a lucky kid. LM: That's Alex. GM: He basically just threw it down the hill. He didn't need to drag it. And he calls his buddies up, "Hey, just got a six pointer." Beautiful deer. That's kind of his shit luck.</p> <p>LM: That's Alex.</p> <p>GM: But you're able to hunt by owning the property, but too many Vermonters take the cash and say... because there's also the old saying that farmers are land rich and cash poor. They own a million dollars worth of property, but you don't have enough money to fix the porch roof is how one guy described it.</p>
Lyman farm	<p>KO: I've heard that.</p> <p>GM: And that's true in a lot of cases. So the guy that has a million dollars worth of property says, I finally want to have money. So he sells it to the down country guy or whatever and it's no longer in the family. So he may cheat his kids or his grandkids from having the opportunity to own the property. We have neighbors here who sold the farm in the mid '60s for not much money at that time. And now the grandson of the guy hays all the property, but he doesn't own a bit of it. Marty Lyman, I think you'll do his interview.</p> <p>KO: Yea, I think tomorrow I'm meeting with Harris Lyman. Harris was –</p> <p>LM: Harris was one of those kids. [In the school photograph.]</p> <p>GM: So Harris would be an interesting interview to listen to. He was the same age as my father, Harris. But their family sold it.</p> <p>LM: Outside of the family. GM: Outside of the family. Well I think Marty was like 13 at the time. For whatever, family reason, Harris' father had health problems. It was a big farm. A lot of things- LM: But they had a problem with water. They didn't have any. GM: They didn't have any water. LM: So they drilled well upon well, but just didn't get any. GM: There's was the biggest farm on the hill here. But since it left their family, Marty has like no say in what happens to that property. A bunch of rich guys own it.</p> <p>KO: It's a shame. It's nice that your farm has been in your family.</p>

<p>01:48:42</p>	<p>GM: It's as long as we can keep it on. As long as Linda keeps working and bringing money in.</p> <p>[Phone rings] 01:48:42</p> <p>GM: But.</p>
<p>Biggest differences in farming: money</p>	<p>KO: So, what do you think is the biggest difference between growing up on a farm and now? The differences between when you grew up on a farm and now?</p> <p>GM: Oh it takes so much more money to operate.</p> <p>KO: Yea.</p>
<p>Government changes; taxes</p>	<p>GM: A lot of government stuff – well, we have an employee and a half. We have big workers compensation. And they are forever auditing their premium. And Linda, she takes care of the books. All of the money you take in, you have to show where it goes. So all the layers and layers of bureaucracy just to operate a farm. We had our taxes down and it was like 500 and some odd dollars to do our taxes.</p> <p>KO: That's expensive, yea.</p>
<p>Changes: milk prices</p>	<p>GM: That's a lot of money. But the money it takes to operate and how much you have left when you get done. When we were growing, well, we were in the dairy business there, my father custom slaughtered pigs and stuff. You claimed your income, but if you got five bucks for a bale of hay. That doesn't go on anymore. You have to report it all. If you don't, the IRS will come kick your ass. That's what happens. And what it takes to operate – one of my mottos are “you do more to do more to do more as a farmer.” It's just one big circle. You want to do more, so you buy a bigger tractor. So you do more and you've got to have more cows to pay for that tractor. And then the tractor wears out and you need another tractor. So it's really just one big circle.</p>
	<p>LM: I think one of things – when we were talking about what we get from milk prices – is none of the other things stayed static at the same level. So when we're making like \$13/hundred or \$16/hundred, that's what we made 30 years ago, 28 years ago?</p> <p>KO: Really?</p> <p>GM: At times.</p> <p>LM: So nothing else. Fuel prices aren't what it was 28 years ago. So that's what the hardship is for farming.</p>

<p>01:50:54</p> <p>Milk check; costs of milk production; insurance; need to grow as a farm; milk prices</p>	<p>KO: Why are they still the same?</p> <p>01:50:54</p> <p>GM: Well –</p> <p>LM: They take a nosedive. They go back to what it was when we started.</p> <p>GM: More people are getting a bigger cut of your milk check. The hauling costs are more because of the diesel fuel. So to move your milk around, to transport – farmers are one of the few to pay to have the milk hauled. We produce it and you would think the buyer-</p> <p>LM: the buyer would come get it.</p> <p>GM: -the buyer comes to get it. We pay to have it trucked. That goes up with diesel prices, fuel prices. Insurance prices. It's all a bigger – we're paying like \$5,000 worth of fire insurance and liability insurance.</p> <p>LM: And worker's comp is outrageous.</p> <p>GM: It's like \$400.</p> <p>LM: Just everything is way more than we were paying 35 years ago, but the milk price-</p> <p>GM: It was simpler, kind of thing. But there's a lot – all the costs have gone up. The only advantage, the only way to combat it is to have more, milk more cows, which makes the circle bigger. Or produce more milk per cow. And that's really the only way you can kind of keep up with all the inflation and stay the same price. Last year the price being \$20/hundred, that was great. That's almost a break even point where we actually had some money to spend, to repair equipment or buy new equipment that was worn out. On years that you don't have money to buy new equipment – years when it dips down. It just dipped down to under \$17/hundred. And it goes down because of nationwide production. It's hard to understand how the price milk. Say there's a deficit in milk production or they think there might be a shortage. The future buyers would come in and say, there's going to be a shortage. So they buy a future's up ?? so they can sell it at a higher rate. Same thing they do with a fuel. There's a scare and bam, up goes the fuel prices. There may not even be a shortage, but the fear of a shortage or the fear of a surplus drives them down. As far as I can understand, that's about how they price milk.</p> <p>LM: And the sad thing is that there's huge milk production in California and Arizona-</p> <p>GM: -the west-</p> <p>LM: -because the cost of the labor is that much less. They don't have to</p>
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<p>Hill farms; land base</p>	<p>have housing. They literally will have cows that they literally have thousands and thousands of cows being milked. And they literally will put in into a bulk tank and off it goes.</p> <p>GM: So the government buys up some.</p> <p>LM: But these little hill farms, you can't do that. You can't have big farms like that.</p> <p>GM: We don't have the land base. So, I mean, I'm not sure. We wouldn't want to milk more cows anyway. So I think that's the difference is the cost and everything. You really have to be able to make money. You can't lose money.</p> <p>LM: You can't sustain losing money.</p>
<p>How little you work for in farming</p>	<p>GM: A lot of times my motto is, it's not so much how money you make a farmer, it's how little you work for. Some years you don't work for very much. Other years – another guy says, there are no good years; just some are better than others. And what's the other saying? What's a farmer have – farmers and a wine maker? Something like you put farmers in the cellar, they're all a bunch of whiners. At the Vermont Farm Show a few years, this guy, actually the family won the Vermont Farmer of the Year Award and the older – the guy's father. So the elder statesman of the farm, and he wasn't that old, he was probably about 60. But he said, "well this is quite the honor, but I'm usually up here complaining about something."</p>
<p>01:55:40</p>	<p>01:55:40</p>
<p>State of Vermont & agriculture; working with the State of Vermont</p>	<p>LM: But, here, I wanted to say something about the State of Vermont, which is amazing. We go to do the cheese plant, right? And we had to get a special permit because of the water or something. So George ended up-</p> <p>GM: -Act 250 permit-</p> <p>LM: You tell the story then.</p> <p>GM: So that's how small the State of Vermont is. We met the Secretary of Agriculture at a –</p> <p>LM: Farm Show dinner.</p> <p>GM: And had dinner with him. And so he would know us. And we got to know the cheese plant inspector. And some of the milk inspectors we knew from here and there. But we needed an Act 250 permit. So I applied for it I guess and sent it to the state. A woman calls up and says, what are you actually doing with this? I said it's just a farmstead cheese plant, and it's just wastewater disposal or something. And she says,</p>

<p>Good farming practices</p>	<p>well, my name is Julie Schmidt. I said, all right, Julie, what do I need. She said, I used to be Julie Hazen. Lived over not very far and went to school with her son – older brother I mean. I said, where do you go from here? She said you contact so and so, in the Agency of Natural Resources. So they pass you along, but they were all very helpful. And that’s how connected you are in the State of Vermont. It’s so small that the Governor, this governor, we’ve met him before. And one of the state senators is actually a good friend of ours, John Campbell. His son- LM: His son and Alex lived together. GM: He’s a good friend of our son Alex. So in the State only this small, do you actually get to know the state government workers. And they are pretty ordinary people. I mean the Governor is pretty ordinary. Common people.</p> <p>LM: And another guy that George had to speak to, Brian Moyer- GM: Moyer, yea. He said, “Oh yea, I used to inspect (he was the head of the dairy division for a long time) that farm for a long. Wasn’t your grandfather Chet and your grandmother Hazel? Oh I know right where that farm is.” And he’d pass stuff along. Whatever we can do to help. It’s like you just have to show somebody in state government that you’re going to do what you say you’re going to do. You’re not trying to pull the wool over.</p> <p>LM: And the other guy that was fantastic was Greg Lockwood (?). GM: He was the cheese plant- LM: He was the cheese plant inspector. He would say to George, “Seriously, call me before you do anything. I don’t want you to have to tear things out. I don’t want you to have to tear things out. I want to get it so that we get it right from the get go.” And he would say, “George, call me anytime.” So we would get home from milking on Sunday night at 9:00 and he’d go, oh I’ve got to call Greg. And I’m like, seriously George, 9:00 on a Sunday? He said to call him. And this guy Greg loved his job and he was such a big help. And sadly for us, he’s not doing this area anymore. But we saw him at the farm show this year and it’s like big smile on his face, glad to see you, kind of thing.</p> <p>GM: We’ve got a good rapport with the farm inspector and the current cheese plant guy. You do what you say- LM: Like George says, you do what you say you’re going to do. The other thing that George was on the NRCS for lots of years – the Natural Resources Conservation – GM: -The Ottaquechee Conservation District. LM: So we do a lot of things, again, knowing that it’s the right thing to do. We protect the water as much as we can. We ended up getting some grant money. There’s a filter, a manure filter. GM: We put in a cost share manure pit at the other farm.</p>
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Awards for the farm	<p>LM: And make sure the rainwater coming off roofs go the right place.</p> <p>GM: Good practices.</p> <p>LM: Good practices. Or like they asked us to concrete where-</p> <p>GM: -cement barnyard-</p> <p>LM: – so that- cement barnyard, yea. So that it doesn't erode the ground any more than it would otherwise.</p> <p>GM: Different things.</p> <p>LM: You were the farm of the year for, what was that called? The conservation?</p> <p>GM: Conservation. For the Ottaquechee District. Just different practices we had done in 1996, I think. They are AAP – accepted Ag practices.</p> <p>LM: But other awards George has won – High Quality milk awards every year. We win those.</p> <p>GM: We've won a couple of those.</p> <p>LM: We won the world's best maple syrup award in 1994.</p> <p>KO: Cool.</p> <p>LM: I'm tooting your horn for you, George.</p> <p>KO: You should.</p> <p>GM: Toot, toot.</p> <p>KO: So you do it because you love it.</p> <p>GM: Yea. Well, the same thing, if you didn't do it, you couldn't keep the farm. It's almost like a ball and chain on you sometimes. It might drag you down, but as long as it doesn't keep you down. Some days are better than others. I have a knack and the raptors – there's a hawk. We've seen bald eagles fly over. Linda's the same – it's a kestrel.</p> <p>LM: So George could never be in a job, 9-5.</p> <p>GM: You don't see those things in a building.</p> <p>KO: Yea. Although I have a good view from my desk. It's over the mountains.</p>
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Farm & family today	<p>GM: And the work outside. But that's the price we have to pay to own the place. Whether it continues on with our generation or beyond, I don't know. We're young enough.</p> <p>LM: No, no, we have an exit plan. What are you talking about?</p> <p>GM: Not to sell the farm.</p> <p>LM: No, no.</p> <p>KO: Maybe the kids will decide they want to come back. You never know.</p> <p>GM: Yea, if you go ahead and sell it. My grandfather often would say, often, maybe I'll just sell this place. Well he had me to leave it to you see. So he didn't sell. He always threatened. It may have been in the back of his mind. If I weren't a farmer, he probably very well have sold the farm. I got a brother, my older brother, works with us and occasionally works for himself. But he pitches in and works all the time. The hardest part was he didn't get a portion of the farm. But I always include him with stuff. He cuts wood anywhere he wants. He asks and such. But he missed out on owning the property as well, for whatever reason.</p> <p>LM: Because he was working downtown at the time. He worked at West Lebanon supply.</p> <p>GM: He had an outside job. He wasn't a farmer at the time. Farming is commitment. The ball and chain, it's seven days a week. Maybe when you have beef animals, you can lighten the load of the animal care. Maybe if we sold the dairy cows we could have some beef. But there's not much money in the beef.</p>
Story about cow & calf	<p>LM: So George today – I'll tell this cute story. George is so good at knowing, seriously, keep track of 60 animals. When they need to bred – he does his own breeding. And when are they going to be due, calving and he just is constantly checking on those cows. So he knew that this cow was going to calve. And George says, “geez, I've got to go check that cow.” And there's no calf. But there was no calf outside.</p> <p>GM: She was lying in the pen. But there was no calf around. It's got to be around here somewhere. It's not in her, so it's like geez. So I walked around the yard and sure enough, in the little lean to shed, where we have some hay. And the little cus(??) was in the hay, where we had one bale removed. He was in there sleeping.</p>

Animal care	<p>KO: Aw.</p> <p>GM: And he looks back like, Mom told me to hide.</p> <p>KO: Aw.</p> <p>GM: That's animal care. They come first. I remember one time when we had pigs when I was a kid. We did chores. It was every day. It was a matter of feeding the pigs and stuff. I remember getting into bed one night, it was probably 8 or 9:00. I was probably 10, 12, or 13. And it was like, I didn't bed the pigs. Oh man. So I got out to the barn to bed the pigs so they had clean, dry bedding. And back to bed. I could very well have said, oh the hell with it. Maybe today I would, but at the time I wouldn't.</p> <p>LM: He wouldn't. Just this past winter George got up because he knew a cow was going to calve or something. And he had to drive to other barn, and it was like 2:00 in the morning.</p>
Animal care	<p>GM: You go to check. That's the same thing. In year's past, my father would get up and gone to check that cow before going to bed. He's unable to do that now, so I go down at 10:00 if it's necessary to check on a cow. Most of them it's when they calve or if there's something wrong with them.</p> <p>LM: Most of the time we don't end up having to call the vet because George is able to do his own IV, therapy and such.</p> <p>KO: Oh wow.</p> <p>LM: But you have to be able to do that because you can't be calling the vet all the time.</p> <p>GM: Those are costs. You have to cut costs wherever you can. Being able to do stuff like that – milk fever-</p> <p>LM: And he's got a great rapport with the vet, so he can call up and say this is what I'm seeing. What do you think? She'll tell him what to do.</p> <p>KO: Nice. Vets are expensive. My uncle was a cow veterinarian.</p> <p>GM: Justifiably, so. They're not driving around at night. The good ones are. Our veterinarian, I consider her a pretty good friend, and they own a farm in Lebanon, NH. So I'll call her. We came home one night after we get done. My cousin Andy has Sundays off, so my relief milker sits right there [nods to Linda]. So she helps me milking and chores. So her</p>

02:08:12	<p>day off is not Sunday. Although the good part is we do stuff together. We spend together even though it's work. We get done at 9:00, and went into the barn to feed the heifers up here. And this one has this allergic reaction. Her head is all swollen up. Eyes swollen shut. And it's like, what the hell did she get in to? So I call the vet up and she says, give her some antihistamine and this and this. Call me back in an hour if she's not better. Here it's 9:00 at night and she doesn't want to drive the hell out here just to give an injection or an epinephrine. So I have that-</p> <p>LM: -trust enough-</p> <p>GM: -and she knows that I know what I'm doing. And she's not risking her license by telling me to do something I shouldn't. This is 9:30 at night and of course she was still at the barn. But we fixed that problem. It's not an easy problem. The same thing is – here's this animal that gets herself in trouble with an allergic reaction. It's like, what the hell are you doing.</p> <p>LM: Something in the hay.</p> <p>GM: Some allergic reaction to some mold or something. But we fixed the problem and now we get to go to bed.</p> <p>2:08:12</p> <p>KO: And I bet you're tired after a long day.</p> <p>GM: Yup.</p> <p>KO: Well, I know you probably have more chores to do today, so I don't want to take up all your time.</p> <p>LM: Did we hit all your highlights?</p> <p>KO: Yes. Have you told all these stories before because you managed to cover many things very well.</p> <p>GM: Some of them.</p> <p>LM: He's just a good talker.</p> <p>KO: It's been lovely.</p> <p>GM: I'm just a storyteller. I can tell a good joke, too.</p> <p>LM: The story that we always tell is the story of George Nelson buying the farm. And that's on our website, too. It's just kind of an amazing story to me that he was –</p>
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<p>Making good decisions as a farmer; smart decisions</p> <p>02:11:17</p>	<p>GM: But times were simpler. People didn't have to vacation. All they had to do was work. And in the early 1900s or whatever, if you worked hard, then you would be successful. Today's it's not necessarily true.</p> <p>KO: That's true.</p> <p>GM: I think as far as a farmer, you can work you butt off, but milk prices or whatever beyond your control, might not allow you to make you a living. You have to make some good decisions, too. If you're working for someone else, then yea, at Mary Hitchcock, Linda works hard and they pay her well. So she makes a good living. But being a farmer, it's not necessarily how hard you work.</p> <p>LM: It's how smart you work.</p> <p>GM: You've got to make good decisions. And not spend more money than you can afford. In the old days, as long as you could feed your family and worked hard, then you were alright. You didn't know any better. You didn't have to – you didn't want to go to Disney Land or Disney World or go away for a week. It didn't happen. They didn't know any different. You get up in the morning and work all day.</p> <p>LM: So George alluded and it's true, we've been very blessed. We have been able to go away. When George Ostler's family, George and old George and Annalise were over there in Europe one time in Germany, George and I had to opportunity to go to Europe and be there at the same time. That was great. So we have had horizons.</p> <p>GM: That's because my family has helped pitch in when I was gone. My sister might come up and help milk. My brother comes and helps milk. Nick, my nephew, works for us part time. He's supposed to milk Sunday nights or help milk if I'm not there. If he's got something to do, he talks his father into coming to replace him. Chet helped milk last night for us. It being in the family and pretty close together; my brothers and sisters all live pretty close together.</p> <p>LM: Sadly, one of George's brothers was just diagnosed with cancer. So he's struggling a little bit with that but everybody's very helpful.</p> <p>KO: That's nice.</p> <p>LM: So did we miss anything?</p> <p>2:11:17</p> <p>KO: No. I mean these are just guides I have in front of me. Is there</p>
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<p>Schoolhouse; Jericho community center</p>	<p>anything that you would like to add? I always like to ask that.</p> <p>LM: George?</p> <p>GM: Well, I don't know. The Jericho history. What I would like to do, in the Jericho area, is to take pictures of all the old farmhouses and make a calendar, put it on a calendar.</p> <p>KO: That would be nice.</p> <p>GM: For this farmhouse. The Lymans' farmhouse. It'd be like a dozen or so to do and a brief history of it, of all of them. But that all takes time to collect. We have pictures of this farm. You've got the oldest one there Linda?</p> <p>LM: Yes. And you know that this is a historic district?</p> <p>KO: The Jericho Historic District.</p> <p>GM: [Looking at photograph] That's the barn originally. So about 1900. 1914 maybe.</p> <p>LM: I think that's the oldest one, right?</p> <p>GM: That's the oldest one. That's looking down. That's changed. To keep this house – this house is still the same. To keep the farm as close – I mean we built a lot of buildings – but to keep it pretty much the same and active, still be able to make a living.</p> <p>LM: That's the schoolhouse when it was white. It was not a red schoolhouse, it was a white schoolhouse.</p> <p>GM: We have pretty close ties to the community. Even the Jericho community, that history, when it was all farm. To keep it open, that's pretty important. So there's fewer and fewer of us natives that still live here. Really only a couple families that have lived here much more than 50 years.</p> <p>LM: So that little Jericho Community Club place – actually June 2, there's a little potluck and people get together. There's a secretary and a treasurer.</p> <p>GM: Very few of the natives go.</p> <p>LM: Yea.</p>
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Home Dem	<p>GM: Linda and I might go once in a while. Not very much of the people go.</p> <p>LM: But it is nice to know your neighbors. And George's mom, they had a little thing called the ten-cent party that 's been going on since years. I think World War I kind of thing. And supposedly all of the women in the community would get together one day. All of the husbands had to take care of the kids and they could only spend up to ten cents for the gift. And they would exchange the same gift. But it was sort of an excuse to get together and visit with your friends. I stopped going because there was too many women to fit into one certain building. So they were starting to excluding other people. And I'm thinking you should exclude people that moved off the hill. The ones that were still here in the Jericho community, those are the ones that would go. It was chosen not to do that, so I decided not to go. They also had something called "Home-Dem."</p> <p>GM: It was "Home Demonstration."</p> <p>LM: So those women would learn how to do like canning. And they would learn how to sew.</p> <p>GM: And how to cook your meat. It was a government program. So they would have a coordinator, a county coordinator. If you looked up "Home Demonstration." I think it was probably done through UVM extension. It was at least the last of it. So my mother was in that.</p> <p>LM: And I think Glenna is in that. So again, they wanted women to know how to cook pork.</p> <p>GM: [Looking at photograph] That's ? LM: Oh it is? Okay. GM: These is Ermine ? She and her husband had a farm. Marianne Gauthier had a farm. This one is ? Weelsy. That's my mother. Ruth Lyman and Winona Lyman. Their family had a big farm. They'd be Harris' sister-in-laws. So they all would meet. And they would have a coordinator to demonstrate how you properly cook pork so you don't get sick from raw meat. It was all government run. To this day, my mother will cook a steak like shoe leather. You can't chew it.</p> <p>KO: Better safe than sorry, I guess.</p> <p>GM: Oh it's cooked alright, mother.</p> <p>LM: When George and I were in high school, we had gone over to a restaurant and we ordered a steak.</p>
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<p>1950s</p>	<p>GM: Medium-rare. It was rare. It was like, “this is what steak is actually supposed to taste like? It’s great!” And mother would always cook it like there was no pink left. It was brown. And she’s a great cook other than meat. That was when rural living was rural living, is home demonstration.</p> <p>KO: I’ll have to look that up.</p> <p>GM: Yea, Home Demonstration. They called it “Home Dem.” Winona and – it’s on the back.</p> <p>LM: I see it, too.</p> <p>GM: 1956.</p> <p>LM: Home-Dem.</p>
<p>Farming in relation to Hartford today</p>	<p>GM: So, yea. We were born in 1958, so we’re on the young side of the rural family. Harris Lyman must be 78. He’s the older generation. He’s my father generation. But we remember rural living that people in their 60s that lived downtown, they never actually experienced living on the farm. It wasn’t that long ago that everybody said, “Oh yea, my uncle had a farm. My father had a farm.” Now the generations have left. They live in Vermont. “I’ve never actually seen a cow up close.”</p> <p>KO: That’s strange, living in Vermont.</p> <p>GM: It is.</p> <p>LM: George goes down – the White River School, every year they have a farmer.</p> <p>GM: Every couple years.</p> <p>LM: So George goes down and talks to the kids and whatever. They have one of the farmers bring. Didn’t Harold bring a steer?</p>
<p>Farming today; jobs on the farm as kids</p>	<p>GM: They call it farm days I guess.</p> <p>LM: But we have kids who say, “I saw you.”</p> <p>GM: “Aren’t you the guy who made cheese?” And it’s the connection to the farmers that I think people, if they never have a connection, they never get the experience. I don’t know if you’re going to do Peter Schaal, he lives next door. He was from Quechee. He was like, yea, I ought to get my grandson and work for you for a while. But working for a summer on a farm showed a lot of kids the time commitment. My nephews all worked for me, and one of my nephews was the best help I ever had. But I don’t expect him – he wasn’t going to be a farmer. He’s</p>

<p>Relatives on the farm</p>	<p>a builder, a contractor now. He was just – he said, everyday we do something different. One day I shot a raccoon. One day I shot a woodchuck. And then we paint the house. My mother would always say – I remember when we were really little, we’d say, “we’re bored” – “Well go out to the barn and do something. So boredom was the biggest thing. You never wanted to be bored. You’re not bored when you’re on a farm. There is always something you should do, might have to do, or even want to do. There’s never any boredom. Some people do. Kids who get in trouble. I’m sure they said the same thing, 30 – 40 years ago. They’re sitting around thinking, “What the hell can we do to get in trouble.”</p> <p>LM: But all of our nieces and nephews all came up at some point in their lives and painted that barn.</p> <p>GM: Yup, painted the inside of the barn.</p> <p>LM: And they all, they got it done and put their hands up.</p> <p>GM: Dale did. Maybe Geneva didn’t, the youngest.</p> <p>LM: Everybody else came up and did some barn painting.</p> <p>GM: Yea, because the oldest nephew painted it one year. Started out. He paints this door, it takes him one hour. It’s like, son you haven’t got all summer to do this. So he did great. I said, look, Bryan, you paint that door. You get to that other door in an hour. And he’s like, yea, what. It taught him how to work. He moved right along and got the thing done. His younger brother helped me. He and Alex were closest. They’d go fishing when they had a chance and they did farm shit. They were allowed to jump on the three wheeler to go down the road to go fishing.</p>
<p>Fishing.</p>	<p>LM: There’s a little brook down on at that farm. They’d go down and catch brookie</p> <p>GM: Yea, I got a brookie. It’s four inches long. Should have thrown him back.</p> <p>LM: Well, thank you for coming.</p> <p>KO: Thank you so much for all of your time.</p> <p>LM: You’re welcome.</p> <p>KO: I will turn this off now.</p>

02:20:46	2:20:46 – END OF INTERVIEW.
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