

**“Green Mountain Chronicles”  
Oral History Transcriptions, 1981-1989 (bulk: 1987-1988)  
MSA 199 & 200**

**Introduction**

This transcription is one of approximately 42 transcriptions of interviews with individuals conducted primarily in 1987 and 1988 in preparation for a radio program sponsored by the Vermont Historical Society entitled “Green Mountain Chronicles.”

**Merritt E. Carpenter  
Part 2**

MC No they tried generally to, they figured there was room enough there for all of them. The only place you had competition was down around New York City or Boston where you had gangs and gang warfare and stuff like that. But up in this region, I never heard of any competition. I did see two burned up cars one time over on Hog Island and they belonged to some outfit in New York and how they were over on this side of the lake, but that isn't why they got burned. The locals had nothing at all to do with that. That was creditably determined. Apparently there was a war on over on the New York side and they came over this way thinking to avoid a road block or trap you know and word had got out that they might do it and the New York opposition was over here and caught them on this road in the swamp and burned the cars and shot the men, just like that. That was a lesson for those who knew who it was and what it was and everybody else just piously looked the other way and went away as fast as they could. But that had nothing to do with these operators over here. They never, the nearest thing you come to violence over here is as I say, the time that, that John Conway fell off his motorboat.

MK Or was pushed, huh?

MC Yea, if he was pushed it was violence. If he fell off, it's something else.

MK Too bad. So if one operator had a tip that could help another one or that could tip off another one as to a route that was going to be staked out, they would?

MC No, they never cooperated like that. They just did not get each others way. But if somebody came around and said he'd been driving for so and so, and they wouldn't give them enough money and he thought he would like to try it for you, you promptly called up so and so who knew who you were, just as well as you knew who he was and you asked him, "What about this lad? you know, and if he said, "ah, he's no good, he gets up there, picks up the load and gets half in the bag and he's made it so far, but you know as well as I, he isn't going to always make it." And okay, thank him and when you see the lad you say, "well, I got nothing here for you." You see, things like that, but as far as routing or where there might be some business or anything, they just, were just as close as the single operators.

MK Were there women ever involved?

MC Yes there were. I don't know how many, but I know of one in Franklin County. She lived up outside of Enosburg Falls on the road that goes down through to Bakersfield from Enosburg Falls. You come out of the valley there, up the hill before you dip over and go in toward Bakersfield. And up there with a good view to the north and west in what must have been a tenant farmers house is where she lived. And you could tell when she was home because she had a big Moon roadster and it was parked under a tree there. Well what do you see under the trees of all the other tenement houses, Model T's you know. Here's this great big powerful Moon roadster and when she came out of the house she didn't look like any farmer's housewife. She even put on high heels. And she was an independent, ran all by herself. I saw her one day in action. There was a, the railroad from Enosburg up to Richford crosses the highway several times and between two such crossings was a bridge and they were rebuilding the bridge and they had one way traffic through while they worked on the bridge. And so I was there with my father who was observing the progress on the bridge and making sure that everything was as it should be and there was also a freight train on that railway which came down, went up every day and came down every day in those days. I think it originated in St. Albans, went to Richford, and then came back to St. Albans. But it interchanged with some other Canadian railroads up in Richford, so there was quite a long train. And we could here the train whistling for the crossings up above and it was getting very close and all of a sudden she came down through in her big Moon roadster going like hell. Well she was lucky. There was nobody on the bridge. It was one way, but they were all set up to have the traffic go the other way. You know, I mean it didn't bother her any. She could see the way was clear. She went right through and nearly tore down the guard rail. She didn't hit anything, she was just going so fast that the suction... And the train is right here coming down the track and right behind her come the customs men and they'd go right across the bridge. Of course, by then the flagmen had realized what was happening and he held everything up til this vaudeville act was over you know. She made it to that crossing just ahead of that engine, over the crossing you know, she was going so fast the car was in the air half its length at least you know and then the engine went across the crossing and the customs men screeched to a halt sideways to the road, every which way you know, just barely got stopped and the train didn't even bother to stop. I mean it was all over you know. She, they had to sit there while the train went by and she was off down the road long out of sight.

MK Oh boy.

MC And back up at the bridge job they were still picking up their boards and their nails, and "God what was that" you know. (LAUGHING) After that I noticed that car wherever I saw it. I can't remember her name now.

MK So then this would have been in the daylight?

MC She was, it was broad daylight.

MK Isn't that unusual?

MC Well you would run when you thought you could get away with it. That was the whole idea. You, I've seen them run the fleet cars in daylight.

MK Oh, I never thought about it really, but I just realized as you were telling the story, that I have this image that they always operated at night.

MC No, I know everybody thinks that. But it isn't so.

MK What color was her car?

MC Red.

MK Wow!

MC I think her hair was too, if I remember right. (LAUGHING)

MK Nothing subtle about that lady.

MC No, she wasn't backwards and she was good looking besides.

MK What a character! What ever happened to her, do you know?

MC I have no idea. I have a feeling she didn't throw her money away. I suppose that since she never seemed to have got caught, that she simply faded from the scene when it was all over. You often wonder about those things, but I had no way of, of ever knowing. I think there must be one or two people still alive that among whom somebody might remember her you know. Of course I'm 71 about to become 72 and when I stop to think about it, there aren't too many. You see I was just a kid of eight to ten, somewhere in there, maybe twelve you know at the time. And so you stop to think, that people who would have known her would have been older than me by at least five to ten years and they're gone by now. It's too bad that when the tape recorder came out, somebody didn't get on this stuff

because then they could<sup>have</sup> had a lot. A lot of stuff is gone now you know. And of course when you went back a ways, they wouldn't any of them talk about anything.

MK I discovered that, see it was just about five years ago I was interviewing someone up around North Troy and was asking him about who he knew in that area—

MC He clammed right up.

MK Well, he hadn't been involved, but you know he still clammed up.

MC He still clammed up.

MK The thing that I find so interesting about it is that when you talk to people who weren't involved, a lot of them you know had a sympathy for the bootleggers. There was a sort of romance about it, an adventure, as this woman I was interviewing yesterday said, "Well not much happened in these little towns you know."

MC That was all that happened. Yea.

MK She says, "I guess we always thought," she says, "I suppose we just sort of appreciated the adventure of it. It wasn't our adventure, but we kind of enjoyed watching it or something like that."

MC Yea.

MK And so on the one hand, people I guess feel, who were involved, have felt like I don't know whether it's shame on their family or what that they don't want to talk about it, but the other folks who weren't involved think it's sort of nice kind of notoriety to be able to say you were involved in bootlegging or something. It's kind of ironic. Yea.

MC Well, Pete talked, as you know, because maybe you've even heard some of Eleanor's tapes on him.

MK I haven't heard the tapes. She told me a little bit, little bit about it.

MC And Conrad LaBelle talked. We went up to Iberville to see him a couple of times. And there was no reason why either one of them shouldn't talk at this time you know. There's no way of getting at them for anything. Those are the only ones, well their the only ones, live ones we ever saw. (LAUGHING) Well no, I did, I did take her to see one

- of the ones who was in the row boat fleet. But he wouldn't talk. He'd tell how it was done and all, but he would never say that he was involved in it. But I know his brother was and I'm damn sure he was you know.
- MK Yea. You can tell it in third person.
- MC Yea. Harry Whitehill was the, in charge of the land forces in those days. And he erected a barricade on the Alburg- North Hero bridge. It was a big chain. And he would come along and put that chain up when he thought there was going to be any movement and then there would be somebody there and if you came along and could prove you were legitimate, they would undo the chain and let you go through you know.
- MK How did you prove that? Did they search your vehicle or?
- MC I suppose so. Or if they knew you and they saw who you were. Well Rainy Perry, who was, passed away just the other day, was a big outlaw of Alburg. He, the idea just went against his brain. He was a real outlaw. So he got this old Packard Twin Six which had been a bootlegging car, but they'd turned to newer cars by then and he had a garage and in the garage they built a, a blade on the front end of it, made out of a piece of railroad iron up on edge, see and stayed back to the frame in all directions and everything. So when Rainy knew that Harry Whitehill had his barricade up and Rainy had a bunch of cars to come down behind him because he was sure they would be thrown in such disarray if the system worked that they could all go through safely which is what happened. He came roaring down through with that thing almost as fast as it would go you know. It had a lot of power and a lot of torque. And he hit that barricade and it bent both sides of the bridge, but it broke the chain and he went right through and his cars went right through behind him and old Harry stood there in the bridge tender's shack snorting and cursing and carrying on. (GROANING) Oh, that was some performance.
- MK It didn't hurt his car a bit, huh?
- MC Apparently not, he simply went down the road and turned around and drove right back through, thumb to his nose as he went by. Because he didn't have anything on the, on the barricade busting car. All that was for was to break the barricade you see.
- MK Now did they try to arrest him for the damage or anything like that or?



- MC What are you going to charge him with? Failing to stop? But did we know there was anybody out there even holding up their hand when he went through you know.
- MK Uh huh, that's true. But if it bent the bridge.  
(LAUGHING) Not that, yea, as you say, that doesn't, that doesn't really solve the problem if they are trying to get him for bootlegging.
- MC No, they didn't bother with him. They just looked the other way when he thumbed his nose. There was, the bridge was a draw bridge, it would swing open to let boats through, boats that were high enough to need to have it opened. They didn't come through very often then. And so \_\_\_\_\_ had the phone company up there with his \_\_\_\_\_ and sole phone company and he simply twisted the wires together and that was it. And every time they opened the bridge, phone service was disrupted until they could get a hold of him to come back down and twist the wires back together again you know. Of course they didn't open very often. That was something. He had a good looking girl who worked for him up in Alburg in the phone office and when you called in you got her and told her what had happened you know. Of course, nobody could call unless they were on the Alburg side of the bridge. The Hutchins family ran a store there and they would call. Because they knew as soon as the bridge opened, that phone service was gone.
- MK They could just plan on it. If the bridge opens, the phones are out.
- MC Yea.
- MK That's great, that's great.
- MC As a rule, the local law enforcement people wouldn't get into that mess anyway you know. The only people who were really chasing anybody were the customs patrol. Once in awhile the State Police would get into it, but not much. They were on motor cycles back in those days and they didn't want anything to do with that.
- MK I didn't realize they were on motor cycles.
- MC Oh yea.
- MK I assumed they were an older vintage, cars like everybody else.

- MC Oh, no, no, they were on motorcycles. Horace Melondy had the Franklin County territory and one night he was patrolling on his motorcycle and a bunch of the game ad group came down through from Canada where they'd been up drinking and somebody threw a bottle out of their big touring car and it hit the road in front of Horace and burst his tire and he went in the ditch and he was mad. The next morning he was down at the American House having breakfast the same as usual and there's this big blonde waitress, good looking and he knew she was in that car and he zeroed in on her and that was a circus. She give him as good as he did. She knew he couldn't do anything to her. She was just riding in the car. She didn't throw the bottle out you know. God what a circus that was.
- MK Did he try to lie in wait for any of them after that?
- MC Well, no, they weren't bootleggers. They were just roisterers. Gone up over the line and whooped it up in the saloon up there and come back you see. It has nothing to do with this subject, but you didn't know about the motorcycle patrol?
- MK No, I really didn't.
- MC My god this is something. Well, you know, there were a lot of them in it. They are all dead now. They were damned good riders. Very good riders and they had good motorcycles. And of course, they were young men and it wasn't long before they learned you could ride standing up on the seat and everything else you know. And so here they are, you know, they'd have a whole county or at the very least a half a county to patrol you know and they are very much all by themselves like the so called Texas Rangers or the Mounties or something you know. So they did about as they pleased. And they used to like to ride their motorcycles and so some old bitty body out somewhere was put putting up the road in her ancient vehicle and she saw this officer, resplendent uniform, metals and the whole bit, great dignity coming at her standing on the seat of his motorcycle and, you know what I mean, and he'd bow sedately as he passes. Well, she reported him to the governor. And the governor who was a part-time, oh I can't think of his name, well such a memory, so anyway, they took the matter to the head of the department see and this wasn't the only complaint. There had been others from other counties you know about these men roaring up the road you know scattering the geese and the ducks and the chickens in all directions and riding around standing up on their seats and one thing after the other. The whole bit, so. The head of the department called them all



in one day. They all arrived in Montpelier in their best uniforms looking properly subdued, dignified and all that and they were hauled in and sat down and they were told there was to be no more of this horse play you know, read the riot act right down the line and they all picked up their hats and you know, bowed their heads over them and promised to try to do better. And alright now, you're dismissed. Out the door they filed. They got on their motorcycles and they started looking around at each other. Then *en masse* they drove down across the lawn and up the State House steps, around the pillars, back down the steps and off to their various counties just like that. And the head of the department stood inside and looked out the window. Oh god!

MK Every single one of them?

MC Every single one of them. It wasn't long after that they were given cars. (LAUGHING)

MK That's great. That's wonderful.

MC They're all dead now, I can safely tell it.

MK It's incredible though. You couldn't have done much of anything, it wasn't like, either that or wipe out his whole state department. (LAUGHING)

MC Not only that, he couldn't have caught them. They all went back to Bennington, and Brattleboro, heaven knows where you know.

MK That's great.

MC After all, they'd spend half the day riding up there. It was going to take another half day to get back. To get up there and to have to listen to that... It was a colorful period, there's no question about it.

MK Well, what I wanted to ask you about, you would have been young enough maybe to remember trolleys in Burlington?

MC Oh yes, I do very well. In fact I rode on them.

MK Yea.

MC Yes, fond memories.

MK Fond memories. That was an era.

MC That was.

[ MK asks about memories of travel by trolley. ]

MK Where did you, where did you take the trolley from, from where to where? Where did they run?

MC Well, let's see. Every summer, my grandmother, my maternal grandmother would take me to the circus. And the circus in those days was down here on the corner of Flynn Avenue and South, what to heck do you call this, Shelburne Road. And so living in Charlotte, we would come up on the local train which deposited us down at the station. Then we'd take a trolley uptown to where the City Hall is. That was where the trolley office was and where the cars were dispatched from. And from there they dispatched special cars to the circus. I mean besides the regular cars, there were big open cars that took you down to the circus you see at the corner of Flynn Avenue and we'd get on one of those and ride down to the circus. Then when the circus was over, we would, there would be a line of them waiting and we'd get on whichever one was loading and ride back up to City Hall and get another one to ride down to the corner of Flynn Avenue and, or Pine Street and get off and walk back to the station and catch the train home. And then after the flood, I was with my father during the school holiday. It must have been around the Christmas holidays I guess and he went up to Richford. That was quite a job because the railroad bridges were washed out at Sheldon Junction. See these bridges washed out. But the, by god, I don't remember for sure about that. One of the bridges was still there and the other wasn't. Anyway, we rode down from Richford on a train, got off at Sheldon Junction and changed to the what was then known as the St. J & LC. Rode down to Cambridge Junction, changed to, I forgot what they called that line that ran from Cambridge Junction to Burlington, Burlington and Cambridge or some such thing, got on that train, rode down to Essex Junction, got off because of course, CV bridge was washed out, got on the trolley there at Essex Junction. Luckily, there had been a couple on the Winooski side of the river when the flood took the bridge out, so they still had them to run on that. We rode down from Essex Junction to Winooski, right down to where the bridge had been, got off walked across the temporary bridge they had put in just for pedestrians to the other side, got on a car there and rode up over Colchester Avenue and along Pearl Street and down to City Hall to change cars and down to the Pine Street and got off and walked down to the depot and road back to Charlotte. That was the longest single trolley line I ever, single trolley ride I ever had here in the Burlington system. The runner-up on it would have been when we had at the end of the school year picnics out at Ethan Allen park. I managed to get together enough money so, while everybody else was ranging through the park, I

would run back and get on the trolley car and ride into Burlington and then ride back out and I'd still be in time to go home, you know. And then that was the next longest ride I ever had.

MK So that's how you spent the school picnic day was running the trolley?

MC Yea, part of it anyway. But of course, my mother used to come to Burlington every Saturday and then I would see the trolleys. I remember getting a haircut in what is now Magrams upstairs. And I remember sitting in a barber chair while he cut my hair and I could see the trolley pole go by on the wire, but I couldn't see the car, it was just below my sight level you know. And I'd hear a little hissing and I'd look and sure enough, the trolley pole would go by.

MK Were they noisy to ride in? The clattering on the rails and?

MC Oh some thought them noisy. Some cars were noisier than others of course. It depends on what shape they were in. They were a lot noisier than they needed to be, but they were the state of the art at that time, that's how they were. Today, they have some trolleys still in Europe they have a lot. And for example in Zurich they have what they call the golden tram which is an old time four wheel trolley towing a trailer, also an old time four wheeler. It's painted gold, a beautiful sight. Well you know that car is no where near as noisy as it was when it was on the run in the old days. They've applied a modern dampening techniques, a piece of rubber here, a pad of something there you know, and they made them quiet and smooth and they run, they are a great joy to ride. And you pay extra money just to pay a sightseeing loop around you know. People who have weddings charter them. I saw one go by the last time, yea the last time I was in Zurich. My god, they went up the street and the champagne corks were popping you know. And it was a nice warm day and the windows were open and they were all hanging out you know. Here I am sitting drinking beer in the sidewalk cafe wishing I was out there. But they have them everywhere. Even in this country, San Francisco has got some. I haven't ridden in them. I don't know whether they've dutied them up as much as the Europeans have or not or whether they still clang, rattle and grind.

MK I rode one in San Francisco, now it's a good twenty years ago.

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MC Well that was the old, well wait a minute, they were using just a modern, we thought they were modern then, PCC car. That was fairly quiet.

MK See, I had nothing to compare it to.

MC That was quiet. Yea. Well now you see on market street in the summer, they run some of the old cars. But I think, I hope they've taken the clank, rattle and grind out of them because, I mean if they are going to be a tourist attraction, they ought to be pleasant you know. Yea, some of those old cars when they put the brakes on, everything would shutter and rattle and god, and when they went up a hill, they went (rrra! rrra! rrra! rrra! rrra! rrra!) real loud you know. God! I can see why, but they had not been improved since they were introduced into the country you know. I mean something that was designed around 1900 and produced in 1905 and was still running in 1930, it was bound to make quite a lot of noise. The Europeans kept improving their cars and so they never fell into that at all. And also the track was bad in most of the American lines toward the end. When you got bad track, the car is at its worse. It ducks, sways and rattles and rolls you know. And if he speeds it up, you think it's going to jump the track and it scares you to death you know. Whereas when everything is right, it just goes spewwww!

MK Do you remember how you felt as a kid riding it? What the great attraction was?

MC Well yes, exhilaration. Childish exhilaration. I mean, imagine the big open car. You can look out and see the ground going by you know. The conductor comes along the side and you're grandmother keeps telling you, "Don't sit so close to the edge. Come back." You know and you are sitting out here taking it all in you know. The closed cars were nice too, but the real thrill was going to the, oh, we also went to the fair in the open cars. And out opposite the fairgrounds, they had a stub track, there may have been two of them parallel. The cars would go in there, the big open cars and sit there til they should start back you know. That way there was a heavy supply of cars between Burlington and the fair to handle the heavy traffic that there was at the time of the fair you see. And of course being summer, they'd use all the open cars. The closed cars would stay on the regular runs. The biggest thrill I ever got though in riding the electric cars was when I got out into the midwest just before they were gone and rode the in<sup>the</sup> Urbans. They were fast. They could make anywhere from 60 to 80 mph depending on who

built them and what they were built for and what shape the track was in. Well I'll give you an example. When I was in college in Angola, Indiana, I decided one day I wanted to go to, it was a holiday and I couldn't go home. I couldn't afford it. There wasn't really time anyway. I decided I would go to Louisville, Kentucky for lunch. So I had a Model T coop which looked like a back house on a spring wagon, but it went. I drove it to Ft. Wayne and parked it and got on the morning car. It was just before light. Well of course it was in the winter time, the days were short and I got on a big combination baggage and passenger car and we rolled out of Ft. Wayne, went to Indianapolis, changed cars, went out of Indianapolis right on schedule and down to the Ohio River, over the bridge and into Louisville. We got in there about 11:00 in the morning I think. I walked around Louisville, walked up and down along the Main Street above the river, looking down at the river, went to a good hotel, had a good dinner, then I went down to the water front and looked at the steam boats. Then I came up and got back on the inter Urban and rode back up and changed cars again at Indianapolis. I got lightweight high speed cars everywhere except that first morning Combo car coming down. And I was back in Angola at 10:00 that night. I'd been to lunch in Louisville. Well, it's quite a ways off if you look at the map.

MK Yea, it is.

MC Out in the country we were doing 70 and 80 mph along the straight stretch you know. Of course the country is flat out there and the track is mostly straight. It's all gone now, but it's quite a thrill to ride it. Since then I've been to Europe though and I've ridden some of those meter-gauged lines in Switzerland. They're even faster and smoother. And of course, they are very modern equipment. That's a real...

MK Not by any means a straight-away there, are they?

MC Well up the Rhone Valley, the Leisure Express is straight. Yea, when you get into the mountains, it's around, an around, and around.

MK Yea. Now were there, did St. Albans have trolleys?

MC Yea, and I remember seeing those. I never had a chance to ride on them, but they were running when I first got up there with my father. They ran from St. Albans Bay up to the city and then to Swanton on the east side of the park in Swanton, they went all the way to the north end of it



and stopped right there. In St. Albans, there was a local car which ran back and forth from up where the car barn was, up where the Richford Branch crosses, crosses Route 7 you know as it goes up on its way toward Richford. That big building on the right was the car barn. I've forgot what it is now. It used to be an auto sales place. They went from there, that local car went from there down to the south end about a quarter of a mile south of where the Hood plant was in Swanton, in St. Albans if you remember when that was standing. That hasn't been gone too long. That was the local car. The bay cars ran right through to Swanton and vice versa. They were fairly big cars, but they weren't fast like the western cars. They might make 40 mph outside of town when the track was good. They wouldn't get up anymore than that. There weren't any fast car lines in the east. There is just one and that was from Portland, Maine to Lewiston. That was a, I think those were only 60 mph cars, but that's a lot faster than 30.

MK Did the drivers, conductors ever try to open it up just to see how fast they could get it to go if they had a clear stretch?

MC Oh sure. They couldn't, you can't keep them, you got to be <sup>an</sup>old man            before you will abide by all the laws you know. I remember there was one fellow and he was alive not long ago, I've seen him on the street. I don't know if he's still alive or not, but my father and he apparently had a slight acquaintanceship and I remember we were coming, no we were going toward Essex Junction in my father's car and I guess he was going to go up through Westford and Fairfax and that way and we caught this car at the fork. There was a siding at the fork where they used to meet. And we didn't stop of course being in an automobile. We came along and this fellow pulled out from the siding onto the main line and headed for Essex Junction and he turned around and he looked at father and father looked at him and waved and then he cranked her right around into the corner and away she went. Well he must have thought the track was good enough, but lord, how that car was swaying. I was sitting there amazed you know. But he held his place. Of course that was a sand road for the car. You know, the pavement ended up back at St. Mikes in those days. But father was getting all out of her he could and boy he was holding his. That must have been one of those ex-St. Albans cars and could make 40 because he had him until he slowed down for Essex Junction.



MK I was, as I look at my watch, what might (in terms of Pete Hanlon) what might be better... I've got to be in Burlington again next Tuesday.

MC Okay.

MK That might be easier. I've got to do an interview in the morning and then I could just give you a call when I was finished up.

MC Let me see where I am on Tuesday. [checks book]

MK Eleanor was telling me something about and maybe, maybe actually, maybe this, maybe this came from you originally, but something about a, would it have been St. Albans, a race between was it a trolley car and a train or?

MC Well, I guess that's really what it was. The local went out of St. Albans north. I never really did... Anyway when you leave St. Albans to go to Swanton on the trolley, you go out past the car barns and across the Richford Branch and you're on the right side of the road all the way to Swanton. That is, not all the way, but all the way til you get ready to cross the Missisquoi River. But anyway, you go gradually up hill after you've made the bend to go toward Swanton coming out of, if you went straight you'd go up to Highgate Springs or some place like that, but you make a bend and then go straight towards Swanton and you go up a hill til you go by the Country Club, the St. Albans Country Club and that's up at the top of the hill and then it's across a little plateau area and then it's a long gradual down grade all the way to Fonda Junction which is no longer a junction anyway, but it was then. I think this motorman had bet this, this engineer that he could beat him to Fonda Junction if they started at the same time. So he opened her up coming down that grade and he was going a good deal more than the 40 mph than they'd make because he was not only going down-grade, but he had the power pole on you see. It was a direct current, you just keep pushing. But down at the bottom of the grade there is a bend and around to the right, right there in Fonda Junction. Well he didn't slow down enough and when he hit that curve, he went right off the tracks across the highway and over the ditch and right up onto the railroad practically, just as the train came through. Well, they didn't hit or anything. He didn't quite make it to there, but god, what an ending.

MK You weren't a passenger on that?

MC No, I never even saw that. I heard about it.

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MK Passengers must have, did they have passengers?

MC I don't know whether he happened to have an empty car. I think he must have had to take the chance he was taking you know.

MK The train of course, did the train carry passengers to there?

MC Oh yea.

MK Yea, it would have been passengers - .

MC It was probably a three car train which was probably only going as far as Alburg probably and then come back to St. Albans, a local.

MK So some of those passengers would have gotten to see the

MC Oh they would have seen it all. Well they would have got there in time to see the big trolley lying in the ditch and all the torn up road where it went across. It was only a gravel road, so it wouldn't have been torn up much, but the tracks it would have made would have still been there when they got there.

MK Pretty exciting time.

MC Yup.

MK There's a romance about the trolley cars I guess because they are not around. You know, I don't know whether they'd seem so romantic if they were common place here.

MC Well if you were sitting in a sidewalk cafe on Bonhaustaus in Zurich watching a boat go by, I think you'd be glad to see them yet. They are so quiet there that you don't know they are going by until you look out and see them. They isn't pantagraphs, pan pantagraphs instead of trolley poles. And for some reason or another, they don't hiss on the wire like the old trolley wheel used to or any European city where they are, where they've got modern equipment. And if they got anything at all by now, it's modern you know. Because they long ago decided whether to keep them or to throw them out. And where they are thrown out, they are long gone and where they are kept, they are right up in shape.

MK When were the trolley tracks taken up in Burlington, when were they taken up?

MC Well, not immediately. Well of course all the track on private right of way, that means that which is not in the pavement was taken up immediately after they abandoned the line. It was sold to a scrap contractor who came and cut it all up for scrap iron you see, burned the ties. The track in the street remained for awhile. Anytime a street was rebuilt, it was taken out. I mean a complete rebuilt you know, not just a surfacing. Up until this summer, there was still track in the street in Winooski from the bridge up the hill to the railroad bridge where the railway goes under you know. I think that's all been taken up now. The other day I was up through there. They are rebuilding that street though and I did see a pair of rails going onto the bridge that had been uncovered when they started stripping down you know. They were still there the other day. But I think everything below them was out by then. In Church Street, Burlington, the girder rail the lower flange is still in the pavement. All they did was come along with a torch and cut the upper surface that the wheels ran on, cut it off as low down as they could get it and every time they break open the pavement to do anything you get a chance to see the rest of the rail there in the pavement you know. That applies to Church Street only. I think everywhere else it's all gone.

MK Do you recall the ceremony that they had for the last trolley car?

MC Oh thank god I was not in town. That was, they burned one right there in front of the Flynn Theater is what they did. And that would have annoyed me. I think I was up in Camp Abinaki at that time. In any event, I wasn't in Burlington.

MK On another transportation theme, do you recall riding on the steamboat Ticondaroga?

MC Oh yea, I rode on all three of those vessels. The Ticondaroga, the Vermont and the Shatagay. My mother used to take me every year down to Montcalm Landing and back once the Vermont and that was a banner trip. And I always used to like to go back and peer in the windows of the dining room and see them all eating their dinners and wish I could be there. We sat up on deck and ate out of a picnic basket. "Why can't we eat in there?" "It costs too much".

MK Did they have, did they exchange routes or did they each run a, did they keep the same route for each boat?

MC Well, they, when three of them were running in their original form before the Shatagay was cut down to a ferry, they had one set of routes. Somebody has got a record of them somewhere. As long as they ran on that system, the Vermont over nighted in Plattsburgh. They began each day coming down from Plattsburgh to the Champlain Hotel, Bluff Point Landing, stopped there. Then it went to Burlington. And then when it left Burlington, it went to Essex, New York, then to Westport, New York, then to Port Henry, New York and finally to Montcalm Landing. And it was met there by a little train that went up to Baldwin and connected with the Lake George boats and the purser who's still alive, one of them who was on that job, when he was in college. What to hell was his name, Fred Reed, Fred Reed. I think he's in Montpelier because he worked all his life for National Life. He would take his brief case and get on a little train and run a, ride up to Bolton Landing, while the Vermont sat there at Montcalm Landing, meet that boat there and take all their money and their tickets and put them in his brief case, get back on the train, ride back down to the Vermont, get off and get on the Vermont and then when the Vermont docked in Burlington going back, Fred would go up the hill to the office and give them all the proceeds and then go back and get on the boat and ride to Plattsburgh and start the whole thing over again. That's what the Vermont did all the while it ran. The Ticondaroga originally over nighted in Westport, New York. And every morning came up through from Westport and it stopped at Cedar Beach in Essex. I'm not sure about that Essex stop. But I think so, yea. Came from Westport, stopped at Cedar Beach, stopped at Essex, went to Burlington, went to Plattsburgh, went to Adams Landing, which is just before you go through the gut on the west lake side you know, north end of South Hero and went through the gut and went to St. Albans. Then came back and make all the same stops and over nighted in Westport. ? The Shatagay over-nighted in Burlington, went out of there, went to Port Kent, went to Plattsburgh and I believe back to Port Kent, back to Burlington. And I think they did that twice in the day see. And that was their run. That's the way I remember it at the height of everything. When they brought the Shatagay out as a ferry boat, they cut both ends off from her down at the main deck so that they could put cars on. You've seen pictures of her that way. Then all she did was go to Burlington to Port Kent and back and that's all she did. And at that time, they cut the Ticondaroga down from the St. Albans Bay Line around and it just went Plattsburgh, Adams Landing and back you see. And that's how it was until they stopped, until the ? stopped running her, running the system. It was only after that, that the

Ticondaroga became an excursion boat and the others disappeared. But you see, it was quite exciting, 9:00 o'clock in the morning you would find the Vermont, Ticondaroga and the Shatagay all in here at the same time. Vermont was across the end of the dock, the Ticondaroga was on the south side of the dock, the Shatagay was way up in the end. Vermont went out first and the Ti went out and the Shatagay went out.

MK This would have been when you were a boy?

MC Yea. That would have been anywhere between the time I was six and whatever age I was in 1932 when it ceased, when it stopped. I think it was '32. Yup. The same time the trolley line went out. Everything stopped that year.

MK (LAUGHING) So then the Ticondaroga was an excursion boat for awhile. How did that work?

MC Well they filled her. First, of course, \_\_\_\_\_ got her, he bought everything D. H. had and he ran her as an excursion boat for awhile and he sold her to some Jewish enterprise whose name I can't remember and they ran her for a little bit, for awhile, then the Fishers ran her for a little while, then Mrs. Webb ran her in Fishers honor and that's when she quit. \_\_\_\_\_, he always took more out of anything than he ever put in it, so when the Jewish group got her, why she was somewhat run down. And they being of the nature they were wouldn't spend any money on her, so they didn't own her very long. And the Fishers got her, she hadn't been much improved. Then the, Mrs. Webb got her and she poured money into her and everything was fixed up again. But then the Fishers wouldn't always run when they were scheduled to and this irritated the people on the other side of the lake who would come down 500 or 600 strong expecting to go somewhere on an arranged and agreed upon charter and nothing would happen you know. Then I've been told, Mrs. Webb always wanted it up in a museum. That was the perfect excuse to get to it. I mean if you're going to bicker, well, put an end to it. I never could understand why the Fishers wouldn't run on schedule. I had to put up with it a couple of times at Essex. There would be an excursion planned out of there backed by the local organizations you know, whatever they have, their Fire Department or something you know and there would be 500 or 600 people down on the dock and we used the same dock in those days. The old docks they are called where the restaurant is and we went in and out of there and they'd all say, "well, where's the boat, when is it coming?" Well by then, we had radio, so we'd call up Burlington, and



Burlington would call up whoever it took to find out and the word would come back, "It's not coming," and I'd have to tell those people. And they'd all been getting ready for the cruise in advance, so they were in no mood to be toyed with, and god! I thought at times I was going to be scalped, you know. I didn't have anything to do with it, it wasn't our outfit.

MK An uncomfortable spot to be in, to have 600 angry people.

MC And some of them well lubricated. The loudest ones of course. But I was always convinced that if it had been, if it had run as it was supposed to, that it would have done well.

MK It's a beautiful boat.

MC Yea it is.

MK It would have been nice to be able, I would have loved to see it on the lake in just about any capacity. But when I came along, it wasn't there anymore.

MC Well if you ever get to Switzerland, you can ride on some similar to it, beautifully kept, beautifully kept steamers, side wheel steamers. There's three go out of Zurich every day. I guess there's three out of the Geneva and maybe some others around that I'm not aware of, but those I've seen you know.

MK Well I should be packing up here. One last thing I want to do is just get a few seconds of the sound of the room, the clock ticking, planes, whatever, traffic.

MC Want me to open the windows again, so you can get the traffic? (LAUGHING)

MK No, this will be just the room, without us, just whatever happens.

MC Okay.