

**“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.”

**Deane C. Davis
Part 3**

Deane C. Davis

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June 23, 1988

DD So that's what I always call home is my Allen Street home.

MK So you would have memories of the trolleys in Barre?

DD Yes.

MK When the trolleys were running.

DD Yes. The, the, the trolleys at that time, the pavement was cobblestones. That was during the horse and buggy days or the first part of it was during the horse and buggy days and many of the towns in Vermont put in cobblestones in their Main Street because the horses could navigate that and it kept them from being quite such a muggy, muddy mess with the so much horse traffic as there was and the two tracks would were right in the middle of the street and I rode I know, I remember riding, I remember riding on the, on the trolleys from here down to half way between Barre and Montpelier. You know where Lums Restaurant is now? That used to be called Intercity Park. That was all open there and the Italian people in Barre who came here to work in the granite business had formed a number of clubs because they were not the first generations that came didn't really try very hard to speak English and so they were mostly kept by themselves for their social activities and things of that kind. And one of the clubs that was formed was the Italian Athletic Club and these young men that grew up as kids my age and a little bit older, a few of them were a little older were soon playing really professional baseball. And they used to have marvelous baseball games there in this Intercity Park. There used to be a wooden stadium there and it was a gathering place and people would come there for the whole day and bring picnic lunches and, and so on, but the main attraction was the, were the baseball games. And a number of those young men, Italian young men became good enough so that they got contracts with National, National baseball teams. Two that I remember, that among that group and there were more than those two, but one was Cornelius Granai who just died here just a short time ago, a lawyer in in Barre for a long time and the father of Dr. Granai. The other one was Krip Polli. I don't know what his first name is, we called him Krip P-O-L-L-I. He lives up in, he's still alive. He lives up in Graniteville or Websterville, up in that, near the quarries, but that was, that was a real place. Well then the electric cars in the summertime, the electric cars were open just seats parallel to each other. And then the in the wintertime why they were closed in and they used to brush the snow,

keep the snow off the track by a snow plow that or a snow blower, I guess what you call it which was hitched to the front end of an electric car and rotated like this, great big brushes just like a cylindrical type of thing which went around and around and flew the snow off by turning pitching the angle like that you could go along there and it would throw the snow away from the track and where it went along the side of a road, it would throw it into the road. And I can remember cars, we had electric, we had electric cars as late as through the '20's because first automobile that I owned I bought in, and it would be probably the '20, late '20's I wouldn't be able to say what year and I was at that time practicing law in Barre and I had a very important case which lasted for a long time involving an explosion of a building in Barre where a number of people were killed and a lot of people were injured and the case was being tried in Montpelier and I represented the Vermont Gas Company who was accused of being the cause of the explosion which they were not and which we were able to prove they were not, but my client was the Company, but the man who was managing the Company was a fella by the name of Joe Nelson and we were on our way home in the wintertime after court had adjourned. This would be around 5:00 in the afternoon and there had been a big snowstorm during the day and as we went, as we drove toward Barre, this electric car snow plow was coming down here throwing snow into the road. Well that made an impenetrable vale. You just couldn't see through it at all. And there was a big lumber truck heavily loaded with lumber on the road and the car, let's see the car was going toward Barre, they were blowing the snow like this and so I couldn't go by because I would, I wouldn't be able to see. I was on the right, but I stayed on the right hand side of the road, but the lumber truck coming down the other way, it's a lot heavier the snow near the car than it is on the other side so on the other side of the road he very foolishly went over onto his left to get away from as much of the snow as possible and the result was that we met head on and mine was a little ford coupe and when it met a three or four ton truck loaded with lumber it was quite a bump. I remember Joe Nelson was hanging onto the door for some reason. Whether he was trying to get out or not I don't know. I was knocked unconscious and he was too, but he grabbed the, he had hold of the door on the right hand side and when they picked him up he was up on the bank about 15 or 20 feet the other side of the road still hanging onto the door and unconscious. I was, because I was behind the steering wheel, I was there in the wreck. Well they put me onto the snow plow and took me to a doctor up in Barre, Dr. Stewart, right away, but that's the last of my memories of

the, of electric cars. I can't give you the exact time that they, that they quit, but it was not long after that.

MK I wondered whether perhaps the flood might have torn up the tracks so badly.

DD What did you say?

MK Did the flood tear up the track? Did it happen as late as the 1927 Flood ?

DD '27, well the flood did tear up a lot of the track, but I don't believe that was the reason.

MK Uh huh.

DD It was the advancing use of automobiles and the, that was really put the electric cars out of business. You see before that there was no way to go to Montpelier except you could go on the train for a short period of time but while the railroad tracks were there, they had given up passenger traffic for some reason and there wasn't any service of that kind. But I think it was the automobile that put, that put the electric car out of business.

MK Yea. Certainly eventually regardless of when it happened.

DD Yea.

MK Certainly the cause.

DD Yea.

MK Okay, you were practicing law in Barre in the '20's?

DD Yea, I was admitted in 1922 and I practiced until 1936. No, til 1931 and then in 1931 I went on a bench for six years, five years. It was a Superior Court Bench and then I was invited to join a new law firm that was being set-up in, in Barre by a former governor, Governor Wilson and Ward Carver who's a former Attorney General and a very good trial lawyer, they were organizing this statewide law firm and at that, when the depression came along in the '30's, early '30's, they cut back, the State of Vermont cut back all of, all of its salaries and wages levels. A minimum of 10% and other cases they did a lot worse and they cut back about 20, cut the judges back about 20. Just why I don't know. And I was having trouble at that time trying to support my family anyway on a judge's salary which was \$5,000 and I was having, I wasn't making any progress in saving money to provide for the education

of the two children I had so I accepted this offer and we had this firm of Wilson, Carver, Davis and Keeter which did a statewide business and I enjoyed that part of the practice very much. And then I hadn't been at that only about four years when I was invited to become General Counsel for National Life Insurance Company. I accepted that in 1940 that was and I served as General Counsel ten years there when I was elected President of the Company and served there 17, I think it's about 17 years. Knowing that I was going to see you today, this you won't need to want to read now, but here's a chronological statement of my whole life that...

MK Oh wonderful. Thank you.

DD ...there isn't much to it, it's just dates and that it might, it might help you relate some of this stuff to.

MK Yes.

DD It'll suggest things to you and it will tie in with, with...

MK Yes that's good, that's very helpful. One thing I wanted to go back to pick up on in the '20's. One of the programs that we might be looking on for this, looking at for this series we're not quite sure yet has to do with the Klu Klux Klan in Vermont in the '20's.

DD Uh huh.

MK And it's interesting. I mean, you know, these days the Klan would not enjoy a following I don't believe in Vermont, but from what we, from what I've been reading, it did have somewhat of a following in the '20's.

DD Well, I can tell what little I know about that. There was a, a group of so called Klu Klux Klanners or whether they were legitimate members of the Organization as such or whether they were primarily supporters and political supporters and believers I don't know, but it happened right over in West Topsham, Vermont which is not very far from Pike Hill and not very far from Waits River either. You know where West Topsham is?

MK Yes.

DD And the, it became so intense for a period of time. I had no personal involvement that I can remember, but I do remember very well that, the discussions that were going

on around the state and particularly, of course, in Barre and there was a family over there of, their names were Hight as I remember, H-I-G-H-T. Hight Store, and that store is still there now. There were four brothers. Two of them were Klu Klux Klanners and two of them were not and that is what started the, your either loyal to Joe and Jim or you were loyal to Harry and Fred. That's not their correct names, but and it just tore that little town apart. It tore the church apart. It tore the town government apart and the social life whatever there was of it, it tore that apart too and I don't know how long it lasted. It was not long, several years. Two or three I would say at the most and then it began to die down. But that's really all I know about it, but I know, I remember so well the discussions at that time and what a horrible thing everybody thought it was that, that it could exist in the little country town where there wasn't anybody really to hate in order to, in order to serve for a good reason for a Klu Klux Klan movement.

MK What was the appeal of the Klan in Vermont in the '20's?

DD I don't really know. I, I think they were only reacting to the, to the reasons that were given. I think it was a question, mainly of being against the blacks and being against Catholics. I don't think the blacks had much to do with it here in Vermont, but I think that it was a strong anti-Catholic ingredient in it. That's the only part of it that I ever heard discussed was the, was the Catholic end of it and of course the Catholic, the anti-Catholic feeling in Vermont was very strong during the years in which I was going through both graded school and high school. The, it was a strong feeling. The Protestant churches were, were in a great majority in Barre and the churches were, they had full memberships back at that time. I can remember going to the Methodist Church which my family went to and, it was altogether different than it is today when you go into, at least a Protestant Church today, if you get a respectable number of people to call it a crowd at all, it's of the unusual. It must be Christmas or Easter, but back in the those days the churches were pretty well filled every Sunday and see originally the first churches in Barre were all Protestant. The Catholic Church didn't come along until the granite business had grown to quite, to the major economic factor in the area. There's another interesting story there is to why these Italians who came from Catholic areas and where they were there members of Catholic Church, very very few joined the Catholic Church in or attended the Catholic Church in Barre. That's why, why, two things developed here with the North Barre

Mission as it was first called on Berlin Street where there was a little church built, a kind of excuse for a church anyway and two deaconesses in charge of it, very able women, well trained in religious aspects and I think they taught more practical things than they did religion but they were very popular and some of our best young Italian children, that was a great place for them, and became the source of their inspiration to go to school and to go to college. Dr. Carasoli is one of them. Granai is another, Cornelius Granai, let's see if I can remember. Aldo Poletti became Governor of New York. Hugo Carusi who became U.S. Commissioner of Naturalization and worked as a Secretary to the Attorney General of the United States, to five Attorney Generals. All of those kids were, were adheren you know to this mission down there. That was a big deal. And they all were inspired by those deaconesses down there to go on in religion. I mean go on in school and get a good education. And they didn't all get a college education, but they all got educated one way or another and were a success. Now what were we talking about?

MK The Klu Klux Klan and the anti-Catholic...

DD Yea, well I don't think I can be of much help to you on the Klu Klux Klan because all that I ever heard about it, most that I ever heard about it was discussion around the supper table at home, my own home in Barre. But I am very conscious of the, of the anti-Catholic feeling that existed during the days that I went to graded school and high school on both sides. The Catholics were terribly anti the Protestants and visa versa. A Protestant wouldn't think of going to a store owned by a Catholic you know for his provisions or anything and the other way around. But the Catholic Church was later coming in, being started in, in Barre. Now I can't tell you when, but I know that it was, my guess is that it, the first Catholic Church must have been around the later part of the second decade, about in 1918 or somewhere along in there, whereas the first Protestant churches were started here way back before 1900.

MK Yea. I had wondered about whether you might have memories of that period just-I guess I'm asking everyone who is...

DD Yes, well that's right and...

MK ...who possibly had been an observer of that period and...

DD Yea, well I remember it. It's a clear memory but the reasons for it other than the anti-Catholic part of it and the details of even that are not, not in my mind. Truthfully I wasn't much interested in it, but it's one of the things that you're a part of and here the discussions and that's about all and I know that by the time I was practicing law in Barre in the '20's, I formed a fast friendship with Monseigneur Cray. He was not a Monseigneur at that time, he was a priest, but he, Father Craze we used to call him here in, he had charge of the Barre Catholic Church. He's the first one I remember. He wasn't the first one there, but he was the first one, I think there was one ahead of him called McKenna and McKenna I remember this. I remember that McKenna was an influence toward keeping that "anti" business going. And Cray was just the opposite. He was a peacemaker and trying to get people to level out and fly right on this thing and but how I happened to get so well acquainted with Cray was that I handled a lot of divorce cases back in those days. I hated them incidently, but that's, that was part of your business and so I sometimes would have Catholics. Of course Catholics are not supposed to get a divorce in those days. I guess they excommunicated you from church if you. So often if I had a Catholic client and sometimes when I only had both Protestants, I would go to home and try to get him to be a counsellor in the case and he was always willing too and he was very effective too. And out of that we formed a friendship that lasted til his death. But people would have to be pretty near as old as I am to remember even that there was an anti-Catholic feeling in Barre.

MK Yea.

DD So I think, I think the Klu Klux Klan had to be primarily the result of an already existing division between the Catholics and the Protestants.

MK Yea.

DD All the Protestants, practically all the Protestant churches were built right up there in the center of Barre, around the square. There was a Presbyterian Church was built down opposite the Catholic Church, but that's the only one that I think was built anywhere except around City Park up in Barre.

MK Yea. It's true. I remember thinking that was interesting. I think maybe the first time I came to Barre when I realized that gee all the churches are clustered right here in this one area.

DD Yea, yea.

MK It's sort of unusual like that huh?

DD Yea. I had the pleasure of handing, handing a deed to the City of the City Park which was actually legally owned by the Methodist Church in Barre. And on some anniversary of the Church, I don't know just when it was, we decided that we should give the title over to Barre because we weren't using it and the City was using it and had been using it for a long time. So there was quite a ceremony made of that back at that time.

MK To stay with the '20's and looking at another political event. What do you recall of the feeling in Barre, especially particular in the Italian community during the years of the Sacco and Vanzetti case?

DD During the years of what?

MK During the Sacco and Vanzetti case, during those years, leading up to when they were executed... ?

DD Oh that was quite intense. At, the Italian people of course were, a majority of the Italian people were loyal to their own racial origins or national origins and lots of discussion about it. No violence of any kind. The only violence we had came about earlier than that. You know where Socialist Hall is up in Barre on Granite Street?

MK Yes.

DD That was at the time, that was called the IWW Hall and the IWW of course was the, nationally, the most well known violent revolutionary movement, political movement that there was. I don't know what the, how close that connection was, but everybody spoke about it as being IWW. And there were a lot of, there were a lot of physical assaults that went on there at that place, usually among the Italians. Nobody else went in there except the Italians and they had, let me see, they had nationally known figures used to come there. Emma Goldman came there. It's in her book. I read her book. She's, she came there and spoke. I've got that set down somewhere, but if it's any use to you I can look that up for you, let you know. But Bill Hayward I remember him. He was one of the revolutionaries of the day if you remember.

MK Now do you remember when he came? Was that...

DD It was all about this same time. Of course I never saw those people that I'm giving the names to because I didn't know who they were and wouldn't be there, yet I remember standing in front with other kids my age in front of that building that has the arm and hammer symbol on the top of it and staring in awe and wonder you know. We didn't know what IWW meant, but we knew it was something awful because our adults said so. (LAUGHING) That all had to happen in the early 1900's before, before 1915 at the latest. There's a, there's quite a little material on this in the new archives in Barre. They got out a pamphlet there. Have you seen that by any chance?

MK I've seen some of the things that they've put out. Some, I probably have.

DD Yea, this one is, this one is a picture pamphlet as well as a text and it's people like Humph, Hathaway who's down here at the college has a nice article in there. And it's really a well researched and, and there are others too. One of the women that, that is either the associate or perhaps she has, perhaps she's the archivist I don't know at the moment I can't remember her name, she's got a marvelous article. Mulvaney.

MK Joelen Mulvaney

DD Yea, she's got a marvelous article in there. If you do decide to explore, go further with this, don't fail to go up and get whatever they've got because they got it well indexed up there. It's easy to find and they're there a couple days a week I think. I'm going to have to excuse myself for my lassax again I'll be right back. (TAPE OFF)

DD I started out writing a biography of my life for my grandchildren and well one thing lead to another and Tom Slayton got a hold of it down there, so he got me interested in thinking of possibly publishing it and of course it was too long the way I had it. There had to be quite a lot of stuff changed in it to meet their requirements, shortening it and so on. I did, but while I was shortening it, I also lengthened it. (LAUGHING)

MK ^{Shortened} some sections and lengthened others.

DD ^(laughs) That was^{it.} that was one of the chapters of the book. I just got it ready to show to him to see whether or not it's worthy of inclusion in the other material or not, but my memories of the Italian people are, are fairly good because in the first place my father was a practicing lawyer and I spent a lot of my kid time in the, in the

office you know cleaning spittoons and things of that kind. And most of his clientele was very largely Italian. And many of them were, were first generation Italians. Almost all of them first generation Italians and had to be communicated with through an interpreter which is fascinating to me and then I worked on a farm, the Kelly farm up on West Hill, where, which was one of the places where the Italian people used to have their picnics in the, in the summertime. They were great people for picnics because at that time they were still holding pretty much to themselves because they had not learned to speak English. Children were speaking English, but not them. And so they used to have these social clubs and they would put on Sunday picnics or occasionally a Saturday one, but usually Sunday because they were working Saturdays back in those days in the sheds. And this favorite spot was so near the Kelly farm you could, by coming up Berlin Street you could, very easy for those people to walk from the North End up there and so Mr. Kelly used to let them have the, have their picnics there whenever they wanted to, didn't charge them anything for it. It was a beautiful park like section of a cow pasture. I used to go over there you know on a Sunday and get quite interested. Then later on I, I had to take a year off from my law school in order to earn money enough to go the next year, so I drove a truck for the R. L. Clark Grain Company in Barre and a lot of these people in the North End, the Italian people were some of our best customers because they, practically all had hens and some had cow, had a cow in the back yard or their pig or whatever you and so I had to deliver grain and I got acquainted with those Italian people very well. And they would, if I was late at night going with my trip around, some of them would take pity on me and invite me to supper you know, an Italian supper and so I got to know them quite well and then later on when I was States Attorney, I had to, we were getting complaints all the time from WCTU that they were, these widows were selling alcoholic beverages which they were. My interests were all on their side. I had to go through the motions you know. And I, I got to know them that way too very well. And then my, Hugo Karusi who became a great friend, he worked for my father for the fantastic sum of \$2.00 a week afternoons during, while he was in high school, Robert Suzanna of Montpelier was another young man that he had working for him. All of these young men that he got, he didn't believe in women secretaries you see. He was what you call, what would you call him? A man like that?

MK I'm not sure.

DD (LAUGH) You're not sure. I don't know it either. But he did inspire all those young men. Every single one of them because a lawyer and I think there were five altogether that served as secretaries for him.

MK Really almost a apprentices?

DD Yea, Monte was another. Jelsey Monte. And, so I, and I even studied Italian a year. My dad got me to do that. I wish I'd studied it more assiduously than I did, but other things were interesting me at the time and I didn't do very well at it, but it helped me a little bit in, to, in the pronunciation of latin which I had to take later as part of law school. But they were, these Italian people are, they are wonderful, wonderful people in so many ways. You know back in those days I never saw, they all had wine. I've seen as many as 18 barrels of wine in one, one cellar where I'd take the grain. They used to keep the grain in the cellar. It's the only place they had for the chickens. And they drank wine at meals regularly. Anytime, any other time they wanted to and I've never seen an Italian people, an Italian person in those days intoxicated, never. The women were immaculate housekeepers and they were, I would say, the women were the boss back in those days. I mean they were boss of the family. They, they took a very, most of the women were uneducated as far as what we would speak of formal education, but they had inherited traditions. See most of them were from, practically all of the people who came here to work in the granite business came from the sections of Italy that, where they had worked in marble. Carara was the principle place, but there were others, but they were all practically from Northern Italy and the Northern Italians as a class, seemed to have for what little I have read and experienced here in Barre, they seem to be a sort of superior group of Italians. Now maybe that's unfair to the others, I don't know, because I haven't known the others, many of the others, but these people were, they paid their bills, they were hardly ever in trouble. They were high spirited and they could get mad and angry and then they could get into a fist fight and I've defended a few of them for pretty serious assaults, even murder, non-intended murder I'm sure, but murder, what would be under the law from their you know that intense emotional aspect of their nature. But they're good people and they weren't cheaters, they weren't liars and they, they were good citizens. So there's some good stories. There's been quite a little bit written about the Italians too and it's, it's a good thing there has been.

MK You mentioned that during prohibition that a number of the widows would be selling?

DD Yes. Well they had no other. You see, these Italian men at that time, this was before they had found the way to handle and prevent silicosis in the granite sheds which led to tuberculosis and these, these men were dying off in their 40's. To see, in the early part of the 1900's to see an Italian stonecutter who'd followed this thing all his life, to see one 45 years old, he was an old man. He looked like an old man and, and he was an old man because they weren't living beyond that age if they, if they got into the granite business as a, oh there was a connection there, what was it? Oh then, the wives, a lot of the wives, begged their husbands to quit this work you know, but they were artists. They had the feeling which an artist has and they, they just wouldn't. I mean to them giving up their and the fact that they weren't trained for anything else. So they went on, expecting as we all do that whatever disease comes isn't going to hit us, it'll hit somebody else, but won't hit us and then they would get silicosis and a lot of them that turned into tuberculosis very shortly. So many that they had to build the Washington County Sanitarium up there on, on Beckley Street Extension. That was a very sad, sad era. I mean the personal tragedies in those families. A lot of these men had to go up there to the sanitarium, knowing that they would never leave there while they were still vigorous enough to walk around town and that sort of thing, but they had to go, went there because they wanted to protect their family from tuberculosis you see. But and I was aware of that way, way back in those days. There's some real poignant stories told in a book by Marie Tomasi if you, have you read any of her stuff? I've forgotten which book it is, but there's one in particular that covers that area more than the others.

MK "Like Lesser Gods?"

DD Like what?

MK "Like Lesser Gods?" Is that the book?

DD Yea I think it is. I think that's right. Marie was a great writer. Too bad she died young. She understood those Italians. She understood the granite business and she could have added a lot more and she was a great writer too. Didn't you think that was skillful the way she handled the story telling?

MK Hum.

DD But this is why, this is why the widows began to sell liquor. In the first place they didn't associate the selling of liquor as having any moral problem connected with it. It was purely a statutory prohibition by the law, but they didn't conceive any moral wrong in either the use of liquor or selling it because of their own experiences with liquor, they had all been good. And...

MK Now the prohibition...

DD ...there was nothing else for them to do, just absolutely nothing else for them to do. And that was...

MK Where did they get it? Did they make what they were selling?

DD Oh, they, most of it they made. Of course back in the early, earliest of my memory, the grapes came in from, ~~carload~~ lots from California and one of my common ways of having fun was during the grape season and other kids too, we'd go down and watch these cars coming in and, down in Depot Square, they were opened up there at Depot Square. This was when they were still using horses and express wagons to do the carrying and they would come and what they did you see, the Italians would join up together and have a whole carload come and then they'd take ten boxes or ten barrels or ten this or ten that of grapes and then these carriers, freighters there with the horses and express wagons they would do the delivering because there was no other way to do it. Then just before prohibition, that was had pretty much changed to receiving the stuff in barrel form, all made, the wine all made. But grappa which was the real, real distilled liquor, they, the Italians would get four or five runs of the, of the grapes and to make wine and then all of those hulls and seeds and everything that was left became the mixture which was distilled and the alcohol was distilled from that. They made, many of them made their own distilleries which would consist of a, of an old metal wash basin and some of the, some of the Italian women became very proficient at giving dinners to a group of people at which they would serve wine and I've been to, I went to a number of those back when it was illegal during prohibition and you, I've met many, many prominent American Vermonters from Montpelier and Barre there at the dinner. They were good, oh they were marvelous cooks. But of course they went as much for the wine as they did for the food you see because that was the only way to get it.

MK Huh. So they would, the women would support their families by selling liquor?

DD By, by selling retail. You see, people would come to the home and they sold it both in bottles and but more, more importantly it was drank on the premises because the. I have an interesting story in one, one of my books that. You haven't seen my books probably have you? I'll loan you a couple of them if you'd like.

MK Yes.

DD If I can find them.

MK Oh, thank you very much. Yea, this is terrific.

DD That book has done over 100,000 already.

MK Has it really? That's wonderful.

DD People like humor. That's...

MK I'm sure.

DD Yea.

MK Sure they do. That's great. Well this is wonderful. Thank you very much. I wanted to ask you, *when we're done today*, I want to ask you if I can come back yet again and keep going? (LAUGHING) But, ^{first} could you give me your impressions of Barre during the depression. How hard hit was Barre?

DD Very hard hit. I happen to believe that we're going to have another one. I don't know when. I hope it won't be as severe as that, but all the evidence will point in the direction of its being worse. I was practicing law of course at the time and the foreclosure of homes and you see what happened at that, back at that time we had larger homes by large than we have now, so people that had gone to young people, young couples who had, who had gone to Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, other places, to pursue a life career of some kind, they were harder hit than our Vermonters to begin with. They began to flock back here. They had a place to go to Mom and Pops you know because there was room and something they could do around town that wouldn't earn a real living but they could, they could get by. We aren't going to have that now, with these, with first number one a lack of housing, number two the, how most homes now are so much smaller than they were back in those days. Furthermore, back at that time, we didn't have any national debt to speak of and today with a national debt we've got now, there isn't, the cost of, even if you could get anybody to buy a

government bond, once we get a bad depression, it's going to be fantastic and it's going to be the same thing all over again I'm afraid. There are a lot of people that think I'm wrong. Oh, I hope they're right because it was, it was bad. There were people just out of jobs and it was, it was the traumatic effect upon these young couples that had left Vermont and found employment in factories of various kinds and other jobs that were created as the economy had boomed before and the way of life that they had come to expect and enjoy, all of a sudden it just blew up in their face and they, they became sort of dependent upon their mothers and fathers. And a lot of the older people that were very self-reliant, but didn't have very much except their own home, had a mortgage on that and a lot of those homes were, were foreclosed during that period. Although of course the, a lot of the banks had sense enough to know you couldn't do much with one after you, after you got it back so, but it was, I mean the, it was a subtle thing in a way. I mean there wasn't anybody dying in the streets and that sort of thing and everybody could find something to do. They could mow somebody's lawn or they could for \$.50 an hour or do little jobs, odd jobs like that or get jobs that paid a tenth of what they were getting where they were and it takes quite a lot of fortitude to adjust to that sort of thing and that's what I saw as a lawyer because a lot of these things came across my desk in that, in my general, just ordinary general practice. So it is, I feel very badly about that because my memories of, of, of the time are still unhappy memories and quite clear too.

MK Well, I would like to come back and keep going if you're willing to do so and...

DD Well, alright.

Deane C. Davis

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MK Well let's see now it is the 14th of July and we're going to do some more talking about events in Vermont history. Okay, last time we were talking about the, talking about the depression as such and I wanted to do a little skipping around a bit.

DD Uh huh.

MK And come back up to, actually come back up I guess to around the '60's you know. One of the programs that we're thinking about doing has to do with the lessening of the Republican control over politics in Vermont and some of the changes that went on around that, and, of course, you followed Governor Hoff into office.

DD Yes, right.

MK Well then, Tom Salmon came after you and ^{now} Madeline Kunin. So clearly there was a lessening of Republican dominance in politics.

DD Yes.

MK I was interested in what you thought might be some of the factors that contributed to that?

DD Well back in the days, let's go back to the '50's and the '40's and even the '30's during those periods, those decades, the Republican party was, was dominant. I mean the, every governor that was elected as you can see during that period were, were Republicans and the legislature was, had a majority in both Houses of Republicans. So what was happening back in that time was since there weren't any Democrats to fight with, why the Republicans fought with each other and we had two wings of the party, the so called conservative wing and the so called liberal wing. That's my hearing aid I think.

MK I think maybe if I move this around a little bit it might, maybe if I put it on this, well I don't know, let's see if I put it more sort of straight in front of you it will be less of a problem.

DD I see yea. Playing with that is a...

MK Yea. A little feedback there.

DD Yup.

MK There, that'll, I think that might be a little better. Okay. So Republicans fought among themselves then?

DD Yes they did. Well they had two wings of the party, conservative wing and a, and a liberal wing. Perhaps the most exciting part of that controversy was in the years in which former Governor Aiken and later United States Senator Aiken was active in politics. He is, he is one man in Vermont who can truly be said to have made a life long career of politics because he started in, by running for the House of Representatives and was Speaker of the House and went on up through the chairs as they used to do in those older days and became Governor and then served two terms as Governor which was the norm at that time and went on to be a United States Senator. He was without question the leader during all of that time of the liberal wing of the Republican party. To put my finger on who was the leader during, for the Republicans during that whole period of time would be I think an impossibility because there were changes in men who were interested enough and active enough to, to take on the burdens of that sort of thing and almost none of them who were active in politics were actually making a career of politics as Senator Aiken did. But one name that stands out is Mortimer Proctor who was ^{the} third generation I guess of Proctor s that had been governor of the State of Vermont and was a family of ability and well known throughout the state. Lived in the Rutland area in the Town of Proctor and were the owners of the, what later became the Proctor Marble Company, Vermont Marble Company I guess is the name they used, but it was, grew and grew into a very large institution which was in the business of not only marble memorials, monuments, but also more definitely using granite, selling granite all over the world as a matter of fact for building purposes.

MK Selling granite?

DD Uh marble, marble. And marble is more adaptable to building in one way than granite is because it is a softer stone and therefore makes it, but sufficiently hard to stand the usual demands of the years of a building, whereas granite is a very hard rock and working on it is much more costly because it takes so much more time to do anything to it that you'd do to it, even to cut two pieces, cut a piece into two pieces is, is much harder to do with granite than marble is. But anyway, the Proctor family had been very active in politics and they were doing much of that period that I first mentioned, sort of the leaders, the leaders of the, of the Republican party.

Of course no leader ever has, has leadership without some opposition. But that was the general situation that existed in the '30's, '40's and '50's and then, when the '60's came along, you will find I think if you check the records that the, the last Governor before Hoff was Ray Keiser. Ray Keiser is, was I guess the youngest Governor that we'd had for many, many years and perhaps the youngest Governor of all. But he had served, he was from Chelsea and he served in the legislature for a time and eventually ran for Governor. I can't tell you his exact age, but I would guess he was not over 30, right around there. He was a good governor in my opinion because he had a, he had a talent for administrative direction and the programs that the legislature passed, why he took charge of them and handled them in a very, very capable administrative way. At that time there was a beginning to be a sharp increase in the immigration of people into Vermont. And most of them were coming from areas of, of large population and dense population, cities and places where usually Democrats had control of the cities back at that, in that time. I never knew how the rift came, but there did develop a, a little rift in the Republican party. About just before the second, what would have been the second term of Keiser if he had been reelected, which he was not due to this rift that was had developed, there was a man who later was in the Senate by the name of Buckley, Senator Buckley and, a man in Brattleboro whose name escapes me at the moment, but I will, maybe it'll come back to me. I know him well. They were the two sort of leaders of this rift. And they were able in the primary, I mean in the General Election to corral enough votes against, from against Keiser from Republicans so that they squeaked by with and Hoff was the candidate. That's how, how he was elected. Of course that was partially helped by the fact that most of the immigrants into Vermont, well let me change the word most, a substantial majority of the newcomers in Vermont were Democrats because they had been Democrats in the localities from which they came. And that was the beginning of the change in the power or the relative power of the Republicans and the Democrats. Now as you know, this immigration continued very rapidly during the latter part of the '60's. See Hoff I think was elected in '62 or '63 somewhere along in that area. You'll have to check that. But it was the early '60's and by the last half of the '60's that immigration was showing clearly to everybody that there was a real immigration into Vermont taking place. During the '60's and the latter part of the '60's and the '70's and is still going on so far, that increased population has been annually and for each decade a greater increase in population than in both in percentage and in

numbers than at anytime in the history of Vermont except a period either just before the Civil War or just after. I believe it was just after. Those population figures can easily be checked but, essentially what took the Democrats into, into power has been, has been immigration into Vermont of people from areas which were historically Democratic and people don't change just because they come from one state into another. During the period that I ran for Governor in '68 and again in '70, I noticed some of the polls that were being taken by the Republican party and it indicated, well there was no clear official way to determine exactly what the percentage of Democrats was and what the percentage of Republicans was, there were questions asked in those polls to the participants in the poll taking as to whether they considered themselves a Republican or whether they considered themselves a Democrat and we are speaking roughly now, my conclusion at that time was that the, there were about, about equal as far as Republicans and Democrats were concerned in '68. But that was only about 30% Republicans and 30% Democrats and 40% were Independents. But the significant thing was that the, that quite a fair percentage of the, of the 40% of Independents were leaned toward the Democratic Party. They weren't members of the Party. They didn't declare themselves to be Democrats, but their prior experience and things that they had, either the place that they came from or even if they were local born locally here, there was a clear tilt toward numbers of Independents being Democrats. And in the '70 election, the, the figures were much the same. As I said before, the it's not possible from the way people answer questions to be absolutely sure whether they were Republicans or Democrats even though you ask them the question. Some people hedge a little bit and you don't can't quite tell by the way the pollsters set down their, their and divided the numbers of these responses. In the '70 election, it would appear to me that there was just a little increase in that trend, that showed up. Even though the numbers of, of immigrants was increasing by the '70 election. And of course in the '70's, '70's we got our first indication of this immigration through the census figures too. And then again in 1980, it showed that it was still continuing and I think you can lay the, the change in political power from Republicans to Democrats almost entirely to and in Vermont I mean, almost entirely to this immigration. Now why did we, why did we have all this immigration during that period? I've done a little thinking about that at different times and I've come up with a few ideas about it. I think that the principle reason was the over population of big cities, particularly along the Eastern Seaboard. New York for instance had had such a bad reputation as far as pollution

is concerned but it wasn't only physical pollution, over population was created conditions which were difficult for young men and women and by this time the feminists movement was taking real moving rapidly and young people were unhappy and looking for a better chance somewhere to be, to have, to live and to have a and to have a career. And at the same time we had this increasing affluence that took place all over the country. People had more money and people spent more money. And they had more things and that when it applies, as applied to older people, the older people it gave them a little more courage to the ones that were retired or about to retire either to give up a job and retire early or if they were already retired to move to Vermont. And I think they moved to Vermont because it was, you know, in a real sense, it was the antithesis of what they had where they were. Number one, they saw the State in their vision, it was clean water, clean air, forests, gurgling streams, lush meadows and a wonderful place to live. Furthermore, they saw the beginnings at least of a statewide interest in protecting the area from further pollution. So and it was a beautiful State also. But because it was small, and because it was based on village life so predominately, it seemed to them that here was a chance where they could actually participate in, in the life. Not only the political life, but the, the business life or the professional life if they were professionals and but particularly, if they were accepted here by Vermonters, they would be able to start in and be active in local politics and local betterment groups and that sort of thing and move on into, into activities statewide. And that's just what happened. If you look in the legislature now, you'll find that over 50% of the, of the legislators were not born in Vermont. Now that's taking place in, in quite a, in a rapid, in a short period of time and of course my memory goes back into the '30's and early '40's when the legislature was predominately farmers or if not farmers they were members of a, of a family that was farm orientated so that they had the farm point of view in what they, in all their political responses. And I feel very strongly that's what, that's what happened. They wanted to, they wanted to participate in life and it seemed that Vermont was the kind of place that offered that sort of thing and it turned out that that's true because I think while there's been lots of grumbling of course from the old, old, older Vermonters who were born in Vermont when it comes down to real action, they accept Vermonters. They accept, Vermonters are a tolerant people in spite of some of their things that they say about those flat landers and so forth. In other words, it's poor matter of humor than it is a matter of distaste for a flat lander.

Sure they'll say "Well, he or she hasn't lived here only five years, I don't see why they should think they could be run for Representative or something like that." When push come to shove, why if they had the talents and had the ability, that would indicate to them and of course we had a lot, we had a lot of old-timer Democrats too in Vermont that, so they didn't have to cross Party lines to, to elect a lot of the newcomers so-called. Now does that sound like a reasonable hypothesis?

MK Seems reasonable to me. (LAUGHING) I was talking once with Clare Parker down in Springfield a few years ago and he spoke about how he had had his term in the legislature and wasn't reelected and he said "Well you know why people aren't Republicans anymore, they've imported all these Democrats."

DD Yea, yea. Well of course there's some resentment bound to be in a situation like, particularly if you, if you've been active as a Republican and now you find that you're not a, you haven't got the power you had before. But it's, it was *a matter of* grumbling more than it was a matter of hostility.

MK Interesting. Wait til the door closes here. One of the, one of the other programs we're trying to figure out what to do with, and it's such a big topic we're not quite sure how to handle it yet, but that is the Vietnam era.

DD Oh yes.

MK The Vietnam War.

DD Yes.

MK Um, I didn't live in Vermont. I'm one of those flatlanders. I didn't live in Vermont at the time that the Vietnam War was going on, but I can imagine in the communities where I did live, families were torn apart, communities were torn apart over the tension surrounding you know which side you favored...

DD Yea.

MK whether you were pro-or anti: Now during that period, I know that just from a little bit of reading, there was a demonstration at the University of Vermont at the time of the October, 1979 Moratorium March in Washington and at that point I guess ^(Governor) Governor Hoff spoke out and addressed the crowd and was joined by, he was