

“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.”

Scope and Content

The transcriptions in this collection represent interviews of approximately 42 individuals conducted primarily in 1987 and 1988 by Mark Greenberg, Mary Kasamatsu, Eleanor Ott, and Tom Davis in preparation for a radio series entitled “Green Mountain Chronicles.” The series of 52 five-minute programs was broadcast by commercial and public radio stations throughout the state in late 1988 and early 1989. The earliest interview in the collection was conducted in 1981; the latest was in 1989.

The interviewers spoke with well known Vermonters such as Governors Philip Hoff, Deane Davis, and Madeleine Kunin; lesser known personalities such as Catherine Robbins Clifford, one of the first women to hike the entire length of the Long Trail; and historians such as Weston Cate. The following inventory of the collection highlights the major theme(s) of each interview. The following list of program tapes gives the title of each radio program.

The goal of the radio series was to tell the history of Vermont in the twentieth century using archival sound recordings and recent interviews. The project was undertaken by the VHS in celebration of its 150th anniversary in 1988 and was funded by a \$14,000 grant from the Vermont Council on the Humanities and Public Issues with additional support from New England Telephone Company.

MSA 199, Folder 0 contains background information on the project. The VHS website at www.vermonthistory.org/gmchronicles contains a list of the Green Mountain Chronicles radio broadcasts and audio files of those broadcasts.

Walter Hard, Jr.
February 5, 1988

Mary Kasamatsu
Interviewer

MK Coming up now, is an interview with Walter Hard, Jr. about his father's writings. And let's see, he picks up kind of right in the middle of everything... This is a Green Mountain Chronicles interview with Walter Hard, Jr. of Enosburg, Vermont. [He is speaking about his father, Walter Hard, Sr.]

WH I suppose that's where he got the nucleus of his stories, was from visiting with these people. He didn't have to pry it out of them, they were just a talkative bunch. And then later he, I suppose he had an affinity for the kind of things they talk about and but all of his, most all of his, a lot of people have asked me, "Were these true, real people?" and I think most of them were. I know a lot of them were. A lot of the stories were true. He took poetic license occasionally to make them more dramatic but quite a lot of them were. Not that he knew them, but somebody would, as he got older and as his people knew that he was writing this sort of thing, they'd come in and tell him these stories. Some of them weren't any good. Some of them were stock stories. But some of them were excellent of course. He couldn't have ever achieved that, gotten that many alone you know. But Kevin and I when we got out this last book of his, I don't know if you've seen it or not, this collection that we got together after he died. Do you want a copy? Good huh. These are, we poured through all his the clippings of 50 years or 60 years of whatever it was of his columns in the Rutland Herald and tried to window out those that hadn't been published already. Just by memory that's the only way you could do it and then of the others try to pick out those that we thought were worthy of inclusion and it's an oddity but the better ones were in his middle years back oh to say his early '60's and after that they began to sort of taper off in interest I think partly perhaps because of his age and maybe because the state was changing, the people were changing. They weren't, this kind of person wasn't available your know making these stories.

MK I wondered about that as I, well I think about Manchester and how Manchester looks now...

WH There's no connection with that sort of thing, with those kinds of people, but I think they died out about at the time of the war pretty much. After the war, the ski industry came in and the old timers were dying off or moving back in the hills further and further. You still find some people of that type in northern Vermont, I think, north of here. North of Burlington up near the Canadian border and in the Northeast Kingdom.

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MK How did your father feel about those changes? Was he saddened by..

WH Well I don't he was aware that they were basically changing as much as they were. He, they came on rather slowly in Manchester at the time he was there and he was retiring somewhat and from contact with of course in business and he left the drugstore in 1936 and went into the book store and it, I don't know, I never heard him deplore the changes. I think he realized that it was an era that was passing. Maybe that's partly why he wanted to record them, the things before they disappeared. A sort of a culture that was going. I think he felt that there were lasting qualities of these, ^{the} people had, because of course they weren't all funny stories. There are a lot of other sort of things. But I don't, in his early days of creating things and writing, I wasn't really as aware as my sister was, she being older I suppose that was the reason. And then after I went away to school and then after that the army and then that was really, I didn't see him very much.

MK Now you said he did tell stories sort of humorous stories as you were growing up?

WH Oh yes, he would sit around the dinner table at night and recomp what somebody had said, some funny story or some times there were other things of course. It wasn't always stories, but there was always a lot of conversation going on. Very interested in politics and of course that didn't interest me at all in those days. And my mother was very interested in those things. Not so much, she didn't have the knowledge and the appreciation of the old time Vermonters. She was born in Vermont, but actually she didn't grow up there. She came back later and was married there, but she grew up in New York. So she learned about Vermonters mainly through him, the old timers you see and those that she met too of course. She came back to Vermont in 1912 or 11, somewhere in there.

MK Do you remember the two of them ever, you know when you'd ever come into lunch or to dinner and sit down, and ^{he} say "Well, I'm working on this piece about such and such," or did he ever talk about things as he was in the process of writing something?

WH No, not to me. I think he did to mother probably.

MK You never over heard that?

WH No, I think they, he was pretty much one to work on something and then bring out the finished product. In his weekly columns and individual poems, he did though, he wrote them almost always on Saturday afternoons and evenings. He had accumulated the material through the week and had a little notebook that he always carried with him and jotted down the tag lines and so on and then he'd create these things working in the afternoon after church. And then he'd bring these over to my mother and I think sometimes she'd make a suggestion, sometimes not, but the other things that he did, I don't know. He and she wrote a little travel book about Vermont together, but I don't know anything about that. I was away somewhere in college I guess. I remember when he was writing "The Connecticut" for the river series, not that he said very much except about some-~~I~~ in his research he became very interested in some two women, I forget their names. They were 1840's era sisters who he was very impressed with. They weren't Vermonters but very scholarly, conversed in Greek and things like that you know. But he did a lot of research for that book and...

MK Where were these two women? Where did they live?

WH I can't remember where it was. It was somewhere in the Connecticut Valley, say around Greenfield or North Hampton or somewhere in there. I think he referred to them in the book, I don't know just how they came into it, but he was very interested in people historically as well as present day.

MK He was an observer of people wasn't he? I mean he must have watched people carefully to (unclear) ?

WH I guess so, although you wonder somehow how he caught the intonation of their speech so well when he was so deaf. And I remember as, in the '20's he didn't wear a hearing aid, but he was fairly deaf and it got progressively worse. Well, I guess he could hear enough, but the, it wasn't only the sound of the speech of course, it was what they said and the settings. He was very much aware of the natural places, the settings and the places. Most of his stories have a place particularly those that deal with people in back country. He often would set the stage of where they lived or how it was that they got there or going by a brook or something. He was a very close to nature type himself, very much an outdoors person in his younger years and a great hiker and snow shoer, that was before skiing you know.

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MK Would he take, if he was, did he fictionalize to a certain extent?

WH I think only as much as he had to. I think he liked to keep it as close to the real thing as possible. But often he had to dress up the story to give it some flash you know because often all there was there were the kickers at the end. And you could see that. A lot of the early parts of every poem are a build-up of who these people were. He always gives them a name. There are not just unidentified characters. Sometimes they are so involved you lose track of what is going on. You have to go back again. I always felt that was sort of a weakness to some of his stories that he put so many people into them that it didn't matter who they were really. And although in some of his things, the same person would come back. He had a store, Braley's store, well that actually was a store. It was Bradley's store. It was an old country grocery store in the Town of Sunderland and I don't remember. It was before I was born I guess, but it was, he often put a lot of the action at this store. I don't think it happened. I think it actually happened in his store probably. His store of course being a summer resort town there wasn't much going on in the winter. And there wasn't much to do except wait for these people to come in and sit around and talk. And they'd wait for the New York papers to come in and the mail to come in and just visit that's all. There wasn't much news in town. It was often made-up news you know.

MK And did he have a place there for them to sit so they could...

WH Well he didn't make it too cozy for them. There wasn't the typical stove in the center unfortunately. But there was a big bench along the front of the store as I recall under the windows and I can't remember just what it was for, but they would sit there somewhat, but he didn't. He would kind of wander around so he wasn't tied down by their, but they'd sit there until they got tired. But he got, it didn't all happen in his store. The, some of the action occurs in other places.

MK The reason I wondered whether he had fictionalized some of it was it is so detailed in terms of the place .

WH I think a lot of that, yea, I think maybe he transfers memories of some other thing to that particular store. It didn't have anything to do with it. But I think most all of his stories had actual true happening to them except some that maybe later were told to him and he thought they

were true, but they weren't. They were, I think there are some that got by that were stock stories you know. But it's hard to tell.

MK Did any of the characters in the stories ever take offense at any of his characterizations?

WH I never heard they did. This Nat Canfield knew he was being used and he rather was proud of it. In fact some of the stories he was called by name. It said Nat in some of the later ones. Then he had a whole series on Rob Lawler, the hermit that lived up in the Kelly Stand out the old road that ran from West Arlington, East Arlington up over the mountain into Wardsboro, up past Stratton. The Kelly Stand and this old man Lawler lived there until he died. It was a tavern once and it was falling down and I guess he had at least three or four poems based on him and calling him by name and they were all true I think. Very evocative of what it looked like as I remembered it. But there were a few others. There was a man named Henry Slade in town who was a dead pan sort of man, chewed tobacco all the time. I can remember him as a boy and always had at least a day and a halves growth of beard and he was, he thought himself to be fairly sharp, but he wasn't very and there was one story. I don't remember if father used it, I think he did where he went into the bank with a twenty dollar bill. This was a true story. This is the Factor Point Bank in Manchester Center and asked for change into dollar bills and they gave him twenty dollars and he took it back and counted it. Then he came back somewhat later and changed it back into a twenty. He kept doing this most of the morning and finally the teller paid him off again and he counted it out very slowly and he said Mr. Slade is it all there. And he said just barely. Well I don't tell it well, but he obviously was waiting for them to make a mistake of course.

MK It's interesting that no one of course I can't, I haven't read everything that he's written obviously, but I can't recall something that I would think would strike anyone as being offensive in anything that I've read, but I do know that my, I met David Budbill, and we've talked, and I know that David at one point has, when his Judevine poems were just becoming known, received some threats from, angry threats from neighbors who thought they recognized themselves _____.

WH Yea, that's all, yea.

MK They threatened to burn his house down and really angry.

WH No kidding. Huh.

MK Really angry people and hostile. He insisted believe it or not he was not using anyone that these were sort of gathered impressions of a lifetime and set them in Vermont but they might have been people from Ohio...

WH Yes, well I don't know. Maybe some of the things that weren't very complimentary weren't local people or, he often had people who were lazy. Very lazy farmers and oh hypochondriacs, lots of things that weren't very complimentary but they were treated a little gently you know and I think probably maybe a lot of time had lapsed between, maybe the people weren't even alive anymore. I suspect some of these stories went back to even before he was born. Some that maybe his father had told him. His father had this store. I don't know what his father was like. He died before I was born. But he may have been something of the same type of gathering kind of lure of people, who knows. It seems unlikely that he could have come across so many of these things you know because he didn't, he sat in the store most of the time as I remember he did.

MK Did a lot of farmers come into the store? His characterizations of the farmers are so strong.

WH Yea, no that's it, they didn't you see because it wasn't a farmers kind of store. It was a summer resort store. There was just a few like this Nat Canfield who came in in the wintertime, but there weren't many farmers around there even when I was a kid or later. So I don't know how he, I guess he sensed that these people were mostly back country farm people and maybe they were, maybe they, maybe he got all of these stories second hand, I don't know.

MK Did he ever talk about how he was encouraged to write in the first place? Had he always written as a kid growing up?

WH I don't think so. Um, I think that, I think probably these happenings, these stories intrigued him so much that he just kind of put them down because he just wanted to record them and then perhaps he or my mother thought he ought to try to do something with them. I think that the form he had was sort of blank verse came sort of naturally to him. I don't think it was planned in any way. And after he had, I suppose written a few, then I guess he went to the, I don't know whether he wanted fame and

fortune or what, but he, whether he went to the local Manchester Journal and asked them if they'd be interested in printing them weekly as a column. Well they obviously were, they'd print anything, and it was and I guess that's how he got started. Then they became sort of read more and more and the Rutland Herald saw them and asked to have them too, and then he got together a collection for this first book which he published as a vanity (unclear), he paid for it himself. But after that, after the first book, of course he had an audience then that continued.

MK Was writing almost a recreational thing for him since he was running the store and...

WH Oh yes, it was a way to get out of the store and he didn't like, he never liked the store of course. It was a chore and a burden. And I think—He always wanted to be a newspaper man. Maybe that's a connection too, with having them printing them, having them printed and published. He always had wanted to be a newspaper editor or writer or something, but, as you probably know, his father died when he was a senior in college and he wasn't ever able to finish college, probably could have, but his mother wouldn't let him. She said he had to mind the store.

MK Was he the only son?

WH Yea. And she held the purse strings. She owned the store I guess. There's no reason why he couldn't have continued in his college and graduated but she was, I don't know, she was a rather narrow minded little old lady. I can remember her.

MK Had she not approved somehow of him wanting to do something other than (unclear) ?

WH Oh I'm sure she didn't, no, I don't know. She probably wouldn't of, she probably was very conservative and felt the store was a family support and her husband had started the store back in the '70's and you shouldn't throw it away you know. You shouldn't take a chance on anything. And then he got married of course and then children, so I guess he felt he couldn't afford to take a chance anymore on trying something different.

MK It's interesting. In thinking about his mother as being conservative and the idea of him perhaps... Do you think he saw himself as preserving a part of Vermont by...

WH I think he did later, yes. I don't think initially perhaps when the '20's there wasn't the change so much

back in the early days in the middle '20's when he started, but I think later it definitely was. He was, and I think my mother encouraged him in that direction because she felt it was, these things were unique really and that it was a passing sort of part of the culture. I guess he probably felt it was going to, he must have. I mean when he died, see in '66 I think it was, things were so different in Manchester. I remember taking him up to see the, driving up to see the Stratton ski area which was you know quite huge and with these fancy condominiums and he didn't deplore it, but it you could see that it didn't appeal to him. It wasn't his style at all. When he remembered it, it was just a wilderness up in there. So I don't know. Older people tend to live in the past anyway so I think that he lived out (and my mother too) their lives rather happily in Manchester which was completely alien to anything that was when they grew up there or lived there in their middle lives, but they didn't really, it didn't absorb because they lived within themselves and with a few friends and reading and so on. But they weren't aware of the changes probably.

MK I have read that some critics had problems relating to his poems as poems and dealing...

WH Well yes, I think that's true because the—I don't know whether, he never claimed they were poems. Other people, he just wrote them that way. They do have a certain when he would recite them sometimes, I think he's told them rather well. It's too bad there isn't a better recording than that one disk that is available. There are any number of people who tried to make tapes of him later but he had gotten beyond doing them well. He was then pretty old and his voice wasn't what it was. And being very deaf, that affects the way a person talks too. But, no I don't think he had any pretensions of literary style or anything. I think he was pleased that people did like them and that they were applauded somewhat, but I think it was the content of them that was really interesting to him. The fact that people were reading about the kind of people in life that they'd probably never knew about before and maybe would never see or hear.

MK Do you think that's the, if he would have said, "this is what I want to do, or this is what I want these things I'm writing to accomplish," that that would have been it?

WH No, I think it might be partly, but I think if he had had a free hand after college he would have probably have tried to be a country newspaper editor, a weekly newspaper editor with all sorts of things you know. He might have

gotten into this too, but it's unlikely that he would I think perhaps because he wouldn't come in contact with the same kinds of people as he did in the store.

MK It's ironic that the store that he didn't want to have anything to do with was such a source of material for him.

WH Yes, right. It's hard to tell. He was, always seemed, my mother always said he was very unhappy with the store and he probably was, but he never showed it much. He worked awfully hard and it must have been pretty boring too. It didn't occur to me at the time you see, but I don't think that—Once he sold the store, I guess he felt a great sense of release of not having this and this was in 1936, so you see he had 30 more years of life after that and he did have, he and my mother had the book store, book shop, but that was quite a different thing. That was fun. They enjoyed that and it wasn't, the hours were pretty easy and they took turns you know running the place and then later they got somebody else in to help. It was a very, easy sort of a livelihood. It wasn't really a big livelihood but of course it was a small shop, but it was enough. But I don't think he would have started out as a, with a bookstore at first you know. That was only because my sister had started it years before. But he liked, he liked reading. He read a great deal. A tremendous amount and he got to know a lot of the writers in that area. There were lots of writers you know, summer people mostly, and, who I guess appreciated his what he was writing. It was a very different sort of thing, of course, and there were a lot of publishers around there, a surprising number. Farrer, John Farrer of Farrer and Reinhardt. Nelson Doubleday and Henry Holt and I don't know.

MK A publishers colony there.

WH It was surprising. They lived, they had summer homes or they visited and then when there were writers you know, Alexander Wolcott and that colony he had at Lake Bomoseen with Harpo Marx, and oh there are a tremendous, there seemed to be a tremendous number in that corner of the state in the summer.

MK Did you ever know any of those people well?

WH Well, he did. I didn't, I wasn't around much. I was too young or I was away in college but that group and then with Dorothy Canfield Fisher in Arlington, and there were others down there, Arthur _____, and oh gee I can't think of the names. They were well-known authors of that era you know. Franklin Pierce Adams and columnist, newspaper

columnist from New York and that sort of thing. And art critics, who some of them were summer people, summer guests at the hotel. Later the establishment of the Southern Vermont Art Center sort of changed the tone of the town to the better. Instead of just being plain a golfing town, it began to have a little more cultural interest you know. They eventually had other activities to the art center. I mean concerts and so on you know. But that was much later. That was after the war.

MK Did you, I was just curious, I did an interview with Luigi Lucioni a couple of years ago.

WH I can't quite hear you.

MK Luigi Lucioni, did you know him?

WH Yes, oh yes. I knew him quite well. In fact, I still hear from him occasionally. I knew him, not when he was up here at the Webbs, but then he went, he was sort of a captive artist of the Webbs for some years, Electra Webb, and then moved down to Manchester and I guess he still has a place there lived with his sisters. I think they are both dead. I don't know whether he comes back to Manchester very much or not.

MK He was there, but I don't know about this past summer, but I saw him there the year before in the summer of '86.

WH Have you see the television film he made?

MK No, I haven't.

WH Oh, it's great. It is just the best. It was made by Vermont ETV back, oh, probably five or six years ago. They didn't make very many. And this is just, I never realized that he's such a vocal person and he just talks to the camera wandering around the studio and outside. I don't think you even see anybody else. I remember I used to see him painting on Main Street because he would paint about, it would take him hours and hours and hours to do one painting with every little leaf. And he'd come back when the light was just right and only paint for half an hour maybe and then come back another day and paint the same thing. It would take all summer to do one painting. The thing is sitting right on the edge of Route 7, you couldn't believe that you could do that today. Get mowed down by the gas fumes.

MK To get back to your father, do you recall him encouraging you, was he your role model as a writer?

WH No, no. No, he, I don't think he even suggested anything. I think, I don't know books, books seemed to have come to be a sort of a big thing in the family. Even when he had a drug store, he sold books there, and brought them home and a tremendous amount of reading. My sister the same way. She was quite a bright girl and then she started this book shop I think her junior year in college and then she left and I can't remember just how it was worked. Oh, for awhile, it was run next door to the drug store. There was a little shop next to it. It was a haberdashery shop originally and they converted it into a book shop and my mother would be in there and then later when they sold the drug store, they bought the little brick building next to the Equinox House and put it there, but I think there was just a natural interest. I majored in English and I guess, my sister majored in history oddly enough. But she, she was a good writer and she wrote a newspaper column several years in the Brattleboro Reformer and then later it was a sort of a syndicate out in New York State. A very personal sort of a column about family life and then books, about books, book reviews. But I don't know as I was anything was ever suggested that I take up. I ran a book shop too for awhile. It wasn't a success. It was in Bangor, Maine. This was after I got out of college. It was in the depression period. Pretty hard going in anything. And I ran it for a year and just about broke even and that was it. Closed it up and soon after that the war started and I went in the army and that was the end of it for six years. But then when I got out again, I went into the newspaper business. So maybe there was something there that I didn't realize, some subtle, I worked for the Rutland Herald and then in the Press Bureau in Montpelier at the Herald and the Free Press and then I transferred to Vermont Life, but that was in the business sense first and then after I got through with Vermont Life in '73 I worked for a publisher in Garden Way Publishing. I was editor of their books for about four years, five years. I got out of there just before they folded up.

MK It was before the mutiny or whatever (unclear).

WH Yea, I missed that.

MK That's interesting. Where's your sister now?

WH She's in a nursing home non compis, Alzheimer's, somewhere near Utica. She did live with a daughter for awhile. She was a librarian in Watertown, New York and retired about age 70 and then almost immediately just when downhill to nothing. Just within two years from being the sparkling person to just not knowing anybody, not being

able to speak coherently or anything. It's a sad thing. You know about his creative origins though, I'd always felt sort of at a loss because I was just too young to be interested. A boy at ten or eleven years old you know, doesn't interest ~~him~~, that sort of thing. I know there's a lot of conversation, but I didn't listen to it very much. I was bored.

MK Did you pick up on any kind of, sort of amorphous osmosis kind of level^asense of, I guess what I'm getting at is-I grew up with neither of my parents having gone to college, there was no one, ~~My~~ father had wanted to be, I think he would have enjoyed going to college and studying journalism, but the war intervened and he came home and had a family and it didn't work out you know. Even though the GI bill was there, it still didn't happen. But anyway I grew up with this, there was this almost reverence for books. And even when I was in college and I didn't have any money to speak of, if I bought a book it was okay, you know. If I spent money on something else, well, that was frivolous, but if it was books that was alright. You know, I couldn't have articulated that at the time at all but looking back on it it definitely was something that I picked up from just around the house.

WH I think that was a feeling that was went back and I think may be dead now, but it was it wasn't just our family had that too, but other families had it this, it was a reverence for education and reading and as you say books, although I can remember a lot of sneering, not sneering, but down grading some novels that were the best sellers of the period like Warwick Deeping and things like that, they are now putting on Masterpiece Theater and A. J. Crozier and things like that. But anyway, my mother read a great deal out loud to us as kids. Even after we could read ourselves to try to instill I can remember Dickens, my gosh, she enjoyed it herself you know so much and she knew I maybe wouldn't read it myself, she'd read it anyway.

MK Did your father participate in those kinds of things?

WH No, no.

MK ~~You know~~ ^{this}, family read-aloud?

WH No, he didn't. Not to my knowledge. She'd do this probably when I was eight or nine or so or ten. Going to bed and reading it before you go to bed, you know, or when you're sick or something like that. And yea, books meant a great deal. I mean they were like friends. But there

were other people. This Nat Canfield, this old farmer lived with his sister and neither of them ever married, Miss Hermione, her name was and she, all they ever did, all their lives was sit around at home and read. They read everything that ever came in the library and whatever they could get anywhere else you know. They had this, the family, the Canfield family came up from Connecticut to, they split from Connecticut and the tradition is that Mrs. Dorothy Canfield told me this once that they had a set of Shakespeare in the family and they didn't know what to do so one branch of the family took the tragedies and the others took the Comedies and the Vermont branch took the Comedies so Miss Hermione and Nathaniel, I forget what they come for "Mid Summer Nights Dream" or something like that and all the children were named for several generations for Shakespeare characters. But you know you wouldn't believe it, going in to that old tumble down house and see these old people sitting around there with books piled all over the place and reading them you know. I'm afraid that tradition isn't as strong as it was. This was before the days of television of course. used to live in Calais huh, East Calais?

MK Calais, yea.

WH Well I mean he was communicative on a personal sense. He was, um, he talked a lot and my mother, but these were not personal close in things emotionally close as a parent. I was never close to him as a parent. I think I got to be so with my mother perhaps in her later years. She was more emotional. He was, he hid his emotions. Sometimes though, it's odd, he would be reading his own poetry and he would almost break down. You could see his lips begin to tremble because he could envision the thing that he had written about that he felt was but except for that I never saw him really show emotions. He was very tempered in his speech. Never swore. I heard him call somebody a skunk once and that's the worse I ever heard him say of anybody. That was Vrest Ortm. Very tolerant man you know and got along with everybody. My mother thought he got along with too many people. She thought he ought to put his foot down. He was, you know, easy going. She was too. They were a very happy couple. I don't know if I've ever seen a man and a woman that were so happy together, the ideal marriage. Just unbelievably happy. They were quite different in their temperaments too. It's surprising. Maybe that's why they got along so well.

MK Was he at all a disciplinarian?

WH No, no. He wasn't. He lost his temper with me once when I was about nine or ten. I remember that. Spoke to me very sternly, and it was because I was rude to my mother about something I don't know what. No he very very loosey fair, both of them. No guidance, no guidance at all. Probably could have used some. Some suggestions you know. But I don't think that he was ever to sure of his own beliefs. He wasn't a positive man.

MK You mean he didn't have a *firm*, opinionated...

WH No he wasn't opinionated at all on any thing in conversation, probably deep down he had convictions of, but he passed as a republican, but my mother passed as a democrat, but they got along perfectly well and seemed to agree about most of the candidates, they didn't like them. I can just hear them now on Reagan. ~~They~~ would have, she in particular. And religion, he was a conformist. He was, his father and grandfather had been deacons of the Congregational Church and he was too. And he was treasurer and he went to it and turned off his hearing aid and all he went for was because it was kind of peaceful and he liked to sing in a choir. Although I don't know how well he could sing with not hearing very well, but he sang in the choir and that he enjoyed that. My mother as a token support went there a little bit, but she liked more high church things. She went either to the Catholic church or Episcopal Church. She liked the ceremony of them, of the...

MK Had she been Catholic?

WH No, she grew up Quaker.

MK That's interesting.

WH She tried everything. No, her family were all Quakers. And I don't know where she got into the Episcopal Church but when it became like kind of a low church in Manchester, she didn't go for that at all, so she went to the Catholic Church for some time. Former Bishop Joyce was the priest there then, a young priest I can remember. I was in grade school and she liked him very much. She shopped around. She went where she liked the services.

MK Now your father got into legislature... ^(unclear)

WH Yes, I think that was part of his concern for not local issues but he took on, he was, he's more interested in educational subjects in the legislature when he was there apparently. And also I think he made a sort of crusade

for jury duty for women. It took a long time to get that through the legislature and he finally triumphed after about four sessions. They passed it and then he found that constituents the women didn't want it anyway. He was kind of hurt by that.

MK I didn't realize that women were not...

WH Isn't that funny. They voted of course back in the whatever the 22nd amendment was it in 1919 somewhere in there. The franchise, but jury duty in the State of Vermont wasn't enacted until about I guess in the mid '30's, somewhere in there. Doesn't that seem odd.

MK It's very odd. I didn't realize that at all.

WH I don't know just why, maybe it was just the way it was worded, about that men would be empaneled or something and so that's all they did. They just didn't select the women.

MK That's interesting.

WH Yea, he enjoyed the legislature. A lot of people, it was very slow moving you know and I think a lot of people probably got disenchanted with so much wasted time in sitting around.

MK Do you know whether he got, whether that was a source of material, sitting around (unclear)

WH Oh, I think he must have, he must have gotten stories from other members of the legislature. Oh, I'm sure he did. I can't cite any at the moment, but there were some other conferees there who you know had remembrances of things of that sort.

MK Other than the jury duty for women and education,, those were the particular ones?...

WH Those were the two things that he really pushed on I think for the exclusion of other things. I don't know what committees he served on. He was a representative for one or two terms and then he was in the senate as a Bennington County Senator I guess for the last few. He was there in a special session of 1936 when Mortimer Proctor was Governor and I was there as a reporter. That's how I happened to remember it. It was the tail end, I forget why it was a special session.

MK Would that have been the Green Mountain Parkway?

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WH No, it was a little later than that. The Parkway business took place while I was in college I think. No, I say '36, I'm way off. It was after the war. It was '45, the special session of '45 when Proctor and dad was a senator and I think he didn't run after that. That was his last term as senator and then Gibson came in as Governor. Gibson and so on.

MK That must have been interesting to be there as a reporter when your father was a senator?

WH Well, it was a very short session. It was only about a week, I think, something like that. I can't remember what the issue was. They don't have special sessions for except for a good reason you know.

MK (unclear)

WH Would it be '45 or would it be, see it might have been '45, yea. I got out of the army in August or September of '45. No, no, it must have been later because I worked for a whole year after that at the Rutland Herald before I went to Montpelier so it must have been '46 that the special session was. Proctor was governor, it was his swan song as governor.

MK Well, I don't want to keep you any longer.

WH Well, if I had anything more to tell, I'll be glad.

MK Thank you. One thing I do need to do before you unclip that, I want to get just a little of the sound of the room in case I need to have a little bit of editing space.

WH Yea, sure.

MK Just a few seconds.