

**“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](http://www.vermonthistory.org/gmchronicles) contains a list of the Green Mountain Chronicles radio broadcasts and audio files of those broadcasts.

John Holden, Jr.  
April 14, 1988

Mary Kasamatsu  
Interviewer

- MK This is an interview for the Green Mountain Chronicles. I'm with Mr. John Holden in East Montpelier. And we are going to talk about a number of things including one you say you don't know anything about.
- JH Yes, yea.
- MK But let's start with the beginning. Are you a native of Vermont?
- JH No I'm not, but and I have, I was introduced up and down the state as a native of Vermont and I was always prepared to meet that if I was challenged by saying no it's better to be a Vermonter by choice than a Vermonter because you couldn't help it. Because I was born in West Newton, Massachusetts and I started yelling until they brought me to Vermont. (LAUGHING)
- MK Were you ever challenged?
- JH No I never was.
- MK Well this is your chance. See this is your chance to say that.
- JH Yes, yes, okay.
- MK That's great. West Newton, Massachusetts. Okay and when did you come to Vermont then?
- JH My family brought me in probably August of 1901.
- MK So you were pretty, pretty small when you came to Vermont?
- JH Well I was a few months old, well I was nearly a year old. I was born in 1900.
- MK So really, your earliest memories<sup>are</sup> of Vermont then.
- JH Oh, by all means, yes.
- MK Now when you came to Vermont, did you come to this part of Vermont?
- JH No, I came to Bennington. And so that's a very pertinent question because I used to tell Dorothy Canfield Fisher who lived in Arlington, I said I didn't think Vermont really began until you got north of Rutland. Of course that wasn't welcome to her because and Arlington isn't, it's still south of Rutland. And she was a Vermonter if anything.

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MK What was your, what was your family doing in Bennington?

JH It was, my grandfather had bought into a partnership for a woolen mill in Bennington. And father went into the business too. But he was, he was, the reason I was born in Newton, Mass. was that father was, lived down there just shortly after he was married, he lived there for a couple, two or three years as charge of the Boston office of the company. All these country mills had to have some kind of representative in the trading centers and Holden-Leonard Mill in Bennington had an office in New York and also an office in Boston, both were for buying the wool and for the selling the goods.

MK Is that mill still in existence in Bennington?

JH The mill is still in existence, but I don't know what it's used for. I'm quite sure that it's not a manufacturing any more woolen goods. There was a proposal at one time that it be converted to a regional high school.

MK *So it has strayed far from its days* as a woolen mill, yea.

JH Yes, yea.

MK Interesting. Do you have particular memories of growing up around the woolen industry?

JH No, nothing connected with the industry at all.

MK Uh huh. Well, when did you come into this part of Vermont then and how did that come to happen?

JH Well, it does happen that my father also had a business interest in the Woodbury Granite Company up here in Hardwick and I remember being with him. This would have been when I was maybe twelve years old or so. Driving, making a two day trip driving from Bennington up here to Hardwick, but this was as I say, I don't remember anything about, getting connected with the granite in anyway or anything like that, but that, that was my first, first time I ever got really much north of Bennington. And actually what, what brought me here was a, I was, in studying for my master's degree in education at Harvard and education administration, I, I had to take what we call a systematic study of a school system and that was all orientated of course toward urban systems and that sort of thing and Burlington was the nearest to having any, to being a size that would qualify. And so I took Burlington to study as a, systematically as a school system and it also necessitated coming to Montpelier and study to

get stuff of legal background and that sort of thing. And so that's what first brought me up to this part of the, of the country and then shortly, well afterwards after I'd gotten my degree and had a travelling year in Europe, I became sort of a field worker for something called the Vermont Commission on Country Life which was a, it was really the first probably, probably the first statewide sociological economic study of a state and that was, that was an organization called the Vermont Country Life Commission and I worked for them. They were just finishing their work when I became available. I mean heading into the last year. A lot of committee work, committees on forestry, on education, on medical facilities, on the care of the handicapped, I forgot a whole lot of topics and they produced a report which is called "Rural Vermont Program for the Future by 200 Vermonters" because it was sort of, it was much of a study to educate the Vermonters that were committee members as it was to come out with the results and recommendations. That was in 1931. And so that gave me, had occasion for a lot more study in some of the records about teachers in the State Department of Education.

MK Now was this the same project that Helen Hartness Flanders began her collecting of folk songs?

JH Well, yes that Vermont Folk Songs and Ballads, that was one of the four volumes sponsored so to speak, or prompted by the Vermont, the Committee on Vermont Traditions and Ideals, something like that.

MK Which was part of the Commission on...

JH That was one of the working committees under the whole Commission and Helen Hartness Flanders' Vermont Folk Songs and Ballads was one of the productions. Another was Vermont as a Group of Biographies. Let's see, well I can't, I can't remember specifically what they were. I've got them all of course.

MK Now what, just, I'm going to ask you, could you tell me briefly what, what was the purpose of this whole commission? Why was this being done?

JH It was really initiated by a professor of I think it was of zoology over at the University of Vermont, Harry Perkins, who had been, let's see what did he call, they called it the eugenic study. Incidentally, I think it's in Vermont Affairs there's a comment on this thing as being so fascist. I don't know whether you've seen that.

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MK I have not actually. I knew of the article, I hadn't read it.

JH Anyway, Harry Perkins, I don't know how long this Vermont eugenic survey had been going on, but there had been quite a lot of field work and he, he came to the, incidently his father was a very important intellectual, the generation before, in Vermont Life, I've forgotten the exact roles he played. Anyway, Harry Perkins decided that you see eugenics and zoology, this is based on the, on the, the nature, the genetic part of it, the inherited, heritable part of it and he had the idea, well, nurture the, the life, the conditions under which people are growing up has a lot to do with whether they turn out intelligent or not, that sort of thing. In those years, there was quite a, I think in the intellectual world there was quite a lot of argument between nature and nurture they call it. And so he wanted to do something about, about studying, well the social and the sociological situation in the state. And he went to the, I think it was the organization founded, I've forgotten what the money, whether it was Rockefeller money or what it was, made the Social Science Research Council was the outfit. He went to them and approached this idea. He wanted some, some grant money to finance a study along this line. Well, he had good ideas, but his ideas were sometimes not in total array so to speak and they sensed here is a significant thing to study, yes and they'd be glad to back it, but they wanted, but they wouldn't put Harry Perkins in charge of the whole thing. And so they said sure we'll do it, if you'll take Henry C. Taylor who is a, at that time, he was a first Chief of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics in Washington. He was a middle westerner. Take him as the director and so he was really, Henry C. Taylor was the one who, who organized, I think it was his conception this idea of a whole lot of committees of studying, studying your own problems so to speak, rather than just have some experts come in and do some research. And as a matter of fact, I worked, I got in when there was a little field work to do for the Committee on Educational Facilities which involved travelling around and talking with the school board members and so on on various issues. And then the, the thing was coming to a close and the committees were submitting their reports and all and the biggest intellectual experience I'd ever had to that time and maybe in all, was working right across desks with Henry C. Taylor on seeing the, seeing these reports through, through the printing and composing of the book and so on. I've told you more about that than you want to know.

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MK It's interesting. I had, I had come across the, you know, the name of the commission a few times in different connections, but I hadn't ever had occasion to really talk with anybody about it.

JH You hadn't had a chance to see one of the reports.

MK Right. Actually I think I might have. I can't remember whether it was published by the commission. There was something that I read a few years ago when I was working on another project which I borrowed from the Kellogg Hubbard Library in their Vermont collection. And I think...

JH Yea, probably you did then.

MK I think it was basically about the you know, the life of the agricultural communities in Vermont.

JH Yea, yea.

MK Sort of a general overview of agricultural life at that point.

JH Uh huh.

MK And it was, I think it was something coming on in the early '30's, so it, I'm assuming that perhaps it was part of that.

JH Yea, quite likely.

MK Yea. Okay, well let's move then from, from your work with the commission when that concluded. Did you continue then in education?

JH Oh yes. I, I had been teaching down in the Boston area and when I, when I went to, when I stopped teaching and went for my master's in education at Harvard, I was interested in getting back to Vermont, my home state. And I realized that I had to know something about, about the way the schools themselves operated so to speak. Oh well I had, I had, had a traveling fellowship, with Sheldon Traveling Fellowship of which Harvard gives a dozen or more I guess every year. Very modest financially and very, but very open as to what you do with you it and I spent a year travelling in Europe looking for the ideal rural school. Because...

MK Did you find it?



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JH Well pretty near, in various ways. But, nothing was pure in this business. And, let me get my thought, well, well oh yes, the dominant, the dominant word in the educational profession in those days was the one room school is an educational atrocity. The only thing to do to improve it is to abolish it. Well this is an way gets into your second topic.

MK That's quite alright.

JH And I had a feeling, I don't think this is right. Well, because I myself had been, my schooling before high school level, was in, what I learned after was called a dame school. Just a one woman who has her own little enterprise there takes them into her house and there were twelve or fourteen something like that kids of different ages and all that, that this woman, it was almost individual tutoring as far as she was concerned. And I think the fact that I'd had that sort of schooling, pre-high school schooling was one of the things that made me think it's not an atrocity. So and the interesting thing is, though my career actually was in public education, I myself only went two years to a public school. (LAUGH) Anyway, I came back with some, from that travelling fellowship with, with some vague ideas you might say about the possibilities in one room school and then, this work by the Country Life Commission was available at that time, so that's what I did for, for that very whole academic year and then as the year came to a close, along in the summer, I began to be looking for a job teaching. And I decided I'd, I'd like to, well vaguely maybe, maybe a one room school, at least an elementary school somewhere and I got a chance to teach up here at Maple Corner. It was the grammar room. It was appropriate for me to start with them, rather than with the smallest kids. And, and then from then on, I was either teaching or well taking a year off to study or, or became a superintendent later.

MK Now you taught in a grammar room, how many rooms were there to the Maple Corner?

JH Just two.

MK Just two.

JH For first four grades and 5, 6, 7 and 8 was the other one.

MK So still as a teacher, you still had multiple grades there anyway?

JH That's right, yes, yea.

MK What, how did you like that? How did you find that?

JH I don't know whether it was a question of liking or, well I kept fairly close to the usual way of doing things except I remember, I don't know whether all the kids were in on this business of, this isn't really in connection, it didn't have any place in any curriculum, but of where the idea was, where do we get all the, all the things we use, particularly foods and ending up with a, you know, a map of a world up here with a sample of cinnamon and a line up to where cinnamon came from of which I've forgotten, but that sort of thing, was, as far as I remember, that was only, the only non-establishment thing that I, that I did with those kids. But then the next year I taught in the Morse School right out here, you know where the turn is to go to the Horn. And it was, it was an ideal condition for a green horn to get in on, because there wasn't any first grade, there wasn't any eighth grade. In the meantime, that, yes in the meantime I spent the summer out at Winetka, where there was, Winetka had made itself quite notorious we'll say for shaking up the curriculum and the way of doing things and so on. And I did then try to use some of those ideas.

MK You say shaking up the curriculum, was this perhaps along the lines of John Dewey or?

JH Well, what, I don't, I don't know how much John Dewey influenced Cotton Washburn, but they had the curriculum basically divided into, into skills which somebody, which each kid could pursue at his own rate. And the other part was group and creative activities which, well like, project on Southwest Indians, they spend maybe half a year on that and build a pueblo and all this sort of thing. And some of those ideas, I sort of used here. The thing I, the, well one sample was, as I say you teach the way you were taught and in this case, I taught what I was taught. That was in Miss Carpenter's school. Now and then, she'd, everybody in the school would, would memorize some poem or other and one that always impressed me was Whitier's "Snowbound." And I read that to the school piece by piece and they, they learned it and of course it's a nice homey sort of thing in the snow and all this and I said, well now what, what pictures do you see in this? And each one chose a picture to represent in the block print and then we, well we printed them on a, on bleached muslin tablecloth which was of course they enjoyed that and it meant something to them and it was a lot, it had essentially some good art values in it.



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MK Did you come to feel then that the one room school experience was...?

JH Oh, I, I still think that if you can get, get the right teacher, get a good teacher with the right ideas and so on, that it, it can be a wonderful way for a kid to grow up.

MK I have talked at different times to people who call themselves products of one room schools

JH Yes.

MK And I have yet to find someone who said it was a bad experience.

JH Right, yea, yea.

MK Everyone has spoken very positively, I mean, very, it's not a survey at all, but everyone I've run into and I haven't sought them out particularly, but they have all talked about it as a very positive experience. A sense of, you know, they were learning within a family, within a community.

JH Yes, that's right.

MK And they learned from each other as well as from the teacher and they talked about all kinds of positive values. As a teacher, what were you seeing as, you know, what were the benefits you were seeing for the students, from your position as a teacher?

JH I don't know as I can answer that exactly.

MK What were the benefits...?

JH Well, I think, one thing I think that they, oh there were a lot of short comings in this thing too, but I think that they did have, did get a certain amount of sort of discovering, I mean, some new idea. One of things we did was and this would be not the whole school, well usually the lower three grades of course they got out earlier and all that. But some of these things were all for the fourth grade up and this one was, I've forgotten what the rest of the background on this was, but anyway it was representing the solar system and I had a source, it gave me the distances to the different planets and the size of the different planets and converted it to, something manageable and they made models of the different, scale of the different planets and then we, I don't, they couldn't

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all go at once in my car, but anyway, we set, set them out at the distances from the sun to scale and we went all the way down to the top of Clay Hill in Montpelier before we got Neptune. (LAUGHING) And the biggest, Saturn if that was it or Jupiter I've forgotten was only about that big. It was mostly just newspapered, but clay holding it all together. So...

MK It was about 2 feet.

JH Yea, that's right. That's right.

MK Well that's wonderful. So they did probably get a good sense of the perspective of it, the relationships huh.?

JH That's right, that's right. That's right.

MK So it is possible, especially when you are dealing with a fairly small group of children...

JH Uh huh.

MK ...by comparison, to do some really innovative and interesting things with them.

JH Yea.

MK Well we are sort of skipping ahead and jumping around here but, as you, okay, as you, did you continue teaching then for a number of years or did you get into, you know, administration and — ? — ?

JH (SIGH) Let's see, I, I taught, one year up at Maple Corner and then here at the Morse School, I think it was three years and then I went down to Columbia and then I was studying. And it was, yes, it was after a year of study there that I became a Superintendent.

MK Uh huh, now at that point, did Vermont have primarily rural one room schools?

JH Well it had plenty of them but I don't know how many. There were almost, practically every town had one or more.

MK Where was the impetus coming from to get rid of the rural schools?

JH I don't know. I think that, well there is no question that most, most, almost everybody who is, was hoping to teach, was prepared for teaching would want a situation that had the fewest grades possible, I think. I think

that's one place that the, the impetus came from and well I suppose from school boards to a considerable extent. That's all I can say.

MK I had been reading that, I can't remember where, I just recall reading this, that really the move toward school consolidation began with the migration of hill farmers off the farms in the mid 1800's as towns began to lose population in some of the districts here, some of the places that had little neighborhood one room schools and those closed down, that that was toward the beginning of the school consolidation is and I was wondering what the conditions of the times were like, that made that sort of pick up speed going through the, approaching the mid 1900's?

JH Well I think it was, it was probably economic in an important part. Of course each community though, the people in that community usually didn't want to give up their school.

MK What were some of the disadvantages or the problems with the one room schools?

JH Hard to get a good teacher. I think perhaps that's one of the main one.

MK Because teachers didn't want to teach in those situations or?

JH That's right.

MK Okay.

JH I could say that by all means that, though there were a few, a very few people at the say in the education, the teacher preparation hierarchy we'll say who were trying to make the most of the rural schools, that one was Fannie Dunn down at TC. In general, well, the whole efficiency idea had blossomed in education at that time. And just from the point of view of, from the you might say, narrow administrative point of view, it didn't make sense to have all these small schools out around here. I think that's one of the factors at the time. There were probably others in the air by all means.

MK This efficiency mentality taken hold let's say the 1930's or did that come along later?

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JH Oh it was, it was, yea it had, I think it took a long time, I'm trying to think. I remember somebody produced a, I suppose it was a doctor study on this business, this idea about efficiency and I can't think of just when that was. But it was definitely in the air in graduate schools of education and that sort of thing and it, obviously left us that had an influence on the normal schools as many of them were at that time before it becoming teacher's colleges.

MK When, when then did things actually move to a head in terms of consolidating so many of the small schools into, you know, the one town central elementary school? I mean, I realize there ~~were~~ a few one room schools left in Vermont, a handful basically, maybe two handfuls?

JH Uh huh. I think it was all so long and slow and persistent that it would be hard to put your finger on a, on a date on that. There's this thing, you are probably aware of, that is done in, has been done in many towns before moving to one central school, we had, the example in this town here. Two grades for the whole town in that little school. The next two grades in that little school and that sort of thing and maybe, well I don't remember just which school had which, but we did that for quite awhile.

MK So it happened gradually in that sense and it also meant that some of those buildings that were there were used in some way and they didn't have to build a whole new building to consolidate the whole thing.

JH That's right, that's right, yes.

MK Okay. What, in terms of the community, I know this, this is probably even more the case when the union districts were formed to send kids to a centralized high school, but I would assume in the communities, that there would have been a great resistance to the idea of losing the local school. At least it must have been a contested issue anyway

JH Yes, that's right.

MK Yea. What were some of the arguments that were being raised on both sides at that, at that point?

JH Oh gee!

MK Generally I mean, not any specific.

JH I don't know. I don't know if I can.

MK Was there a sense that the community was losing something by losing that school?

JH Oh yes, I think always that. I don't remember, I can't grapple with that really.

MK Oh sure, okay. Yea. I lived in West Virginia for awhile and I remember there that even say 20, 25 years after, because I hadn't been there at the time of the consolidation to sending kids to a central high school in this one community, but even say 20 years after that had happened, people still talked about how that was a big shame, you know, that that had happened in their town and...

JH Yes, yea, that's right.

MK There was still long standing rivalries persisting between the various towns that used to have their own schools

JH That's right.

MK ,just in terms of the social climate of those communities, and people were now technically all united in one school district, but they did not feel that way.

JH Uh huh. The interesting point, well you mentioned rivalries. Barton and Orleans, there was a long standing rivalry between those two schools. Orleans is a village in the Town of Barton actually, but anyway, I know that when in the early, when anybody, well it was, it was a local newspaper editor who was plugging hard for, for their getting together, but plenty of people, never do that because, these, this athletic rivalry between the two schools is and there is now. It's like Lake Region Union High School, I don't know. It would be very interesting to know how people look at it now. But as I see it, those, those opinions, they gradually wear away so to speak I think. Though there are plenty, plenty of people who think, well whatever it was that was smaller and more intimate, is a value that has been lost and I think, I think, this can't, there's no question, it can happen that, well we talk about the problems of bureaucracy. The people on the staff get a little, a little farther away from, from, from the actual local situation and tend to ignore it perhaps, naturally the local people who get ignored don't like that. And, and I think it, I think actually it, it puts quite a burden on, as I say, on the local staff. For instance, if it's a newly consolidated

high school, puts the burden on the staff and the leadership of that staff to see that what we call the human values aren't, aren't sort of run down, run over. And I think they, of course our whole, our whole social and civic life is, is, we are more tied together by all sorts of economics and all the rest and so it's worthwhile to learn this as you are growing up in school, but I think it's got, I think it's got to be, well, well if you say call it the harshness of bigness, it's got to be, the mediator has got to be toned down by, by the people involved, by the teachers and the administration.

MK That's an aspect of teacher's training that has become necessary through this process. That wasn't there before?

JH That's right, that's right. I do think that, there's a lot more general attention to psychology and emotions now, say in, well apparent in schools then there was 50 years ago. I think that it's crept in there and to a rather good effect, but it's not always there.

MK I do find it interesting. So really you probably could say you've got mixed feelings about the whole thing. There were definitely some good points to the rural schools, but also some, some advantages to be getting to the larger ones as well?

JH To sum it up, yea. That, I guess that's about it. My, my heart is with smallness though. You know, the book "Small is Beautiful." Yea and I'm very strong for that. But I think, I think that we certainly are now more rapidly than ever, moving toward social integration, I mean at least physically if not mentally and all that. That is, all sorts of ways. The population of the world, both in detail and in broad way <sup>is</sup> having more forces putting them together or bringing them in touch with each other and I think we've got to learn to handle that somehow.

MK It does create whole new, whole new concerns for school systems.

JH Yea, yea.

MK It would be hard to see that it could go backwards. I can't envision that, that we could at this, the way our society is structured now, that we could successfully even if someone wanted to, move back to smaller more community based schools than it could be successfully done in terms of you know needing to transport children...



JH Well of course, in a way, not in, this isn't exactly right, but there's something to it, that the idea of an alternative high school has a little bit of this regression you might say or return to the human side, but well that's because you don't have an alternative high school unless you have a high school large enough to need some alternatives so to speak.

MK I just want to pause long enough to turn over the tape. Another one of the projects, programs whether that we are looking at and we haven't done much work on it at this point at all, has to do with John Dewey and I asked you about, whether certain ideas...

JH Yea, yea.

MK ...were an influence of Dewey at all, but did you hear much in your training as a, in your graduate level training. What were you hearing about John Dewey? Was Dewey, were his theories talked about a lot? I mean, around the early 1930's I know, that's when a number of...

JH Yea,...

MK ...alternatives types of schools were begun, supposedly based on Dewey's principles.

JH The funny thing is, well, whether it is the funny thing I don't know. I didn't, I never got into any course where, where John Dewey as such became a prominent source of discussion, subject of discussion really. I think that, I got the impression that he was awfully hard to understand, his writings were hard to understand. I had a friend who taught in one of the New York State teacher's colleges, a little friend, quite a little older than I, not living now, who, well we got into all sorts of conversations about education and he probably mentioned John Dewey a few times, but the funny thing is I haven't a clear idea actually of how much is done on John Dewey's contribution and how much crept through other ways. One of the books I remember that did have a deep impression on me and some of us, was the one called "Emotion and the Education Process." And this was a fellow named Dan Prescott and I don't even know whether, I mean John Dewey may have been somewhat in back of that, but I don't think, I don't connect John Dewey very much with the, specifically with the emotions.

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MK Yea, I have not read more than a smattering of Dewey, so I don't know whether in fact what I understand to be Dewey's principles have come from Dewey or have come from other folks who may or may not have interpreted correctly.

JH Well you hear things like "learning by doing. And "teaching the whole child." Those are about the only two sort of mottos that I think of in those days. I know that in my early days that I didn't have much of any, any, well I say, any feeling for the emotional side. As a matter of fact, because I was, my under graduate education was in engineering and it was that, that, that influenced my outlook and it took a long time before the emotional side and all that began to really crop up in my awareness enough to make any difference. So I can't say anything about, about John Dewey (LAUGHING) that's enlightening in any way. (LAUGHING)

MK I just wondered, I Oh, here's my chance to ask someone about John Dewey. (LAUGHING)

JH No Ma'am sorry to disappoint you. (LAUGHING)

MK It's quite alright. Oh, it's funny though.

JH Yes, that's right.

MK Well just...

JH Well I did, I will say this. That, I ran into a lot of the shuffling labels so to speak. I mean, like progressive education, I don't know who would undertake, I wouldn't undertake to define it or anything like that, but I've seen the term used you know to justify this, that and the other thing. And I, there's very definitely a, a, now what's the word, now I can't think, anyway, the relation of words to facts, to situations. A real problem there. People sometimes get onto a word and write off wildly and forget what it really belongs to.

MK Just so that I have my dates correct on this before we leave the education side and ask you some other questions, you were the, you are a retired Commissioner of Education?

JH That's right.

MK When did you, when were you the Commissioner, when did you <sup>retire</sup>?

JH (SIGH)

MK I'm not sure I'll need to say that, but...

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JH From, from a, I don't know, I've forgotten. Whether it was August 1st anyway, '49 to '65.

MK Okay. It was in '65. Okay. To go back now, to leave education and well not exactly leave it, because you were still identified as an educator, but at the time, to get into the Green Mountain Parkway issue...

JH Oh yes.

MK ...I guess is the one you said you didn't know anything about?

JH That's right.

MK Okay. Well what I'm hoping you can, what I'm hoping you can give me is a sense of the time. You don't have to been an active...

JH Well there's somewhere and I don't, it may have been in Vermont Affairs, that's my best guess, you know that piece.

MK Uh huh.

JH There was quite an exhaustive article about the Green Mountain Parkway. And I'll say that at that time, well I think my time in Vermont was, was broken up about then. I mean I was down in New York studying and I wasn't very much, very close to the trend, but my, my impression of the basic feeling in there that anything that Roosevelt wanted was wrong. I think we were pretty rabidly anti-Roosevelt in this state. But the funny thing is, this would have been, let's see, the fall of, hum, of '30. Let's see, Roosevelt would have been elected in the fall of '32, it was the winter before. Thanksgiving before, 1931 when I was, I was teaching up here in Maple Corner and a cousin of mine who also lived in Bennington was teaching in Waitsfield and I was going to take, take her in my car home for this, we took a whole week at Thanksgiving time then. And while I was waiting her to finish, waiting for her to finish packing her suitcase there in Waitsfield, she was living in the house of a side judge. A respectable and fairly senior side judge and we got visiting this way and we began, we began to I guess, to sort of feel each other out a little bit about politics and we discovered that we agreed that maybe this fellow Roosevelt would be a good guy for the presidency. (LAUGH) But I mean the fact that he as, really I would say, part of the Vermont establishment felt that way. It was rather

unusual and it struck me as rather unusual at the time. But I think certainly the general view was in the State, was I think that was an underlying point of this whole thing. Now, this article, it may have been in Vermont Affairs I don't know, that or somewhere I remember there was an analysis of the voting and the farther the town was from the, from the backbone of the State, the less, the less difference it made to it. I think all the towns that were near... What's that?

MK Was this Frank Bryan's article? Was this Frank Bryan's article?

JH Probably.

MK It might have been in Vermont History, I'm not sure, but I think I've seen the article.

JH Yea.

MK I can't remember what it was about though.

JH And the funny thing is, I'm not, I'm not dead positive though of which way it was. I mean whether the towns nearer were for it or against it, but I kind of think they were against it in the further, well though I'm not sure. I remember myself, I simply felt, well I think it would be a darn good thing to have a road up there to keep these people out of driving through our villages and messing them up so to speak. That was just the off hand feeling I had at the time.

MK What were the arguments for it? I mean, what was it suppose to do? I mean, again, just thinking about the fact that this is a radio series. Many people who hear this won't have had any idea there ever was such a proposed thing as a Green Mountain Parkway.

JH I'm not even sure I know. Well, I think it was, I think that the National Administration, I think they needed to take up the unemployment slack a good deal. I think it was a matter of partly of employment and the article in question may have given that.

MK Was there any thought that this would, well I know that, one thing that was a bit ironic was that James Taylor who headed up the you know the Green Mountain Club...

JH Yes.

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MK <sup>was a proponent</sup> of the Long Trail and all that, he was, he was really thinking it was a good idea. He came out heavily supporting it.

JH Yea, I...

MK At that time, I guess <sup>he</sup> was with the Chamber of Commerce also, <sup>4</sup> thought this would be a great way to get people into the Green Mountains and counted on the Green Mountain Club to back him and they did not. The Green Mountain Club <sup>staunchly</sup> opposed it, which I thought was interesting.

JH Yea. That's right, I remember Jim Taylor very well and he was definitely the Chamber of Commerce promotional kind of guy. Very definitely. But I, I think I've said everything about, that I know.

MK Just, the article that I was reading made it seem as though, this really was like the issue of this particular time. There was a special legislative session <sup>and a special</sup> referendum.

JH And <sup>it</sup> was, <sup>it</sup> was, I know, I was out of the State much of that time.

MK Interestingly, I guess people thought it would, in addition to creating jobs, that it would also probably brought in some dollars from tourism?

JH Yea, that sort of thing. Though some people I remember that said well, they're just, they won't stop to spend any money in Vermont, they just dash right up through to Montreal. I seem to remember that as something that was floating around at the time, among the cons.

MK It's interesting, I've heard people say similar things about the effect of the interstate in parts of Vermont. That it was suppose to bring...

JH Yea, yea.

MK ...dollars in and instead it's taken them right on through.

JH If you want to develop more on that, the guy to talk with is Keith Wallace.

MK Huh.

JH Do you know him?

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MK I didn't...

JH You've heard of him?

MK Yea.

JH He has, you see he was President of the Vermont Farm Bureau for a long time after Arthur Packard and I, and at some point, he's been I think a member of the legislature from Waterbury, relatively recently.

MK For a number of years \_\_\_\_\_.

JH I have an idea that he was one of the leading antagonist.

MK One of those against the parkway?

JH Yes, yea.

MK Oh good, then I'll check with him. It's hard to know who to, who to look up about what on a project like this.

JH That's right, that's right.

MK I mean in a course of a person's life work, they can have been involved in so many different things.

JH Right, right, yea.

MK Yea. That's interesting. One thing that I wanted to pursue going way back when you were talking about your childhood in Bennington and you said your father had an interest in the Woodbury Quarry...

JH Yea.

MK ...and you came up when you were about 12. You drove up on a 2 day trip.

JH Yea.

MK You drove in an automobile?

JH Yea.

MK What do you remember, what kind of an automobile was it? What do you remember about that trip?

JH (SIGH) It was either a Pope Hartford or a Packard.  
(LAUGH) If it was, if it was fathers, because, I think, well, it might have been my uncle's car and I wouldn't



know what that would have been. But our first car was a Pope Hartford. I think it was in 1907. And anyway, those days, when getting near snowy weather you put your car up on blocks and left it there til, after mud time in the spring. But, we started with a Pope Hartford and I think that we, I think we had two there for awhile, I think one of each and I guess we went from the Pope Hartford to a Cadillac and the Cadillac wasn't the kind of thing it is now. I mean it, almost next to a Rolls Royce I guess now, but they were just sort of among the swim of a lot of now forgotten cars.

MK There were some cars that were made then that no one has heard of since.

JH That's right, that's right.

MK Unusual names.

JH Even one of them was a Stanley Steamer. You know, it was powered by steam. And I don't know anything more about the mechanics of it.

MK I wondered, in Bennington, probably the Wasp was made in Bennington. There was a car made in Bennington.

JH Yes, Carl Martin's, wait a minute. It may have been a Wasp. And that was short lived. Yea.

MK Yea, I just wondered, yea. When you, let's see, of course Bennington probably would have had electricity when you were growing up, remember that?

JH Yes.

MK Yes.

JH Well, I can remember when we did get electric lights.

MK Can you.

JH Yes and I don't know how old I would have been then, but we were on candles and kerosene lamps in the earliest days. And it might have been like, oh 1908 or so. Looking at the dining room, looking at that lamp on the wall, it was run by electricity.

MK Do you remember, was there a lot of excitement on the part of the grown-ups that they were getting electricity and...?

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JH I don't think either my father or mother would respond to a thing like that with excitement. (LAUGH)

MK Do you recall how it changed, did it change in the aspect of your family life having this? Did it change the family schedule in anyway, since brighter light?

JH No, no, no I don't thing so.

MK No.

JH No. We didn't have to have the candle burning on the table at the head of the stairs anymore. Didn't use it for hair dryers and toasters and things like that. First, no question, but I can remember, I don't know whether it was, when we first got the electric lights, but soon, we there in the dining room was an electric table and it had, well how big was it. The top of it was about the size of that, maybe a little deeper, maybe not so long, but on the edge down here, it had a long panel here with about four places to plug in. It's not like the plugging in now at all. They were two rather fat prongs to, but you could, we could have a chaffing dish and I don't know what else, wired that way to run off from the electric table which could be moved up by the, near my mother's, her elbow at the table. We didn't use it an awful lot as I remember.

MK Interesting. No one's talked about one of those yet, so.

JH No.

MK That's interesting, yea. The only other thing I wanted to ask you about was the telephone. Do you remember having a telephone?

JH Yea.

MK All of your life?

JH Yes always.

MK Uh huh.

JH And telephone number was lll ring 2 and the neighbor across the street was lll ring 1. And I guess it had a crank on it. It was on the wall, it had a crank. And I don't know, I don't know how you got central as you had to in most cases, but you had to turn the crank. I don't whether you could directly call somebody on your same lines without turning the thing. I don't remember that at all, but it was, you cranked it.

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MK You had to go through the operator to call anyone?

JH Yea, yea.

MK Did people, I was reading an account in the Vermont History News, it tells, from a woman's diary, or I guess from a journal that she had written and she talked about when the telephone came to the family farm and how all the neighbors would of course always listen in on each others conversations.

JH Sure.

MK And always, always make it sound in their own, when they are speaking to other people as though they were the only folks on the party line that never listened to the other conversations. (LAUGHING) Do you recall whether people did listen routinely in the Bennington area?

JH We didn't know, I think Dorothy Canfield has a little story about that. Or maybe, I remember she wrote, had a little skit called "Tourist Accommodated" and I think maybe that was a feature of this, one play, somebody there listening to the neighbors and then reporting. But I don't think my family ever took time for that.

MK Okay. Well thank you very much. You've been really helpful here this morning.

JH On this consolidation business...

MK Yes.

JH ...I think that there's a lot of fuzz as to what kind of consolidation one is talking about.

MK Uh huh.

JH Whether you were talking about consolidation of an attendance area or consolidation of a school administrative district and not that it, I don't know whether that's a significant thing to, make sure what we are talking about as far as consolidation goes, that's the idea which. For instance, some, I'm not sure about the pattern now in recent years, what's been going on when a union high school is formed, sometimes some of those towns are under a different superintendent from the town where the high school is and I think in general the tendency is to, to adjust the superintendent's district so that they fit the high school attendance areas, but that hasn't been always the same obviously. Maybe something to watch. We

try, I will say this, that though during my tenure, perhaps the most, most obvious change in education that happened was the development of the union high school districts. We tried to make them as much as possible, well to make the decision a local one. We got out, I don't think I got any, we got out two little booklets, to guide local study of this issue and we definitely, the last thing in the world I wanted to do was to see it sort of slapped down from above that the main idea was to get the local people to face the alternatives one way or another and make up their own minds. And there were two little booklets we got out and I forgot what, I think one was called "A Guide to Citizen Action for the Public School" something like that and I think that was yellow. And the other one was "Aids to Citizen Actions." That didn't go so far. That was a certain amount of factual stuff. And I think that one was blue. And I don't think I have copies of either of them with my trophies.

MK Probably can turn them up somewhere \_\_\_\_\_.

JH Yea, there ought to be, ought to be, yea.

MK Now it's interesting to think about that difference between the administrative verses the attendance area and I realize too that I'm unclear as to whether the, the movement to the union high schools, was that for instance recently we've seen that now schools have to begin, schools had so much time within which to decide how they were going to implement a kindergarten.

JH Oh, yes.

MK Was it that kind of thing with the union high schools? Did the legislature say, this is the way the state's going, you've got so much time to figure out how you are going to deal with it.

JH No, no, no, no, no.

MK Okay.

JH It was, it was piece by piece. Usually when the school was getting crowded and they had to do something about it. That kind of thing usually prompted it. And, or, yea, usually some at least some local indication we've got to do something about this, what, what should it be. Now, I'm thinking, up there on Route 15, Johnson had a high school, Hyde Park had a high school, Jeffersonville had a high school. Of course, you've got to leave, leave

Worcester, leave, isn't it terrible, names, my age names just get lost. You know they fly away. The town, the darn town North of, north of Stowe.

MK Morrisville.

JH Morrisville, they had a high school. Well People's Academy that was and that was nothing you'd let go at all. But going west from there, Hyde Park, Johnson, Jeffersonville, maybe there was another one, all had smaller high schools. Now I think all of those are in the Lomouille Valley Union now. That was I think since I was a bureaucrat. And it's a fact that the, the high schools of that size, small high schools, it was hard to offer all that they aspired to offer.

MK They've added some vocational programs and more art programs and...

JH That's right and I only learned just for within the last week that almost all of our high schools now have a, a special education teacher, one who spends some time with some of the, the special education kids and a flexible program. I only learned that the other day so to speak which I guess it turns out to be progress. I mean it gives the kids a better break.

MK Now those are important distinctions and there's also when people talk about school consolidation, are they thinking of the, you know, the union districts with the high schools now as being the most recent...

JH Yea.

MK ...and probably the most, well for folks who are having children now, that's the most visible evidence of consolidation because...

JH Yes, yea.

MK ...they probably don't have recollections first hand of perhaps attending the one room schools.

JH That's right.

MK So they're really two consolidations. There's the consolidation you know, losing the one room schools and having one central elementary school and...

JH Yea.

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MK ...then there's the consolidation to the, you know several towns together for the high school.

JH Yea, that's right, that's right.

MK Well thank you very much.

JH This has been kind of interesting in many ways.

MK Well good.

JH Besides I drew too many blanks.

MK No, that's