

Wilma Maynard/TC1992.0060
Mad River Valley Project/VFC1991.0004

JB Jane Beck
WM Wilma Maynard
Place Moretown, VT
Date 05/14/1992

JB Go ahead.

WM I'm Wilma Maynard, I live at the Camel's Hump view
country inn in Moretown.

JB Yeah well why don't we start with, you grew up. Right
here.

WM I've lived, all my life here in Moretown, I went to,
the elementary school here when it was a two room
school. I believe I'm the fourth generation. On my
dad's side to live in Moretown. [.56] We had lived in
Randolph the first year we were married and then we
moved to New Hampshire for a year and our present
place came up for sale, and I was anxious to get back
to Moretown, so we decided to, buy and run it as a,
country inn, I had known the, a previous family called
the Coffrins, and they were a German family and she
ran it as a tourist home, back in the 1930s. About
1934. And I had spoke to her, after we had, come here

to live, and was operating out business and she told me that she, rented her rooms for 50 cents a night.

[1.48] Back then. And, we do a combination of, farming my husband the first few years we were here, he worked in construction, he helped make the asphalt for interstate 89, and he decided he wanted to put beef cattle on the farm so he went into the white face herefords, and he has a herd right now of seventeen with the expecting about nine new little ones within the next two or three weeks, and we also run the little snack bar across the way, so that, it keeps us pretty busy, between both businesses you know we can survive.

JB Do you plant crops and? [2.42]

WM We raise all of our own vegetables, in the garden that we serve to our guests and fruits, we have our own raspberries and strawberries, we have a little orchard started, and we mainly everything that is served here at the inn, other than the meat is, raised right on our farm, on the premises. We've raised our five children here, and they grew up in both businesses.

JB I was talking with Leddy Conrad she was saying the her

mother first started taking paying guests on their property, well first of all she threatened to go back to teaching during the depression, and her husband didn't want her to do that, he said the children needed her at home so she started taking paying guests, during the depression to supplement their income.

WM This is, this is one reason why that I, started the guest business because I had two little boys, that were, a year and just a couple of months and soon we had three, four and five after that. So, we, we took skiers, we in the wintertime, we started here the year that Sugarbush broke trails.

JB Oh you did. So that was what?

WM 1958. And, with the children I decided to stay at home and do the skiers in the wintertime, and then had my summers with the children. And then as they got older and got their own summer jobs, I did it year round. And now we do have a lot of hikers. That we belong to a program, called country inn along the trail and we have a lot of hikers that come through and they hiked the long trail. And, of course one of the, hikes

around here that they enjoy is climbing Camel's Hump.

JB Yeah. [5.08]

WM And which is one of the most hiked mountains in Vermont. And that is what, that's how our farm got it's name, when we moved in we had a, circular come that said Camel's Hump View Farm and I said to Jerry this must be the name of our place, so we put a sign up.

JB Ha! Ha! Ha! You mean, you had a circular come to you saying?

WM It came, it was one of these, second class circulars came and on it, it said Camel's Hump View Farm, Moretown, Vermont. So it, was, evidently.

JB Meant for you.

WM Yeah but I think it was, the previous owners had called, this farm that particular name, so we just continued.

JB That's great.

WM Ah ha. [5.55]

JB So the first year, how many guests did you have?

WM Oh, gosh.

JB Busy?

WM Yes there were hardly any inns in the valley at that time, there was the, what they called the Snuggery, and there was the Clarks' in Fayston, and so the, ski area was asking anyone with private homes to open their doors that had extra bedrooms for guests, and so we, we did, we had, it was mostly just weekends then. And, I can remember we, our first guest we had, was a family called the Touries from New York City, and he was a jeweler, he manufactured jewelry he was Hungarian, and they had two boys, and he brought in his salesman with him, [6.47] Mr., hum, Bond, and his wife and two boys and they kept coming back every year for about ten years until the boys got into college, and here a few years ago, Andy Toury brought his wife back, and he has since taken over his dad's business. And so we still are connected with the family, we hear from them now and then, and he, told us that his mom and dad had retired to Florida, now, and they are in their, late seventies, early eighties at this time.

JB Gosh.

WM So it's, real interesting, to you know have them come back.

JB How many can you take at once?

WM We have, we have around sixteen is good. Cause I serve dinners, I'm not just a B & B now, I, have always served dinners, they talk me at first I was just sleeping people, then they talked me into breakfast and then they said Wilma why don't you do dinners so we don't have to go out for dinner, so. [7.56] I got into dinners.

JB Ha! Ha!

WM And that's the way it, got going. But it's a lot of fun. We, we don't get to travel too much but we travel a lot just listening, to the people that, come in, we have had people from nearly every country, in the world I believe, one interesting group we had in was we had this delegation from Peking, China come, and there were five men, and a lady interpreter, by the name of Miss Wong, and we were their first stop in the United States, they flew into California and then they flew direct from there to Burlington, Vermont and two of the men had been in the state's before but three of them hadn't. And so it was very interesting cause they

did not know anything about our way of living, and all, and I remember feeding them pancakes the first morning, and Miss Wong had not come down, and the five men were sitting around the table, and I put the pancakes on, and they, picked them up in their hands and started to eat the pancakes like toast, so I had to show them how to, how you put the pancakes on the plate, and pour the melted butter on and then the maple syrup so that they could, eat it like that, and they were, they were just so pleased, they spent three days with us and when they left, they said we hope we can come back again, and at the time I had a group of hikers in, and they were fascinated, with this group I had from Peking, China, and they, got right up and sang them a nice welcome in song, and, this group they really enjoyed it, they, then men jumped right up and bowed and, and were real pleased. [9.55] And before they left the following, the second night that they were in, I had a gentleman in from Saskatchewan, Canada that was hiking the long trail, and he, was gonna go to Peking, China, on an exchange, he taught at a, college in Saskatchewan, and so he was very

interested in the group, and he, I introduced him to Miss Wong and as it turned out, he was gonna go over and study at the same university that her brother was going to. [10.30] And so she invited him to come to her home, in January to visit.

JB Oh how.

WM The family and, they exchanged addresses, and things so he would be able to get in touch with her.

JB That's amazing. Has your clientele changed much over the years? [10.46]

WM Yes, in a way it has, because the young people, with the cost of skiing today, we do not get the family people that we used to get years ago. Now, back when we first started out, lifts tickets were, eight dollars, compared to thirty-eight, thirty-nine a piece now. And I had this family that would come in and they had five children, and the, father told me that the children ran newspaper routes and had their own jobs, and they would, earn enough during the period of a year, to buy their lift ticket for the week and then he would pay for their stay here, so they could come on a family vacation, but today, you just, you just

don't see the families coming and staying for at least a week, at a time like you used to.

JB So you don't, that hasn't gone over to the cross country skiers, then. [11.47]

WM We do get, we do get some cross country skiers, not, not not too many, of course your younger children, I think they like the down hill, better.

JB Of course they do.

WM We do do a lot of cross country but, I think the younger people tend to, like riding up and riding down. Ha! Ha! Ha! [12.10] But, you know, we had Bunion fellow called us this year, and he remembered coming skiing, and staying with us, and he made reservations so his two children, he said I haven't been up to your place in thirty years, and he said, I want my two children, my son and daughter to have the same experience that I had at that age. So, he brought his two children in.

JB That's terrific. [12.42]

WM And, you know that, that was kind of different this year, we did see people that we hadn't seen in years. That came back. Which surprised me with the economy

the way it, the way it was. But, there again, there were others that, I assume were loosing jobs and things down country, and they just didn't, you know, you didn't see them. They were having rough times.

JB Has the from when Sugarbush first opened and Mad River I guess was going, have there been sort of major changes in the way of life in the valley? [13.20]

WM Oh, definitely. Definitely. You know it bothers me, to see the mountains all built up, to condos and you know I, I can't help but think that, you've seen it out west, where that they cut for so many, buildings up there, it has a lot to do with our rain forest, and it can't help but harm our water supply here in the area, I have seen the Mad River it used to be, fairly, leveled out year round, now you come back in the summer time and there's hardly any water going down that river. And, [14.12] I can't help but believe that with the, development up there, and drilling for all these wells, and things that it has come effect on, on our water supply down here. And I know, as long as there's this snow on the mountains it tends to give the farmers a later start in getting their crops going

because the air is so chilly. That wind blows cool, as long as there's snow on top of those mountains.

[14.44] You know it's good, it's bad, it's brought in the good and it's brought in the bad, now when I grew up, we never locked a door, even when I, when we bought here in 58 you could go into Montpelier and not lock your door and never had to worry, now you can't even go a mile into Moretown without locking your door. And, that, that's not good. You even have to make sure your cars locked in the parking lot in the, in town, because they're smashing windows and grabbing whatever might be inside, and it seems to be happening day and night, now it's not just, so you know it's brought in, it's brought in money to the, to the area, it's true but, I'm kind of old fashioned and, that isn't all there is to life, you know. I tend to think some of the old ways in the old days were just as good.

JB One of the things I was talking with, Marion Wallace about was the different character of the different towns, Moretown, and Waitsfield and Warren and she was, characterizing them, and I haven't really started

to interview extensively about Moretown, but it sounds to me like it was, very different than Warren, and Waitsfield in that it was, almost a company town for. Can you tell me a little bit about? [16.35]

WM Moretown was, it was, Ward Lumber Company owned the two mills, (Bell ringing) when I grew up, they owned the two mills, they owned the two stores, they had a hardware store and a grocery store, nearly everyone in town worked for Ward Lumber Company. I guess I, have to thank my parents they got us on the road to be an independent and you know, one of my, brothers was a teacher, and I went into the secretarial work, and then my, younger brothers are in carpentry work, so that we did not have to rely on working at the mill. Like a lot of the people did because it seemed like they didn't really get any where.

JB Well that was like a double edge sword.

WM Yes, yes it was. You, a lot of the men they would work by the week and by their groceries, or their you know the general store sold clothing, shoes, whatever you could get anything there, medicines and they always took what you had purchased during the week out of

your pay check so sometimes the men were lucky if they had ten dollars left in their pay envelope when they picked it up on Friday afternoon. [18.02] And, this is, one reason why they, you know, it was hard for them to get ahead. They never knew what was gonna be in there, if they didn't keep, good records at the end of week.

JB Gosh.

WM So, you know it was, definitely a mill town, definitely. Other than what farming went on.

JB And really locked up. By one family, I guess.

WM Yes you see the, the Wards have a, well that was, went through at least four generations, Hiram, Burton, Merlin, and then Holley. Now we had just the one clapboard mill left.

JB And he, Holley runs that?

WM Holley runs that now, um hum. [18.53] Yup. And I don't think, I think he owns one other one in, Maine maybe, I think those are the only two in New England. And, as far as I know, there are not too many more in the whole country if there are any more.

JB Yeah I've been thinking I should definitely interview,

Baird.

WM Andy Baird.

JB Yeah.

WM Andy Baird Jr. Yes, that's right, cause his dad ran that mill for a long time.

JB And the mills were such an important part, of the whole valley.

WM Yes.

JB And now look.

WM Yes. Yes. Yup. Yeah, you see other, that's what the industry was right around this area, and then, of course we had the talc mine over on the Waterbury side, of Moretown.

JB Do you remember that running? [19.47]

WM I knew it was running, but I was not old enough to, to really know that much about it. Of course up on the other Maynard farm here, the Bisby farm.

JB The Bisby.

WM It's the old John Bisby farm.

JB Ye, okay.

WM Yes right here on the corner, there's a mine up on their, a talc mine up on their land.

JB Oh, really. The one and that's, is that your husband's father.

WM Cousin.

JB Cousin.

WM Cousin.

JB And that's where you take a hundred. Is that where a hundred turns?

WM Yeah. Yes, that farm that sits right in the corner there. [20.19] Yeah. The road to the talc mine is the one that's right across from the church of the crucified one, down here.

JB Um, hum. Um, hum. I'll be darned.

WM There's no buildings left there, but Jerry told me that he can remember when he first helped his uncle on the farm here, that there were still, you know, pieces of structures standing there, and that was back in the early fifties. 1950, 51.

JB Yeah cause there were talc mines or a talc mine over in well just outside of Waterbury.

WM Yes. Yeah that's the, that's where the main mine was.

JB So it's all part of that complex.

WM I believe so, I believe so. And the, understanding I

had was that they, supplied for Johnson Baby Products.

JB It's funny as I've interviewed around Vermont, there have been a couple areas I've hit that, you know, and they all do it for Johnsons. Ha! Ha! Baby.

WM Yeah right. Right. You. Now you know, back, like I was saying, when I was growing up we used to have the box socials at the town hall, and the Wards of course having the businesses we used to have the community Christmas tree, a night or two before Christmas, and the school children would put on a program, and then they had Wards would get these two huge great big trees and have them set up in the town hall, and they'd be decorated, with whatever and they'd put gloves and things on the trees for the men you know and the children, every child in town got a candy box, if nothing else. And, we, that sticks in my mind as you know the way they did back then, that would be back in the, oh, 43, 44.

JB Yeah your mother was, funny talking about that, cause she said, where I came from we didn't do that. [22.33]
Ha! Ha! Ha! She said I sort of resented it. Ha! Ha!

WM Ha! Ha! Yeah, she did. That's why, that's why we went

to Montpelier High School and got our education. Ha!

Ha! That's where she graduated from. Ha! Ha!

JB Ha! Ha! Ha! I had to laugh.

WM Yeah. So. Of course they had, you know they'd have to hold dances at the town hall, my uncles played. Green Mountain Rangers.

JB I, I had forgotten that, cause I interviewed Earl Long and I think he used to play with your uncles too.

WM That could be. That could be. [23.10] Was he a violinist?

JB Yes.

WM Yup. Yeah I think he did. Another one was, Alden Bettis.

JB Oh did he play?

WM He played.

JB Now I interviewed him.

WM Yeah he filled in in their band in fact, Alden and Uncle Raymond, still play at the, Cabin Follies in Waitsfield.

JB Oh!

WM They have them in March.

JB I had wanted to go to that, and missed it this year.

WM Yeah. Yeah.

JB What does Alden play, does he play the fiddle?

WM Tuba, I believe.

JB Golly.

WM Tuba.

JB I'll be darned. Yeah I've been impressed with the amount of music that there was in this valley.

WM Really. Yes.

JB And some of the people still remember the old songs.

WM Oh yes. Definitely, yeah. Yeah. No music, they, well Ed Eurich and the Baird family. [24.05] All into music. A lot of it. Yup.

JB And did your uncles always played.

WM Oh yes. Yeah. Uncle Kenneth plays the guitar, Uncle Raymond the accordion, and well when I was growing up, you know as long as you went to Uncle Raymond and Uncle Kenneth's band, you know, their dances, I could go. Ha! Ha! Ha! [24.28] So, I always made sure I went to their dances that way I got to a dance on Saturday night. Ha! Ha! Ha! And my grandfather was there, of course he wouldn't miss a dance anyway.

JB So he played too?

WM He didn't play, he, lots of times he took tickets at the door and, and he went for the, social time. He enjoyed seeing the people and.

JB Well how, where did your uncles learn to play then?
[24.52] Did they pick it up at home or?

WM You know, I am not sure of that, I'm not sure just where they learned to play. See my dad played the saxophone.

JB Oh I didn't realize that.

WM Yeah. In fact our grandson his great grandson, has been taken lessons on his saxophone, at the Waterbury Elementary school yeah. [25.13] And, I, dad played in the Waitsfield town band, now you see, Uncle Raymond and Uncle Kenneth, they were m interested in the, the dance bands instead of the, what do I want to say the brass ensembles and that type of thing.

JB Did they use to sing at all, or?

WM No neither one of them did, they had, a fellow, Harvey Richardson, he was from Riverton, he sang and this Walter Brooks that I told you about he played the drums. [25.53] Warren White, and he's back here living in town.

JB I interviewed him.

WM Did you? He used to call some of their dances.

JB Oh he didn't tell me that, but.

WM Yes.

JB He had, he told me the story of, a wonderful story of, a guy that worked, went, wanted a job with Wards and said he could drive team and was given two mules to drive and the mules ran away with him and the wagon got all smashed up and Ward fired him.

WM Oh! Ha! Ha!

JB And somebody else, I don't remember who it was, wrote a poem about him which he recited. And it was wonderful.

WM Oh yeah. Oh yeah. Yeah. No, he used to call the square dances and I can't think of who else, I know Harvey Richards sang but I can't think of who else did sing with Uncle Raymond's band. But they played for years around. Played in Warren.

JB Do they still play? [26.56]

WM Had them up, what was it three, or four years ago when they played on our snack bar lawn for Mom's.

JB _____.

WM Seventieth, or seventy-fifth birthday party. Ha! Ha!

Ha! We had a little.

JB Oh what fun.

WM Family get-together and Uncle Raymond was up and in the afternoon and I don't know, I mentioned it was mother's birthday, and he said, oh, how old is she, and I said, seventy-five. He said I ought to come up and play her a tune, I said we're all getting together after we close the snack bar tonight at nine, and he said, I should bring my accordion and play Happy Birthday to her, and I said, come right ahead and do it, so he did, we had music and all kinds of it. Ha! Ha!

JB Ha! Ha! Do you run your snack bar all year round or just in the summer?

WM No just reopen the first weekend in May and close Labor Day weekend. [27.52] And, we started that when we had three children in college, we figured that would, give them something to do in the summertime, and help put them thought college.

JB And your the only place really if you think about it, you could pick up a hamburger or a hot dog or.

WM Yeah this is all window service and well there's one little, little one, it's a trailer, over on in Duxbury.

JB Um, hum.

WM That opened up, two or three years ago. And, other than that, yes. Yup. There used to be, used to be Gaylords, Hap Gaylord, they had a snack bar at one time, down in Waitsfield.

JB Yup that's right I've forgotten that. [28.33]

WM But, we, I believe we were the first ones to have the, Taylor soft ice cream machine.

JB Ah ha.

WM And serve the creamies here. Otherwise you had to drive into Montpelier for them. It's a, it's a going spot but it's a very much weather oriented.

JB Oh I can imagine.

WM You know, it has to be a good day and, and people come out, otherwise we play.

JB Now.

WM We play a lot of cribbage. Ha! Ha!

JB Yeah. You have to sort of tend it?

WM Jerry and I run it most of the time ourselves, once in

awhile, our daughter, or daughter-in-law will come in and give us a hand. But, we figure, we'll do what we can do and, and let it go at that.

JB And then, you start having people about now?

WM Our hikers will be starting around the 21st of May, this year and I serve them dinner, and we sleep them and give them breakfast and put them up a trail lunch. And, our oldest daughter, of course these are all by reservations so I know when I have dinners to serve, so I get every thing ready, get it prepared and she comes in and serves for me. [29.50]

JB Great.

WM And cause I'm busy in the snack bar.

JB Yeah.

WM With Jerry and the grill, yeah. So that works out fine.

JB And, are you, full most of the summer or? Most weekends? Or?

WM You know, it's very, you never know, it's very spotty, you have people that come by and a, just beside the road and stop in, or you, you do get them with reservations, but, there are so many inns, in the area

now, that, there's a lot of competition, every year for the last, I'd say eight or ten years, every big old, house that was sold was turned into a B & B and a, even the people that come by, they'll say we have never seen so many B & Bs in such a, a small locality. And, so it's, it's very competitive.

JB The fact that you've been here for a while though, must give you a little bit of a leg up.

WM We, we do, we do have, we find that for advertising, the word of mouth is the best and, yes, because, ha, ha, do you cut some of this out?

JB No. Sort of turn it off.

WM Ha! Ha! Ha! I tell you. Ha! Ha! I mean. (tape off and on)

JB For my edification it's good. [31.33]

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

WM I had a fellow come by, at Christmas time, and he said, he had called me, to make reservations, and he said when he called them, they told him that, alls they had was the condos, they were pushing for the condos. [.25] For him to go into that, and he said, I

said you must have something in your area more
reasonable like a motel.

JB What do they charge for the condos?

WM You know, I am not sure. I am not sure, what they get.
Per day, now. Years ago I, I did know, but I don't
know.

JB But you have to supply I would think your own food
and.

WM Oh yeah.

JB All that.

WM Oh yes.

JB Bed, they must have bedding and stuff.

WM Yeah. They have.

JB But I would think if a family was coming up, it would
be much nicer to stay at an inn. [.55]

WM Well, this is it, anyway he, he said, you know, he
said the price was more than what he wanted to pay and
that's what he tried to tell them, he said you must
have something like a motel, or something more
reasonable, and they said, you've got to understand,
alls we have is country inns up here, because the inns
that they had given him, were some of the higher

priced inns, and you know he was trying to economize and save. And, it's, they have, told people, that they don't need us down this way. [1.35] So we belong to their chamber of commerce last year and I had one couple come, that a gal in the chamber office sent down here, and that was it, for all year. So I said to Jerry we just won't join again this year. I had, we had belonged years ago when Damen Gade owned the area, and it worked really well, really well, and since these, the last two previous owners, the present one and the one before, we just got out of it because I could see, alls they wanted was the money from the inns to help pay their costs, expenses, and then they shove everybody into their own, condos. [2.22] And, so we just got out of it.

JB So does this mean you really, don't see many skiers. That.

WM No just the ones that know us or we do advertise in the Mad River circular. And we do advertise on our own in different areas. Which, you know I, I have, we have decided that, what we do on our own at least we know if people call us, they're gonna call us, they're not

gonna, call up there, when we're paying for an ad and then not getting anything out of it. [3.03]

JB Yeah. How did you do last winter?

WM December, was of course, was very slow, cause we didn't get the snow until late, it picked up, it picked up in, mid-January.

JB So will you get skiers to all different areas, or what, what kind of, of?

WM You mean they ski around the different areas? Yeah. Yeah. They do, they, they ski, Mad River, or they go to Sugarbush where they make snow, or Stowe, we're only 21 miles from Stowe.

JB I know.

WM And I do serve breakfast early if they want it early, so to go to Stowe. If the skiing, if we haven't had much snow in this area, and it's good, Jay Peak, hey they'll drive to Jay Peak, it's an hours drive but. They'll, they've done it before. And, cross, we do get cross country skiers too, they ski Von Trapps. Or they ski depending what conditions are here, _____, Blueberry Lake, [4.10] and Hunt, there's a Camel's Hump cross country ski area now, over in Huntington.

JB Oh!

WM Which.

JB I thought that was closed.

WM Nope.

JB That's open.

WM No that's open, he was by, this past fall with some brochures. [4.25]

JB Ah.

WM Yup. Yup. So they do, they can just go over Route 17, and they're there within.

JB So again, the inn business is very dependent on the snow.

WM Oh yes. Oh yeah. Definitely. Definitely. This is why Sugarbush is wanting to draw water out of the Mad River, for their snowmaking. And there's a lot of controversy going on over that right now.

JB Yeah I've been reading about that.

WM Um hum. I have mixed feelings on that too. It would be fine, if they would, draw, what they're supposed to draw, and take none more, but we live here for three years when they were dumping their sludge on this farm field down here, and left, you could hardly stand to

stay in this building, the smell was, just terrible.

JB Who as dumping the sludge? Sugarbush?

WM Sugarbush. [5.32] Yeah.

JB Hum.

WM And I, you know, I just, I just don't just go for
ruining your environment.

JB No. Well you got to live here.

WM For all this, you know. Because a lot of the people
that have developed they've come in and they've
developed and then they've, they've made their money
and they've gone on, now they're off somewhere else
ruining some other section of the country.

JB Yup.

WM So.

JB Well the thing that's interested me is, the number of
people actually, that still are here, that have been
here.

WM Right.

JB And would like to continue to live here, and the
difficulties in, passing on a farm, because of new
regulations.

WM That's right, you can't, you know, years ago, you

could, if you had an acre of land, you could give it to a son or daughter to put a house on, now you can't. [6.39] They've got it tied up so. And, it's, you know they say this is a free country. Ha! Ha! Ha! It really, it really isn't.

JB Hum.

WM You know, years ago, we would never see a car go by here at night, but now, I don't care what time of night you get up, it's buzzing like it is right now. [7.14] And, it makes you wonder what's going on, those hours in the morning. Years ago you knew, somebody was sick and headed into the hospital, emergencies only.

JB Has there been a, I guess, we're looking around, a big increase in population?

WM Oh definitely. Oh yeah definitely. Everybody wants to retire to Vermont. So many of the skiers that come up here, this is, this is, well I can think of, I mean we're only one inn, but I can think of one, two, or four or five different couples that are already up here. That used to stay here. Now they've got their own homes here in the area.

JB And run it as inns? [8.05]

WM No. They've retired here, a lot of them. Or else they've got their own ski home here, both a piece of land and got their own ski home, here. There is ne couple they, when the Green Mountain Valley School was here in Moretown, they had a son that was there, and they stayed with us, several times. And, they thought the inn business looked so neat that they bought the Longwood Inn in Marlboro, Vermont. Ha! I think it's up for sale now, they had it a few years, maybe ten years, and they said they enjoyed it but, there's work to it. I mean your tied in, twenty four hours a day. If you run it yourselves. Now a lot of the, inn owners, they think that, they're gonna run it, and hire in all the help, and they're, you know, that's the way but it's hard, you can do it if you can set your prices high enough to compensate for it. But, I guess I'm you know being a Vermonter, conservative I, I can't see taking advantage of people.

JB Well I also think that there are many people who come on a vacation that just can't afford to pay those kind of prices. Well what do you charge per night?

WM I get twenty-five per person, B and B. Ten dollars

extra for dinner.

JB Which is.

WM And I serve all my dinners family style. They start out with, well depending on the season and the weather, either a hot homemade soup or else a, on a hot humid day, a chilled soup of some kind, you know, and homemade breads.

JB And you make all your own breads?

WM I make my own breads, my relishes and pickles, and pies, cakes whatever. [10.04] Um hum.

JB Where did you learn to cook so?

WM You know, I sort of, I made my.

JB From your mother?

WM I made my, when I was, what twelve, mother had to have surgery, and I sent her out in my first batch of, well not the whole batch, but, some donuts from my first batch of donuts. Ha! Ha! I had decided to make dad some donuts, and she said they came out pretty good.

JB Ha! Ha!

WM So, and you see I was a, the only girl in the family with, three brothers, for twelve years. My sister is twelve years younger than I am. And that's the year

that mother had surgery after she was only just a, five months old I guess, so, what dad did, they had got this lady to come in the morning and take care of my sister and do up, the major part of the house work, and then I would stay in school, until about, one fifteen and get my perfect attendance and then I'd go home and tend to the house after that and, they lady would go home and come back the next morning, so that's when I made the donuts.

JB Leddy Conrad, had a recipe book of her mothers, which she allowed me to, xerox, and wonderful.

WM Oh yeah. I bet, oh I bet. That's what I'm, I love, you know being in the business I am, I love to get these old, at flea markets and things, look for the old, recipe books.

JB Yeah. Well and I would think that, again, that, your cooking you know old Vermont food and so forth, is another drawing card.

WM It is. It is. Because on this circuit that we're on, on the country inn along the trail, there, it started out as eight inns and they're all people that have moved in from well Maryland, New York, New Jersey,

Connecticut, and I'm the only native, out of the eight inns. [12.14] Excuse me, now my husband, Jerry is from Massachusetts, but he's been coming to Vermont since he was four years old, ha, ha, you see, he jokes cause I tell him he's not a Vermonter, if he's not born in Vermont. [12.28] So, when they go through, you know on this circuit, they'll come here and they might get a good old New England pot roast dinner, and I serve things family style, they had plenty of vegetables, we raise our own, on the table, and they'll say to me Wilma, this is the best meal we've had all along the way. Vegetables are so cheap why is we, when we're hiking we're hungry. You know, and they said this gourmet style food, with all these rich sauces, it gets to us. [13.02] So you know they do like the old, New England cooking.

JB So what kind of things do you serve?

WM Well like I say, I would serve, a pot roast dinner, or I would serve a turkey dinner, or I would serve, I have a chicken dish that I make, with biscuits and whatever, gravy, and I do serve Swedish meatballs sometimes, ham, and I always serve the, McKenzie's

Vermont cured ham. And, pretty much that type of thing.

JB And then you make all kinds of soups and?

WM Oh yes, I, yeah I make, corn chowder, I make a carrot soup, which is quite popular, I make my own cream of broccoli soup, and pea soup, whatever.

JB _____.

WM And they get, they get all the, you know the things that are in season, like, I make the raspberry pies, strawberry pies, strawberry shortcake, when in season. Last year Jerry picked over a hundred quarts of strawberries out of our garden and, I don't know he was up around fifty, sixty quarts of raspberries. We do have our own blueberries, we had bad luck with our blueberry bushes, we started some new ones, [14.30] and apples, apple pie, apple dumpling. So. And, in the fall. There's nothing like walking into a kitchen and smelling the pickles.

JB Oh absolutely.

WM And the relishes being made.

JB No I would think, your home cooking the family style, the fact that you know you've grown up here, well like

people probably don't know that until after they've been here.

WM Right.

JB But, all that would, make you a real drawing card. Over you know the fancier.

WM Yeah. Yeah. I guess, Marla and I have talked, the, that maybe some of our, the inns down this way should get together and go together, on advertising. Because like she said there are so many families that like to come to a farm, with their younger children to see.

JB Yes.

WM They don't get to see it now, Ellen Everett up here on the farm, they're most happy to have our guests if they have children, they want them to go see the milking process. And, cause we always, are all beef cattle.

JB Yeah.

WM And we don't milk them but. You know, they, a lot of the, children have gone in and helped Jerry gather eggs, from the, we have our own hens. Yeah. Layers. And.

JB Do you raise a couple of pigs?

WM Well we used to. We used to, and he, Jerry has had bad luck with his pigs, the last of us having pigs he had a sow and you know the, the pigs, when they have the little one, they run a high fever, and this last one, the last two he had, they'll, they'll snap into them and they'll kill them.

JB I know it. [16.22]

WM And, he, he got up one morning and one pig had killed every one of her litter. Well he said I'll try it again and he tried it again and he happen to catch her, she was starting to pig at night, and he happen to catch her so he, as soon as she'd have them, he'd take them out, and he woke me up in the morning five o'clock he'd been up all night with that pig. And, he said I don't know what I'm gonna do, he said, I tried to put one of them back in with her, and she's just so, angry.

JB And then you have to feed them.

WM Yeah, snap at them, so we ended up, got the vet here and he said I think I can give her a shot that will make her except her pigs, well that, I said you know that pig is right, oh she was wouldn't even let them

near the pen, [17.10] he come into the kitchen and he said to me, he said you know I've got a wife and two kids, he said, I'm going in with that pig.

JB Ha! Ha! Ha!

WM And I said, I told you that that pig was angry, and so he had his book and we decided from the book that you could bring them up, on regular formula, like baby formula. So I had some carnation milk, and I put a little karo in with it, and we bottle fed the pigs that morning, until Jerry could find a farmer that had, fresh cows milk, and so Eurich's had some up on their farm, so they saved us the milk, we would go up and bring it down, four and five gallons at a time, cause we had twelve piglets. [18.00] And, we put them in a box, in the game room in the cellar, with a heat light over them. And, the vet said to us, you'll be lucky if you raise any of them. Well we ended up raising, five out of the twelve.

JB Yeah we've had that same problem.

WM We, we had one Charlie, he'd follow us all around the, cellar, ha, ha. Many, they'd hear us coming down the stairs we fed them every hour the first week and then

it was about every two hours, around the clock, Jerry would set the alarm we'd get up, three and a couple, three times a night, and feed them, you go down and their little mouths would be right up, and they'd be squealing and I'd take two bottles and feed two at once.

JB Ha! Ha! Ha!

WM So he decided it was more then it was worth he'd stick to the, beef cattle. [18.46]

JB Yeah. No they.

WM Jerry. He, he it bothers him, you know it was taking so much out of him I said forget it, he gets so upset with anything like that and, last year he had a, a calf, that came backwards and Roy had, and he, he saved it, I don't know, the calf was, the cow had been in labor quite a while before we discovered her. And my lord when he took the calf out it was like a limp dish rag, and he just laid it up over the rail of the pen in the barn, and massaged it, got the mucus out of it's nostrils and it was the most rugged little bull calf you ever saw running around, it survived. [19.34]
But I guess if it had been five, ten minutes later, it

would of been too late.

JB Oh!

WM So.

JB Well I would say you had your hands full. You.

WM It keeps us busy.

JB You wanted to.

WM It keeps us busy.

JB The thing that interests me is when the Mad River and
Sugarbush opened up, the, there literally were no
inns, and from what you're telling me, it's been an
explosion.

WM Yes. Really there has been.

JB And I wonder if it's more a concept of mind, you know
people come to Vermont, it's like owning a general
store, maybe, they don't realize the long hours, and
but they can't all be making it. [20.24]

WM Oh they're not. They're not, they, we have heard that
the life span of a inn owner is five years.

JB Is that right.

WM We've got one up here called Honeysuckles Inn, that
has turned over, well the people up there I think have
been there about four, five years now and it's on the

market. [20.46] And, two young fellows owned it before that, their the ones that turned it into the inn and they only held on to it four, five years. And, Newtons Inn down here, I'm not sure, how long they've been there now, but when that place was sold, a couple, from well she was from England, right from England, and he was from New Jersey but he'd been in England most of his life, he really has the British accent, and they were a nice couple, they had, they sold that out because this area was too commercial and what I told you about Sugarbush, they just didn't like the attitude of things here, so they went up and they bought an inn, or they bought a house and turned it into a B and B up in Craftsbury Common. And they're up there. [21.37] And we've been up and visited them there. And, that's all taken place within that last eight, ten years, and I understand the Wait Motor Inn is on the market for sale, and there's one up on Lincoln Mountain road, that's for sale.

JB Hum.

WM I mean, yes, they turn over. And you see, yeah there was just, the Clark place, Nancy and Allen Clark, they

ran an inn and it's now Mountain View, Susie and Fred Spencer, run in now and they've had that quite a while, they're, they're, Susie is from Colorado, Fred's family came from Maine, they used to manage what is the Waitsfield Inn, for a few years, and when Allen and Nancy sold there's they bought it. They've been there quite a while and they're a nice young couple. They, they enjoy that, they're, so there, I'm sure they'll be there a while. [22.40] Her folks, Susie's folks run a, cabins in Colorado so she more or less grew up in that type of.

JB That's great.

WM Yes. Yeah. And.

JB Is summer better for you in some ways than winter? As far as?

WM We're busier in the summer because of, we have so many other things to do but as far as the, it's hard to say. Because you know, if you got the snow in the wintertime, the skiers come in, when the economy is good, but, the way we feel is, you can't, usually you can't have a bad winter and a bad summer too.

JB Yeah so one balances the other.

WM Well what is they say, in farming you have to, oh what is it they call it? [23.33] When you take on more than one project. You know. It balances out. So that you can, make a go of it by, diversify.

JB Well it sounds to me that, I mean I think it always has been in the case of farming, you know to cut wood in the winter or they log and, and do something else in the summer to bring in a little extra cash. [24.01] But here you've got the snack bar.

WM Um, hum.

JB You've got your inn.

WM Um, hum.

JB You've got your farm. And, probably that, makes a much better go of it, than just the inn.

WM Oh it definitely would. It definitely does. Yeah. Yeah. That's true, like the snack bar, you get a cold rainy summer, and that doesn't do well, or the economy, now like over there, people that we used to see come two and three times a week, last summer, lucky if they came, once a week. And I can understand it. They've got taxes go up every year, and now it's also the same with the ski business. And the summer

tourism business. [24.48] And you got to understand Vermont is charging eight percent now, that's a lot on, their stay. Where New Hampshire, it isn't that much. I can't remember now what their is. New York is up there pretty, pretty well. But 8 percent a jump from 6 to 8 was a lot.

JB They're supposed to roll that back, aren't they?

WM I think it's supposed to roll back, is it this June, to seven and then next June, back to six. I believe so. Whether it does or not I don't know.

JB I know, I'll believe it when I see it. [25.22]

WM Um, hum.

JB How often do you have a tax rolled back?

WM Yeah. This is it. But that amounts to a lot I mean when you're adding twenty to forty dollars to somebody's bill, just for tax.

JB That's a lot.

WM You see, with us, if we had to hire help, we could not, we would not be able to make a go of it. We do it ourselves. I guess I'm lucky I have a lot of energy. Ha! Ha! Ha! And Jerry too. We're both happy when we're busy.

JB Yeah. No but you.

WM And, and like I say when we get caught in a pinch, you know we can call on, some of our children, and, and ask them to come fill in, we have a daughter graduating from Johnson College, Saturday. So my sister is coming to work the window at the snack bar, and a friend of ours is coming to run the grill. Ha! Ha! I hope it's not too, too busy for them that day. Ha!

JB Now on a busy day, will you have people all day long or?

WM Over there?

JB At the snack bar.

WM It's usually steady, it's usually steady. But, if the weather's really hot, yes. Yup. And, you know the thing of it is with that business, every body decides to eat at one time, so you could go two, and three hours and have just a scattering of customers, and then all of a sudden, your yard is full for an hour, and your just running your legs off. Ha! But you got to be ready for that, anytime. Where with the, with

the inn business, it's a, it's a, you usually know what's happening, I have, three freezers. And with all of our supplies anybody can stop anytime I could, like if I had a group of, ten or twelve people stop and say we would to come in and have bed and breakfast tonight that's why, I don't even have to go out to the store, I've got everything right here. [27.24] Just pull it out of the freezer. So. Another interesting thing we had last fall was, it was during foliage time, we had how many were there, nine of them, Amish young people stop by. On a Saturday night, and believe me they were the real Amish. They had a, there was, seven of them, and then they had this retired couple, they were in their early to mid-sixties, that were chauffeuring them, in a van in a mini-van, and their parents, one young fellow, one couple was married, and I'd say they were in their early to mid-twenties, and his parents had been through the year previous, and gone to Maine to see the ocean, and they were following the same route and they just happen to stop to see if we had rooms and we had, plenty of beds that particular night for them, so. [28.24] The girls when they came in,

were all dressed in light blue with their white aprons black stockings, black shoes, and their little, white, what is it? Organdy, type hats, and then, in the morning for Sunday, they came down they were all in lemon yellow, and the, young fellows had on the black pants, shoes and blue shirts, and Sunday they had on yellow shirts. [28.58]

JB Hum.

WM They were interesting. And, one of the boys told Jerry that, yes they were no vehicles in their community at all, they were from, a little community in Illinois.

JB No kidding.

WM And.

JB So they could drive a van thought.

WM No they, they rode in a van.

JB I see.

WM But they had this couple chauffeuring them, driving them, and chauffeuring them around.

JB I see.

WM But all horse and buggy, they traveled in, in their village. In their community. [29.30]

JB Hum. Well I would think another advantage for you that

you would have over other inns was that you raised so much of your food.

WM People do enjoy that, yes. When I tell them that, they say oh, that sounds super. You know, no preservatives in it, or anything. That is, and it's so fresh, I mean even if I don't tell them and somebody has stopped and they, like you take in foliage season they stop and they'll see me serving dinner, and they'll say oh can we get dinner here? Well, if I, usually there's always room for two or three others, extras, if I'm not booked completely full and I'll say sure. And, they notice the difference in the vegetables, being fresh. Or even in ski season, in the wintertime. They'll say gee, these vegetables taste so fresh, are they frozen or fresh or? And I'll say well their all home grown, and I've, froze, froze them myself. Well it tastes so much better than the frozen ones you get in the market. Well you got to figure the ones in the market they're travelling from your gardeners, and sitting, on a truck for so long and then they're sitting in a warehouse for so long, until they get canned up, where mine, come in the morning picked and in the freezer

within a matter of two hours. [30.52] So you don't
loose too much out of them. Same with your fruits. And
I make all my own jams and jellies.

JB Well I, I know you. [31.06]

END OF TAPE