

Mary Herrick/TC1992.2003
Mad River Valley Project/VFC1991.0004

GS Gregory Sharrow
MH Mary Herrick
Place Moretown, Vermont
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GS Teach also?

MH He was a different type of teacher. He worked in the carpenter department and had charge of the boys under him. No, he didn't have anything to do with the actual school work, unless he helped me. During the war I worked in what they called, it was the department where boys made different things, industrial arts. And I always only filling in during the war. And if anything needed sharpening or things like that he did it for us.

GS What school was this?

MH Lyman school for boys.

GS Was that a residential school?

MH No, that was a state school. That was juvenile delinquency.

GS So tell me, did you mention on the phone that you were from Stowe?

MH Yes, I was born and brought up there. [1:04]

GS Had your family, were they long time Stowe natives?

MH They had their 50th wedding anniversary here.

GS Did you then attend normal school.

MH Oh lord yes. My first year I was going to school in Framingham. And because I was only 17 my father and mother thought they should come back to Vermont because my mother didn't like Massachusetts. So they came back and bought a place on the Waterbury and Stowe road. So then I went to Morrisville to People's Academy when the teachers had their first year there. And I had Jenny Ellingham for my instructor.

GS So People's Academy then had a normal school program.

MH They had one year. I think there were 14 of us. It was kind of a special group, because she didn't want a large class, and they agreed to take whatever she wanted them to. [2:10]

GS So you worked then directly with that one woman.

MH With that one woman, she was the instructor. And then when it came time for us to go out, she told us, I had had a chance to go to Montgomery. My father said to me, Mary, you don't want to go up there, you'll be back in the woods. But I thought because she was the instructor

that I should go. So I went. And it was, it was a lumber area, and I had to walk a mile to school, and I had to sleep with one of the children. My brother said to me if you stay up here, after Thanksgiving I'm not going to be able to come up here and get you. [3:04] Well I didn't feel I wanted to stay up there after Thanksgiving. So I talked it over with Mr. Green, and he said if I would stay, he'd give me a school in Richford. Well that was farther away yet. So I didn't want to go. So I told him I guess I better give it up. Well he didn't want me to but I came back home. And I never lost a day because the superintendent at Morrisville knew I had come home and said he had a teacher sick, and would I go in and fill in for at least a month. Well I went in, and I stayed for a year, because she didn't want to come back.

GS When was this? When was your first year teaching?

MH That was back in '26 was my first year. [4:02]

GS I look at some of the old registers from the schools. And the way that the year was divided up, the terms, way back were quite different. How did the terms run when you first started?

MH When I first started, really about the same as now. We

had a vacation at Thanksgiving time, and then again at Christmas. That's the way they divided it up. We didn't have anything split in between. Up in that area, I started in with 13 children in the beginning, that's all that were enrolled, in Montgomery. My Thanksgiving I had 27. You see it was the lumbering area, and the people moved in, work in the winter time.

GS And what grades did you have?

MH Would you like to know? I had from the first to the 8th, I had them all. [5:02] But when I came to Morrisville I had the first 6, because that was a one room school. That was the nicest one room school you could ever ask for.

GS What made it nice?

MH It was the whole atmosphere, the children, they loved their teacher, they loved the place where I lived, and they used to come with me when I'd go back and forth, because I was only a step from the school. My house mother and father both had been guides up in Maine. And the most wonderful cooks you could ever ask for. And I had a room to myself, and a living room besides. So I started in very well. And then I stayed the end of the year there.

GS I've heard about teachers boarding with families of students. And that I gather is what you did then in Montgomery. [6:02]

MH I had to because there was no place for a teacher to board. They hadn't ever taken, the teacher had never stayed the whole week. They had traveled back and forth. Montgomery and Montgomery Center were quite close together.

GS So the teacher stayed in Montgomery Center and traveled?

MH And traveled back and forth. But I couldn't do that because I didn't have a car. And I hadn't thought that I could afford one at that time.

GS In the Braintree Historical Society's collection, where I live, there's a log that belonged to a teacher, where she lists all the different places where she taught, and how long she taught there. She taught for many, many years. But the amazing thing to me was, she traveled around quite a bit. She didn't stay in any one place very long. So it seems like years ago, perhaps people, teachers changed jobs quite frequently? [7:06]

MH I didn't change. That was the only time I ever changed until I left here and went to Kern Hattin.

GS So you were in Morrisville, and then how did you happen to come to Moretown?

MH I taught in Moscow 2 years. That was where I had so many children. I had my own sister there and 2 cousins. But that was only 6 grades, which was not hard, and it was quite close to home. And then I thought I wanted to make a change. Then I decided I'd get married. So my husband didn't want me to teach. So I gave up teaching for awhile. Then we went to work after the flood, and I said to him I'm going to see if I can't find something to do. [8:02] And he said well where do you want to go? I said I don't know. So anyway I came to Moretown, I went to Waterbury to see Mr. Willis, and he was the nicest superintendent you could ask for. He had had infantile. He was so considerate and everything, so I came over here. And I had to see the chairman first (GS: Of the school board?) Yes. And his name was Mr., I can't think of his name right now. He lived down here at the end of the village. He told me a cute story. The day I went to see him I took my Boston Terrier with me. And when I got out I said to him you stay there. And he said would you

like to hear a story? And I said yes, if you've got one.
[9:00] Well he said I went to Barre a couple of weeks ago to see a teacher. And he said when I went in this little dog followed me, and he said I was all dressed up. He said I had a navy blue suit on, my wife had told me I must dress up. And he said what do I know but the dog jumps up in my lap. So he said I didn't say anything, I patted the dog and made of it. And then he said when I left, the dog followed me. And he said the woman opened the door, she said Mr. Humphrey, you better come back. He said you left your dog behind. He said that isn't my dog, I thought it was your dog! So he said here I was, plastered with mud. He said my wife was some disgusted when I got home and told her what happened to me. So he said if you want to bring the dog in, bring him in. But I said no, he don't need to come in, he'll stay in the car. So he said that's happened to me. [10:06] The school board were really wonderful.

GS As a teacher, who did you have the most contact with, the superintendent or the school board?

MH If we wanted anything, Mr. Willis brought it. He never asked anybody to do it for him, he did all the work. I

used to tell the girls, he used to come if we needed toilet paper, he'd come with it on a string, and carry it in. Everything he did himself. He didn't ask you to help him.

GS And he was superintendent for?

MH Oh my land, I couldn't tell you how many years.

GS And for more than just Moretown.

MH Oh yes, he had Waterbury, and Duxbury, I think he had Waitsfield, I wouldn't say that for sure. But I know that he had Duxbury and Waterbury and Moretown. [11:08] But if you ever had any problems, he was ready to talk it over with. I know I had a little boy that had whooping cough. And oh, he used to be so sick. I sent a note home to his mother and told her he had whooping cough. She sent back word he didn't have whooping cough. Well Mr. Willis came one morning and he was by a tree out there in the yard. The little by had to throw up. And he came in with the little fellow, and he said Perly, his name was Perly Flurry, he said you and I are going home to see your mother. So they went up and he told her, he said that little fellow's got whooping cough, so you better keep him home. So she had to keep him home. He'd do things on

his own. Of course he saw the child, and he couldn't understand why he was coming to school. [12:07]

GS So the superintendent was pretty helpful.

MH Oh yes, he was a big help. And everybody liked it, everybody did, as far as I know.

GS And you taught then here in the village.

MH I taught the first 4 grades, when the building was brand new. And you see when I left, I taught in the other part. They had moved me from the town hall over to the school building. So I had the 6th grade. Did you ever know Jim Isor? He was the principal. He had the math and science, and I had the social studies and English. And that's the way we worked. [13:05] When it was time for me to take his group I took his group and he took mine. And we did that for 2 or 3 years.

GS And when you first came, was it before the new building did you say?

MH Oh yes, I was in the old building for 2 years before they got it done.

GS And the old building was right here in the village?

MH Right in the middle.

GS Was it a one room building?

MH No, it was 2. I had the first 4 grades, and Mrs. Hayes had the upper grades. Then you see when they built the other building, when they added on, they added on to this one after awhile. I had the first floor on this side, and the teacher on that side had the other grades. We had different teachers of course. [14:07]

GS And when you first came here, were there other schools out in the country?

MH Oh yes. This was Moretown, and of course at that time the 7th and 8th grade were taught right here, they didn't go to Harwood Union. In fact Harwood Union wasn't built at that time.

GS Did you live right in the village?

MH When I first came I lived with a Mr. and Mrs. Base. He worked for the Ward Lumber Co. and she kept house. And I lived with them, and she took boarders for awhile. Then she developed, not boils, carbuncles. And had to have hired help. For the first year that she was laid up with these carbuncles, she kept me because she said that it would be easier, and then she took Mr. Wimble along. [15:08] He decided he'd have to board somewhere, so she took the two of us. Then after awhile she thought she

wouldn't try it another year. So then I moved down on the river with Blanche Griffith. She had a grandson in school that went to me. And I was with her until she became ill. And then I said to one of the school board, this time it isn't who wants to take to me, but it's who needs to take me. So he said there was a Mrs. Griffith that lived up on the hill, on the second house, and did I think that was too far to walk? And I said no, I wouldn't mind it a bit. [16:00] So I went up to live with Lara Griffin, and I stayed with her all the while I was here. She was a wonderful person. She had just one room, so I was the only teacher she had.

GS So your husband then stayed where you've been before.

MH He stayed in our own home. We had a home in Stowe, in Moscow rather. He traveled back and forth to Waterbury. So every weekend he came and picked me up. So I spent the weekend at home. Mr. Buckley made a stipulation when I came here. He said that if I was coming to Moretown to teach, and they paid me, they expected me to live in the town and do what I could to help the town. They don't do that anymore. But that was the stipulation when I first came to Moretown, you stayed in Moretown during the week.

And he said we don't care what you do on the weekend, but he said we want you here during the week.

GS [17:08] And did you say you came here before or just after the flood?

MH Just after the flood, the fall after the flood.

GS Were you in Vermont at the time of the flood? (Yes.) In Moscow? (Ya.) Was it bad up there?

MH Not anything compared to Waterbury, and Moretown.

GS I understand Waterbury was perhaps one of the worst in the state.

MH It was. And of course the state hospital was flooded too. And my husband did carpenter work, and he worked in the state hospital for over a year. And all he did was put these knobs on the doors and the locks. He used to say he almost locked himself in. [18:00] But he said he never dare lay his hammer down. At that time there was 1,000 people in that building. And I don't think it's anything like that now. And when we first came to Moretown in the mud, we didn't have any black top road. And the mud was just terrible. And Mr. Shepherd had a pair of horses, and he used to hitch up his horses to go down, pull us out of the mud. But we weren't the only ones, other people got

in the mud too.

GS Did you have special exercises that as a classroom teacher you would?

MH Oh yes, we had every holiday, Thanksgiving we always had a program. Christmas we had a program. I got really upset last year because they weren't doing a thing for the children at Christmas. [19:02] To me, I don't care who you are, the children love Christmas. I don't know what they'll do this year.

GS Did you have a program then in the evening?

MH We usually had it in the afternoon. Usually at Christmas time, the Ward Lumber Company used to have a big Christmas tree for the company. They made candy bags and things like that for them. And then we had our own Christmas tree. Each room had their own tree. That used to be a treat, for the older boys to go out and get the trees for the different teachers. They made a party of it really.

GS You say the Ward Lumber Co. had a big tree, do you mean in the school?

MH No, in the town hall. That's when the grown ups could go too. [20:00] But of course anybody could go to our

program, and they usually turned out beautiful. I had a program, I was going to show it to you. Here it is. Did you ever hear of Mr. Fisher? Well he was a superintendent. This was one of the programs we had. This was in 1960. (GS: A graduation.) [pause.]

GS Now Mrs. Owen Ward, is that Aline?

MH No, that was Kenneth Ward's wife, and she has passed away.

GS You had a school orchestra?

MH Oh yes, we had all that went with it. Mrs. Fisk was the superintendent's wife, and she was quite a musician. And she used to work with the children. [pause; 21:14] We had many interesting things. We had some nice teachers, and we had teachers that you wouldn't know ever saw children.

GS So you stayed here in Moretown as a teacher, continuously then until,

MH Until we went to Massachusetts.

GS And when was that approximately?

MH One summer, Grafton said to me, he said I can't work in the wintertime, and I'd like to see if I can't find something to do outside. And he said I think I'll go to Massachusetts. [22:04] And so he went down, he found

something. And then eventually we went to Lyman School to work. He went at that time we went as house parents. During the war he wanted to go into one of the factories to work. It left to me to work at the school by myself as a house mother, and I didn't like doing that. So I went to Worcester, and I went to work with the Norton Abrasive people, which was right across from where he worked. I had been teaching off and on. My superintendent there wanted me to come back. And I said I didn't know what my husband would do. But anyway he decided he'd stay with _____ Machine. So we stayed until the war was over .

[23:00] And then Mr. DuBois had called my sister and asked her to please have me call him and told her that he wanted me to come back and teach (GS: In Moretown) no, at the school, Lamon School for Boys. We went back. I went back first, and then Grafton came shortly after that because he said as long as I was coming back, they would take him back too. So that's what we did. And I stayed there until after he passed away. I taught there for quite some time. They had quite a staff.

GS Sounds like a challenging place if it was for children who had problems behaving.

MH They did really, some of them did, and some of them turned out very well. Much better than you would expect them. [24:00] In fact one of them called awhile ago, told me Mrs. Herrick, you don't know how glad I am that you had us for fractions. He said now I can do all the fractions I want to.

GS So did you go to Massachusetts before the war? (Yes.) And then how did you happen to come back to Moretown?

MH After my husband died, I had rented the house and we weren't happy with it being rented, this house. So I decided I had to do something, so I came back. Because they had asked me to come back and fill in at the town hall, because they were short a teacher. And they thought if I wasn't going to teach then I might just as well be teaching for them I guess. So I came back to teach for them. [25:06]

GS And when you came back you were teaching on the stage?

MH Here's one of the group of the boys if you want to see. This was the age I had down there. (GS: Big boys.) Ya, they were good size. I had them first year of high school. But this was a whole group, and this was just my class. This was the graduation class. I've had a mixed

up, my teaching has been mixed up. But, it's been worthwhile to me too because I've enjoyed working at different places.

GS When you came back here to teach, did you come back to the town hall?

MH That was when I came back.

GS And could you explain how it happened that you were in the town hall? [26:00]

MH They were short of help, they were short of space for the bigger children, and they wanted to get rid of some of them. So that was the only way they could do was to find a place to put them. So they still had this building over here, but it was full. So I had 6th, 7th and 8th grades on that stage. Then when there was an opening up here, they took me back again, so I came back. And then was when I told you Jim and I, he had 2 grades and I had 2 grades.

GS Did the number of students in school shrink back down again, or did they add on?

MH No, we didn't shrink very much. And we didn't grow very much. We might get 3 or 4, and we might not get any one year. And then the next year we might get 5. [27:00]

GS How did they happen to end up with such a big group that they needed the town hall then?

MH They just filled in. They were trying to get this building done. They couldn't work on the back. The front was all done you see, so they could have some of them in there. So that's why I had the 6th, 7th and 8th grades down there. It was an interesting situation. They were telling me, they had a hole here awhile ago up in the ceiling. I said they could do what we used to do when we first had the building, brand new. One day one of the boys came in, he said oh Mr. _____ , come quick, come quick, the roof is leaking! And I said don't get excited, go get a pail and we'll put it under the leak, so that's what he did. [28:12] So I said when I heard about this hole they were telling about how it was going to fall in and everything else, I said well tell them to get a pail and put it underneath and catch the water, that's what we used to do! So I don't know what they did, but they mended the hole, and it didn't cost them \$70,000 to do it. Of course Moretown has always been very careful. But now the times have changed.

GS And now people are approaching things differently?

MH The school board is entirely different, and I don't know whether they don't seem to pay as much attention to the town itself. [29;05] Of course with the taxes going up and everything, people are upset. Now last year our teachers wanted 11 percent increase, and they gave it to them. Well they better not ask this year because I'm sure they won't get it. Because the situation is too hard for people. But that was one thing about Mr. Willis. He was very considerate of the town's business too. Then of course we had other superintendents that were good.

GS I wanted to ask you about the Ward Lumber Co. It seems like it was a pretty important part of the town here.

MH [30:00] Of course that was the way they made their living. But of course they didn't pay very much either. I remember I was shocked when first got here, at the amount that they paid their help. But one woman [end of tape 1, side A] [Tape 1, side B] that little red house that's up the last one on the right, there was a mill right in there. That mill burned.

GS And I understand there were at one time 2 mills.

MH Down here, yes.

GS So many of your students must of been children of people

who worked in the mills.

MH A good many of them were, and some of them had a farm or something like that rather than. Now Mrs. Kenneth Ward, they had 2 boys that went to school. And Mrs. Merlin Ward, she probably told you, she had 2 boys and a girl that went to school. She had one boy that was especially bright boy. Mr. Willis, this is a cute little story. [1:00] I was teaching Vermont at the time. Mr. Willis was in the room so he heard this. And I thought while Richard is tying his shoe now, I'll see if I can catch him with a question. And he kept right on tying his shoe. So Mr. Willis said to me later, you thought you were going to catch him, but you didn't do it! He answered me while he was tying his shoe! Then he had infantile, that really shook that town here because he hadn't been out of town. Nobody ever knew where he got it.

GS Who had infantile?

MH Richard (GS: Richard Ward.) He was the oldest boy.

GS Did he survive?

MH Oh yes, he's in the lumber business too, but not with them. We went out on his own. I've got some boys that have really turned out very well. I like to keep track of

them. [2:03] Now I have one boy, that was my last year here, before I left. I was giving out different things for him to do. And he came to me, and he said Mrs. Herrick, may I sing for my part? And I said sing? What do you want to sing? He said, what do you think I should sing? I said how about I Believe? He said sure, I'll sing it. So I said to Mr. Izor, he and I worked together, I said Larry thinks he could sing for graduation, but he wants the loudspeaker. Do you want him to have it? He said we'll get it for him anyway. So they got it. Well, the first day he tried it, he looked at me and he said Mrs. Herrick, he doesn't need any loudspeaker. We don't need it, he can sing without it. So he agreed. [3:00] He was willing to sing for us. And one of the girls played the piano. I tried to use all my children, if they could play or sing or anything else, I tried to have them use the time or whatever they wanted to. So we got this Mrs. Maynards daughter up here. She said I can't do it, Mrs. Herrick. I said yes you can, you're going to do it. And she said, well I'll try it. So she practiced with him. That's what he did, he sang. And do you know today he's out west, and he has two bands and he's teaching in one

of the schools. And I think he told me when he was here this fall, he came to see me, he had 167 in one class.

GS This was for a graduation exercise?

MH That was graduation. Now he's gone on. He went from here to Montpelier and he sang in the choir out to Montpelier. And his grandmother said to me Mary, how did you know he could sing? I said I didn't. I said he told me he could sing, and I tried it, and we found out he could. [4:22] He's a wonderful chap too. And they've adopted two children. He just lost his grandmother, and that upset him, Mrs. Conrad. Did you talk with Mrs. Conrad at all?

GS No. Is she the woman who just passed away?

MH Oh no, she's a daughter of the woman that just passed away. They built I think it's \$105,000 house. You better talk to her too. She should have a different version from the rest of us.

GS Are they a long time family here?

MH Oh yes, she was born and brought up here. [5:04] Then she married a man out in Montpelier. And his family were the Gast people out in Montpelier.

GS Did you have much contact with the mills?

MH No, only as I came in contact with the people. Now the

man that had the store was also one of the school directors, Alan Burgess. And he went from here to Bradford to live. And both of them, Mrs. Burgess could sing and play both. Her son used to do that, he's sing or play. He didn't want to. He was different than Larry. Larry was always ready to sing. He loved to sing.

GS Holly Ward was telling me that in the winter, because of the dams, the water was high behind the village, kids would skate. Do you remember going out on the river?

MH [6:17] No, I never did that. We used to have a pond, not a big pond, just a small pond that they could skate on. And then they used to slide. Did Holly say any about sliding?

GS I don't remember that he did.

MH Do you remember when they had the big round pans they used to have? (Yes.) I used to go out with mine at recess time, and we'd go up on the hill and we'd go down in the pan. And one day they got me to go down. One of the boys said I'll be done to the foot of the hill to meet you. Well I had no idea that that pan would go like it went. And I went around and around and around. And it was a good things he met me at the bottom of the hill or I

never been able to stand up. [7:02] But I used to slide with them, they used to love to slide out on that hill. But we never did much skating. The children didn't have, there was children at that time didn't have too much money to spend. And for a long time here they had hot lunches. Each mother would take turns and make a big kettlefull and bring it to school, all hot. And then the teacher wouldn't have to dish it out. Each one had their own bowl and their own cup. They did that for a long time until they put hot lunches in. So we've done everything. But that was something they all enjoyed.

GS One of the things that I'm trying to focus on a little bit in all of my conversations with people is the river. [8:03] And I wondered how have you been aware of the river?

MH The river comes up to my barn. When the river overflows, it comes up there. And at that time, it didn't touch this house, and it didn't touch the cellar even, but this house over here it did touch the cellar, and took some of the land in the back.

GS Do you mean the '27 flood?

MH That was the '27 flood. And then we had another one that

came later, came up on this end and came up, you know where the Schultzes live? (No.) They have a restaurant over back there. And the water came right up the road. And everybody of course got excited, and of course there's one house that disappeared down here, sent down the river, in '27. [9:10] That was you see before I came here, so I didn't see as much of that. People on this end of the town went into the Ward's big house because they could go up high you see. And Mrs. Ward even now, it took a building up here, it took 2 buildings, it took the library. They have a nice library in this little town. But of course the people at school don't want to use it because they don't have any bathroom facilities. So they have to get along by having one over there. I don't know what the state requires now. [10:00] When I was teaching there, each one of us had a library in our own room. And with me it was easier for my children to get their literature and everything right in the room.

GS Have you used the river at all to swim in?

MH No. There's only one place up here that you can swim. They call it the swimming hole.

GS Has that always been popular? Do you remember kids years

ago swimming?

MH I don't remember. Mrs. Ward used to take the children. She used to do that a lot. She allowed in so many and take them up, do you know where the Austins live? They live out on a little hill, you turn to the right before you go straight up. She used to take them up there because there was a good swimming hole, and it wasn't dangerous. [11:00] I don't know, there's some parts of this river I would hate to be in. You see down below where the Shepherd place is, there was a father and son drowned there just 2 years ago. They were on a rock fishing, and the little boy fell in. And the father went in after him and the father drowned too. So they both drowned right there, and the rock.

GS Is the current dangerous?

MH They said it was about 30 foot deep. I never had anything, any children that were disagreeable really. I had a real cute thing happen to me while I was teaching here. A boy that lived up on the hill, asked me one morning if he could bring his ground hog to school. And you know you hate to say you can because you don't know what's going to happen. I said well how are you going to

bring a woodchuck to school? [12:06] Well he said Mrs. Herrick, I got a house for him. I have a place he can eat, a place he can drink, and a place he can sleep. Well, I said, how big is he? He said it'll sit right on the table there. So I said all right, you can bring him down, we'll see, but you mustn't let him out. Oh no, he said, I won't let him out. But he brought him down, he sat him on the table. And he had just what he said, he had a place for him to eat, a place for him to sleep, and a place for him to play if he wanted to. He had a loop for him to jump on.

GS And this was a ground hog?

MH This was a ground hog.

GS They're pretty big, aren't they?

MH Not too big. This was a little one, this was a baby one. It was probably that long. Of course the kids were fascinated to think he brought it. [13:02] So at noon time he said to me may I let him out? Well I said is he going to get away? He said no, he'll sit on my shoulder. So he opened one of the doors and took him out, and he did, he sat on his shoulder and the children were just happy to see him. And he said now he'll go to sleep. So

he put him back in, they played with him a little while, right around the room. And he didn't offer to run away or anything. Put him back. In a few minutes one of my children said to me look, Mrs. Herrick. The ground hog's gone to sleep. He had curled up in the hay and gone to sleep. Now they were fascinated with that ground hog. Somebody said to me how did you dare let him bring that ground hog to school. [14:00] Well I said he said he was a pet. But it showed them that you could do something with animals once and awhile. And he was a boy, he was rough and ready, you wouldn't think he would be so friendly with a woodchuck.

GS It sounds as though the river wasn't too important to you.

MH Not to me, it wasn't to me. Of course it was to the lumber company because they did the sawing, all their sawing down there and up here. I was here when that building burned up there and everybody was scared to death for fear, these houses are kind of close.

GS They pump water out of the river to fight fires here?

MH They had to then, because that was the only place they had the water to get. You see everybody here now, that's

the trouble here, you have to have your own water system. Mine used to be way up on the hill. And I was 70 years old when I made my last trip up there. [15:15] I had a reservoir up there. And I had the water come here first which was the way it was set up. And then Adrian and Bernadette had the overflow from what I had down cellar. Well sometimes they would feel I was drawing more than I should. Maybe I was but I wasn't aware that I was. Of course while my husband was alive he tended to it. But after he died I went up to check on it once and awhile, and Adrian would do it once and awhile. The last trip I made up I said to myself, I'm an awful fool to walk up this hill and see if that water will be running. So I came down, I said to Adrian well, you're going to have to do something You're either going to tend to the water, or I'm going to have to dig a well. [16:15] Well he didn't want to dig a well, but he didn't want to go up on the hill to tend to the water in the winter time. Because when the winter froze you were without water. Roger Strauss let me have water one winter just using a hose. He would fill my water tank downstairs, and that would last me for a week. And then he'd fill it up for the next

week. So that way I got my water. But then I decided I needed a well, so I dug a well. And it cost me only \$4,000, but it was a little bit too much. When I dug the well, Adrian had to dig a well, because he was going to be without water. So he and I both dug a well. [17:00] And so now we each have our own well. Aline doesn't have her own well, she still has the spring. Carolyn and Roger have a well because they were one of the first ones to have a well.

GS Did everyone have, you and Adrian shared a spring, but otherwise did everyone have their own springs?

MH Yes, Aline still shares her spring with these people over here. And then the big house, you know what I mean the big house, the Ward House, they had a spring of their own, and they had a big tank. And they used it with the church. They let the church have the water. And everybody has to have their own septic tank too. [18:00] I don't know how long they'll continue that, but it isn't easy.

GS In the village, were there things that brought everybody in the village together over the years?

MH When I first came, when I was here for awhile they used to have parties, card parties at different houses. And

they did that a lot. But now they don't ever do that. And then they used to have minstrel shows, that was a very popular thing here. Because we did have some wonderful voices. Gordon and Kenneth and Florence had a nice voices. Marilyn Ward had a nice voice. And then the Griffith boys who live down on that little house on the brook, they had voices. But they really had some nice minstrel shows, at the town hall. It was all done in the town hall. [19:05] And they had plays in the town hall.

GS Did everybody mix pretty much?

MH Oh ya, they seemed to. To me they mixed much better than they used to than they do now. You don't see people like you used to. Now I never see any of the teachers. And I always had when I first began to live here by myself, I had different teachers stay with me. The principal said to me one day, Mrs. Herrick, all they have to do is roll out of bed and go to school! He used to laugh about it. And that girl lives down south now and she's still teaching.

GS So the Wards, even though they were the owners of things, mixed with everyone else in town pretty well.

MH [20:04] They seemed to. Of course you'll hear criticism.

You'll hear all kinds of criticism. But you have to value your criticism. I just had one child refuse, she told me one morning, she came to school and she said Mrs. Herrick, I'm not going to salute the flag anymore. I had just lost my brother, because of the war. One of the boys said to me, he never saw me turn so quick. I turned and I said listen, young lady. As long as you're in school, and the school board tell me that you have to salute the flag, you will have to salute the flag. Now I said you go home and you tell your father and mother what I have said. And if they object, they can come down and talk to the school board, not me. [21:04] I said I have to do what the school board tells me. I never heard from them. That was the only thing that I ever had that crossed my path.

GS Did the people in town stay pretty constant? Or did people move in and out quite a bit.

MH They moved in and out. And lately, the last couple of years there's a lot of changing around. And have you been up on Moretown Common?

GS Only to drive through.

MH Over on your right do you notice a lot of houses? Those

are practically all new on that area. Do you know where Dr. Butch lives?

GS I live too far away to know who lives where.

MH You know this 4 corners up there. Dr. Butch is on the right before you go clear up. Then when you turn to your left it takes you up on that's another hill, that's another area. Then over when you're going the middle road, you go up where the doctor lives, several other houses. They put new houses up there. [22:27]

GS And those are all people who work somewhere else.

MH Work somewhere else. One man that lives up above where the road forks again, we got a fork up further, he does something with a boat in New York and travels back and forth.

GS And years ago did everybody pretty much work right here in town?

MH Practically. A lot of them didn't have cars. [23:02]

GS Did the Ward Company ever import people from outside because they needed more work?

MH I don't think so.

GS So it was pretty much then just the local people.

MH I would say. The Brigham family had several boys. They

all worked at the mill. The people that lived in the house where Dr. Strauss lives, they had 2 or 3 boys. And they worked here.

GS Did your husband ever consider coming to work in the mill? (No.) It wasn't work that appealed to him?

MH No. He did practically carpentry work all the time. Where he worked with the Heel Machine people, they used to ask me at Norton Abrasive is we always agreed, I said we never have time to argue about one is better than the other! [24:10] But it was entirely different to me, because I had never worked in anything like that. They told me I was the 10,000 person to work for Norton Abrasive. It's a huge establishment.

GS So you felt more comfortable staying here than staying in Massachusetts after your husband died.

MH I did. My sister doesn't like it, because she says I'm too far away. But of course all I have left is just here. We didn't have a big family, there were only 3 of us.

GS And Moretown was home.

MH No, I can't agree with you there. We moved to Northboro, Mass. And I finished my high school there. I graduated from high school there. Then I went to Framingham Normal.

[25:25] And then it always seemed to me more like home to me because my friends are there. I've got friends here, yes, I got loads of friends here. But I've lived here so long, I told somebody the other day I thought I better sell it and move. And you know what they said to me, why are you going to move!

GS And what did you way?

MH I said I don't know, I haven't got that far! [26:00] But when we talked of buying this, they couldn't get over, we rode to Mr. Joslin in Waterbury bank, and explained to him that we both couldn't be away from the school at the present time and could he tend to this business for us, and he said he could. So we came up in June to look at the house because it was rented. And he said to the woman do you mind if I look at the house? And she said no, I don't mind a bit. But she said we told Mr. Pierce we'd give him \$1,000. She said he don't want to take it. Grafton didn't let on that we had already bought it. So he never said a word, he said do you mind if I go upstairs? She said no. So he went up and he looked the house over. And when he came down he said to her he knew Mrs. Benedict. In fact I had been to school to her.

[27:00] He said when you get ready to close school in June, you will have to find a place because we aren't going to rent it anymore. And she said have you bought it? Then he explained to her, he said yes, we bought it some time ago. She said well he didn't tell us. Grafton said I don't know, you'll have to talk to him. And then they bought the place where Mr. and Mrs. Granphail lived. But we didn't come right up you see. We used to be allowed so many days a week off. And we used to take those 3 days and come up here and spend them. And then we each got a month's vacation. So we used to come and spend our vacation here.

GS You said that your husband had said this would be a good place to buy because it would be a nice place to retire to. [28:02]

MH Yes, and he said they have 2 churches, and he said they have a school, and they have a store. And he said if we get where we couldn't wait on ourselves, somebody would wait on us.

GS Has that proved to be something you've needed?

MH No, because you see he had a heart attack and passed away very quickly in Massachusetts. So he never made it, but

he lived to come back here. So that's one reason I'm at my own house.

GS Can you get out easily?

MH I have an automobile. And I can drive.

GS So you go out and do your shopping?

MH Yes, I do. I happened to have an eye implant a year ago, because I have glaucoma in this eye. And for a long time I couldn't drive. [29:07] And of course the state, in order to drive I had to turn my license in on my own. And they told me if I turned it in on my own, that I would be allowed to drive without a road test. When it got to be my age you didn't feel you wanted to take a road test, when you'd already taken one. So I decided I'd turn my license in, and so I did. When I got where I could see, when you can't see you're lost. I said to Dr. Sideman are you going to help me get my license back? And he said yes, you can have your license anytime. He said now you can tell the state of Vermont you're ready to drive. [30:03] I said you got to tell them because they won't do it on my say so. He said I'll tell them. But then I had a girl friend that worked in the same department that I was talking about. So she asked the man who had charge of it

if he was going to let me have my license, and he said sure. So they gave me my license back and no questions asked.

GS May I ask how old a person you are?

MH How old would you say I was?

GS I don't really know.

MH Well I'm too old, but I'm 88. But up to now I've been able to take care of myself. But if I ever felt that I couldn't drive, I wouldn't drive. But Dr. Sideman said there's no reason in the world why I shouldn't drive and do my own grocery. I drive to Montpelier, I've driven to Massachusetts. I asked him, I never go but now I ask him if he thinks it's all right.

GS So Montpelier is where you shop then. [31:15]

MH No, I shop at Waitsfield mostly. But I shop both places. I like to shop both places.

GS Seems like one very big change in the years that you've been here must be the amount of travel on this road.

MH It is terrible. [End of tape 1, side B]

GS What do you mean come and take your dog and cat?

MH I didn't want him to come, feel that they were in his way or something like that.

GS Oh, a student teacher to come and stay with you you mean.

MH Ya, he was going to come and stay and do his student teaching here.

GS I wee. Were you teaching then or were you retired?

MH I retired, but anyway he came. As it turned out, way back somewhere his father was related to my mother, but way back. But anyway he came. It was a pleasure to have him, it really was. He was a big help to me too. If I wanted something done that I couldn't do he'd do for me. As time went on he said he got to find a job. He said you know, Mary, I've applied way up in Morgan and he said I probably will never get it, but he said I'd like to go up there to teach. You know where Morgan is. [1:10] One day the phone rang, and this man said to be is Robert Hunts there? And I said he's in school. What can I do to help you? And he said I don't know, but maybe you can help him. He said what kind of a guy is he? And I said what are you looking for, a recommendation or what? And he said I'm looking for a recommendation, he said I'll explain it to you. He's got to meet the board tonight, he said to find out whether he's going to be able to have

the position or not. He said is it all right, do you think he would fit in? I said I don't know just what you want me to say, but I said he's a graduate of Johnson normal. And I said I'll tell you this much about him, if he was every going to go to Johnson to a party or anything and he wouldn't be home until 11 or 12, he would call me and tell me he wouldn't be home until such and such a time. [2:14] And I said it was a relief to me because I knew he was all right. But I said he's done that for a couple of years. Well he said he's got a little more time to do some more student teaching, but he can go to Duxbury to do it. But he said he'll have to come up to Morgon tonight. I said he won't get out of school till 4 o'clock. He said he can make it all right. When Robert came I told him and he said I'm going to Duxbury to teach, Mary, for 6 weeks. But he said I'm not going to go. He said I'll stay with you and go back and forth, is that all right with you? And I said well yes, if you want to stay here. He said yes, I'll stay here and go back and forth. Well he did, and he went to Morgan. And they hired him as the principal. He came back and I said Robert, you certainly are lucky I said to get a job

like this. [3:20] And he said I wish you'd go up and look it over and see what you really think about it. Well the next day I decided I'd go up and look at it. And do you know I never saw a one room school, well his was going to be one room, but it was really a 2 room school [speaks to her dog.] if that school was, and he went.

GS Now is that good or bad, when you say you never saw one like that?

MH It was so well equipped, everything. They even had a piano, they had electric stove in the kitchen, everything for convenience. Way up on the side hill. So he went, and he found a place to live. He said I don't know how it's going to go, but he said I'll try it anyway. Well, he's still there. And when he was going to get married he called and he wrote to me and he said I'm going to be married down in Woodstock. Can you come down? [4:34] And I said I don't know if I can come, but I'll find somebody to go with me, but I said they won't have a chance to have an invitation like I have. He said they'll be welcome. Well I had a fellow that used to stop here once and awhile from Waitsfield. And I called and asked him I said would you be willing to drive me down to Woodstock

to a wedding? But I said you've got to go too. He said I don't know whether I want to go to a wedding or not. I said this is Robert, he said yes, I'll go. So he and I went to the wedding. And he know has 3 children. He's still in the same school he was when I let him go. [5:20]

GS Have you have borders here then?

MH Oh ya, I took skiers till I couldn't take anymore.

GS How would you make connections with skiers? How would they find you?

MH Usually, the woman across the street used to take skiers. If she had an overflow I could take 4. And then Mrs. Maynard up on the main road here did the same thing. So I didn't have to go looking for them because I always had them. Helen called me one night and she said Mary, I've got 5 Swedes, and only one of them can talk English. Will you take them? [6:03] I said Helen, I don't know. That's kind of short notice. Well she said, what do you got to have? She said I got to have an apple pie because the man that can speak English want's apple pie and ice cream. Well I said I got the apple pie and the ice cream. Now I said what have I got to have for meat? Well she told me and I said all right, I'll take them. So I took them. And

do you know I heard from that crowd for a couple of years.

GS So you would not only provide them with a place to sleep but you'd feed them. Morning and evening?

MH No, just one meal a day.

GS Do people still do that around here?

MH Not like they used to. They used to do it. I had one doctor come, he had a broken leg. He stayed, he couldn't get go anywhere. They took him out to the hospital and they patched him up, and told him he couldn't ski for I don't know how long. [7:15] He was here pretty near 6 weeks, at my house. But it was no bother. Eat his breakfast. They asked me what time I liked to have breakfast, and I said if you come by half past 7 you can have your breakfast. And so that's what they always did.

GS As far as during your teaching career, from the time you started out to the time you retired, were there particular kinds of changes that occurred that sort of you felt were especially important? [8:02]

MH During the war I worked for the Red Cross. I worked as a nurses aide. And I worked in the city hospital in Worcester, Mass. There were 25 teachers that took that

course. And we all took it. And when the end of our course came, we were given a choice. There were 3 hospitals in Worcester. And they told us we could take any one we wanted. I said I'll take the city hospital because they have trained us. So I stayed with one other girl, and the rest of them all went somewhere else. Pretty soon we could see them coming back, first one, then another. One night I said to this girls what in the world are you coming back for? You left the city hospital. She said Mary, you know up there when we do the bedpans we don't have any washing pan to put it in. We have to do it with a brush and a rag. [9:06] And she said we are getting sick of it, we're going back to a washing machine. So that's why they came back. When I taught school, until one o'clock every day, that was our schedule. And then at 5 o'clock my husband took me to the _____ hospital, and I stayed until 10. And I did that during the war.

GS Was that to take care of combat casualties?

MH Anything that came in in the city hospital. But that was one part of my life that I really gave, I felt I was giving someone something when I had to do that.

GS Did you do that for the entire war?

MH I did it the whole war. I did it afterwards for awhile, but I did it because they were very short of help. [10:04] But that was one phase of my life. But I enjoyed teaching, I really did.

GS When you finished up, was it still the same job that you had started out to do when you first were trained? Or had so many changes occurred?

MH No, I ended up teaching, I did substitute for work. Do you remember when that English teacher came here, and she decided the children didn't have to mind? If they wanted to take a pillow and lay down on the floor they could if they didn't feel like doing their arithmetic they didn't have to?

GS Was that in Moretown?

MH That was one of them, but it was all around here. They did it everywhere. And one day Marian Merchand who was teaching the 4th grade that time wanted to know if I wouldn't substitute a couple of days for her. [11:00] And she said I don't know how they'll act, but she said there's 2 boys she said that have a pillow and a rug in the back of the room. And if they get their work done,

they're allowed to go up and lie down and be quiet for a couple of hours. I said 2 hours? Two boys, that age? And she says to me, you don't think much of that, do you, I said no, I don't. But I said I'll tell you, Marilyn, if they're going to up in the corner lay down and go to sleep, that's all right by me, but if they're going up and wrestle, they're going to do their arithmetic. They wrestled pretty quick. So back they came to do their arithmetic. They told Mrs. Merchand they hoped I never supplied again because I kept them working all day. So she laughed about it. But that's when they were allowing the children so much freedom. [12:00]

GS And that didn't work.

MH And it didn't work, not here anyway. And I don't think it worked anywhere else. Did you ever meet Charlotte Barney? She taught here. She's retired now. I'll tell you where you'll see the retired teachers when you go to the retired teacher's meeting up in Montpelier, you see plenty of them. (GS: Do you go?) I go once and awhile. Mrs. Ward and I go. She didn't graduate from here, but she graduated down in Philadelphia, but she still goes to the retired teachers. She likes to go.

GS Did she teach?

MH She did at that time.

GS Is there anything you'd like to add?

MH [Asks Greg about his teaching. 13:18] Holstein herd that he was very fussy about. And he was looking for a man that would really make the men work I guess.

GS This was a gentleman farmer?

MH Ya, gentleman farmer. He had a beautiful, it was an estate that's really what it was.

GS What was his name? (MH: King.) And he had a show herd of Holsteins.

MH They were all registered and everything.

GS And how did he get wind of your father?

MH Somebody, my father knew this man that had another farm. I don't know how dad did really meet him. But we went, and he was there a number of years. But mother didn't like down there. She didn't like living in Massachusetts.

GS So he was the farm manager?

MH He was the farm manager. We had a nice place to live and everything, but she still wanted to come back to Vermont.

[14:33]

GS Had your father been farming before he went

MH Yes, we had a farm of our own down on the river, down towards Lake Mansfield. When they were going to flood the land, they were going to flood the farm we were on. So dad had a chance to go down there to work, so he went. We moved horse and dog and cat and all.

GS Did you move by train?

MH No, he had a truck. But we had a nice place to live. We were only a short distance from the school, really.

GS And that was in Northboro?

MH That was in Northboro. That's only 10 miles from Worcester. I just went down there last fall to the high school reunion.

GS At 88 that must of been a big number reunion. What was it?

MH It was a high school reunion. (Your) no, they have a rule that anybody that has ever been to school there, it doesn't make any difference whether you've been in the first grade or the high school, you're still an alumni of the school. [16:00] And my sister had been there in the first grade. She went with me this year. She said Mary, I would never believed that people could be so friendly. Everybody was delighted to see everybody. That's why I

said it seemed to me a lot more like home. My brother and I were both close together. He was only 18 months younger than I was anyway. And he was in high school at the same time, but he came back to Stowe you see, so that he graduated with the class that he was going with when he left. So that's the way he made up his time.

GS So was this your 60th or your 70th? What number reunion was this?

MH This was the 68th. But it was surprising to see the people, they came from everywhere. Two of them came from California. [17:09] It takes courage to pick up and go like that.

GS And when your father came back then, did he farm again?

MH No, he worked for the town. He worked on the road. He didn't work steady because he didn't want to. He had a small farm. Then he had a sugar place.

GS And working on the road, was that a seasonal job?

MH No, that was just in the summertime. And then during the flood, after the flood was over with, he worked with a machine in Waterbury, just plowing sand we used to tell him. But he was feeling sorry for people that didn't have anything, their homes were gone. [18:10] The animals too

for that matter. I like Moretown. To me Moretown isn't just exactly like it used to be. It has changed.

GS What comes to mind first when you think of how it's changed?

MH I don't know just how to say it to you. I guess it's because so many people that I've known are gone. Now Florence and Kenneth were very good friends of mine. And when you lose your friends, you lose a lot. [pause; 19:12] Do you have a town meeting in Braintree? (Yes.) What's that near? (Randolph.) Lord, I ought to know that. I taught school down in East Randolph.

GS In the building [tape shut off; end of interview.]