

Otis Wallis/TC1994.0001
Mad River Valley Project/VFC1991.0004

OW Otis Wallis
JB Jane Beck
MS Miles Smith
EV Ev Grimes
Place Waitsfield, VT
Date 02/03/1994

JB I though maybe we just start with, your early family history and coming up here and the way you told it to me before was perfect.

OW Didn't you get that before?

JB I did but see, what happens is I got it, but, I'm a clod as far as radio goes and in order to have the right quality they have to. You know be a little fancier that I was.

OW Oh is that it.

JB And so that's why we a. Have come back and but I still would like to focus on that.

OW Um hum.

JB And some of those same questions. [009]

OW Um hum.

JB I asked you then.

OW Well I don't know how far back you want to go with the

history. A.

JB How about a, coming to, coming to Vermont. And with
_____.

OW Well I can, I probably I can tell you a little bit
maybe before that time. [012] All I can tell you is
this, that David Wallis showed up in Woodstock
Connecticut, in 1728. With four sleighs. And then he
married Mary Anderson, there in Woodstock. Then he
moved from there up to a, Brimfield, Massachusetts.
Later on Brimfield was divided from Brimfield and
another township was made which was Holland. Which
eventually he was living in Holland. And he had five
sons, one of them was David the first, and one of them
was Jonathan, which is the branch that we come from.
And then there was, William, and John and Thomas. And
Thomas was a doctor. And a, but Jonathan stayed there
well for, for some time, and then he moved up to
Weathersfield, Vermont. With Black Sam. And of
course he had to give him his freedom cause nobody
could come into stay with a slave. You could have

slaves in Connecticut but you couldn't buy them. And then he stayed there, I should think about 13 or 14 years there in Weathersfield. And then he come over the mountain which was the old Moretown, which was the old Waitsfield-Northfield road. And built a log cabin and he lived there for what, 2 or 3 years in a log cabin. And then they built a house and Black Sam made all the nails because he was a blacksmith for the house. And then he had a son, Jonathan had a son, Joseph Wallis. And a, a, Mary Wallis. And a, [034] Joseph stayed on up there, and later on he sold the place. And a, he had I think if I remember right he had five sons, one of them was Churchill. And then there was a, Chapman, and I can't seem to think of the other, there was Otis and Otis Wallis was the one, the branch that I come from. And Otis bought the Palmer place there. And lived there for about 13 or 14 years. And then he moved down here. And a, bought this place. And it's been in the family. They bought it in 1865 so it's been in the family since 1865. And a, then he had a son, and a daughter Otis Wallis had, which was George which was my father. And then there

was Rebecca, no, Abby, I'll take that back it was Abby Wallis. And she married a Trask. And a, my grandfather was rather an easy going person. My grandmother she really ruled the roost. And a, ha, so that's about the story. Then when my grandfather died my father come, he was teaching school. And my father come back on the farm. And of course they had sheep and some cattle. And then later on they did away with the sheep and went into dairying completely. And of course then, [055] my father had four sons, well actually he had six. There was Evan, who died at about a year and a half. And then there was Harl, and he graduated from the University of Vermont and worked with General Motors. And then there was another one, Lauren, and he died at a year and a half, and then my brother Everett, who was a professor at Princeton, organic chemistry and then my brother Clifford, he's still living and he was an electrical engineer, he had an electrical engineering department out there in Missouri College. And of course when I come along, they said I had to stay on the farm, so that's how I'm, I've been on the farm. [065]

JB And I think you told me and I, I'd love you to. To tell me again but that you were born in this house, and sort of that, the continuity of it.

OW Um hum. Yeah. Well all the family was born here in the house. Yeah. Um hum. Um hum.

JB And then, you grew up on the farm and then, I think, _____ took it over, bought it. [072]

OW Yeah I bought it in 1936 from my father. Um hum. Yeah. And then I got married in 43. To Elsie Tryon. She was a teacher up there in Middlebury. She taught home economics.

JB Now, when you were growing up, what was the valley like, cause what I'm trying to get at is, in your time and how it's changed today, so I'm looking for some description. What it was like.

OW Well a, most everybody was a, practically in the same boat, there wasn't too much money, of course. But we were always self-sufficient. We had gardens and we had our own meat and we had our own sugar and sugaring and that sort of thing. And a, of course the road our here was a dirt road. And that wasn't paved til, right around, some where around 1940, and a. Of

course, in those early days there wasn't any cars, there was mostly teams, and sleighs. And if anybody did have any car. Well there was a few that had one or two cars here in the valley. [088] But they always put them up for the winter because they couldn't use them in the wintertime. And a. I was educated down here in a one room school house for 2 years. And then, they did away with the, red school houses, and they opened up a new building up here in Waitsfield. Which took in all the grades and high school. They changed it from a two year high to a four year high. And a, I don't know of any.

JB There was farming and then, a there were mills and logging or what was?

OW Oh yeah most, most of it was mills and logging mostly.

[098] Yeah. Um hum.

MS I think we're gonna have to stop and let the cat in.

OW Oh you think that cat is bothering you.

MS Should I just open the door here or?

OW Yeah. Well I don't know it might make it worse. Ha!
Ha!

JB Ha! Ha! (Kitty meows)

?? Come in. (meow)

JB Cats have a way of getting just what they want. We had a cat that any time she was hungry she would sit on the electric can opener.

OW Well maybe I better. Maybe they'll take her out in the apartment.

MS She's afraid of me standing there. [106] (short pause) Sorry.

JB Okay let's see. Where. Really talking about the industry here. And what it was like. And can you describe say the mills and the logging industry as well. Would farmers work at the mills or would it be, a separate job, did they work in the lumber mill?

OW Well I imagine some of course they didn't have too much heavy dairies, they worked in the mill.

MS _____, let me just move this in a little closer.
[117] Keep moving away from me.

OW I do. Okay. Ha! Ha! All right. Of course there was Wards Mill down there, in Moretown, there was two mills, going. They a, lumber mills and both of them were lumber mills, one of them was kind of chair stock mill and also there was another one, the clapboard

mill which is still going. Existing now. And a, of course there was a couple of years ago there was quite a lot of mills up in Warren. I guess probably there would be, there was three, or four or five or six mills up there. And a, most every body was employed in the mill, if they weren't farming they were employed in the mills. We didn't commute to Montpelier very much because a, the horse and buggies took too long to get there and back again. We used to go mostly it was a day trip if you went out there. And then, [130] then I guess years before my time they had also a place where they made brick. I know Sterling Living said something back here, of course Sterling is passed away now, just recently. And he said there was places that, where their dad made brick. Here in, in the valley. The a, I can remember lots of times when I was a kid, listening to the a, teams going up by in the wintertime. There would be any where from 5, 6 or 7. About four o'clock in the morning, and of course each one had a different bell, so you could tell who's who. And I remember sleeping up here, upstairs and listening about three o'clock

and hearing those teams go up by with a bell dinging along and of course you could hear the squeaking of the runners, of course it was cold. [143] And a, like this year, this year we had an old fashioned winter, and that's more like what I remember when I was a kid. And they'd go up and a, Fayston, load up with their logs, and then about 4 or 5 o'clock they would come back. Unload their logs at the mill, put up their horses, and a, then put up for the night and be ready for the next morning to go back, go back up and get another load of logs. And of course everything was, those days were brought in the wintertime, they had huge piles of logs, so that they could saw them in the spring of the year when there was plenty of water. And also some during the summer.

JB Where did most of the people come from that, that came here? I've understood that, that many came from other New England states, or some did, some were Irish, French Canadians? And I gather that some Poles worked in the lumber camps.

OW I don't know too much about that. I know out there in Barre in the quarries, there was a lot of Italians.

They worked in the quarries out there. And a, I remember my Uncle Charlie Bragg he used to come out and, and a, he'd have these racks like that you put hands in and a, they'd go up in the cupola and get these doves and a capture them and then put them in the racks and take them, because they, Italians liked squab meat. Pretty well. And, I don't know yes there was some Canadians, quite a few Canadians come down here. Um hum. French Canadians. And bought farms. Um hum.

JB But every body knew each other it seems like.

OW Oh yes.

JB Tell me a little about that.

OW Well if you were in trouble why always your neighbors come to help you. [173] And a, if it's any help anybody needed any help everybody usually helped each other as much as possible. Um hum.

JB Now your grandfather or was it great-grandfather who built the log cabin?

OW It would be my great-great-great grandfather.

JB Great, great, great grandfather. When do you figure that was?

OW Well, he come over the Northfield mountain around a,
1802, with Black Sam. [180] And built the log cabin
there.

JB And Black Sam was, his name was actually.

OW Samuel Deering.

JB And he stayed with your great.

OW Oh yeah. Um hum. Um hum.

JB And worked with him.

OW And worked with him. Yup. That's right. Um hum.

EV Could we get Mr. Wallis to tell that _____.

JB The story of.

EV Black Sam yeah.

JB Could you tell the story again of Black Sam, I guess I
interrupted you too many times.

EX Um hum.

JB And a, but coming up with your great-great-great
grandfather and making the nails and um. I think
before you told me that um, he lived to be, 90.

OW 98.

JB Yeah. Well if you'd just tell me that whole thing,
cause I imagine he was the first black person ever in
Waitsfield. [196]

OW Well probably was. Probably was. All I can say, he's buried up here in the corner on the north corner of this cemetery. Common cemetery he'd buried, he was buried there. And a, he died a few years before my, Jonathan Wallis passed away. Cause Jonathan more or less lived to 86. And.

JB Now let me get it straight again. Was Jonathan, he was, Black Sam came up with Jonathan Wallis?

OW Ut, un.

JB Okay. Just, just if you'd start that again so. Start with Jonathan Wallis and Sam Deering or however.

OW [207] Well.

JB So we get the names.

OW Well they come over the mountain if that's what you mean?

JB Um. Well, for radio sometimes it's hard to cut in and so what I was trying to do is make you start with their names, yeah. Just, and then tell the, tell the story.

OW Well, Jonathan, he come with Jonathan Wallis. Over the mountain and they built the log cabin. And then later on they built the frame house, which Black Sam

made all the nails for it. And I, in fact I can take you to the cellar hole now. Up there. And a, and then he had, as I said, then there was Joseph Wallis, and then of course there was Otis Wallis, and then Georgia Wallis and then myself.

JB It's quite a.

OW Ha! Ha!

JB Lineage.

OW Yeah. But we never.

JB How.

OW We never found wherever David Wallis come from. And we're in the process, we've had a, well I had a fellow by the name of Russ, Russell Wallis who lives down in Rhode Island, which is a branch from David Wallis. But his, see there was David Wallis, and then David Wallis II, David Wallis the II was in the expedition to Crown Point at the time of the French and Indian War. And evidently he was wounded and he died very young. [230] And his wife, had a child which was David the III. And this Russell Wallis is from that branch. There's also another Wallis, a Guy Wallis, over here in, in Jerusalem and he's very much

interested and he contacts him. ____ here. A short time ago. [237] And he wants an interview with me sometime we're gonna get together this summer. And a, see if there's any connection there with him. [240] So a, also there was another David Wallis that lived over there in Huntington. And a year or two ago he showed up here and but his ancestors are from Maryland. And a, he claims there was a branch of the Wallis' that went north years ago, now whether that's the branch, I'm sure that David Wallis or eventually David Wallis I, eventually comes from down south somewhere. So we're trying to get that linkage, because nothing was ever handed down. In the family. Even Russell said, there was, he never found where, maybe he could find where David Wallis I come from. And a, that's what we're trying to find out.

JB Were there many stories past down in the family of what life was first like here or some stories that, that came down about say building the log cabin or? Particular of banter or anything like that?

OW Not too much. [259] No. No.

JB Well tell me a little bit about a, the change in

farming over the years because a, I know your grandfather farmed and your father and then you took over and, how did it change? [264]

OW Well, of course years and years ago they used to raise a lot of sheep. And a, of course then when Australia took over the sheep market, why then the price of wool went down, considerable so people had to change into something else. And mostly it was dairying. Of course, later on, of course lie Ed Eurich he went into potatoes, he raised potatoes of course quite a lot. And there was quite a lot of people that a, did, did that too. But a, mostly it was dairying. And I can remember on the a, the dairying here, my first recollection is the fact that father had a separator, and we used to separate out our milk, and then take the cream down to the, creamery which is just, just below the hill from our place down here. [283] And I can remember a, Byron Palmer was the a, manager of it. And I remember Clifford and I, my brother used to go down there and we'd take our fingers and after the butter was taken out of the churn, we'd take our

fingers and scrape the churn a little bit to get the butter. And a, it was a kind of an interesting thing, they made two kinds of butter. The blue cow butter and the red cow butter. The blue cow butter got a little bigger price than the red cow butter but it come out of the same vat. Ha! Ha! And a, also I can remember too we used to have a horse, it was called old John, and father would always put the cream on the wagon. And old John would always go down to the creamery by himself. And he would stay in line, and as they moved up why he would move up and they creamery man would take the cream off the a, off from the wagon and put it into the creamery. And then if there was any skim milk of anything like that, he'd fill up the cans with the skim milk and then he'd just tell old John to go out and get up and old John would go down and turn around and come back and stand in the driveway until my father unhitched the horse. From the wagon. He was kind of an old eccentric horse. It was rather interesting. If you went to the village and a, you hitched him. In those days they used to have the church sheds, and each person in the a, in

the church always had a stall. And a, so if you put old John in the stall then hitch him. He's slip his bridle and come home. If you didn't hitch he'd stay there all day. And wait until his master come to get him. He was rather a peculiar horse. [320]

JB You mentioned red cow butter and blue cow butter, what was the difference or why was it called red cow and why was it called blue cow?

OW I don't know. I couldn't tell you that.

JB That's amazing. I'd never heard that one.

OW You never did. Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

JB But I guess in those days, you know there were eccentric horses I mean they all, a lot of them had real characters.

OW Oh yes. [330] Oh yes. Animals have their own particular character, that's right. Yeah.

JB And I think you told me about a, you also had oxen here and breaking out the roads, I think there was one particularly bad snowy.

OW We had one year, there was a lot of snow. It took my father one day to get a road from here to the sugar house. Which was probably be just about, a third of a

mile. And the only way he could do it, he'd have to, put one ox through for a path and then he would the other ox go through the path and eventually he got up to the sugar house. And of course when they come to a, ha, in the spring of the year [344] all the buckets were so high they could hardly reach them and some of them they couldn't reach them. Ha! Ha! Ha! When the snow left.

JB How many trees would you tap, in those days?

OW Well we were tapping right around about a thousand trees.

JB So your, your sugaring was an important income?

OW Oh yes. Yes is was in the, and my father used to, retail quite a lot of his syrup and he made also a sugarcakes and things like that and sold, he had his a, quite a few people that ordered. And a, so that was a source of income too of course.

JB Was he involved at all in drawing gravel? [360] For the roads from the river, you hear a lot of people telling you that in the old days the farmers along the river used to draw gravel out of it.

OW That's right they did. They a, got gravel out of the

river, which was a good thing. And a, they'd gravel the roads. Um hum. There'd be several teams, and then they'd have probably anywhere from 8 or 10 men down in the, in the river. Shoveling the gravel into the wagons, and then the people would haul that and then they'd go to the road and they had, it was made up, the bottom was made up of two by fours, so all it did, one man would stay up at one end at the front end and one at the back end and lift up the two by four and then the gravel would fall down. And through the space onto the road. And then of course after the team left, why then they smoothed it off. And then the next team would come and, unload. And he'd go back after another load. Yeah, most every thing was done for the town was done by the farmers that would work. They didn't get very big pay.

JB I think I remember you telling that a, there was a real difference in those days and then you saw a real change when the ski areas came in and one of the things we're trying to look at is old attitudes, and new attitudes coming in so I wondered if you just give me your perceptions about the changes. [397]

OW Well the only thing is, of course that a, ha, I don't, the only thing I can say there is new people that come in had different ideas then what we, the natives had.

And a, it was kind of irritating to the natives. And we, we still have that, still have that feeling. In a way, um hum. Because they want to change, well where they come from of course a lot of they're passing a laws now where you can't do this and you can't do that. Before when a man owned a property he could do what he wanted to with it. And a, the neighbors never thought of sticking their nose into the, what that farmer was doing or that person was doing. But a, since some of the new ones come up of course is a farmer did something why they didn't like well then they'd take them to court or they'd, have all these zoning laws and things of that nature. [420] And it was very hard for the natives to a, to give up their rights and privileges.

JB I guess that's what I'm trying to get out a little bit is there were, there were very deep seeded attitudes and kind of an unwritten code.

OW Um hum.

JB And a, I think that many people have come from away and don't really understand the code that was in place.

OW Um hum.

JB And I'm trying to get at, or get you to tell me which I know you very well. You know sort of what that code was, what, what those attitudes were and a, just so that we can look at those attitudes and see what's happened to them, or how they have been impacted by people that have come in.

OW Well of course the natives were a very independent bunch, but a, really when in hard times they were very loyal to each other too. [445] Sometimes neighbors had squabbles, maybe over a lines, boundary lines or something of that nature. But usually they were settled, they used to have a little small court appear. And a, run by the justices of the peace, and a lot of those were settled right within the town. But a, very very few of, once in awhile there would be one but nothing very much. And as far as the crime way is concerned we never thought of locking our doors. If you went, if a neighbor went to your house

and a, probably he'd go to the door and open it, and holler if anybody's home. And if there wasn't, he'd shut the door and go on. Or see them some other time.

But a, very little stealing. And of course murders were very unheard of really. In the early, early days, to speak of, maybe once you know in ten years or something like that, might be something. But a, as a general rule, everybody respected everybody, very much so. [478] And a, well I can tell you, I can tell you a little story one time. Well my mother made one time some apple pies. And she put them out on the breast work, and my father and my mother went to the village and when they come back one of the pies was missing. And a, so mother and father always wondered where that pie went. Well in the spring of the. [489]

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

OW My father and mother ever lost. Ha! Ha! Ha!

JB Hum. Yeah one of the things I think that you commented on, before was that in the old days business

was carried on with a handshake or something like that.

OW That's right. Um hum.

JB Can you remember an incident of that?

OW No I. I can't remember of any incident like that right now anyway. Ha! Ha! [008]

JB (short pause) One of the things oh you were talking about snow rollers and cradle hoes and can you remember the snow rollers coming through here or?

OW Oh yes. I can remember the snow rollers. Um hum. Used to be, they used to have two or three pair of horses on it, of course they were huge things. And a, there was always two men on it. And it was an awful cold ride in the wintertime of course. And of course the snow rollers they just packed the snow down on the roads and so it made it a little better travelling. And of course when it, when it drifted or anything like that, why the roller would go over the drift. And usually ended up by the spring of the year you'd have a lot of cradle holes. Which were just big dips in the road. And usually one, if you had a drift why, then they'd roll over it and then as it went on,

during the winter the sleds would gradually keep working it out and then they'd go over another hump and then they'd go down in a dip and then another hump and, and that way and I can remember up here on this hill there was 36 cradle holes at one time. And there was quite, that was by the, when it come spring of the year. Um hum.

JB Pretty bumpy ride, wasn't it?

OW Well it wasn't too bad, it was kind of interesting.

In a sleigh. Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! [026] Ha! Of course those days the sleighs were, the horse was off set you know. If was always on the a, left hand side. So when you turned out, for another sleigh, the horse would cross the, the center part into that particular.

Well, what would I say, trail like, and then the other one would go, beyond the other and then we'd all move back, and so the two, ruts if you want to put it that way. Why that's what you drove along in but a, there weren't too many sleighs and horses. Because most people were busy, on the farm and you know the only time they would really go anywhere would be maybe to, you know for some gathering, or something evening

or something of that nature or go get groceries or something. And mostly grocery stores of course were mostly essentials like flour and sugar. And kerosene, and sometimes they've have bananas and that sort of thing. Strings of bananas. And a, then they've have maybe a few candies and that nature. [041] Maybe a few cookies or something of that nature which most of them were in barrels or boxes.

JB You took your farm over what in 1936.

OW That's right, 1936.

JB And, when you took the farm over, did you begin to make changes, how did farming change? [046]

OW Well when I took the farm over of course most every thing we had was a, horse implements. Like a plows, and a harrows, and a mowing machine and racks and that sort of thing. It was all drawn by horses. And I guess about in the third year of my farming I, I a changed over into a tractor. And more tractor equipment.

JB Did you really notice, when the ski areas first started coming in, did you notice any changes at first or a? Was there a, how long did it take for the ski

areas to build in _____? [057]

OW Well the ski business really opened up, Palmino opened it up in about 1950. And of course there wasn't any lodges or condominiums or anything of that nature. And he did ask the, that was the Mad River Glen that opened up first. And a, he asked you know the farmers and different people around to take in skiers. And a, I know my wife and I took them for two years. But then afterwards they begin to a, come up and build summer homes or then they begin to build condominiums, and that sort of that nature. [066] Actually it didn't really, really get started very much until really Sugarbush opened up, and I can't tell when Sugarbush did open up. But a, I would say probably oh, probably ten years later when they'd open them. And of course that changed things, the big change was then. Because you see Palomino when he come here with this a, opened up the Mad River Glen, he wanted it for expert skiers. And a, he didn't like the idea when Sugarbush opened up. In fact he fought it like every thing to have it open, not have it open. Because he didn't want to get the, well I don't know, I guess he

didn't want the, the general public to get in too much involved up in here. [079]

JB And that's what happened when Sugarbush opened?

OW That's really when Sugarbush opened up and more for the, you know the people that weren't the professional skiers.

JB And did that bring a mob of people or? What was it like?

OW Well of course it was gradually, I mean people kept coming in, and coming in, and coming in of course. Yup. Having some at homes and then the condominiums started being built and that sort of thing. Yeah.

JB Do you think overall it's had a good impact or bad impact? [087]

OW Financially probably it was a good thing. Some other ways, no. I think most natives feel just about that same way I think.

JB Well in talking with Ed Eurich this morning, he was pointing out that a, number one, when the ski area came in, he had, he gave up his potato business cause he said, he could no longer hire to pick potatoes and he also a, pointed out that it was not a steady source

of income because the weather played such a large.

OW Large part. Yeah. Well that's true. That's true.
Um hum.

JB But I think other problems I gather came with it and.

OW Oh sure. Oh sure, well you're bound too. Because as
I say, the newer people that have come in here their
ideas are different. [100] And a, they want, they
want protection, of their own property, so therefore
they had the planning boards and of course put
restrictions on what you could do and how you could do
it and so on and so forth with your land and so on.
And a, as I say, it was very irritating to be natives.

As I've told a lot of them I says, well you can see
how the Indian felt when the white man first showed
up. Cause white man took over the, took over the land
and a, they didn't like it, and a, it's just the same
as we do, we feel that same way, we didn't like the
idea of them taking over our property and telling us
what we can do with it. [111]

JB I remember too before you were telling me, I'd love
you to phrase it this way again cause I thought it was
well phrased but, you told me that they were hard

times but good times. And that you sort of elaborated but a.

OW Well of course there was always, there was hard times and there was good times of course. Um hum. Sometimes milk prices weren't too high and it was hard to get along to pay your grain bills.

JB And yet the, the community seems to be tied together, I don't know whether that was the hardship or the, or what it was. [122]

OW Well probably the hardship was, of course there wasn't as I say too much money playing around. Of course there's more money coming in and of course we've had more inflation too. And the dollar seems to be more prolific than it used to be. (short pause)

JB Another thing that you told me was a, that in the old days people didn't do business unless they could pay for it and I guess my question is, was that pretty much of a standard?

OW Most of them, did it that way, mostly. Um hum. Of course there were some that went in debt and of course. It would be mostly to the store keeper.

JB Yeah what was.

OW Running up a food bill or something of that nature.

JB What was the feeling about a, Ward's almost really owning the town, cause, didn't everybody shop at Ward's Store and a.

OW Well Ward mostly, owned most every thing down in Moretown. Not so much here in Waitsfield or Warren or Fayston. Although they did own quite a lot of land around in places. And of course they'd logged _____, and a lot of the land that they had, when they got it got it big enough so they could cut it. [146]

JB Didn't one of them maybe it was Burt I'm not sure but, have the philosophy that every time you cut a tree you should plant one.

OW Well Burt done quite a lot of planting, I don't know that the a, he felt that way or not, I don't know but I know he a do quite a lot of planting especially pine and that sort of thing around.

JB In Warren and Fayston, were there big logging camps that would come in in the wintertime? Or was that only in?

OW I don't remember any logging, really any logging camps. Very much.

JB Did you do any logging in the wintertime or did you just concentrate pretty much?

OW Well the only logging we did was to get, you know get wood out, you know for fuel. Or to burn. And also for cutting wood for the a, to boil sap. Mostly the a, wood that we burned for the sugar house was soft wood. And of course for the house it was a, hardwood and most of it was trees that weren't good for logs. Yes. Some of them that were dead maybe or something like that or had a, bad heart in the middle. That sort of thing. And if we did want any lumber why a we'd cut maybe a few trees for lumber or our own use, for planking or something of that nature. Or for boards. And take them up here to our local saw mill and. Cause Moriaty used to have a saw mill that used to saw out quite a lot of our lumber. Also there was a mill down here, Mr. Sever's mill, he used to saw out for local. And especially in the spring of the year. When the water was high. [174] And a, then of course there was also the a, Richardson mill up here, which is still in operation now because a, Chappy Baird of course is running that. And a, if you have

logs now you can take them up there and have them sawed. He'd saw them out for you. But I think mostly his logs now he saws them out and then he sends them off and they refinish them. Of course.

MS Can you set those matches down for, do you have matches in your hand there?

OW Yeah.

EV There's a.

OW Oh I'm sorry. [184]

EV Thank you.

JB Well would, yeah.

EV Would you explain, cause I don't think people will know why you used soft wood in sugaring.

OW I guess it was because we had plenty of it. Ha! Ha!
Ha! Ha! Ha!

JB What about the 27 flood, what was that like here? Can you remember that?

OW Oh yes I can remember the 27 flood. I was a sophomore in high school. Or a junior in high school. The bridges all went out. Most of them. And of course a lot of the roads went out. And down here this brook here in front of my place, that went out, and there

was about a 40 foot gap there, and a, and we made a temporary road just below it, you had to before the brook. And, and of course it was a, pretty muddy. Especially up on the flats, going towards Waitsfield.

That's a. That was a very devastating flood because so much of the roads and bridges were all taken out.

[204]

JB And it was just before the depression as well.

OW Yeah you see the depression come in 29 you see. Um hum.

JB So you had the flood and then the depression. What would, how would you access sort of the economic shape of the valley, through the late 20s and 30s and 40s?

[211]

OW Well of course in the depression probably it didn't hit us as hard as it would be in the cities. Because a, most of the people around here were farmers. And they were a, more or less self-sufficient. The only thing is, is the, the hardship was, was getting our milk out, of course. And a, getting it to the creameries. And then of course it was hard for the creameries to get ship the fluid milk, of course down

to Boston. And a, cause so much of that railroad was taken out. [221] I can't just remember how that was done or how they handled it, that particular time.

But a, of course the 29 flood, afterwards there was a lot of people looking for jobs and there was a lot of people walking the roads trying to find work.

JB So the next kind of big economic boom so to speak did come with say the skiing.

OW Probably yes. Yeah. Um hum. [230]

JB I was asking Ed Eurich because he feels that the skiing is so unstable and so forth, what do you think would help the valley the most as far as economic businesses or what have you or less of them or more of them or? What direction do you think a, the valley should go in?

OW Well I think about the only thing we can do now is to continue on with the tourist business and that's the ski business. Actually Vermont's way off one end of the country, and it's not, industries want to be somewhere the cities and places of that nature. And, have industries come up here, of course you've got to transport all their stuff here and transport it all

out again. And a, so I can't see any big a, boom as far as any industries are concerned. And of course the farms are going out. And a, the only thing as I say, it really is the tourist business. [252] And the ski business. I don't know how Ed felt about it.

But. Ha! Ha!

JB I think he thought that we probably needed something a little more than just the tourists.

OW Well I think probably we do but what?

JB Well one of the things he suggested. Well tell me about this a, aqua fir, did I say it right?

OW Yeah. Well up here. Yeah. I don't know much about that, what is being done on that.

JB Well I decided I might, maybe I should go interview to find out.

OW Ha! Ha! Ha! [263]

JB Cause he is very interesting about it saying you know this kind of thing. Everybody needs water and a, he'd like to see the town be able to use it, as a business.

OW Well, it probably would be a good thing for the, for the town, for Irasville and Waitsfield. But there again I don't think it's up to a, we people

that have already our own water supply to a, pay
for a duck to come down to supply the village,
the people should form their own association and,
and a, buy the water. Themselves. Cause after
all I don't think it's up to the town to spend
the money and tax the people. When a lot of us
do have our own wells and springs. And we have
to maintain them and the town doesn't help us out
to maintain our own water rights. [280] That's
of course being an independent yankee just the
same. Ha! Ha! As I said before. Ha! Ha! Ha!

JB One of the things I think here, I'm not so sure about
Waitsfield but certainly in Warren where electricity
came quite late, in the forties, I think that probably
this area in Vermont has seen the greatest change, the
most rapid change, in life style. Do you think?
That's true or am I off base here? [293]

OW Well a, the change has been made because of the
tourists and ski business. That's about the only
thing cause it's changed really from farming into and
also lumbering, it's a, which were the two a,
essential things back years ago. Which now of course

it seems to be going out. Of course there is some logging going on but a, most of the mills are a, off some where else now.

JB But the change in well getting electricity, the change in communication, the telephone when you know everybody had a party line it was the way to get the news around.

OW Um hum.

JB The change in the roads.

OW Um hum.

JB And, then the change in the economy from more of a barter economy to more of a cash economy.

OW Um hum.

JB It seems to have happened here more rapidly perhaps than elsewhere.

OW Well I, I can understand why it would be because a lot of people from the cities, the crime wave is so terrific that a, people want to get out, just for the sake of saving their own skins. You might say. Of course the big change really happened here in Vermont is when the thruways went in. And that was very easy for people to take a car from New York and they could

make it up here in about five hours. And a, before that a, the roads only had dirt roads and things like that why a, you had to kind of take your time, you couldn't travel very fast. Through the potholes and a, the wash boardy roads we used to have. [330]

JB Your sister-in-law said something interesting to me that her maiden name was Bisby.

OW Bisby. Um hum.

JB That the Bisby' and the Wallis' one of the big things that they put, first was education.

OW Um hum.

JB I thought that was an interesting statement too.

OW Um hum. Um hum. A very, my father was very strong for education. A good practical education. Which I sometimes wonder if we're getting it now.

JB Yeah I think that a, another place you see some how different attitudes are the attitudes local, about education, it seems always to be a, come down to kind of a, knocking of heads.

OW Um hum. Um hum. Um hum.

JB Well I don't know what, I mean I just a, I'm, I think that, that there are real evidences of changes. I

don't know whether they're for good or for bad, that's for, I think the people who live here to say. But a, I think you must of seen just fantastic changes. In your lifetime. [362]

OW Well yes. That's true. That's true. Cause every thing is so different now.

JB And I think that's really what I'm, I'm trying to. Yeah I often thought my, my great-grandmother who lived from, 1918 to 1969 probably saw the greatest changes, ending with the man on the moon and.

OW Um hum.

JB Any hundred years and yet probably the next hundred years ago.

OW Oh they'll be, they'll be big changes, there's no question about it. They'll be big changes. The population is growing, in fact the population is growing too much anyway.

JB Is the population growing here?

OW Oh yeah. Oh yes it's growing here, steadily here in Vermont.

JB And are you still getting a great influx of new people here?

OW More and more are coming in. Um hum. That's true.

That's true and of course a, maybe a little more of the moneyed people are coming in. And of course when that happens why then it brings in the other too, the other class, of people that a, well they think that a, their property, the property one has, boy they think they have. They should have, we'll put it that way. And of course drugs and that sort of thing a, we never used to, we never thought of drugs. In my early days.

The only, the only drug would be the tobacco or something of that nature and a, and then if you want to call alcohol. But. [400] Most people a, in the early days they had their own liquor which was made from cider, hard cider, or, or from grains or something of that nature but they made it themselves.

And a, but most of them are, in that time was pretty careful about how they drank it.

JB Is there anything else that you have a burning desire to say about the area and a, sort of in describing it or a?

OW No I don't think I've got anything more to say really.

[413]

JB Well I sure thank you for taking the time to you know
talk with us.

OW Um hum. Well I don't think I've helped you out too
much. Ha! Ha!

JB Oh yes you have. Everybody does. You know the. [418]

END OF TAPE