

Lixi Fortna/TC1994.0015  
Mad River Valley Project/VFC1991.0004

JB Jane Beck  
LF Lixi Fortna  
MS Miles Smith  
EV Ev Grimes  
Place Warren, VT  
Date 03/11/1994

JB Okay well let's, let's start with how you ended up by coming to the valley and also describe how it was when you came. [.13]

LF I came to this valley from Denver, Colorado in 1954, actually I wanted to retire from working in an office which I had done for many years, and we saw an ad for a chicken, for a farm in Moretown, and we came here and bought it. On the, when we were on the way here, the farm burnt down. Actually the house was gutted so we rebuilt the house and a, I went into the chicken business, which wasn't too good. Chickens didn't lay that many eggs, and when they were, didn't lay it was too soft to carry them or have the carried, so it didn't work out too well but we had a wonderful time on the farm anyway. So one day, Damen Gadd came around we had met him skiing at Mad River, at the ski

area, and he said, "you know I'm going to start a ski area in Warren. And a, I wonder if you would like to come and work for us, as bookkeeper." [1.30] And I said, "gee I'm not a great bookkeeper, I don't type that well."

MS Could you go, just say that again that David came to you because the dogs are walking over the mike stand and.

EV We could hear it, it was making \_\_\_\_\_.

LF I'm sorry.

JB No, no.

LF One day Damen Gadd came to the farm we had met him skiing at the Mad River ski area, and a, [1.58] he said a that he was going to, thinking of starting a ski area here in Warren and a, would I like to come and work for him as bookkeeper. Well I said, "I wasn't a great bookkeeper, actually, I didn't type too well, I didn't like to use the phone because of my accent, so he hired me anyway, for a dollar an hour. And a, I was the second employee. The first employee was Henry Perkins. He was the time keeper, he had a little black book, and he wrote down, the times people

came in and people left and I was supposed to translate that into, checks. Well that was very interesting. When we started work at Sugarbush in the summer of 1958, and finished so that it, the ski area opened in December.

EV Excuse me, can you start again with when I started work in the summer of 58, the dog jumped and, I heard that.

JB Ha! Ha! Ha! They hear everything. So.

EV Thank you.

LF Sugarbush, we started working here at the ski area in 19, the summer of 1958, and the ski area was ready to open, December 25th, 1958. [3.22] Life was entirely different in the valley in those days, we, we started work at seven in the morning, so I usually had to start about six thirty, from my home and I wouldn't meet a single other car between Moretown and Waitsfield. Not to speak of Warren at all. There was no road going up here, the access road was non-existent. It was just a, an old logging road went up here of sorts. Actually this had been a farming community way back a hundred years ago or so. But now

it was all grown over. And, I saw a lot of wildlife in those days. On the road. [4.12] We had to drive up the German flats road which was a one lane dirt road, and the trees had grown to form like a canopy over the road which made it very beautiful actually. The drive. We worked at least ten hours a day. We worked until the work was done. The, of course there was nothing up here, Damen Gadd and his general manager, Jack Murphy. Whom he had hired from Mad River. Laid out the trails and ordered the lifts. And the workmen came in and cut the trails. [5.00] There were no buildings around here at all. So our office was the super structure of an old Army telephone truck. There was no electricity we worked by, well day light if there was any and then later on by flashlight, there was a \_\_\_\_\_ rigged telephone, [5.28] in those days it was a crank phone, it was a party line, you couldn't always get it when you wanted it. And we did a lot of business with Italy because all the, the lifts and lift parts came from Italy, and that was quite a feat to talk long distance like that on that telephone, the office equipment was quite

interesting, it was a, manual typewriter, that we borrowed from Sara Gadd, Damen's wife. And the, an adding machine that was like a two arm bandit, you had to hold the figures with your left hand, and then you pulled with your right hand and if you wanted to multiply, you had to pull as many times as you were multiplying for. [6.19] So it was, it was quite interesting too, trying to keep books that way. That was sort of the, the whole equipment we had there, everything was done by hand of course.

EV Oh, that's \_\_\_\_\_, it's done by hand, so if you could start.

LF Well maybe I'll go to that a little later. Hun?

JB Oh sure. Yeah.

LF Yeah. The a, [6.42] the first lift that was put up was the gondola, it came from Italy it was a Calivaro and Savio was the firm that a sent it over. And, so we had reasons to call them quite often on the phone, because they sent over the a blueprints, they were Italian in metric system, and while I speak several

languages, Italian really isn't my forte. I can understand spoken Italian, I can read it a little bit, but the blueprints I wouldn't never understood in any language. I mean being a female I didn't go to any, school where they would have taught me what is a bull wheel and what is a special screw to put in I don't know what. So, that, that was all very difficult, I tried to work it out but the men were pretty impatient with me. Ha! They didn't understand it at all so they figured well you know they pay me a dollar and I should do it right. We worked off and on and had a lot of fun doing that. [7.54] The gentlemen from Italy then came in and a, kind of straightened it all out. The first year we put in three lifts, the gondola, a chair, another puma lift and a the a, castle rock chair lift. As I said, Damen and Jack laid out all the trails themselves and they knew every bit of the, operation, and could jump in and do anybody's work at any time. Sara Gadd did all the PR work, all the brochures and all the PR. We'd all get in the truck, and put a gondola on the truck and go to the various shows, like in Montreal the ski shows or

to New York. And a, \_\_\_\_\_ with people, what a beautiful area Sugarbush would be once it would be constructed, which it turned out to be. [9.01] Damen Gadd is a, was born in Hawaii, went to Yale and a, knew a lot about business, he had come to this valley and a opened a ski lodge so he knew the business from that angle too. He later sold the ski lodge to Soule Williams. He had met his wife in school I believe. And they traveled a lot in Europe where they, saw a lot of the ski areas and I don't know which one it was but one of them made a real big impression on him and that was his dream to build Sugarbush just like this, ski area, that he had seen. Well they have, quite socialists, and a, they're, they persuaded a few of their family and a lot of their socialite friends to join them in this venture. And even a lot of us local people put money into this private corporation. So we really all felt like we were all working together for, the same goal. [10.28] The. (dog barks) The first ski instructor was a Peter Esten who was a socialite from New York. And he brought in what was called the jet set in those days. All the beautiful people and

very quickly the mountain got the nickname, Mascara mountain. Skiing was good, but only on natural snow and people weren't as spoiled as they are now. If they had some snow they were happy. There was no idea about snow making in those first days.

JB I wanted to ask you.

MS Sort of try moving this. \_\_\_\_\_. That's okay.

JB I was gonna ask you how a, Damen Gadd \_\_\_\_\_ the area and how long that had taken him and a, what, I think I don't know whether you told me this time or last time that he'd skied at Mad River but he must of spent a lot of time looking into how all that sort of transpired. [11.57]

LF Well he, Damen Gadd, Damen and Sara both had a this dream of a ski area and they did a lot of bush whacking here and looking for property that would be suitable for what they had in mind and they found what they then called Sugarbush. The area is located to a great extent on forest, U. S. Forest Service land, and then Damen bought quite a bit of the other land from Roy Long who was the biggest a, land owner here in the



area. I believe Emma Ford was a, the one that really did all the real estate transactions. He and Jack, as I say they, they bush whacked and found the best places for to put trails and to put up the lifts.

[13.00]

JB How did the name Sugarbush, or how did he come by that name Sugarbush?

LF Well Sugarbush in Vermont, means a stand of sugar maple, maple sugar, no sugar maple. Ha! And a, I believe that's how he, he invented the name, he or Sara I don't know which one came up with that name. And they sort of asked a few people and everybody said that was a wonderful idea, it gave the flavor of sugar, of Vermont. And, it became known and then the gondola really became the trademark. Everything seemed to show a gondola or have a picture of a gondola. We my husband and I later on put up a, a lodge here, very near the ski area, and a, without us promoting it, somebody asked us if we didn't want some curtain material, drape material that had those, the gondola on it and they came from New York and brought us all these bolts of linen with the colored gondolas

on it. Ha! So that was the, Sugarbush trademark.

[14.18]

JB There must of, in doing all this, there must of been a lot of fun.

LF It was a lot of fun.

JB And I guess I'm looking for maybe one or two humorous stories that bring that.

LF Well, the first office was humorous enough. When you imagine there were no facilities. From there we moved into the a valley house which was the first building built right next to the gondola. We moved there in the beginning of December and we were glad to move, it was getting pretty cold outside there. The first office was under the stairs from the first to the second floor, and a, there was a little cubby hole there where we sold tickets and then the office was in a windowless room. Right next to the a, boiler room.

And the three of us had our main working table was a pair of saw horses, and the door laid on that and we sat on something that was a, just benches without backs, it was very uncomfortable. But there was so

much work to be done we didn't really, we didn't realize any discomfort. [15.39] We a, of course there were no banks in this valley. There was nothing here in the valley. So a, we needed a lot of change, because the first tickets were five dollars and fifty cents for a day ticket. So we needed a lot of change and a, somebody always had to go to Montpelier and bring back the change, but then in the evening when we had collected some money, there was no way of getting rid of it. So we had two ways of doing it, either we left it in the bags, and put it after it was counted in the evening. We let, we put it in bags and we put in on top of the boilers and went home. Didn't ever worry about it. Or we would, if it was a lot of money, like over a weekend where we naturally couldn't get to town. We would a, divide it up into three parts, and each of us would take home a part. Ha! Now you try and do that now a days. Ha! I don't think that the insurance would be very happy with that. Ha! Henry Perkins always took the money into town, everybody in the valley knew that he took the money. And what time of the day he would go and

nobody worried. We never locked anything here.

[16.53] A few years later, we did have a night watchman, and I remember well being as I lived the closest of the so called management, I had all the keys and so on. So I remember that they woke me up during the night quite often to, if something went wrong, and they had to get into the building or something like that. So one night three o'clock in the morning he came up, pounded on my door and said, there was a break in up there and he knew somebody was breaking in and a, I should come up with the keys and let him in. So I got bundled up, it was pretty cold, and he drove me up and then, we got to the door, and he stood back very politely, and let me open the door and let me go in first. Ha! Ha! And I'll never forget that sensation of, why should I go in and face the would be burglar. Of course nobody was there, nothing had happened. We had an exciting life in those days.

JB When did you know that it was a success?

LF Right from the first day. [18.05] People loved it right from the first day, it was a, a very welcoming

area, and a, you know like the customers always right.

We did everything we could for the people and they felt at home here. They could come in my office, at you know, sometimes it was too much but usually you felt that was the thing to do, they could always come in and we would do anything we possible could to make them feel comfortable, make them feel happy. Have them have a good vacation. People would come in and cash checks, they would come in and make a phone call to their office. The kids would come in and borrow money because they couldn't find their parents on the slopes. And we did all this and loved it. [18.56] And they, the customers in turn, seemed to appreciate that. In later years it became bigger and it became more, not quite so personal, like the, any other big ski area.

JB I think I've heard that really Damen Gadd put his mark on Sugarbush and it really changed after he left, or maybe that was farther down the chain.

LF Well, Damen Gadd and Sara and Jack and myself we, as I say we ran it as a small area that, it grew a lot, it was in the next few years, but somehow it was, we were

familiar with everything that happened, one of the three of us always knew exactly what was going on, who did what, who needed what and um. Especially Damen, he could do any part of any work, he, I've seen him in the dish pan, I've seen him behind the bar, he would help out with the tickets, he would, if I was in trouble with bookkeeping, I would call on him because that's what he had gone to school to learn. And he, he was unruffled, he was sweet, I've never heard a mean word out of him, he never ran anybody down, and that's how he put his mark on because he was so nice, that everybody else was nice. And he was sort of the, the business part of Sugarbush and Jack Murphy was the mechanical engineer, he could put anything together with a little bailing wire and a little chewing gum. He could. Ha! Repair anything. And we relied on the two of them to always help out and always be there. As the place grew of course, there were more, more and more problems, and more and more people had to be hired. I think I was in the office alone for five years, I did everything. And then slowly you know, we grew so that, it became a, big operation. And then

when after it was sold, it was sold to Mr. Roy Cohen, and a, he then in turn purchased Glen Ellen so it became two ski areas in one and it became really a large operation. And then, Mr. Cohen's father built the sport center, and a, so that was another department. Then they built the tennis courts, every thing got larger and bigger and of course a lot of building went on, many condominiums, and restaurants were built in those days. The very first place was the Sugarbush Inn. After that came oh several other inns and lodges, and a, I suppose everybody has heard about a, the Common Man, which was, it's a very famous restaurant. It was started by Mr. Sardi, from New York, who saw this old barn and figured that would make a lovely restaurant and he sort of restored this old barn, put in pink chandeliers, and a, it was beautiful. And it still is. It became a, a place where, all the beautiful people gathered. [23.05]

Ha!

JB You talk about a, the jet set and so forth, are there any people that come to mind, that people would recognize.

LF I'm so bad on names, give me a second.

JB Oh sure. I mean you got all the time in the world.

LF Who is that famous conductor?

MS \_\_\_\_\_.

LF No. Yeah he was here too. Bernstein he stayed with us at the Golden Horse. A very nice man.

MS \_\_\_\_\_.

LF No, no, no, no. Modern. Modern music. I'll ask my husband.

JB Ha! ha! Ha! [23.56]

LF Pick my brains here.

JB That's the beauty of all this.

LF Ha! Armando Orsini from New York saw the possibility of making a restaurant out of an old Vermont barn. And proceeded to do so. He a put pink chandeliers in this beautiful old barn and fixed it up. It's got a big stone fireplace, and of course the food was excellent, and it became quite the meeting place of all the, jet set, and mascara mountain people. Another famous person was Skitch Henderson, who fell in love with the place and bought a whole mountainside. And they, he and his wife came up and



stayed here many times. I do believe he's still owns the, the land but I'm not sure of that. Then Vince Saudi, and his group. A gentleman by the name of Butler, who became later famous because he, he was instrumental in putting on the show called Hair. In New York City. I'm bad with names. So I really can't remember all the, people that came here better ask somebody that has a better memory for names.

JB That gives a flavor. [25.31] The other thing I want to ask you is the inner relationship or between Mad River and Sugarbush and then, a little bit about when Glen Ellen came in, too.

LF Mad River I believe I couldn't give you the exact date but a it was here when we came and we came in 54, so it must of been here a few years, I believe somebody told me 48 but I might be wrong at that. It was a, family ski area, and a, a few groups from New York, clubs from New York, built houses and a, there are quite a few private homes up and down Route 17, and it a, it still remains mostly a family area. And club area. I don't believe they could grow too much even if they wanted to because their parking lot is not

very large, they sort of sit in the valley there. And I don't know where they would put their sewer, either.

And very proud of staying that way and they, I don't believe that they are too fond of snow making.

There's only been very friendly rivalry between the two areas. Everybody goes back and forth and skis them both. Glen Ellen was built a little bit after Sugarbush, 60 or 61 something like that, was owned by Mr. Elliot, and a, after it was purchased by Sugarbush it became, it was known as Sugarbush North, and it was the place where the first, really extensive snow making was put in, which has been very successful. A lot of people prefer north, the younger people seem to prefer skiing at north it must be more challenging or something. I don't know I've only skied it a couple of times. And a, other people just love south and would never go any where else. But of course the tickets are interchangeable. And there's a bus running back and forth. [28.04]

JB You must of seen real changes from you know, it's infancy til today which really is very different than when you were, how long have you been retired? Or do

you still?

LF I retired from Sugarbush in 1982 when I went to the state house.

JB So there's, real changes since you left there too. And I guess I want to get at sort of what modern Sugarbush is like today. [28.45]

LF Okay. When I first came here, let's go back to 58 first. The valley was very different of course, there was no traffic, as I said there was no bank, there was one grocery store, one liquor store, and that was it. [29.07] Oh yeah a hardware store. And that was it. And look at it now. We have at least one of every thing, usually two, we have two banks, we have two big grocery stores and a few smaller convenience stores, gas pumps I don't know how many. We have a cultural center in Waitsfield, we have a, a theater, which is I believe the only theater in all of Vermont that is in the black, they own their own building. We have a very nice movie house, several places where you can rent horses to ride, and enumerable tennis courts and swimming pools. A lot of beautiful new homes have

been built, aside from all of the condominiums. I'm one that brags a lot about the valley. In the statehouse I would get up and I would say, "but in my valley" and everybody would start laughing because they knew I would brag about something. And in the last few years, the three valley towns, Fayston, Waitsfield and Warren have come closer together and have worked together on a lot of projects, and a, therefore we have a, mutual help in fire departments, we have a medical center, and all, a lot of the services are supported by all three, by all these three villages. Towns. The, you want to hear more about the modern?

JB Yeah. And the businesses like Mad River Canoe and, wasn't Green Mountain Coffee Roasters, a little bit about it. Yeah modern. [31.06]

LF Well we have the very famous Green Mountain school here, that a, has produced quite a few a, well known skiers, now. There are two shopping centers with you can buy everything in the valley here, just everything. We have a very good bookstore, we have two excellent libraries. Ha! Enumerable real estate

offices, quite a few lawyers. Anything you could find in a large city you can now find here in the valley. And people do seem to get along very well and one thing if, if anything happens to anybody in the valley, you will find that they really stick together and help each other out. Arthur Williams is the head of the community fund. They always have drives, or if somebody needs something, people rally around them. It's, it's like, this is really the good old Vermont way. I don't believe you could find that in any of the larger cities. [32.32] There are a lot of, of course out of towners that have condominiums of houses here. And they seem to fit in very well. They seem to, most of them, came in as a, out of towners and now they live here and have their families here or have retired here and a, have gotten very involved in the communities.

JB How about the new businesses and I'm thinking here Green Mountain Coffee Roasters, Mad River Canoe, those kind of businesses that started up here.

LF There are quite a few businesses in the valley that have come in of course in the last few years and a lot

of them do change hands. People come in and start a business and maybe it isn't quite what they had dreamed about, money isn't quite as good. Salaries probably aren't quite as good as they might be in a larger city, and so they a, change hands, some of them have been established for a long time like the coffee roasters, Bisby's Hardware, several of the restaurants, new restaurants, and they're all good restaurants in there, there isn't one that I would say wasn't first class. From the, ones that only serve pizza and, up to the Common Man or the Chinese restaurant. There's something here for everybody's taste. [34.14]

JB One of the things that I've heard is that in the beginning there was no place to stay.

LF That's right. That's right. There were, well there were a couple of places on Route 17 that served Mad River, a couple of places in Waitsfield, and then a, some of the private farm people would a, take in guests, and a, the oldest one I would say that still exists is a Thelma Rickert's farm. She's in her 90s

now, I'm not sure if she still takes people, she's not that well. But up to a couple of years ago, she would take in a groups of people, bicycle people, well that's another thing. We got a very good bicycle pass here. That goes from the, comes through the, the Granville gorge and a, goes through to Montpelier. And we're working on having a path system. Well everybody took in during Christmas time you couldn't find a bed any where in the valley. And, people weren't quite as, demanding as they are now. [35.33]

Yeah any old bed would do as long it was clean and warm. And a, we had a wonderful institution in the old days and they were called ski bums. They were young people, male and female, that a, loved to ski and the most of them took a year or two out of a, college or before college and they would come up here and a, they would do any work that was necessary, in the lodges or in the restaurants or at the ski area, and they would get paid by means of a ski pass. Which was in those days, \$95 for the season for a ski bum. And so they worked as maybe waiters in the morning and at night and the rest of the time they were out

skiing. Or they did some office work, or something, they were young people that were very happy and a, love to go out and party and dance and, they, they weren't demanding at all. I mean, most of them got the ski pass and a room and board. [36.48] And, and a great number of them settled in the valley, they got married, they settled there, the young families of the valley now. My husband was especially good in hiring them and those, some of the girls that are now, well middle age ladies, come to visit, they write for Christmas, they call up, they still come up skiing with their kids now. And a, keep in touch. Some of them are doctors, and lawyers and a, very upstanding citizens, they were called bums but they weren't really, they were, good workers. And, very enjoyable to have around.

JB I want to ask you something about your own political career, cause I think you went to the state house and a, I think that's you know very interesting, I mean you really become a part of and a selectman or, whatever it's called now.

LF Well I worked for Sugarbush a few years, after I'd



worked for Sugarbush a few years, in 1973 I believe it was, there was an opening on the board of selectmen in Warren. And, I figured well why not try it, I owe this town some public service. And, [38.16] a, I know all the people, a lot of the people from Warren had worked at Sugarbush, or working at Sugarbush, I know them, I knew their wives, or maybe their wives worked there too. I knew all the kids because they all came in for tickets. And a, they encouraged me to. (dog barks) Be quiet.

JB It's the airplane. We can wait until it goes over.  
Yeah.

EV Good dog.

JB Ha! Ha! Ha!

EV Scare off the mean old \_\_\_\_\_.

LF Oh they protect us.

EV Ha! Ha! Ha!

LF Okay.

JB Okay. [38.58]

LF Some people encouraged me and being a Sugarbush was and still is, the biggest, commercial institution here and the biggest tax payer I suppose too, I felt I

should be able to contribute something, to the town's affairs and so I, duly got elected selectman, and have been ever since. It's a very interesting job. I learned a lot, I learned a lot of how you, handle people, how you try to do for them. I've always enjoyed working for people. Trying to make them happy, make them comfortable. And a, solve problems.

As quickly as possible. I mean let's do it now. And then in 1982, I don't know where, where I got the idea but I figured if I could do it on a local level, let's try the state. And so I ran for, representative from this valley. And got elected. And a, re-elected four times, so I, I was in the state house for eight years.

And that's well I mean, I tried to work for the valley. Which is a lot different, you have to keep your, your valley in mind, and what is good for them.

And compare it what's good for all of Vermont.

[40.45] Sometimes there's a conflict. So you have to choose which is the most important and as I say my heart is in the valley. So, I always stood up for them. It was very interesting work, I enjoyed it no end. And after it came to and end, I was appointed by

the, by Governor Snelling, to the, Vermont  
Environmental Board. And that's where I serve now.

Which is very challenging. Ha! Ha! So. But you feel  
like, you really doing a public service.

JB They're having a lot of problems with that now, aren't  
they?

LF Yes. Yes. It's not easy. Ha! Ha!

JB I want to ask you a little bit more about, sort of  
local government and working with the local people  
and, and a did you have, you know sometimes there's  
talk about the insiders and the outsiders, and but you  
knew all these people so.

LF See that's where I had the advantage. Because I, I  
lived with the insiders and I lived with the  
outsiders. And I knew what the people that just  
commute to ski what they would like or what they  
demand or what they should have. And a, on the other  
hand I, I knew all the locals, so I knew all the  
locals, I know how they felt about things. I know who  
pays the taxes, and the person that pays the taxes  
should have some say in the matter. Ha! I'm very  
familiar with road problems, which is always a, a

great question here in Vermont. And a, I believe that  
our board of selectman.

JB There's something came on. It's water. [43.00]

END OF SIDE ONE, TAPE ONE

SIDE TWO

LF Oh yeah.

JB As you a, knew both sides.

LF Yeah that's where I felt that my strength was, that I  
did, and I could talk to all of them. [.14] I could  
pick up the phone and, and call somebody and say how  
do you feel about it and what shall we do about it,  
how quickly can we get it solved. [.24] (Dog barks)  
(Lixi whisper to dog) You be good now, be good.  
Don't talk back.

EV Just the last sentence, who quickly can we get it  
solved. They you can go on. Thank you.

LF And how quickly we could get any problems solved.  
People don't hesitate to call you in the middle of the  
night if it's necessary and if a dog, your neighbor's  
dog barks too much why the selectman have to do  
something about it. It's sort of like being, you know  
the mother or father over the whole, town. And, it's,

it's challenging at times and it's also interesting, and being as I was both on the local and the state level, it was, I think it was even more important, because I knew how those two will interplay, and I could a, make decisions that I knew would you know be possible to make on both levels. But knowing which laws are coming up, or how it would play out this certain law would play out at home, be prepared for it. And make a reasonable decision. [1.56]

JB And the local government is very strong.

LF I do believe local government is still very strong, it's been encroached upon a lot by the state that always wants to be a big brother. And you have to fight for your local government. The a, the backbone of the town is really the local government, and the local school board. If we let the state, come and dictate too much and mandate too much to us, then we could loose it all. And that has been an uphill fight for the last few years. [2.43] I believe our board is pretty well balanced that we have a people from all walks of life that understand the different view points of people. So we're not really one sided, that

will only know the, skiers or only know the farms. By the way there were quite a few farms a few years ago and now we're down to two. [3.10] We just have the DeFrees farm which is very large, and then a, the Blair farm that's all that's left. People aren't afraid to come and tell you what they need. They know when we meet, they come to the meetings, they chew us out when we don't do things right. We have a lot of explaining to do and we do the budget. So a state job for me was just a little bit larger than that. And I knew what was needed.

JB Let me ask you, it's not quite in Warren I know but a, I've been hearing a lot about the aquifer. Do you know anything about that at all?

LF You mean in Waitsfield?

JB Yeah.

LF You know what an aquifer is?

JB No.

LF An aquifer is an underground stream of water. An aquifer is fed by, it's been there thousands and thousands of years, it goes back to the ice age, and a, it, at times it makes a, like a lake, an

underground lake, it's being fed drop by drop water coming down soil dirt and stone. [4.40] So it's not something that sort of gushes you know. Under ground.

If you, plug into it, then it will gush. But the knowledge of aquifer is not very great, because you, you can't go under there and look, you can't measure it, you can't photograph it, so a, people are a little leery about knowing big is this aquifer, is that there forever or is it possible to drain it. Now I understand that some of it has been measured. By drilling wells and a, so the one in Waitsfield is supposed to be inexhaustible. And the water of course is old water that has been purified through the stones, and the various elements underground. And it's supposed to be very good. Probably would make very good drinking water. But there are problems. Like in anything that you want to, it's an, a resource, a natural resource and people guard it very jealousy. [6.02]

JB Ha! Now something. Ha! Ha! Ha!

LF He snores.

MS Yeah.

LF Ha! Ha!

JB Somebody like Ed Eurich, told me that a, here was something that could be a kind of clean business, for the town.

LF He is quite right, it could provide a, a very clean business that would employ quite a few people, and that's what most towns are looking for. [6.43] It probably wouldn't damage the earth's resources at all.

But you always find problems with something like that. The neighbors think there would be too much traffic, they moved up here and built their house because they wanted to, be separated, they wanted to have a lot of breathing space around them, and they are not too happy to see too many trucks going up and down their roads. People wouldn't want to see a big building go up. To, to bottle the stuff. You have to look at it from both sides and understand both sides.

I'm glad it's not in my town, I'm glad I don't have to make the decision on it. [7.34] I would probably come down on deciding that it was a very good thing for the town, it certainly would be good for the grand list. But I try to stay out of it, I have enough of



those kind of problems on the environmental board.

JB Well I think a, let me just look at my notes, but I think we've a. Oh a, one thing that we didn't discuss, was a, we touched on it a little bit, again at Sugarbush but the attempt to make it a year round resort. We haven't talked much about, you mentioned the building of stuff but maybe we should round that out a little bit. [8.19] And maybe a, this, this occurred after you left, I mean this is the newest dimension of it.

LF Not really, no.

JB Okay.

LF Both Damen and Jack were involved in trying to make it a four season resort, and Damen was especially proud of the idea of a village, the Sugarbush village. And a, the tennis courts in there, they, there was some tennis courts, we were all members of that long before Roy Cohen put in the, sports center there. It was supposed to be a year round place. There were several shops there and of course Chey Anre, the very famous Chey Anre restaurant, and a, valley day school was up

there, for the little children. That helped in summer a great deal. And then the owners of the inn that was Breeta and Jim Herman, built an 18 hole golf course, it's a Trent Jones built it, he's supposed to be the best. And I've heard from golfers that say it's very challenging, because it's up and down. It's very well kept. And a, people really like it. So that brought in a lot of summer business. Quite a few homes sprang up around the golf course, the one thing that we don't have here is water of course. And people in summer especially kids would like to swim, there are a few, pools but then somebody in Warren, Leonard Robinson from Warren had the idea that it would be nice to have a lake. So he went ahead and he dug up a lake. Which was wonderful but it, it turned out to be a really complicated problem. He went broke, and his partner [10.33] is suing the town, and the town was going buy the lake, and didn't quite make it. So everybody is suing everybody now and the lake is still there. And while it was in operation, under Leonard, or I should say just open for anybody. People just loved it. The kids had their swimming classes there and people would

just go and sit around the water and, love it, but  
right now it's in a, lawsuit and it's, we don't know  
what's gonna happen. [11.06]

JB The lake is still there though?

LF The lake is still there and we, we, the town relocated  
the road, the road used to go right through where the  
lake is now. So the road had to be relocated. Which  
meant that the, property had to be deeded and redeeded  
and what we call thrown up here, which means when a  
road is no longer in use, the town throws it up. Ha!  
Ha! And then it's, it's no longer a road, and nobody  
takes care of it. So that was one of the roads that  
goes, right through the middle there. But something  
went wrong some where. And so, right now. I really  
can't talk about the lawsuit but it is, unfortunately  
not the, the town wanted to buy it. And we set the  
money aside, and it's still set aside in a special  
fund. So maybe eventually we'll get it yet. [12.00]

JB The place she's talking about is where Bob Gove was.

EV Ah!

LF Yeah it's right beyond that. And the other summer  
activities yes, the cultural center in Waitsfield, has

a lot of activities in summer, they have concerts, beautiful outdoor concerts, you sit down a nice warm evening and you know it's really nice. They have a, all kinds of art shows and stuff. There is a, a summer, oh what do you call, the fair like, an art fair. And a of course now we have a cricket club here. They play cricket, on the brook's field, and in summer we have our very famous Warren 4th of July parade. The soaring. There is a lot to do here in summer now so it really has become a, four season resort. And people that own condominiums and houses here, spend their vacations here.

JB So basically you really feel that it's been a very positive change.

LF Oh I would say so. [13.20] I know I run into people who say we liked it better before and we don't like the skiers and we don't like this or that development, but when you look at the times we live in, and what people, the way of life of people, they really enjoy this. People like to come from Boston or New York or Philadelphia and, and see the Green Mountains and enjoy what we have here. And it's, of course it's not

as rustic as it used to be, they like their amenities, and they wouldn't come here if they didn't have all this. Their families come here and maybe the older folks will just go for a walk but the kids want some amusement, they want to be able to go to the movies, they want to be able to go horseback riding, and play tennis, and go dancing in the evening. So we have to have all that. And, and I think we have it all. And I think we've done well and I hope it will stay this way. If you picked, did you pick up a terrible noise?

JB Ha! Ha! Ha!

LF I'm sorry.

EV Okay just say the sentence again.

JB Just say.

LF It's very rude but I, I told you I had this thing.  
What did I say, what was my last sentence? Ha! Ha!

JB You said a, we hope it will stay that, which is wonderful I think actually. So if you'll just say that one more time.

LF And we hope we can keep it that way, from now on. And make it even better maybe. [14.52]

JB I think that was done just superbly.

LF Oh!

JB Really, that was terrific, I mean it's, it was so  
clear, look they're nodding their heads.

LF In spite of this \_\_\_\_\_, I'm sorry really.

JB No, no.

EV It's fine, that's why Miles moved the microphone, so  
we didn't get that. [15.13]

END OF SIDE TWO, END OF INTERVIEW