

Alden Bettis/TC1994.0003
Mad River Valley Project/VFC1991.0004

AB Alden Bettis
JB Jane Beck
MS Miles Smith
EV Ev Grimes
Place Waitsfield, VT
Date 02/04/1994

AB Ha! Ha! Ha!

JB I'll ask all kinds of questions.

AB Yeah.

JB So yeah do tell me about a.

AB Well we moved up there on the farm in 29, and there was no electricity. We had to milk, we had 25 holsteins we had to milk them by hand, the old man wouldn't have a, a gasoline engine in the barn, cause he was afraid of fires. So a, we used to get up four o'clock in the morning and go out and milk them and. And, of course, we did everything with horses, the roads at that time were a, dirt roads, and they a, the

next door neighbor used to go hitch his horses on with a, Eurich's team from over across the hill on the big snow roller. And they rolled it. Every time a, well west hill was noted, they called it breezy hill farm where I lived and, it seemed like every time we had an old fashioned thaw which was a, a foot of snow and a heck of a blow. The roads would drift, two, three feet and they'd run the roller over top of it. So it would get, get up in the spring of the year where the snow was so deep that we had a, we had to go through the fields and around these big snow drifts cause the horses feet couldn't get down to the bottom of it and they'd, those sharp corks lots of times we had to knock those drive in corks out and a, run them without any corks so they could get to the village to take the milk down. We had to, we had to jaw the milk down every morning, a solid mile on a sled to get it to the main, to the truck down on the main road. And a,

[020] If a, my aunt wanted something down at the store, we, I had a set of traverses that I could jump on and a, well no matter in two three minutes I was done up that mile down there. It would really scoot

on that a, rolled down road once it was froze up. And then we used to take them out in the evenings and the neighbor's kids and I used to, slide down through and pull them back up, but this one particular time I was a, Harold Parker he ran the store down in Warren village, he used to come up and a, visit one of my neighbors, Frank Turner, up on the hill next to us there and he came down by about the time my aunt had asked me to go down street and pick up some, something to make a cake or some dog gone thing and. I see Harold and I said, "Harold, wouldn't you like a ride?" Well no he didn't think he wanted, I said, "come on, don't be chicken. I, I may shake you up a little bit but I won't kill you." So he got way on the back end of the, the traverse, and we took off. And for awhile he kept his feet up, but then after awhile we made a couple of fast bends there and he got a little shook up. [034] He had a brand fired new pair of five buckle overshoes, and he started dragging those, he never took them off the road until we pulled into the last bend down by the bridge which we, come pretty close to every time, and I swear when he got on

those traverses, there was smoke coming out of the bottom of those shoes. And he said that he would never, never ride with me again on those traverses. Ha! He said that was one of the worst rides he ever took in his life. Well I didn't think that was appreciating a nice trip, I done it time and time, I enjoyed it, of course we almost hit the bridge every time but a. That was, you know when you was young you got to have something for a thrill, that's about the only way we had. Ha! Ha! And then finally a, finally when I was 18, I got my driving license, driving a, a 1932 Model B Ford station wagon. I took that out to Montpelier, and that was the day I was 18. 1935, September 27th, I can remember that very well. Ha! The next day I went on to a, oh 1930, well the 36's were just come out, the new long wheel base, flat bodied truck and started hauling milk, with that.

[050] And, I learned a few things quite fast but, and I never got tangled up a snow storm, and I'll never forget it, it was a Christmas Eve. The grass was green and gee everybody thought we was gonna have a green Christmas, I got up the next morning, and I

don't know whether it was fourteen or eighteen inches, of brand new snow, and it was heavy stuff, it warn't like this fluff we've got these two storms. And I put on my chains and of course the trucks back in those days had summer tires, so I put on chains and I headed for east Warren, and it, I don't think it's more than a mile and a half up to the top of the hill there, I made it pretty good until I got to Pike Hill and somebody had been up that hill before me and they chewed it all to heck, and I'm telling you, and that next hour and a half, I got an education in driving in the snow, because I was in one ditch and another ditch and all that truck would do was hop up and down, we go ahead about 50 feet and back up and punt and try it again. It took me an hour and a half to go up to the four corners in east Warren which I usually would make in about 10 minutes easy. So, that was one hectic day, back in those days the a, they didn't have, they had the old v-plow on a tractor with a side wing, and a, of course it took them a long time to get out through to the Waitsfield line and when they got to the Waitsfield line they had another tractor and they,

they a, the gentleman that handled the wings sat on the a, on an old mowing machine seat on the side and they had chain falls on the, on the wing and he used to raise and lower the wing with the chain falls. Well needless to say that took a long time to get through. Lots of times you had a, just a one, one way track, just to the woods, with the v-plow on front. So if you met anybody well, if there was a car, you'd let them get buried and you pulled them out, and a, some of the time you got big hearted and ended up in the ditch and then you had to shovel your way out, which wasn't fun. But I a, I did that for nine years, I remember speaking of a mud conditions of course if you, if you survive the winter, then the next thing you had was the confounded mud. And a, I remember [077] up in front of Orin Lovett's just above pike hill, I got into the mud there one, one morning, and a, I lost the truck clear down to the drivers, I had a band in the truck and I got a, one of Mr. Chase's a, brother-in-law's truck to come and continue that route, that night we went up with the old farmall tractor and the a, loading bed on the back of the

truck was, was just level with the road, you couldn't even see the rear wheels, we had to play woodchuck to, to a, get a chain on the axle where we could pull that thing out. That was just an example what the, conditions was. [066]

EV Excuse me, could you say that sentence again.

JB Yeah let me give a good cough.

EV Okay.

JB (Cough) I coughed right in the middle of where you were saying a, you had to play woodchuck.

AB Yeah we had, we had to dog for, oh probably a half an hour, to get down to the frame of truck where we could hitch a chain on to the tractor and not pull the truck apart, but that was just an example of some of the roads we had back in those days. It wasn't unusual to

get stuck anywhere from 5 to 6 times just coming from a Warren village out through to Waitsfield village.

Cause there's a lot of clay out through there and they tried to keep it but, there was a one strip of, up to where Steve Alley acres in the spring of the year I was the only vehicle that went down through it for about two weeks. Because of the a, something about the shape of the rear end on the truck, it would slide through the mud. Why the other had the big banjo type and they'd get hung up. But one morning I started down through there and a, was going along all right I had it way down to first gear and all at once it was one big chug in the, the a, road was level with the windshield. [100] It was a water, undermined the road and I, the whole truck, the front end of the truck dropped down there about four feet. And, why I should of been looking at the sun I was looking at the crown of the road. Ha! Well needless to say I spent probably two solid hours and moved the whole stone wall, jacked it up and put it in. I got myself out because it was pretty hard to find a wrecker around here that would move your truck. And a, I remember in

the middle of that winter, or one winter there, some where around the place, I don't know where it's at, but we, I got a picture, of course the trucks had running boards on them in those days. I could stand on the running board, and take a, one of these hand racks, the wood, with the wooden teeth in it, which had a long handle, and by holding that up, as high as I could, in my right hand, the top of the rake was at the top of snow drift where they'd shoveled through.

[112] And there was just room for the truck to go through it. And it made me think of some of the piles of snow you see around the shopping centers but, back in those days we didn't have bucket loaders to move it out with so a gang of five, six men would go up and shovel all day to break through a drift so that tractor could get a hole through it. And a, you get out on the main road and that wasn't the end of it, because lots of times I have run chains from here to Middlesex, and a, we had just a dual track, where the trucks had gone through, and if you met anybody you took a flying flip out into the, as far out as you could get and then chewed your way back in again. You

better have your chains on or you, you were buried.

Well it a, some different in those days of a, a a, milk was all put in these cooler tanks. And some of them was on top of the a, floor, so they was, you had to stand on a box to pull the milk can out and then some of them were, imbedded down into the floor and a, they weren't too bad to get out, but, they take it, the trucks had a, the older trucks had manifold heaters on them, which didn't throw an awful lot of heat but. You get out of the truck and you pull out six tanks, or six cans of that milk, and your trousers were soaked from the waist clear down to your feet and then they'd freeze before you got the milk loaded.

[130] Well then, you get in the truck and you drive to the next farm and you get prit near thawed out again before you had to go out and get soaked again. So you spent most of the time hanging it with icicles on your trousers. Ha! Ha! And that wasn't exactly fun. [133] I remember I moved a, moved on to the, to Irasville, and a, we got up one morning there and it's, that winter it seemed a, about every other day we got anywhere from six, eight, ten, twelve inches of

snow. So every morning you got up, you dreaded it. I got up one morning, about oh I guess it must of been between four and five and went out into the kitchen, and we had two oil burners in the stove, and they were both going full force when we went to bed. And they were still going but the water pipes was froze up in the kitchen. The old coal stove I fired that up in good shape and got the house warmed up. And then I went out and took a, a bucket of coals and put it under the old truck, cause it was sitting outside, and we didn't have tank heaters and all that junk, and went in and thawed the water out in the kitchen, ate some breakfast. Went out and tried to start the truck and I couldn't even make the thing turn over so I looked at the thermometer, it was 50 below zero. And if you ever see Irasville flat when there wasn't a nice breeze, let me know about it because oh, it was cold. Well I worked on that for, quite a long time and put new batches under it, then the trucks had crank holes in them so you could put a crank in and you could turn it. So a, I would get out there and I'd wind it over by hand, just about all I could do.

I fought with it for about an hour and a half, and finally Bonet's garage opened up, [153] or the _____ opened. I called up Mr. Bonet and he came up he had a, he had a 32 Model B Ford wrecker. He hitched that on to my truck and he couldn't even jar it, it was froze up so bad. So he had plenty, two, three batches with him and we hitched those up and. We spent about an hour and a half trying to get the darn truck so it would even turn over, so it would even pop. It would keep a, fire but it wouldn't go. So. We went in the house and got one of those old fashioned gasoline torches that you pump up. Fired that up, and Mr. Bonet says, "you'll burn it up." And I said, "well, I, I'm to get it out of my year anyway." So. Put that on the intake manifold and he stood there with his cob pipe bobbing up and down well I was eating it up. Ha! But a, I finally so it would fire more times, and I got it, finally got it going, running, then I tried to shift the, shifting lever, and the grease and transmission was so hard that they couldn't get it into gear. So then we heat up some kerosene and poured that in the transmission to thin

down the grease, and I finally got it out of the dooryard. And that was, that was one of the worst days in my life, as far as trucking was concerned, the whole nine years that took the cake. [169] I was going down at that time I was hauling milk into Randolph. I had the old truck doped for 45 below zero, going down through Northfield gulf it froze up on me and the steam started coming out from under the hood. Well I guess you know that didn't take a, the manifold heater wasn't kicking into much heat in the cab. But a, I made it into the milk plant, I guess I was two hours late. They had to hold up the milk train for me and they, I got quite a blessing for that deal. I told them if they didn't like it, they could get somebody else and, I think it was the next week after that and I decided I had all the trucking I wanted so I went and, tried to enlist in the service.

I went in for the a, talked to the Army boys and they insisted that they couldn't teach me to drive a truck because a, I couldn't learn to do it the Army way. [181] I told them I, I thought if I could drive our through east Warren at mud time, and I had a four

wheel drive, that I could teach them something about driving truck but, that didn't go over. And then I went to the Marine recruiting office and the officer at the next desk and he, nope he said a, he couldn't take me in the Marines because I had false teeth. And I couldn't eat hard tack. Well you think you're pretty tough I'll tell you what. Stick your finger out, and I'll bet I'll get the second try. Well I guess you know he told me where to go. So I went over to the Navy desk and I'll be darned they were hard up for men and they, they, I signed up, and that was the end of the trucking business shortly. And I went in and I, I spent two years in the service and I got stuck down in Key West, Florida. Tried everything in the book to get out of there, but every time I did I just ended up getting on report and oh a, old man vowed he was gonna keep me there for 18 months and instead it took a, one guy on land to keep five guys at sea and I was it, which didn't make me happy. Cause I mean I could of stayed out but because it was all in the food products. But the rest of my buddies was all in and I felt I warn't doing my part of the

job and I was sick of trucking. Ha! Ha! But I finally got pulled out of the fleet and stuck in the Air Force. That's where I got a little experience in heavy equipment, I drove a, a car, I was head of the maintenance on the car dogs, fire fighting truck which was the largest fire truck they had in the service at the time, actually. They had three of them I believe.

[202] And that was quite an experience. When you, you shifted it twelve times, you could get it into high gear and you could do 28 1/2 miles an hour but how do you run down a plane that landing at 90 miles an hour. Ha! Ha! Try to catch up with him. It's almost impossible. But then I got out of the service, I came back to Vermont and well like all, a lot of the other boys, it was just mass confusion, you didn't know what you wanted to do and. I, bought a truck and hauled logs for awhile and I got sick of that and then my brother-in-law and I decided we'd go in the mill business. We bought an old, obsolete mill, cause that's about the only thing you could find, and we was fairly successful. He, he a, hauled the logs out of the woods, got them cut and hauled them out and I, I

learned to run the board saw. And a, we sawed for awhile, and we didn't loose our shirt but we dropped a few buttons along the line, we finally got out of that, I mean we made good lumber but, the a, all the big companies that promised that a, if they would furnish a, lumber to these outfits during the war, and not go for the black market, they would have a market after the a, the crisis was over. So, I mean we couldn't naturally expect it, we was starting up but just cause we was veterans that they was gonna buy our lumber, you know so. We got out of that. [222] Then I worked up to Bowen Hunter's mill for awhile, making bobbins up there. I got a little fed up with that, and I went up to Mad River and a, I helped worked on the dynamite tree, blowing the stumps out up there on the trails. Had quite an interesting summer.

JB Now tell me a little bit about the start of Mad River, cause that must of been right at the beginning.

AB Yeah. Yeah. They started up to just cutting trails down the side of the mountain there, we'd a, put a bar

under a stump, and cut the tree down and haul that away with a tractor and then they'd stick a bar under the stump and put, oh half a dozen sticks of dynamite in there, and that would blow the stump out and then a crew would come along with _____ hoes and level it off. And we worked up there [235] day after day after day doing that, we had two dynamite crews and once in awhile we'd get a little competition and waste a little dynamite of course but see who could make the biggest bang. One particular day just for having a little fun, it turned out that a, the head guy was a, he was a JG in the Army, or, yeah in the Army and we called him 90 day wonders and so it's a lot of us veterans working on the job at the time and of course we didn't have much use for the 90 day wonders. This guy happen to be a, he was a nice guy we shouldn't of done it to him but. So one morning just to have a little fun I, snapped to attention, give his a salute, and said morning lieutenant and he said he that you're gonna get it, and I said, "yeah, what's that." He said, "instead of dynamiting today, you're gonna boghole, run a boghole, and that will teach you to.

Ha! Ha! Come out with wise remarks. So I bet him a dollar that I wouldn't boghole all day. So along about three o'clock in the afternoon, they, we was gonna blow up, blow a big stump and I came along with the boghole, said to the boys, they're bogging out pretty hard, you got to put more dynamite under them.

So they put in a couple of extra sticks and I feel to the rear when they started running for cover. [253] And I laid my boghole across this stump and kept walking. Well they, they let off the charge and went back and there laid my boghole, it hadn't gone anywhere. Well we got it ready for another stump and I didn't say anything, that time I coaxed them into a little extra dynamite, and when I went along I set the boghole up and down on top of the stump. And, my buddy and I was over behind the a big beech tree and they let off the charge and I heard something go woooo, and I'll never forget old Charlie said to me, "what the heck was that?" I never heard a rock make that noise. Gee I haven't any idea. So we went down, back down and there was no boghole there, and the whole gang started helping me try to find the boghole.

And after 15, 20 minutes, one of the boys said, "hey, Bettis had a bet that he wouldn't bog all the afternoon, I think he's won that bet. I'll bet that was the boghole we heard." Three years later they found that boghole up in the middle of a tree above there. Ha! Ha! Well that was, that was kind of dirty trick. [268] He wouldn't pay me the dollar cause he the boghole cost a dollar. Ha! Ha! Well after that I, I tried different things, and finally I went in to the a, working for Taylor's Appliance in Montpelier.

JB Now wait, you drove the ambulance before doing that.

AB Yeah that a, after I bogholes that winter, I bought a big Chrysler car, and a, by taking the cross arms, the braces out of the trunk, I found you could slide a toboggan clear in it. So I decided I'd try running taxi and ambulance service. So I used to stand by up there and the first patient I got was a fourteen year old boy from, from I think he was from Morrisville. He run into a beech tree, and he got a fine crack in his head. Well I backed up to pick him up and he was, he was unconscious, but they didn't even send an attendant with me, I had to go it alone with him. I

figured well, he's sleeping nicely, he's not gonna be any problem so. I got up to the hospital with him all right and a, he came to while we was there and I guess the boy lived out of the deal but. It was, it could make you a little nervous you know and have somebody like that in the back end. That wasn't a very successful winter, we used to threaten to put ropes across the trail to see if we couldn't get more business with the ambulance. I got, I got fifteen dollars to go into Fayston to Morrisville and back. But a, well, you could buy gasoline cheaper than and a, it did help pay the rent. The taxi business would get good on weekends but the rest of the time you could starve but. [292] We went through that winter but that was enough of that. Ha! Ha! Ha!

JB Well now I think you told me too, that a, before Mad River came in there was some kind of rope tow or something in Warren and you.

AB Yes. Yeah. I, I forgot about that. Back before any of them came in with any of the ski outfits here, some, there was a gentleman that came up from New York

and he talked the boys into a, investing five dollars a piece into a, rope tow down in I think it was in Plymouth, Vermont. And I took the old milk truck and this was back before I went in the service, so that was quite a bit before, before Sugarbush or Mad River.

So a, I went down and got in and we worked Sundays and nights, after I got back from the milk truck and we set that up, on Bury Buel's land, that's right at the intersection as you're going to a, Warren village.

It was up on the right hand side. Well they had a big old a, apple tree up there was Mr. Buel didn't want them to cut down, but it was kind of in the path, right at the bottom. And so, some of the boys got the bright idea if they went over to brook's mill, and got some sawdust and put it in bags and put it around the tree, to take off the shock if you hit it. And of course back in those days the skis, skis was all right just the harnesses, and the equipment you had to keep, we didn't have ski boots really and. Well the, this Mr. Townsend came up from New York, he had professional equipment which of course wasn't like it is today but they did have boots, and better a, better

harnesses to hold them, he could steer them better than we could. So, moonlight nights we'd kick in fifty cents a piece for the old Buick to gas tank and we'd start the thing up and we'd go up there and ski.

Well nobody knew how to a, stop with the darn thing, only Mr. Townsend he knew how but, nobody ever heard of snow plowing on a pair of skis so we come straight down you know and if you wanted to stop, you couldn't do it any other way, you sat down and a, slid for a ways. Well I, I'd go up half way and I could ride all the bumps and there, I could get clear to the bottom all right. And some jerk come along and said, "hey, you're getting good, you ought to go clear to the top." I said, "well maybe you, maybe I could make it." So I went up to the top and I was coming down through, I was really flying, well, Mr. Townsend skied in front of me, and I'd seen him throw his body around and shit directions. So it's either to run into him or, or shift so. I done a big twist and, boy I got headed in another direction but then I found I was lined up with this apple tree. Well, I tried everything in the book to, to a, slow down and I

couldn't seem to do it so finally I decided I got to sit down. And I sat down and I was going faster than [335] I thought because I went into that tree with both legs spread and I guess you know, ha, ha! That was a, that was an awful sensation. Ha! Ha! Ha! That convinced me that I was never gonna be a, a professional skier. And I give up the art right afterwards. We had a little auction I sold the skis and harnesses and the whole works, to a buddy on mine and, I hobbled off the field and I'm telling you it was, five, six days before I felt too comfortable driving that milk truck. Ha! Ha! Ha! [343] Ha! Ha! But, you know I guess if we had ski boots and things like they have today I could probably of mastered the art but. It was one flying sensation, I didn't get over for a long time. Ha! Ha!

JB When Mad River was starting out was it mostly local people working there? Did you know everybody?

AB Yeah it was pretty much from around the valley. Yeah we knew everybody. Mr. Moody came from I don't know where he came from but a, he was the manager at the time. It has been said that Jack Murphy was the first

one, but he was not, because it was a, Howard Moody.
He lived down in Waitsfield village cause I used to
ride to work with him, he was the young, lieutenant in
the service that we used to pick on. [355] He was a
heck of a nice guy though and he was good to work
with. He just made the one mistake, we was sitting up
in the dynamite house, one day, sweating out a thunder
shower, and he mentioned the fact, it was about the
time I got my commission, we picked up some dynamite
and one of the boys said, "remember what we said we
was gonna of to those lieutenants." Ha! Ha! Ha! Said
"hey but I wasn't one of those kind of boys," he said,
"I was a good guy." And we said, "yeah." It must be
you were because we can live with it you know. And we
got by that one all right. Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

JB I just got a, passed a note sometimes in describing
things, we need a little more detail, and a, maybe a
word description on both what a traverse sled is, you
know what it was like and also what does a boghole
look like? [369]

AB Well a boghole is like a pick ax only being a pick,

not being a pick ax, it's the one blade is one side, it's broad, probably oh, I'd say four to five inches and then you got a sharp pick on the other side, you got a dual, a dual implement there, you can a, you can scrape with it, or you can pick, you got a root you can chop it off with the, wide part, and then you can pull it out with the a, the pointed part. And as for the toboggans, they were a, two set of sleds on a long plank really. The one I had I guess was about a, ten or twelve feet long, and a, you set on that plank and then you put your feet up around the, the a stomach of the person in front of you. And the guy on the, on the front of the traverse, to give him more _____, he crossed the ropes and steered what they called a cross rope. [385] I remember one time we was coming down off the hill one night, we was out sledding and a, the a, there was a place where the wind had blown all the snow off and it was just glare ice, so what you did, everybody leaned in the, the low side of the bank and that would carry you around like a speed car, a race car you know, you banked the thing, and the turn should be banked, see and the road wasn't banked,

you had to bank the load of the traverse, well I yelled to everybody to a, to a, lay over instead of that, they leaned the wrong way, and we went into a snow bank and I was driven in there about oh, six feet I guess, straight in, feet first, they had to dig me out. Ha! Ha! Kind of a rough landing. And I remember one other time the neighbor's girl used to ride, I'd take the traverses when I was going to school and a, I could wait until five minutes for school time, it would give me a little bit more time to change my clothes after I come from the barn. So a, my next door neighbors had a girl that went to the same as I did, and of course she'd get way on the tail end of those traverses, to hold the back, back end down. And of course there was some bumps along the way, and I remember one morning she got awful mad at me because I hit the bumps she went in the air and I drove out from under her. Ha! Ha! She was setting up in the road shaking her fist at me. Ha! Ha! Ha! It kept it all interesting though. [409]

JB I think you also told me about a, some of the men riding shovels down.

AB Oh yeah when they, when you get in the wintertime when the boys was working on the mountain up there, see they had to do a lot of the grooming on the trails by hand and they used scoop shovels, so when they got ready to come back, come down the mountain they'd jump onto the, sit on the scoop and hang onto that, the handle and they'd really come down through there, they'd go by the skiers sometimes. Ha! Ha! I don't remember exactly how they stopped I guess they just wound the shovel around and around. Ha! Ha! And a, when I got into the gas business, after I, I finally after I worked for Taylor's Appliances for five years I decided maybe I'd learned enough so I could go in on my own. So I came out to Waitsfield here, and started up a, right in the center of town across the church, I started a little appliance business and a, and a, gas

business. Well I had a little boy that was a, had cystic fibrosis, and I had to dig up some extra income some way or other, cause, well as a travelling salesman, back in those days I made 55 bucks a week which was good average pay. [430] But then I was spending \$35 a week for medicine because the insurance wouldn't cover him. So, I was getting kind of close on the budget so, I discovered I went down to Albany, New York, and a friend of mine had a new television set, I watched that one night and I said gee if I could make that work in Waitsfield that would be a pretty good supplement to my income. Well then I discovered through my travelling as a salesman that the fellow by the name of William Hart in Rochester, was a graduate from MIT and, in engineering and electricity and a, he became bedridden for awhile and he'd taken a course on a television which came pretty easy to him. [441] Well, he found out that I was interested in it and he said a, "you can do the roof work, and I'll do the ground work and we'll go into the television business." So he, he tried his best to teach me what, I finally learned, and a, a lot of it

was through hit or miss, I'd go up and, we'd make tests and I'd put up the antennas on the roof and he'd give me the working knowledge. Tell me what I did wrong, and he helped me out of a lot of messes. Finally I put a, as an experiment I put a, a mile of well they call it cable television in Waitsfield, but it wasn't cable it was a four hundred and fifty, it was ladder wires, that we strung along the telephone poles. So a, that was, that was way back in a, oh it must of been along in about 53 that I put that in, so I had one of the first TV cables you might call it, there wasn't a round of territory certainly around here any where. I set up the first televisions ever set up in Waitsfield. [460] And a, I sold a lot of them because I got the ground floor. And when the television came to Montpelier, I was working for Taylors. And a, we done a terrific business in television because I, I had the training so that a, I could go out and hitch them up. And a, finally I decided I'd go in on my own, so I bought this, this old burned out house out in Waitsfield, and it had a little snack bar and I used that for an appliance

store. And. So a, built the house over the first year, and set up a lot of gas equipment, put in quite a few televisions, sold a lot of washing machines, and I ran along quite successful, I think I was in that for about nine years. I started out from zero and I had a, four hundred and fifty customers at the end of the nine years I took on fifty customers every year. [477] Never lost only one customer because, and the only reason I lost her, she kept her, writing me rubber checks. And I very nicely told her that I thought that she could do me a justice by going to one of my competitors. Ha! Ha! There's no hard feelings. But a, then the big business came in and of course Sugarbush had started up, Glen Ellen, I put all the gas on to the, all the lift lines and the base boxes and both Mad River and Glen Ellen. In fact up at Glen Ellen where the restaurant is half way up the mountain, I used to take in the fall of the year when the road was frozen, I'd take a big bulk truck like you see going up and down the roads now. And I'd go up to the bottom of the steepest hill and they'd hitch on to me with a bulldozer and take me up to that

restaurant. And I think I had six thousand gallon tanks you there, which I pumped full and that would go them all winter. And after I got done they, they put another guy on the truck and he wouldn't let the bulldozer pull, he made him get behind with his blade and push, and of course that didn't do justice to the back end of that gas truck so, that went out, they had a, [500] they had to take, skid tanks and tow them up with a, snow machines after that, but I run it along and things was going pretty good too. And of course I had all hundred pound cylinders, like up at the Sugarbush base bogs, I think I had 20 tanks on that to supply their kitchen. And this big company from Westfield, got the idea that there's one of the fastest it's been, the area as it was and they, they wanted a part of it, they came up and tried to a, run me out of business. They run around here for two, three weeks, and a, they couldn't seem to, shift anybody and I remember Tony Hide, he run Mad Bush Chalet, that's a, about half way from Warren to Waitsfield up on the right there. I guess they call it the, Mad Falls or something like that, now

Sugarbush has bought the place out. But he had that a, motel there, and I remember I came in to deliver some gas one time and his furnace was out, and he tried all the afternoon to get somebody to fix his furnace, and he couldn't get anybody and it was getting pretty cold and he was getting pretty shook, he said, "do you know anything about oil burners" and I said, "well, they're a good deal like a diesel I probably could fix them." [523] So I went down and I got his furnace to going. Well soon after that I put a, a short cable from the, top of the hill and brought it down, I think I hitched up fifteen televisions on it for him. And a, he bought washers and appliances from me, a good customer of mine, he bought a lot of gas. In fact he put in the first sauna, sona, sauna, they had down there. I was delivering gas there one day and I got really shook up because I heard a lot of hooting and yelling and I see a, three or four, stark naked men come out and jump in the snowbank. And I thought the dumb thing had blown up, you know. And oh my God, I'll get sued for that. And hope I got plenty of liability insurance, I didn't trust the darn thing

cause it got pretty hot in there, you know. But they, that was part of the ritual. I guess you come out and roll in the snow. And, woo, not for me but. Ha! Ha!

Anyway a, [541] they came along and they tried to a, get him to change over to this other gas company. So he asked them, he said, "well, would you know how to put in a tv cable, would you know how to fix a television set?" A, no. Well could you fix my oil burner? Well no we just work on gas. Well he said Mr. Bettis does, I'd be kind of foolish to change, don't you think? And he stood by me. I never lost the one out of the bunch. And they, but a, I mean, it took on, a terrific amount of capital to, to shift over four hundred and fifty customers to bulk gas, you know and having started from scratch I didn't have anything when I started in, I didn't have the money to go for that, so I battered with them for quite awhile and they, they finally gave up, and finally. Well I didn't make a big thing, I mean I, I got back what I put into it, and a little bit extra which I, I didn't have much credit, the a, and the part I didn't like I had to sign a contract to work for them for three

years. And, of course their policy was a little different. We sent out a notice and we want our money within ten days. Well, I never threatened anybody with ten days, and I have very few that were bad accounts either. Because the people would, as soon as they could they'd, they knew, I gave the best prices of anywhere around. Had to or I wouldn't of got the.

In fact I sold a, propane for 19 cents a gallon and today I'm paying a dollar and ten for it. That can show you how things have changed with no competition.

I know that a, there's a pretty good, there's an awful lot better mark up than I ever made on it but. Well that's beside the point, that's the way times go you know but. Golly I, I sold a lot of gas, and a lot of gas for as low as five dollars and twenty-five cents, for a hundred pound cylinder. Now I guess the cheapest you can buy a hundred cylinder is something like \$19.00. Oh that's, it's gone way out of bounds.

And it shouldn't be that way. But. It's changing times.

JB I know a, one of the things that you told me and I'm wondering if you'd say just a little bit about it was

that all your customers were your friends, I mean that came.

AB Oh yeah. Yeah. The time a, the time my little boy died they came in from all over the valley, and brought in food, and a, why there was, you knew everybody's troubles you know and a, if anybody was in a jam you went and helped them out, and a, there's none of the old a, feelings there are now that's somebody's getting ahead of you, you know, you glorified in seeing a guy make a living. [595] And nobody resented my making a living, I mean a, I a, gosh I go into a house and a, one woman a, said that a she had a sick child and she had a sick television. [601] She didn't have money to pay the doctor and the television man most, so she called up me. She figured that maybe if she could keep the kid quiet, that a, get her television fixed, she wouldn't have to call the doctor. Ha! Ha! So it's a, no it was, back when I a, after I sold the business, I took a job a, down

to Hardwood Union, I was the first bus master down there, and a, I remember one day I was walking down the corridor and one of my customers boys was going to high school there. He drew off and he patted me one in my arm and I turned around and I patted him right back. The principal was standing up the end of the hall, he see the whole thing, but a, the young lad put his arm around my shoulder, he was about a foot taller than I was. We went walking up the isle, laughing our heads off. And he said, when I got up there, he, the kid went his way and I stopped to talk with the principal and he said a, "boy," he said, "I thought you was in for a beating there for a minute. I thought I was gonna have a problem." He said a, "how did you, how did you get away with that?" I said, "I used to put diapers on that kid when I was fixing his mother's television and she was out in the kitchen busy." Ha! Ha! So I think this kid I guess remembers it. So. It was a great life. I mean up in 54, back when I was started out business here, everybody was so friendly, and, all you had to do is honest and be in a working man never having anything, I kept prices down. I made

service calls on televisions for three dollars a trip.

But I was going by with a tank, two, three tanks of gas, I'd stop in and fix their television. And I'd make a couple of dollars off from two, three tanks of gas and. Well that put food on the table and a, paid off the mortgage on the house so, what more did you want, I didn't, if I charged the way the rest of them had, I'd of been a millionaire, today and. Cause I had to, I had over five hundred television sets that I was taking care here in the valley and. [645] I'm sure I must of had that many washers and dryers and refrigerators. I also had to keep going. But, it was, I worked as many as fourteen hours a day. But, it was a pleasure, you go, they used to kid me I, I'd go out fix somebody's television, and I'd sit around to see if it was gonna be all right afterwards cause, I was never like some of these people that, well let's get it fixed and walk out. I, I want to make sure that it was gonna go. And. Ha! I'd fall asleep. Ha! So the other guy, and I remember one time, Mr. Bonet, we both woke up about ten o'clock and he said, "I think it's about time you go home and I go to bed."

Ha! Ha! Ha! It was hard hours but you got tired, you know, you sit down and the next thing you knew you fall asleep. But. I guess it used to worry my wife sometimes if you're out, asleep all night wouldn't come home. Ha! Ha! Ha! [667] But it was nice working for the public, then I enjoyed it. Things have changed considerable now. I mean. You a, like if you wanted to set up a sawmill you can't do it any way. I mean a, it almost seems like it's anti-business. After all a, you just can't, can't do it even if you wasn't gonna do too much harm I mean. It bothers me awful I sit here and I watch these big old tractor and trailers go down through with thousands and thousands, well more than enough lumber to build a house. A home out of. And it's all going out of the country. They're cleaning off the woods up here, instead of a, maybe relaxing a little bit some where on one of these farms where they're not farming and putting in a saw mill, and employing some local help. And so we'd have something besides recreation. You could finish the lumber, and sell it locally instead of having it, they tell me that a lot of it goes into

Montreal, and it's put on a big ship, a Japanese ship, they had a saw mill right on that ship, and they a, they cut that lumber, they cut those logs into lumber, they burn the waste to run the boilers on the ship, so when they get to Japan, all they've got is a load of lumber on there. But it's all coming out of our hill.

[701]

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

AB They kept of lot of people eating and a, I don't think they're too destructive. I never heard of any of them doing it, the worst part is when they caught on fire and it was thirty below zero and you had to ride from Waitsfield to Moretown to put the fire out on the back end of the fire truck. I've done that a few times. It wasn't exactly fun but. And it use to keep a lot of people to working around here. But now you see it going down the road, oh my gosh, it's, you won't have to sit here very long before you see a log truck going down through here with thousands of feet, they, they

just a, my next door neighbor runs a big log truck he takes five thousand feet of maple over the, over McCullough turnpike, can you imagine riding down that mountain with five thousand feet of, of rock maple on a truck. Woo! It's some different than the old sleds they used to draw the stuff on. [010] When I first came out of the service I bought that log truck there, I put 1200 feet on it and that's all I could get up the hills with, was 1200 feet. And now they put, oh my gosh, they put, 5000 on them and go right over McCullough turnpike. I wouldn't ride over there on it but then. Ha! Ha! [013] Ha! No it's, things have drastically changed. I guess it's for the better but, there's a few things that aren't. I'd like to see more of this lumber. Gosh, you, you can't afford to, to a buy lumber to build a house with today. You get up where you, well. That's the reason I bought this doublewide, and I probably shouldn't of done that because I put some, well there's no local people to, to saw the lumber else I didn't hurt them too bad, of course I did take a little away from the carpenters. But. Well I hired enough other people to work on the

lot and things to make up. And I put as much into, buying the lot and landscaping, and getting water as I paid for the house so. Well it left a little money in the area. Well it's a, it's too bad. They talk about a, low income housing, but, under the regulations it's almost impossible.

JB Has skiing changed the area? A great deal, would, is that a, what are the major things that have caused the biggest changes to the?

AB Well of course it's, it's brought in an awful, awful lot of people from out of state and a, it's brought in a lot of summer homes and things like that which of course they only operate, I mean winter homes, they close them up so, you have a terrific surge of traffic and everything here in the winter. And, everything is booming and banging but then it comes to a screeching halt the next day after they close down. [030] It's brought a lot of money to the valley I guess. There's

quite a few, they, they come. I never realized how many people but you sit out here in the morning and they, they start going by here at five o'clock in the morning to get up to the mountain _____. So it's [033] they come from Northfield, I guess there's some come as far as from Burlington, I understand there are. There's a lot of people come from Waterbury. And a, you take it about six o'clock from then on until about eight. There's just a stream going that way. Then suddenly it reverses and there's another stream headed for Montpelier and Burlington to work in the offices. And of course most of the, an awful lot of homes in the village that were, that were homes are now a, business offices. The, that is quite a change, from what it was and of course, they, everything is gone up to a, Irasville where it used to be in the village. That was a, center business in the old days.

I don't know whether it's any better I had the postoffice there in Waitsfield and, they told me the government told me they wanted to make it a first class and wanted to make it bigger, and you got to be constructed of masonry. Well there was no way I could

a wooden building into masonry. So they went up to the shopping center and made a wooden building anyway.

So. Ha! And now you go up there and you take your life in your hands sometimes to find a parking place or get out of it without getting backed into, to mail a letter. So I don't know maybe it's a, maybe it's better but it's a little confusing to understand it sometimes. They got water problems up there, they got so many septic systems there and I guess you can't put a well down to get decent water. So it's a, maybe cluster building it okay but, it seems to bad to have, so much area that, well say it's kind of being wasted really. If you strung out it wouldn't, they wouldn't get into all these problems I don't believe. Maybe. Cause I'm not that intelligent so. Not being college educated I probably don't understand the situation. But, to us it looks kind of foolish. Ha! Ha! [054] I don't think to many of the natives recent them, once in awhile when they have town meetings down here, of course we've got so many newcomers, they can out vote us local people. And a, they I guess have got more money than some of us have so they, they don't pinch

so bad when it comes to voting for these things they, there is the old saying that, they'll vote for anything. If somebody comes, the right person comes up with the idea which. Of course us old timers we, well we try to be a little conservative we, it seems like we get along with a little bit less. You know but they voted. My wife is sputtering something. She's sputtering about it. And, said, well you know, it's sixty-five percent of the people in town, are outsiders, they own the property, us local people sold it to them, so if there's, if they've got the, they got the property, they got a right to vote so what the heck. They vote their way, they out vote us but we're to blame we sold them the property in the first place.

So. Yeah. Sometimes I know how the old Indians felt but. Well. We all do it I guess. You get sick of it or you can't handle it. Somebody comes along and that God Almighty dollar looks good you take it. That is when the Indians sold New York city, there. Ha! Ha! Ha! They thought it was a big deal. Ha! Ha! Well I guess it isn't that bad here, but a. I don't know, I actually liked it better in 1954 because it was, it

was a friendly environment not that they aren't friendly now, but there's a difference. There's a different feeling all the time and. You don't know half the people in town no more. I work up at the a, skating up here, I volunteer to a, go up there and keep track of the rink afternoons. Gosh people come in there, they know me but I don't know them. [075] Ha! And it's confusing. But. They're a nice bunch of people, they, they go for sports, everything is sports in the valley now I mean. Actually what else is there to do. I mean, a few people work in stores and offices around here, but, actually there's a, if you're unskilled labor there ain't too much you can do around here. You got to go out of town. And the cost of operating an automobile today that can get expensive. And, then you take a common job outside the valley and you're lucky if you can make both ends meet. Real estate like a, the house up there in Irasville, where the water froze up on me when I went in the service I had a chance to buy it for \$1500. And I don't know what they, what the woman did pay for it but. It certainly wasn't \$1500. Ha! But of

course a, back in those days you could hire a man to work all day for \$2. an hour. Back when I was a, wasn't feeling well and didn't feel like throwing the milk can, I hired a young lad up there and gave him \$2.00 a day. And gee he was, well he was hoping I would be sick more often. He, he made out well with that two dollars. [089] Oh you could take \$2.00 and go into a grocery store and you had a bag it was just about all you could carry out, you know. Two dollars.

You can't even buy a decent pound of coffee for that now. Ha! Ha! No it's a. It's fast changing, I can remember there was, my gosh there was, there must of been a hundred farms in the valley and now you can count them all on one hand. Of course they got big ones but a, gee. Every, every place down through here was, well there was a, I think at the time that I was operating I think there was four milk trucks going out of the valley. Now I believe there's one big one that comes in and takes the whole thing. Of course he's got a big tank so he. He just backs up and pumps it in, he don't have to get his trousers wet pulling them out of the tank. He's got good roads on, he don't

have to worry. Well he worries, the other morning when it was all glare ice, it wasn't fun driving one of those big tankers. But. Gosh, he. He never gets buried in the mud like I used to. So it's a fast changing world. [101]

JB One of the things I don't think we talked about was really how late electricity came into Warren.

AB Well a, it was in Warren village of course even back when I was a kid but. Up on west hill there, when a lot of these back, like up in North Fayston and places like that, the REA put it in after the war. So a, after I came back from the service, it was after I came back from the service in 46. We still didn't have electricity up at the old farm. But it was just about getting ready to put the REA up through there. And a. So it was quite a few years before they had it up there. A lot of, some people had these old delco plants with a, a whole battery of _____ that they charged up, and then they had lights, of course you had to buy, you had to buy a 32 volt refrigerator or something like that, DC current. And, you couldn't go out and buy a, a lot of equipment that you'd used on

the regular lines. Because it had to be thirty-two volt, DC which don't operate good on AC. So it was, been big changes in that respect.

JB Tell me a little bit about, what was the, what is REA stand for?

AB Rural Electrification, it was a, I don't remember exactly when it came out but they, they set aside this money down in Washington, DC for to a electrify the rural areas that was without electricity. And it's still in effect I guess. And I think Washington Electric, a lot of that was REA. I think that's one of the, one of the routes that they took over, because I know, REA, services Hardwood over there, and a, well most all of Duxbury I think was, was put in with REA, back in the old days. [125] And they buy the electricity from Green Mountain or some place like that and then turn around and distribute it on these lines. Yup.

JB When it came in it must of made just a huge difference.

AB Oh it sure did. Yeah. It was. The difference

between one gentleman that I get a big kick out of, I lived up on Lincoln mountain road, and a friend of mine was an electrician and he went up and wired his house and hitched it up. And oh, that was wonderful.

And one afternoon a, he called up the electrician and he said a, "I wish you'd come up Joe," he said, "a one of my lights don't work." And Joe said, "well, maybe you ought to put in a new bulb." "Well for gosh sakes" he said, "you mean that's all there is to it."

He said, "well, it's a wonderful invention but gee I don't want to be without it." Well, Joe had quite a time explaining to him he had to screw one out and screw another one in. Cause. Yeah that was how new it was to him you know. [137] Yeah. The same guy is a, his son he had a Model T Ford he used to drive around in, and his son bought him, bought a Model A Ford and he got him to, to a pick it up down in Warren and drive it up onto the hill. So he rode on the running board and told him how to shift it, well he got it, he got it into second gear and, of course by that time he was going just about as fast as the son wanted to stay aboard so he bailed off. He got it up

to the house and he forgot, he never did shift it, and he went up through Warren village in second gear really humming. Ha! Ha! He got it up to the house and he wanted to stop and he couldn't remember how to stop it. So he went around the barn, two, three times, and finally run it into the back there and got it stopped. Ha! Ha! Oh he said that thing had the most power of anything he ever saw. Ha! Ha! Ha! Yeah. They. That was quite a change too. From the Model T to the, cars we got today. Ah!

JB The other thing I should ask you about too, was the telephone. Because that, well I guess all kinds of communication but, that again.

AB Oh yeah we [151] had the old party lines, it could be six or eight people on it and a, you a, you went by the number of dingles, somebody might have four shorts, and somebody might have a long, two, three shorts and when I married my wife, she was a telephone operator down in Waitsfield village, here. And, she

used to sit there at the switch board and she'd push this a, little plug in a hole and then she'd pull a lever and she'd, and then if they had a, if they had a fire, she'd put in a whole bunch of those plugs and then she'd ring, I forget what the signal was but I think it was she'd ring three short, rings three times. And then she'd come on the a, phone and a, and tell where the fire was and everybody would take off and go and help fight the fire. [161] But a, they used to get those lines tied up and a. Once in awhile somebody would get a little nosy and they'd, you could hear them breathing on the other side of the phone. Ha! Ha! Ha! [163] It was a, well. It was better than nothing, I mean you step up there and take the receiver off and wind that old crank, and. And then the operator would come on and you'd tell her what number she want and she'd plug in that switch and tweet, tweet, tweet, tweet, you know. And. Yeah. It a. It was a lot better than nothing that's for sure.

And oh it was, that of course came in we had the telephone up on west hill long before we had electricity. Yup. In fact a, Mr. Chase and I used to

go down in the woods and get out telephone poles for them. For Mr. Farr here in Waitsfield. Go around and put up, all he had was a, one string of wire I think it was on the knobs there. And they run for miles. A tree would come down across it but it, they got around, they didn't have six or eight trucks to service it you know. One old truck and he'd usually get to it before the week was out. It might be a couple of days but. Nope that was the only communications we really had. And the radios, we had an old Atwater Kent I remember. They had to have a bunch of D batches and a, and a car batcher to run it.

[179] When the old bee batch got flat and we didn't have money enough to buy another one, we had to wait awhile sometimes. I know and a lot of fun to listen to Amos and Andy and that was, old, Burns there, and it's, was it. Had a sister by the name of Mary I think it was, George Burns and Mary there, they used to get on the air, Amos and Andy was quite a, quite a favorite for most everybody back then. Back when I was a kid living up in a, in Waitsfield there, when I first went to live with my folks, it must of been

around 1923, my uncle took in a, a, young lad that had a little problem, nobody seemed to want to take him in but he, some way or other he studied radio, and I remember a, just before Christmas he a, got me, I had a lot of parts to erector set, and we used to take these Quaker oatmeal round, round Quaker oatmeals, boxes, and wind wire around them and a, make radios, make those a, one tube or two tube radios. And my uncle bought a, three sets, no four sets, of head phones and they spent all one afternoon going us this 35 foot silo to get a, a wire about a hundred feet long from that, the top of that silo over to the house so they have antenna enough to get it. [199] And I remember we sat down Christmas Eve, and he fired this thing up, and run it on these round batches, and he fired it up, and oh squeal, you know, the head phones almost come off your head and you let out a tweet, and a squeal and a hum, and finally he'd get these three dials adjusted, and I never forget NBC was the one we was listening to that night and they, you know they had the same a, call letters as they got now, pink pong, boom, bong. And I never forgot it, that was way

back in 23. And then not too long ago that same thing come over the air. Yup. That I think is about is the most interesting thing in my childhood. I mean a, that really set me a going, I guess that's why I got interested in television. But we had a lot of fun making the doggone thing, you know, pieces of wire winded around these boxes and then, you get another a, box and a, put it inside and that made a variable condenser, and a. That's the way we had three of those going. Put it through this doggone tube and it was quite plain, once in awhile we'd loose it and it would fade away and then it'd come back and then it would squeal. And, readjust these things again and. But, a lot of people came to our house to listen to it. And then a little while after that I used to go down to the telephone office and Mr. Farr had built himself a, a bigger one so he was, we used to in there and listen to that one, it was, it was fun. But. Some change against what they got now a days. Ha! Ha! Ha! [220]

JB Well, I think we've just about covered every thing, I was gonna look at my notes.

AB We must of. Ha! Ha! Ha!

JB Are you pooped. I think a, oh the only thing I didn't ask you about that I have written down, are jack jumpers and McCullough turnpike. Did you used to ride jack jumpers at all?

AB I used to ride them but not up there, no. No I used, I had a pair of, I had a gas cart mounted on a pair of head skis and I'd lay a tank down on top of that cause my gosh the snow was four feet deep and you couldn't drag one of them two hundred pound cylinders through the deep snow cause you'd go right to the bottom, so I a, a friend of mine gave me a pair of a, of head skis that had taken a little bit of a beating, and I mounted the gas sled on and then come right along on top. [232] So when I go up to the t-bar on the mountain I had to put the tanks on these heating shanties up on the line so I'd throw the a rope around the t-bar and jump onto the tank and ride it up. When I got ready to come back I put the empty tank on,

turned it around and jump on and come down. [235] I could even beat some of the skiers. It was kind of hard on the boots, I didn't wear five buckle overshoes I'm telling you, I had to have heavier boots but I could land it all right. It was a lot of fun. How the skiers would laugh when I go sailing down through there you know. Ha! Ha! Nope, I did as a kid I would, and my wife is a, I'm sure that a, she had a homemade a jumper made out of a barrel stave and we used to beat one together and get on it. It was pretty good on those things. But we didn't have the skis back then or, if they had them, we didn't have them, we made our own jumpers or got our folks to make them for us. You could take a barrel stave, and oak barrel stave and brace it up and it'd give you a wild run, ride in March when there's a good crust, it go right over the top of the bob wired fences. Make jumps and go in the air with them, you know, it's kind of hard on the anatomy when you landed but. Ha! Ha! It was fun. We had to make our own fun in those days, I mean, the kids don't know what a good time is really today I don't think. They got so many sports I don't

think they have time to learn to read and write.

Spent all their time in sports, I mean, I heard one woman the other day telling all the things that her kid was gonna do and she wasn't sure she was gonna even time to get meals. Ha! Ha! Toting her kid here and toting the kid there, first they had skiing lessons, and then skating lessons and, and I guess they had to go and play basketball some where and, well it sounded like a busy life to me. She asked the kid if he got his homework done. He said, "yeah he did that between something." I forget what it was.

Ha! Ha! Ha! We didn't have any problem getting time to do our homework we had all kinds of it. And we had time for fun too. [260] Well we didn't know anything different so I guess we were happy. Ha! I know I wasn't very, I wasn't very happy when a, Thanksgiving Day come along and we'd have to put the old Chevrolet up because you couldn't get on off the hill and then the mud got so deep we couldn't run it, well we didn't usually register it until the first or middle of May.

So a, I used to get kind of sick of that. I done an awful lot of walking and a lot of toboggoning. Ha!

Ha! Yup, and now they got a black top road, they keep it plowed, I got up through there in high gear.

Remember the old model B Ford, I used to, we made it in second gear, we thought we was really doing something now I take my Buick and slide up there 40 miles an hour and it don't. Nothing to it. It's, well I guess that's an improvement. I mow the golf course over next and that's another thing I over where a I worked for two summers now, running the a, big seven gang mower, to mow the golf course, years ago when I was a kid I used to cut corn on that same area.

There's two farms and my neighbors, our neighbor's farm and that, and that neighbor's farm is all golf course now. I like to go up there and work because it brings back old days but what a difference I mean, even that mowing machine is about a convenience that I had when I was younger. Ha! Ha! Yeah they, a lot of people come up there, it's, golf is really going over big, they come from all over heck up there. But it's better than sitting _____, you know you can't retire this, there's no fun in retiring. You get used to working six days a week, and then you sit down and you

just go, go to pieces. I don't know how much longer they'll hire me, I'll be 77 this fall. So. Ha! Ha! Whether they'll, the young lad I work for, they didn't the first summer I worked there they didn't have radios enough to, the portable radios enough to go around, so I said, "well I don't need a radio." And he used to say, "well, if you get a pain any where Alden, you get back to the club house just as fast as you can." And I said, "hey Mike, don't worry about me, if I have a pain I'll make sure I get back and punch the timer out. I'll do whatever I'm gonna do on my time, so don't worry about it." Ha! Ha! Ha! Kind of sputtered a little bit. He said, "you and your stinking sense of humor, it ain't funny." Ha! Ha! Ha! Well last summer he insisted I carry the radio. Ha! Ha! Ha! [296] And my gosh even these hand held radios, why gee, the confounded home made contraptions was a great long boxes and now they got one you can put in your hip pocket. I mean, they're really good, I mean. The fire departments can certainly go to town. They'd be handicapped without them and. So, there's been a lot of improvements that's been darn

good but, most of them came out of World War II that's the sad part of it. But. Too bad you have to have a war to come out with all these four wheel drives and two way radios and all that stuff. But. Well at least we got something good out of it. Ha! Ha!

JB One last a, story I was gonna ask you, I hope I'll go to see your cousin, I haven't called her yet. But.

AB I don't think you'll see her cause she's pretty sick with the. Oh she's got a heck of a cold.

JB Oh not, it will be awhile. I'll call her Monday.

AB Oh she ought to be over it by then if she isn't they'll bury her.

JB Oh! Ha!

AB Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! No she's got it pretty bad I guess.

JB I was gonna ask you and I'm gonna ask Jack the same thing, that wonderful story about a, the car that went into the ditch, and a he.

AB Pushed it back in again. Yeah. Yeah. Oh he gets a big kick out of telling that one. Yeah.

JB One of the things I, if I can get a couple of different people to tell it, you can sometimes get

voices going back and forth so I thought I'd, I'd ask you knowing you knew it.

AB Oh yeah I remember when he was telling about it when it happened. Yeah. He pulled him out and then he didn't want to pay so he pushed him right back in again. Ha! Ha!

JB Spit it out a little more, I mean, a, the way it happened.

AB Well I don't, don't know too many of the details, it seems that he, he put up this a, I forget what they called the doggone thing, it was a, some kind of a snow plow.

JB Something _____, a. [327]

AB Yeah he had a, he had a special name for it, trade name.

JB Um hum.

AB But a, it would go anywhere I guess and he, he run it all the time plowing and he just put it up in the garage, and this guy had slobbered off out in there and got himself stuck, and and he asked him if he'd come pull him out. And he said, "yes he would." So he went over and pulled him out and when he went down

and unhitched the chain, he asked him how much he owed him, and I guess he told him, he, he I guess he got smart to him or something, I don't, I never got all the details. But I do remember that Jack, his disposition got a little heaped up and he just put the blade right against him and pushed him back in and unhitched the chain and went home. Ha! Ha! He went over to the office and jumped the boss about it, and the boss said, you know that isn't our business, they got a garage down here that makes a, we was just trying to be accommodating or something. But, I never got quite all the details, the only thing I ever really got verified was the fact that he pushed him back in again. I heard that so many times I knew he did it all right. [343] But a.

JB The story I heard was that he a, before all that happened, I guess, I forgot who was his boss but he said, you know, we're not in the business of towing people out, charge them something. And he charged him five bucks, or something and the guy wouldn't pay so he pushed him back in and then a, the garage came and charged him 25 bucks or something.

AB Yeah. Yeah. They, they finally had to come get him.

Well you know and I a, I drove shuttle bus up to Sugarbush Inn for two winters, three winters. And a, one morning I remember they had a Mercedes there that wouldn't start and they had a colored boy that worked for the outfit and he would go out and start cars once in awhile, so I was pretty busy and a, so I said, to him why don't you go out and start that Mercedes and I'll go and get the Canadian with the Chrysler over here at one of the condos. [358] So I went over and I had a heck of a time getting that thing, it was flooded and I ground, and ground and ground and finally got him started and a, he said a, "how much do I owe you?" And I said, "well whatever it's worth to you." So he give me a couple of dollars. So I probably burned two dollars worth of gas, grinding him, to get him going. Well, and I came back over and I said to the colored boy, "well, how was your morning?" By gosh he says, "good, it took me about three minutes and the guy gave me 20 dollars." Ha! Ha! Ha! I said, "I ain't gonna send no more business to you." Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! So that was probably where

the guy came out that, ha, ha! Had to pay the \$25 for the wrecker. Ha! No. It's a. Winter can be brutal on the cars. Although these newer cars they don't have gosh I can remember when, one winter I was unemployed, and I went to work up in Bonet's garage to help out Mr. Bonet was a good buddy of mine, and he was short of help. We went out three o'clock in the afternoon and a, three o'clock the next morning we was still starting cars around. Oh it was bitter cold. Well we wouldn't of been so bad, but we had a flat tire on the wrecker and we didn't have a spare tire. Ha! So we had to get Mr. Bonet out of bed and go hunt up his spare tire and come up to help us get so we could get home. That was a terrible night. But we started cars every where, they were stuck, oh my gosh, and they wouldn't start. Off the road and. Boy. What a wild night. Ha! Ha! Ha!

JB Well I think you've done enough _____ that was just the kinds of things that we.

AB I hope I filled the bill.

JB You certainly did.

AB My wife said I hope you tell the same story twice the

same. Ha! Ha! Ha! Well I try. Ha! Ha!

JB Almost word for word.

AB Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! A few things I can remember but I'm getting so aren't, names, I never was any good, I a piece of property where the gas plant is, when after I sold the business, the big guy came up from down country, and I bought this piece of land and he thought my gosh, he bought all that land for \$1500 boy, I got to meet up with the guy he bought it from he must be some kind of a nut. You know. And so I got to the guy's house and I started to introduce him and I couldn't remember the boss's name, he said, "well you're gonna make one heck of a good manager I can see that, you don't even know what your boss's name is." Well I said, "I guess it don't much matter I know what the company name is and that's where my checks are made out." Ha! Ha! Ha! He said, "you don't care who signs them." I said, "no, not so long as they're cashable." But he thought that was something cause he come up from down country and I, I

was gonna take over as business manager and I couldn't even, didn't even know my boss's name. Well I'd only met him once before, you know. And I got to know him pretty well for the three years is up. Ha! Ha! Ha!

Ha! [405] But you know I think he actually liked me.

I used to have to go down to Mat, Westfield, Massachusetts once a month for a business meeting, and we'd get in the office and he'd line every body out, you know oh he'd give them all heck, for something. But he'd never lay onto me and the boys used to say, one of these days he's gonna open up on you, you wait and see. He said, that's the way he is, but you know that guy he, he never chewed me out. And it wasn't cause I'm sure I must of committed as many crimes as the others because well I couldn't see as they done anything very bad. But he, he, he liked that. Yup. But I never forget the time that I was supposed to introduce him to, the gentleman done here we bought the land from and, he, I guess he figured we were both nuts. Ha! Ha! Ha! Well I suppose down in Massachusetts you wouldn't buy an acre and a half of land for and the best part of it was, they called up

one day and they said the fire marshall insists you've got to have ten gallons of water a minute. Well where the heck you gonna, well he said, I understood when you bought it the guy that owned it said there was an old well on the land. So, he averaged to get ten gallons a minute out of an old well. And a, well he said, "I want you to get water some where there."

[425] Well gee that summer it was dryer than the, woo oh my God, just like a desert around. So I got Fred Armstrong over next door, he'd take a couple of welding rods, and if there was one puddle of water he'd find it. He went over there and we couldn't find that old well but boy we found a stream of water that a, well I guess it turned out to be about 20 gallons a minute, and I said, "by gosh, if I'd bought this land it would of cost me a thousand dollars to even drill a well to get a gallon a minute and this, they got all kinds of water. Gee." I didn't get any bonus for that one but. [435] All we had to do is, is to put a tank down there and put a bunch of stone around it and we had water enough to, fight any fire we wanted to around there. [438] It was just plain luck. People

don't believe in these dowzers no more. But. It worked out here I got a stream just five feet from the edge of the house that my son-in-law found for me. Yeah. I never could figure out how they found these gold mines and all these things out west. But this old Bill Hearth that taught me television, he said a, "well you've heard of dowzers haven't you?" And he said, "you think it's the water that attracts their rods, but it isn't," he said, "it's the metal in the water." He was right, that's the way they found it. I later after I, read more, I found out that was the case. And a lot of crazy things in this world if you want to, you could be smart enough to know all about them. Ha! Ha! Ha!

JB Well! I sure thank you. I think that, there's one other thing that they like to do and that is, um, they get a minute, or two minutes of room tone, which makes it easier to edit. So we have to sit here.

MS You just have to sit here.

JB Without heavy breathing.

MS Quietly, for just about half a minute. [458]

AB I think I can hold my breath that long.

JB I can't. [500]

MS Okay this is, Alden Bettis at room tone. [461] [474]

MS That's the end of the room tone.

AB I guess we're off the air, right?

JB We're off the air. And what they'll do is just, you.

[476]

END OF TAPE