

## Summary

The interview transcript summarizes the life story of Dick Page, who was born in 1946 in Colchester, Vermont and grew up on a dairy farm in Underhill, Vermont. It covers his family background, childhood on the farm, schooling at Green Mountain Academy and Underhill Central School, high school years in Jericho, getting drafted for the Vietnam War, postwar career in construction, marriage, health issues, and perspectives on how Underhill has changed over time. The interview explores life in rural Vermont in the mid-20th century, including use of trains for transportation, operation of small family dairy farms, and how Underhill residents supported each other.

## Highlights

Q: You were born when, Dick?

A: 1946, May 25th

Q: And were you born in Underhill?

A: Colchester, actually

Q: And your family was here in Underhill?

A: Yes

Q: And who were your parents?

A: Foster and Antonio Page

Q: Where was your home?

A: On Page Road now, but it was just Poker Hill when I grew up

Q: How many cows did you have?

A: We had up to about forty had at one time

Q: What was your job in the barn?

A: Clean the gutters till I graduated to milk and I'm not much of a graduation either

Q: What didn't you like eating at school?

A: I hated macaroni and cheese

Q: Who was the principal at Underhill Central School?

A: Emily Flynn

Q: Who taught the older classes at Underhill Central School?

A: Emily Flynn

Q: Who was your high school principal?

A: Don Jamison

Q: How long were you in Vietnam?

A: A year

Q: When you were in tour

Q: Was Mike Jacobs with you then?

A: Yes

Q: Then you went into construction?

A: Yes

Q: On your own?

A: Yes

Q: How long have you and Betsy been married?

A: I think thirty -five or forty years

Q: Did you have children?

A: No

Q: What's different about Underhill now compared to when you were growing up?

A: The people are different

Q: Do you remember their names?

A: Ned and Flo Ellis

Q: Were you ever in their house?

A: Never was

Q: How was the milk transported from your farm?

A: My dad trucked for Whiting's

Q: Did you ever take the train yourself to Burlington?

A: No

Q: Were there buses to Burlington?

A: There used to be a 12 -passion bus coming in on the hill every day

Q: Anything you can tell me about your life now in Underhill?

A: I miss the open meadows and pastures

Q: Do you work in the woods much?

A: Just as much as I can

Q: Do you heat with wood?

A: Somewhat

Q: How did you do with COVID?

A: I think I had it when they first come around

Q: How sick were you?

A: I didn't feel great but I coughed

Q: Do you keep pets at your house?

A: Just a dog

Q: Always have had a dog?

A: Yes

00:03

Today is the 18th of August 2023 and I'm sitting here with Dick Page and he's going to talk to me a little bit about his life and his time in Underhill. You were born when, Dick? 1946, May 25th. And were you born in Underhill?

00:26

Colchester, actually. Okay. At a hospital? Yeah. In Fannie Allen. But your family was here in Underhill. And who were your

parents? Foster and Antonio Page. And where was your home? And Page Road now, but it was just Poker Hill when I grew up.

00:47

And it's Page Road, is it's a road off of Poker Hill? Correct. How far up? Way up? Come up Station Road and make a right. And then next left. So if you went up from 15, it's quite a ways up. In a way, yeah.

01:02

Yeah. But that was your childhood home? Yes, it was. And is it still your home now? Yes, it is. So you are very unique that way. I mean, most people don't get born, stay in the same place. You know, you're right.

01:20

You've done that. So you are Richard Middlename Page? Lindner Page. Related to Rose Lindner? My aunt. Okay, all right. So on your mother's side? Mother's side, yep. They were sisters. And there were other sisters.

01:42

There was Martha. There were ten of them all together and six of them sisters, four boys. And four boys. Jerrick and Underhill. They lived in Underhill, approximately a mile north of me, where we live right now.

01:56

Oh. And they lived on the Clark Farm at that time. Ten children ten children Wow, yeah, and they're both from immigrant parents from Germany and Austria. That was the name lenderers German name. Yeah, yeah So are there lenders still around live now?

02:16

No, no, they've all another generation. Yeah Was there a Martha sister who was in Jericho, correct? She was a librarian. Yeah Jericho So was her last name fuller Martha she married a fuller. She married a fuller.

02:35

That's how because when I was in Jericho, I knew her there. Yeah But generally the lenders stayed around under hill pretty much pretty much. Okay, one of the boys Ended up living in Nevada most of his life.

02:50

Okay, but To him living under hill and Jericho and one lived in stone the men No women pretty much around here Louise Mcwhallum with a Lidner, Roald Lidner of course, Gert Breyer, the Lidner. Also lived in in Waterbury and I'm turning I'm missing one.

03:13

It's come to you. Eventually it'll come to you. So as a young boy you knew all these folks. Correct. Anson uncles. Yep. In and out of the household. Yeah. So what was your childhood like? Just surrounded by people?

03:31

Not really. I mean we grew up on a farm. Mm -hmm. And basically we never traveled very far. Maybe on the side or here to go shopping. That was about it. Till we went to school we stayed home pretty much.

03:46

Dairy farm. Yep. How many cows? We had up to about forty had at one time. That was considered a good size at that time? Yeah. The breeding of the animals back then was so that if you got ten pounds of milk out of one and a hundred out of another it might average out but most of the time you'd get ten pounds.

04:08

That was what you usually got? Yeah. It was simply a survival farm. It's all they are. Motolomware. Yeah. Do you remember working in the barn yourself? Oh yeah. Yeah. And you had to? Yeah. We had to.

04:21

Starting very young. Yeah. Yeah. What was your job in the barn? Clean the gutters till I graduated to milk and I'm not much of a graduation either. Every day, twice a day. Yeah. Yeah. But I was kind of lucky.

04:38

In one sense bulk tanks came through the area. Everybody had to have them and most of the farmers around here couldn't afford them so they went out of business. In one sense I'll be fortunate when I went out of business because it was a dead end street anyway.

04:55

Yeah. So then what did the family do for an income? I'm after you close the door. My father went into construction, and he ended up working at General Electric upon the range. Oh. You know, after we were gone, left the house, but that's where he ended up.

05:10

So it was a good job for him. So that happened after you grew up? Yeah. Yeah. So your life basically was the farm until you got out of school. Yeah, until I got out of school. Yeah. Yeah. So, and you had how many siblings?

05:26

There were six of us all the way. OK. Three boys, three girls. Can you tell me about them? Ha, they've done the same. They've all stayed in the area too. Yeah. Brother Sawyer is probably Richmond. Restomar Hall is still right here in town.

05:42

One town or another close to us. I guess for the record, it'd be good if you could give me their names. Oh. My older brother is deceased now. It was Tom. I was next. And my younger brother Rodney, who at the old home said Rodney Paige yeah and my sister Deb is a conant now and she got the conant prime in Richmond that's Deb Conant yeah oh okay and my younger middle sister lives right next door to me Barbara okay and my other sister is married to a fellow they live in Richmond and something pines I don't know they're all around oh yeah so that the boys all came first three boys and three girls yeah nice balance family yeah I know how they arranged it but they worked out so you were number two in the family yeah yeah so you went to school probably not until you were six there was no kindergarten in those days and so if you were six you would have been it would have been in 52 that you would have gone to school and you went to the Green Mountain Academy for about I think maybe a year maybe half year I don't recall well the schoolhouse had burned right I didn't go to that you you missed it by a year yeah that's what happened because in 52 the schoolhouse burned and you went to school as a six -year - old the everybody over to the Academy temporarily while they built the central school yeah part of the part of the classes went to the bottom of the church Catholic Church okay and I don't remember what grades but I know first and second were up at the Academy maybe a third and fourth but I recall being up there for about a year were there different classrooms or were you all in one big room all in one big room and who were your teachers remember don't remember one end of Thomas okay that was your all the time I mean she was my first teacher teacher, and she was Phil Thomas' wife.

08:00

She lived right there in the village by Gale Pryor. Right. So they were combined grades? Yeah. Yeah. There weren't very many of you? No. No, no, they weren't. And then when we got to Undale Center, the new school, whatever you'd call it, there were two classes in each room.

08:22

Yeah. And divided out, there was four rooms all together. And that's where you went all the way through eighth grade? So do you remember names of your classmates? You said Marion Harkins was one. Yeah.

08:39

Ernest Batt, Sharon Burgess. Yeah. Gerald Du Bois, Bobby LeGrand. Bobby LeGrand was... My neighbor here on Harvey Road, yeah. Yeah. OK. Jan Kennedy. Jan Kennedy. That was Roy's oldest girl. Oh, she, yes.

09:09

Guy's sister. Guy's older sister. She lived up on Irish settlement road later. Yeah. Yeah. Bevy Rossin. Oh, God. That's pretty good. That's pretty good. I got to do more there. That's really good, Dick.

09:26

That is really good to remember that well. I couldn't do that. So was who taught the older classes at that time? At the Central? Well, when you were at the academy, the classes that were over at the Catholic Church were probably the sixth, seventh, eighth grade.

09:51

Right. And that was Emily? Emily Flynn was teaching over there. Because she then also moved over to the Central School and taught there for a while. Yeah. Must have been quite different at the Central School when you went there as to where it is, the way it is now.

10:09

Oh, yeah. Did you have, you didn't have a gym? Just had that main hall. Which they still have. Yeah. And you ate your meals in there. Yeah. Well, we actually ended up eating in our room at that time.

10:25

Did you take your lunch or did you have it cooked? It was always cooked. Good prior. Oh, yeah. It ain't great. Your aunt cooked it, yeah. OK. Yeah. And if you didn't like something, she knew it, she'd always cooked something else for you.

10:38

Is that right individually? Oh, yeah. What did you remember not liking? I hated macaroni and cheese. Which is standard school fare. Everybody's macaroni and cheese. And so it would be macaroni and cheese day.

10:56

and Gert knew he didn't like it so what would she give you? I just don't recall now but it wouldn't be macaroni and bologna sandwich or something. Possibly whatever. Yeah. Oh yeah she could cook boy she could whip it up so easily.

11:09

And did she cook at home and bring it over? Sometimes she would some of it. Yeah. And most of the time she wouldn't make it right there at the school but yeah. But there was something she'd make at home.

11:22

Right. So how was your transportation from poker Hill? School bus. Was it or it wasn't a real bus? Oh yeah. Oh it was. Yeah it was a big yellow bus. I wouldn't say a 52 passenger but it was a good size bus.

11:36

So you had quite a little crowd of poker Hill kids coming down every day. Yeah the bus is pretty full back in but that's the only transportation was and always back in nobody had two cars or three cars.

11:48

No. No. So the ID school was open at that time. Yep. And of course they went on for years until just recently closed. But all the children from over Poker Hill skirted the flats and all the way back.

12:05

We went through Boo and Adam and everything every day. Through what? Boo and Adam. You know, they'd be out in the schoolyard playing and of course we were going to school. And you know, rivalry between the two schools.

12:21

Oh, okay. You know, cat -call each other, whatever. So that's what you would call them, is Boo and Adam? Yeah, you know, we'd get in the windows and make faces out of them when we went by. And how would they respond?

12:34

Same thing. We ended up having... Two rivals with each other. Yeah, we were, but we were friendly. Yeah, and some of them, they all lived in Riverside and the flats. So some of them were your friends probably.

12:48

Oh, absolutely. Yeah, yeah, but... That's really amazing. Yeah, it was fun. We used to have a... every year we used to have a ball game against each other. Where would you play it? Right here at the...

13:01

Central School. Central School, they had the best fields at that time. And how did that often come out even? No, we usually won. Oh, okay. And I guess maybe we had more places to play sports than they did.

13:17

They all ended up at that schoolyard down there. Right. And if they played anywhere, they'd do it at home, a bunch of them would get together and play. And that was before the present building was built back up.

13:30

Yeah, you'd see a red green mountain foam. Right, that wasn't much space there. No space. Yeah. Okay. So transportation and food and classes, you had the basics. Yeah. Read and writing and arithmetic.

13:46

Do you feel like I had a good education? I think I had a lot better to get today, to be honest with you. Really? In what way? That interests me. Wow. So, our minds, of course, living on a farm like we were, there was nothing to look around.

14:01

You just enjoy nature, but there was no books, there was nothing, no TV, there was nothing. You had to use your mind. If you wanted to have fun, your mother would say, get out the door, go play somewhere.

14:14

You made your own fun. And you did learn the names of plants and flowers and things. Not so much. To some extent, I mean... I didn't. Maybe some other people that had. Gail told me about an assignment she had.

14:29

She was into the 4 -H thing. Yeah. 4 -H was there. Yeah. But beyond that, there wasn't much of any other outside organization. No. It was school. School. That was basically... That was our primary outlet.

14:44

Right. Right. And do you remember any amazing things that happened at school? Any kind of... Crazy stories of people. I don't remember anything really stood out Who was the principal Emily was Emily was okay She stood out in the whole school.

15:06

It was Emily Flynn. She ran the show But but she was an excellent teacher this is every single person I've talked to she was Said she was you know, we're scared to death over for sure But I guess the one thing that I do remember about her I'll then be a great teacher and a discipline disciplinary When she retired I was in seventh grade and they brought in the barbershop quartet of some from someplace and She sat up on the main stage in the middle of school at that table and and She was sitting there with the whoever were the dignitaries where we was calm and the singers and She was smoking a cigarette Interesting and I had no clue that she ever smoked Maybe she was highly nervous about the whole thing.

16:04

I don't think so I mean she felt right at home, but she's smoking a cigarette, which was the norm back in I mean, yeah, yeah and I Did you ever meet her? No No, I don't I mean we have some historical pictures of her with the classes, but No, I didn't her nickname.

16:26

You didn't say it to her face But all the kids call it chinny chin chin She had a chin a protruding chin on her And I can always remember just sitting there smoking a cigarette and the ashes fell off on her chin I never forgot that I Wouldn't think a kid would forget that because it it was not your image of her.

16:51

Oh, yeah, I had no idea she smoked and the fact that she was being honored. Yeah. Interesting. Yeah, but it was crazy. I guess that's the one thing I always remember about her. But she could manhandle all the kids.

17:06

Well, there was a famous story that she hung a kid over the fire escape railing. He was misbehaving and she got so angry with him, she took him out the door upstairs there and hung him over and said, if you don't behave, I'm gonna drop you gun.

17:22

I wouldn't doubt it. I wouldn't doubt it. That's, we heard that story. But that was the fun of being there. I mean, half scared, but half waiting for her to teach you something, she was an excellent teacher.

17:32

I had excellent teachers all the way through in that school. So it was like, excellent meaning you learned your math. You

learned what you learned to learn. They were a good teacher and I kept your attention.

17:43

And you had to pay attention. There was no fooling around. No fooling around. Right. So did you do, you did math in English, of course. Yep. Did you do the old conventional parsing sentences or not? I was never an English major.

18:00

You never got into that. Did you have what they now call social studies history? History was, we loved history. And she was good at that. All those teachers were good at history. Was it mostly American history?

18:15

Yep. You didn't go into Europe or Asia or any other history? No, it was all American. That was expected at high school, I suppose. Okay, so sounds like it was a good time. It was a good, well, for being going home and playing with a cow, you go to school, you can't, couldn't wait to go back to school.

18:34

Wow. So, but today, it's not that way. So then from eighth grade, where did you go? Jericho High School, the old high school, over in the park. I remember it, yep. And I'm not sure I remember. For four years?

18:52

Yep. We might have been in the last class there, I don't recall now, because they opened a new school. So, let me think, if you went to school in 40, in 53, in eight years, 61, you were in high school in the early 60s.

19:15

Yeah, I graduated in 64. 64. And that was the last year. I lived in Jericho Center at that time. We moved to Jericho Center in 58, so I remember the school. And your principal was who? Don Jamison, I think, back in.

19:35

Don Jamison, but he came after the well-known man who had been there for a long time, who lived in a house across the road. You can't remember, sorry, we'll find it. I know there was someone there before Don Jamison.

19:53

Don was the last one that I remember going to. Oh, I can't think of the fellow name. They look home to us. So then the school bus still took you—they took you there to Jericho Center, or did you have to go— No, we didn't get off at Simpson's Store.

20:14

Where was that? It would be—if you're looking at the United Church, be on the right-hand side of the church. That used to be Simpson's Store. In Jericho? No, I didn't. Oh, the bus would only go to Underhill.

20:28

No, they'd continue their route up to this central school. We'd get off right there in the village. And then what? And the Goodyoos had a—we call it the puddle jumper—a little 12-passioner bus. Mary and Goodyoos.

20:43

I don't remember her name. Yes. She lived in Jericho. Ralph. Ralph Goodyoos. Yeah, okay. They would take you from Flats to the Jericho Center. Yeah, and there probably weren't a lot of you just probably about a dozen.

21:00

Yeah, you know that you were all there together waiting for that bus Okay, how was that high school? How was that for school? It was very similar to going to here. It was okay. Oh, yeah Yeah, yeah and Meanwhile you still were dairy farming at home At that point we're getting out of it though.

21:22

Yeah by that time. Yeah, most everybody had gone out of farming. Yeah So then upon graduating from high school, what did you do? I worked construction long enough to get drafted. Oh And I didn't get drafted up rather than when I graduated I worked probably two years in construction and then Uncle Sam called and I joined them 131st engineers.

21:50

Okay Thinking we were going to avoid going to Vietnam, but we did not So you had to go to Vietnam. Yeah. Yeah, there was kind of a set of only alone How it went and remember some of the names. Oh, I know all of them.

22:03

Why don't we tell tell me who they were? God as much as you can remember my Jacob John sure, you know who Mike Jacobs Mike Jacobs. Yes, yeah, Mike Billy hands Ronnie Garry Dave Villano I'm missing some to bowl labels Robert and Michael.

22:27

Okay Yes, you've got a Johnny McCarthy you got about six or seven right there yourself I'm trying to think who I'm missing Okay, I can't I get well, I don't know if he was living in an ill at that time, but our captain was John Andrews Oh, you used to live up here on what?

22:55

Yeah, I'm not sure he lived in underhealed at that time, but he did after the fact. Right, right. So did you all go together? Yeah. You got on a train and went somewhere? Train to, well, we went to Belvoir, Virginia, which is where we shipped out of, where we got down.

23:14

It must have been a kind of a rough feeling at that time to do that. We were so young and dumb at that time it didn't make any difference. We actually, by and large, we had a pretty good time being in the service.

23:34

It was great to be in a group like that. Oh, that's going to say very close to each other. We knew, well, we were in the guards for about a year and a half before we got activated. So everybody knew each other pretty well.

23:45

And of course we spent two and a half years together after that. Did the other men that you got to know, I think Vermont was sort of a back roads place, did they look down on you in any way or did you— Oh, if anybody looked down on you, it was a regular army, regulars.

24:06

Okay. They hated us. Because? We were smarter than they were. Okay. And that's a true thrill. And they knew it. Yeah. We had a company that—we had every trade covered. I mean, anything you had to know, we had electricians that could set up — Plumbing and you could do anything.

24:26

We had everything. Plus all the equipment we had. Yeah. We had about 180 of us out of Vermont. Plus we had some fillers. And we had a company about 220 men. And you were all down there in that one? We were in Belvoir and then we should do — What state is Belvoir in?

24:43

Virginia. Virginia, okay. Yeah. And we were from there to Tui Wai in Vietnam. We spent a month acclimating that area and then they shipped us into the Central Highlands. And our job was maintaining a road about 60 miles a road, which would be diagonally across the country.

25:05

We were about 30 miles from Cambodia. Were you near fighting? We never really fought. We would say engineers don't really have the—you get shot at, there's no doubt. But it's for marching into the jungle and finding somebody to know.

25:20

We worked the roads. So you felt safe? No. But you were safer than being in the woods. Right. Right. Where we ended up camping out, or base camp, was a swamp. And they named it Camp Swampy. But when we got done, we had barracks underground and we had an air strip.

25:44

Because you were all engineers? Because we had equipment. You couldn't believe the type of equipment. in an interstate we had all of it. Times four. Each person had it. We had a lot of stuff. And we had people who knew how to run it too.



25:59

So you had camaraderie and you also had a purpose. You had something to do. It wasn't like sitting around waiting for— Well, we did sit around for a couple months. About half the company wrote a letter and they sent one to the president, one to the Senate down here.

26:16

If we ain't going to do anything, we'll go home. Within a week we had more work we could ever do in our lifetime. So you jointly wrote a letter. Oh, yeah. Said, give us something to do or else we're going home.

26:30

Could you have done that? Could you have gone home? Do you think? You couldn't have. You just said, no. That's interesting. How long totally were you in— A year. When you were in tour. Was Mike Jacobs with you then?

26:43

Oh, yeah. He was. Okay. All the guys I've named were— They were all there. Yeah. Okay. And it sounds like they're all local underhired Jericho Cambridge Yeah, all bright boys David Bill the wood splitters.

26:58

He's there when we'll slayton Benor I can't think of his first name That was guys are no R. B. You are no it for nor. Yeah. Yeah, I can't think of his first name now Oh Roman Mitchell, okay Mason's son.

27:17

He was okay. He wasn't with us, but he was over there at the time Wayne born Wow, you've done very well remembering all those things. Yeah, I do I do We were very you were in your 20s. Yeah, yeah, but we were all compared to the kids that are over there We're probably two years older most of them Yeah, it was rough a lot rougher for them.

27:43

It was very rough and It was not easy When people came home because there was so much anti -Vietnam war protests. I was thinking about that yesterday. I Don't recall seeing too many Vietnam monuments anywhere in any town anymore You know, or whatever was the only one we got basically is when you come into the state down there and share I think there's a lot of regret now about how Veterans were treated from Vietnam regret from all sides.

28:15

Yeah the way we were set up as a group We didn't get to harassment That some of them did they went on advanced priority going over and when they come back there or ahead of us about a week or two weeks But they they run into it as a You know two or three of them at a time and in California when they landed out there, I mean people being negative to oh, yeah yelling at them, yeah But we came as a group so yeah Certainly people in under hill Jericho were nice to you because they were glad you were home and safe.

28:52

Yeah, but you know most people on the El Jeric and they know we're gone. Really? How come? I don't know. They didn't know you were gone. Where are those guys? I'm talking to somebody. You were in Vietnam?

29:04

We didn't know you were over there. So now looking back on that, do you like, do you march in the parade as a Vietnam on that? Or do you... I had the little army truck with the old timers in it. Okay.

29:18

You do that every year? Yeah. Okay. Good. We in underhill know about you then. Oh yeah. Okay, good. Yeah, we uh, I guess we weren't really happy about the war being there, but I'm glad that the guys I went with and I think we did a good job.

29:41

What were we doing? Yeah, well it was mainly that road you were talking about. Yeah, and that was... Crazy thing about that we worked for a year getting it great Paving it and everything else keeping it open And when we left the north came right through that area right through the Highlands And a friend of mine is delivering oil he's back in our fields down there in Middlebury Delivered fuel one day to a house and this guy come out and they were talking you see Rock had his army boots on the guys.

30:11

Oh, you're in Vietnam rock. Yeah. Yeah, so was I and Got talking where we were and what we're doing He says that's right. That road is wrong rebuilt Before we left we blew it all the hell again. Oh, no All that work you did I guess that's the way it is.

30:31

That's what it is. That's the way it is terribly worthless war I Remember our senator Akin said he went to Washington. He said let's declare that we've won Me I Think that's a Vermont thing and we really really believed in that.

30:52

Yeah So after after that you came home. You were still in your 20s. Yep Then you went into construction. Yeah, I stayed in construction all my life all your life working for On your own. Okay So you would just Go to some individual that wanted to hire you for something.

31:14

I did some individual houses But most of time I run a framing crew three four guys and we do around frame for the all the contractors Frame them up. They come in finish them off themselves Like when the house is getting built you did the framework of it You and your get it to the roof and windows in and then you go to the next one.

31:34

Yeah, it doesn't happen like that anymore Does it? Oh, yeah, it does. Oh, okay so So how many did you have working with your I had a one time? Didn't work out to work Well, there's a lot of people too many people for me.

31:49

I mean pay payroll. Yeah, yeah You know how payroll and the government like their money. Yeah. Yeah, so you had to keep track of that But it was hard a good treasure. I was a treasure. You did the whole thing.

32:02

Yeah Yeah, did you have to fire anybody? You don't have to name names, but I mean two guys you did okay Yeah, two guys I fired and And Get to the point at the end Which I'm glad I'm not a bit down because you can't hire anybody anymore.

32:19

Mm -hmm. There's nobody out there I want to work anymore like that. Mm -hmm My nephew took over the business He's doing well and what's his name Keegan peas. Okay? And he in the case be a se yeah related to the grain company.

32:35

No, no the whole name. Okay. Yeah Uh Related to the peas dr. P's it was in use to live in Jericho And his wife was Heidi. No, that was a daughter. That was a daughter. Yeah. Okay. I remember a teddy peas who worked when I was a little criminal.

33:01

I worked at Browns River Middle School. You did? Yes, that's all I knew. That was from that family. He took it over. So you've been retired for a while now. About ten years. Yeah. How's your retirement?

33:17

I wish I could have done it twenty years earlier. You like it. Yeah, I've enjoyed it. You can call the shots every day. Well, the whole thing, I retired because of my health. Got worse and worse. I had a conjecture heart failure.

33:32

Really? Yeah. Are you pretty healthy now? Not really. You look good. Yeah, I feel good. But I don't. I had a little doubt of it come back here last year. But I've had three cancer operations on my bladder.

33:49

So far so good. Just keep trucking. Well, the doctors know things now. They didn't know a hundred years ago. Yeah. Yeah. So, have you and Betsy been married for how long? I knew you'd ask that question.

34:04

Well, it must be thirty -five or forty years. Quite a while. Quite a while. Did you have children? No. You didn't have children? No. We got married pretty late. Yeah. But you certainly got plenty of family.

34:18

Yeah, plenty of family. And a lot of their families got kids too, so we don't have to have it. Right. Right. I guess it was just because a lot of it we got married, we were fairly late. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

34:31

So, thinking about Underhill itself and just thinking about you're growing up in the town, what are the main things that seem different to you now? What's different? The people are different. How are they different?

34:50

I grew up with farmers. Okay. And they're talking about flatlanders? Well, I wouldn't say that. Most everybody is a flatlander. No. Yeah. Absolutely. Yeah. Yeah. But, you know, I had nothing against them, that's for sure.

35:11

I guess the thing that I always remembered growing up when I was just, I don't know, probably four years old, five years old, maybe somewhere in that area, during World War II, there was a Jewish fellow and his wife lived way up on the hill behind us, way up in the woods.

35:32

And there used to be a farmer one time. Yeah. Always left us just an old. And when I, last time I remember it was just like an old farm with a store and a half farmhouse, but very small. And I don't know if the barns were gone, I think, but I remember going up there with my mother.

35:51

We used to go for a burying, because the berries come in after a while. You could go black, green or bare. But the thing I remember about growing up was Med and Flo Ellis. And they went up there, and whether he was hiding from Hitler, I have no idea.

36:08

But he was Jewish. And they lived like hermits up there for about five years. During the war? During the war, and after the war. Maybe he was hiding. Of course, he shouldn't have had to hide in under him.

36:21

He shouldn't have had, but that's where they chose to live. And I can remember, I don't know if you were familiar with it, but the road up through there is very, very steep. It's open now, but back in it was just like a horse path.

36:35

Where exactly? Above my mother and father's home. Way up. Way up in the middle of the basin. Okay. And they would walk down on a Saturday night and pick up the stuff my mother and father would buy for them at the store during the Saturday night or Saturday afternoon.

36:54

And I always remember going to the window and watching them, going up that hill. The middle winter, she's carrying a lantern, and he's carrying groceries. And it's just like this. Walking. Walking back up there.

37:07

They had no transportation? No transportation. Just the two of them? Yeah. Were they older or middle -aged? I don't, I would guess they were middle -aged. Yeah. And I remember they were up there for, I can remember probably two years of it.

37:24

They were fortunate to have your mother at your home. Yeah. But mom and dad were fortunate to have them there. Somebody come down and play cards. Yeah. You know, it was, they were nice. Do you remember their names?

37:35

Ned and Flo Ellis. Ellis. Yeah. Okay. And they stayed in the old camper old house until I want to say maybe the 50s. early 15th. They moved back into Burlington. And he went to work back as a bookkeeper for a clothing outfit.

37:54

I don't remember what it was. So they went from the real, real countryside back into the city. Yeah. Yeah. And that died and Flo moved to California with a daughter. Oh, okay. Or moved out there. I never see the daughter.

38:08

I never remember the daughter, but. It's really good to remember them that they were under hill residents and had their time here. Yeah. But it was crazy just seeing. In my mind now, I see them walk up that hill, cold or now snow wept of the ways, walk it back up that damn hill.

38:26

And it is steep. And were you ever in their house? I don't know. Never was I am. No. Just wonder it was probably pretty basic. Oh, yeah. I mean the basic structure now that after building has been looking at them, you know, I'd, yeah, it's not about a starting half of the roof on it.

38:43

That's about it. Right. Wow. There were a lot of people living way in back roads and little houses. Basic, you know, we assume so much now in a way of heat and warmth and food and so forth. They didn't have any of that back in, nothing like that.

39:03

So back to your farm, did you have to go out anywhere to get extra food? I mean, I know you grew a lot of your own. That ended up doing a milk route. Okay. And you'd pick up food for the family? You'd pick up the other farms along the road there.

39:21

I don't remember those, the Fuller Farms over in the valley, Westman's Farms. What about River Road? No. Most of that stuff went to Richmond. Okay. Most of it. To the Cramerade Richmond. Yeah, and there used to be a cremary right there in the village by the middle school.

39:42

Where that dance studio is now. That was a cremary there? Used to be a cremary there. Okay. You know, there used to be a sawmill in there too at one time. Amazing. Yeah. But they, a lot of them shipped their milk there and then what didn't go there went to the United Farmers in Cambridge.

39:59

And my dad trucked for Whiting's, which is on the wrong, on the other side of the wrong way bridge, that old cement building. He trucked milk into that place. So how did they decide whether it was going north or south?

40:13

The farmers decided, they joined one place or the other, whoever gave them the most money. Where they get their money. So you had a cooler at the farm that kept the milk, everybody had a cooler and it went every day.

40:28

Oh yeah. Every day. Yeah. Seven days a week. And then at the cremary was it pasteurized there or not? I think it, I think it was. Because there was a lot of unpasteurized milk drawn. I know there was a huge steam boiler.

40:51

I remember that. And you could all see steam coming up out of that place. So you didn't do any kind of pasteurizing at the farm? It went and they did everything up there and then they bottled it and then it got delivered by the—I think the milk—I remember right, the milk that went into Cambridge in both places was put on tank trucks and sent to Boston.

41:17

Really? Yeah. I think that's where a lot of it went. The people that sent milk to hoods, it would be pasteurized here in Burlington. But I don't think either one of those places is pasteurized. I think it went bulk.

41:29

So if you were living in Boston and the milk came down, you bought your milk, that way it was probably a couple days old. No, it went every day. Every day in a cooling—a truck that kept it cold. Yeah.

41:42

And it was cooled at the crematory too. It had a big tank there. That was, it was ice cold out coming out of that big tank, I remember that. And they, I'm sure the tanker trucks had some former cooling, but I think they probably made it every day.

41:57

So trucks were used, were the trains used at all for anything? Before I remember, yeah. Used to stop right there in the— The flats. Well, used to stop at North Underhill and at the flats. Yeah. Yeah.

42:09

And North Underhill used to be, I don't remember, Al's Garage. Yes. That used to be a train station. The train station was there. Yeah, I remember that. Just barely remember that. You come down from Cambridge?

42:24

Yeah. Yeah. And then Underhill and then Jericho all the way down. And that was, that would, would that transport milk too or not? Oh, yeah. It would? Yeah. But I think my dad was talking before that, mostly it was just cream going down through.

42:41

Everybody had separators in their farms before it became bold. Oh, the cream would go. Yeah. And most of them made a living selling cream more than they did in the mill. Oh, okay. But, and I remember, I remember a separator just to be up overhead in the shed, but I don't ever remember it being used.

43:01

Yeah. So, but do you, did you ever take the train yourself to Burlington? No. No, I was gone by the time you got home. Yeah. That was sad to see the trains all go. Oh, yeah. A lot of that stuff still worked today.

43:18

Yeah. But for the young children in the flats, you know, all who lived out here in the early days, like the thirties, that would have been a big deal to go to Burlington by train. I don't have dates exactly when it all stopped, but it was in that time before.

43:40

You didn't have a personal remembrance of taking a train anywhere because it was all gone. No time I ever got on the train was going to Fort Dix, New Jersey for basic training. That was my first train.

43:52

From where? From Essex. Essex to Fort Dix. Yeah, and Essex was a big— Like Amtrak, at the Amtrak, right? Oh, yeah. Where that station is now. Yeah. Yeah. Huh. But I can remember, we'd go into Burling or some, say Essex, whatever, when we were kids in the car, and I could still see the old steam train sitting there puffing away, waiting for people to get on.

44:20

Yeah. And I guess— But I only see so little of it, I kind of didn't know what it was until I grew up. So things were more by truck and your— Yeah, in my generation. By truck and bus. Yeah. Were there buses to Burlington?

44:36

There used to be a— I don't remember it, but there used to be a— like a 12 -passion bus coming in on the hill. Every day. Yeah. Yeah, we need more of that. So, anything you can tell me about your life now in Underhill or any remembrance of the town, how do you feel about Underhill and how it is these days?

45:00

Oh, I don't know. I guess I miss the open meadows and pastures. Mm -hmm. You know, people like you, I live in the middle of Woodstone. It was, boy, it's beautiful out here in the woods, but you know, I remember the pastures, the scenery was excellent.

45:19

I loved it. Mm -hmm. After I lost it, after it's gone. And that's why some of the land trusts, keeping it like the Tamasi meadow, for instance, we're all happy that that's now still open. Yeah. And I had a picture of where my mother grew up, which I, where Bobby Clark lived, where his wife still does.

45:42

We got pictures of that when Grant and Grandma lived there. Mm -hmm. And they were standing out on the house of a bottom little knoll. And the pictures are facing each way all the way around it. Yeah.

45:54

They're holding trees. I know, it's amazing. They're lawn meadows. Amazing. I'm amazed. We are so surrounded by trees. I'm, I'm, I've got, I have lots of trees here. Yeah, I got 50 many. And it's tough to take them down.

46:09

Well, I don't mind taking them down anymore. I, when I built the house, I was, oh, this is going to be great. But I just stand and get rid of a few more pretty easily. Me too. Yeah. Do you work in the woods much?

46:19

Do you do a change? Just as much as I can. I just got done cutting and splitting Tuesday. You like it? Yeah. Do you heat with wood? Not as much as I should, but. Somewhat. Yeah. Supplement with it. Yeah.

46:31

I got sick of, one time I got sick of handling wood. Yeah. Burning it all winter. There's a lot to it. Yeah. And a lot of steps. I did it for 40 years. Yeah. Yeah. And I, would you go propane? No, I hate to tell you this, but I went to coal.

46:50

Interesting. Yeah. I had a coal furnace. It's a coal furnace, but it works like a pallet stove. Okay. That's what you have now? Yeah. And I burned two cores of wood, two ton of coal, maybe 50 to 60 gallons of oil.

47:04

So we used all three. Wow. And the oil is good because it's convenient. Turn it on and off. Yeah. The wood. That's what the, like a... It's a regular furnace. A monitor type of thing, needle. No, it's built right in my furnace.

47:19

So you've got a coal furnace and an oil furnace? Yeah. And a wood stove? No, it's a wood furnace. Wood and coal? Wood and coal. No, it's wood coal. Yeah. I'm sorry. It will, the main furnace would burn wood, coal, or oil.

47:36

Yeah. But this very inefficient handling coal, because it's all big stuff. Yeah. So I bought this add -on when it works like a pellet stove. They just sat beside each other and when I get sick of one I try the other.

47:49

Well that's very inventive. Well I don't invent it but I love the coal I'll be honest with you. It makes you nice and warm. Nice and warm and people think it's dirty it's not dirty. You don't see anything coming out of the chimney.

48:03

Not a thing you see heat waves, there's nothing else coming out of it. Where do you get it from? Tractor supply. Oh yeah. There's quite a few places that sell it out. Yeah and they deliver? I go get it.

48:13

You go get it in a truck. Yeah 40 pound bags just like the pellets. Wood pellets. Yeah. Same setup. Wow that's interesting. Yeah. The only problem is this last go around with their government they decided I went from \$2 .50 a bag to \$5 a bag.

48:34

Ooh that made a difference. Crazy. Yeah yeah it is expensive. How did you do with the last three years with COVID? I think I had it when they first come around. Really? Yeah. You felt sick. Oh I was sick.

48:51

January of 2020. I think I had it before that. I think I had it back in November December. Everybody said I want it here then. Well we did come and find out it was here. How sick were you? What do you feel?

49:08

I didn't feel great but I coughed. I had coughed like I never ever coughed in my life. Yeah. Fever. And I had headache. No I didn't have any headaches but while I was congested a few days and a half nothing like some of the people who got and I my wife got the same damn thing.

49:28

You probably said I've got a bad cold here. Yeah that's really bad. Yeah. I had no worries and after that I just never thought

about it and never bothered to wear a mask or anything else. Maybe in a way that immune gave you immunity.

49:43

They say maybe. I mean, it's a lot of maybes. It was tough for a lot of people. Oh yeah. A lot of people. Yeah, we knew a girl who died from it. Yeah, I knew some people too, and it was very sad. So do you keep pets at your house?

49:58

Just a dog. Always have had a dog? Yeah. I miss a dog, yeah. Yeah, we got the last one is a rescued dog. And for the first two years, we waited for somebody to come rescue us. Ha ha ha ha. Ha ha ha ha.

50:16

Ha ha ha ha. Right from the rescue dog. Ha ha ha. That's funny. Oh God. Ha ha ha. But she turned out to be a nice dog. Yeah. Even though she gave me 12 stitches here, not too long ago. On purpose? Or she?

50:31

No, I thrown a stick. And uh. She was trying to grab this. And usually when I threw it out, I always made sure she was in front of me. This time she got behind me, and I just reached back and grabbed the stick real quick and just not throw it under her hand.

50:44

Yeah. She says she wanted it before I threw it or I haven't figured it out. Maybe I threw my hand into her mouth first She was going for the stick. Yeah, she didn't mean to oh, yeah Okay, well, I think we're ready to wind down unless you can think of anything you want to say that you feel like you haven't said about underhill or Well, like I say, I probably wouldn't been very good on the phone.

51:09

I'm probably not real great here, but oh No, it's very comfortable Wonderful really really thanks so much. It's really great to hear and It's important that we keep track of people, you know And you are one of the people in the town that's been here all through you've seen it all up under hill So I think the real mistake I made when I when I grew up got older didn't realize it but Real mistake was I should have been done doing the same thing to our neighbor back in Joe Mechif Joe lived a non -deal most of his life and he was our town representative to see Wendell's father.

51:50

Yeah. Yeah It's too bad you couldn't it couldn't interview him. I'm telling you he knew he was a walking dictionary You knew everybody knew everything who who bought that two acre lot over there Yeah, and the name of the lot over there.

52:06

So he was a considerably older man from you. Yeah, yeah But he knew everything He did his job when he got up in the morning was to catch Linland here who was a mailman and write down to the village Where you going today went down to the village Find out what's going on in town store to store to store find out everything Then when Linland would go home that in the afternoon that night jumping the card right back home He did it for every day So he was Joe Mechif and who was his wife, you remember Julia Julia and they were parents of Wendell and Allston and West.

52:47

Okay. I knew Wendell and he later married Bolio. Zilda. Zilda. Yeah. So you knew Zilda. Oh yeah. Yeah. We used to go to Florida. We used to stop and see him every time we were down there. Yeah. She's in St.

53:00

Albans in Florida. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. She's on like, she's like you, right? You won't quit. She's, I think she's in her 90s, right? Yeah. Oh, I know she is. Yeah. She is. Yeah. She's a great lady. I like her.

53:12

Yeah. Hard to believe back when she went, she run the town. Yep. All by herself too. Did you know Luella Lamphere? Not real well, but I know who she was. Yeah. And of course Pat Lamphere is still, and he's a petser into history too.

53:28

Yeah. Yeah. I know he is too. Yeah. Okay. Well, thank you. Thank you so much. Thank you. I'm going to push stop here.