

Fred 1

🕒 Tue, 02/27 11:31AM · 49mins

00:01

I'm interviewing Fred Fletcher today and he lives in Fletcher on Kinsley Road. Fred what year were you born? 1941 and where were you born?

00:16

Colchester, Vermont

00:17

Uh -huh. And did you grow up in Colchester?

00:21

No.

00:22

What happened to you after you got born? Where did you live and tell me about your childhood?

00:28

I lived in Essex Junction a couple of months. I was born in July, my dad died in September, and I wintered in Craftsbury with my grandparents, my mother and I did, with Grandpa, Grandma Fletcher, and a winter of 41 and 42, my mother came to Underhill and took a job for Neil Metcalf.

00:54

He lost his wife and he had four kids and she took a job at housekeeping and I grew up there, we came to Underhill 1942, March.

01:05

At the Metcalf home yeah and so she was kind of a housekeeper for him for Neil yes so who was Joe Metcalf

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Joe Metcalfe was my step- so Neil Metcalfe was my stepdad for 50 years, right? Right. So Joe Metcalfe was his father's cousin. Okay.

01:26

Okay, did he live there too?

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Joe Metcalf lived in North Underhill up the road two miles.

01:32

Oh, only two miles from where you were.

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About two miles, yeah, he had a farm up there.

01:37

And how was he related to Neil?

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I think they were cousins, dad always said.

01:42

Okay, okay So you considered Neil your dad. Yep. He was your dad. Yep. Okay. Was it on a farm?

01:52

Oh yeah, big farm, best farm in Underhill, or at that time we were one of the bigger farms for years, we milked 30 -some cows for years.

02:02

You did, and can you tell me where the farm was in Underhill?

02:07

Poker Hill.

02:08

On poker hill how far up way up up towards north North Underhill Station

02:14

No, no, it's two miles from the school house. So we used to go downhill ID school and it was just about two miles from the farm to the school. Okay. And the Creamery, we went to the, took our milk to the Richmond Creamery down to Riverside every morning.

02:32

And then we rode the truck to school, the milk truck, 7 .30, 8 o'clock in the morning. Wow. And walked home, you didn't, nobody come and got you at night. You walked home, the snow and the wind and the rain.

02:44

How long was that trip? Walking.

02:48

it was two miles when you were little six seven eight years old it was quite a ways but there were some bigger kids walking with you usually yeah but i remember it'd be dark when you get home sometime in the deep snow and in the dead of winter.

03:02

Yeah.

03:02

They wouldn't come out of the woods to get you out of the hay field. If it was a rainy day or something and they weren't in the woods working, they might come to get you the truck or car, but usually you walked.

03:17

Because they were busy, they had stuff to do. Yeah. So that was the I.D. School, which was at the lower end of Poker Hill.

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It was right down in the village right in the front. They just tore it down a couple of years ago.

03:36

Oh, that one. Okay. It turned into a high school later.

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It was a high school. At the end of the last year of high school, I started first grade in '47, and that was the last year of the high school. My step-sister graduated Mary Metcalf in '47 when I was first grade.

03:57

I remember that. I was there.

04:00

Yeah. Now I know I can picture how long a walk that was to the farm. That was quite a job. You had to go up 15, what is now Route 15, and then on up Poker Hill a mile or two. Did you help in the barn? Mm -hmm.

04:24

Starting at what age? Young.

04:27

Seven, eight years old, I was raising calves and feeding calves and I was down there my time. I was five. I was riding a milk truck every morning. I'd get in a pickup before school. I was five years old.

04:41

I'd ride with my step -brother and take the canned milk down. It was all milk cans them days, right? Mm -hmm. And we had a 36 Chevrolet pickup. It only hold eight cans, but in those days eight cans was a lot of milk.

04:55

And why did you ride the milk truck? Because I wanted to go down. Oh, just because, yeah.

05:01

And he was a good guy. He was my buddy. Yeah, he was an older step -brother Yeah, and...We grew up that way he tended, we had two teams of horses two pair of Percheron horses

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And what did you use the horses for, for haying and everything?

05:26

sugar and getting that wood work, hauling wood, yeah, haying, and uh...

05:32

Did you get handy at handling the horses?

05:34

Oh yeah, I was driving hard, when I was 12 years old I was running a team together and sat alone at 12, 14.

05:42

Is your sugar bush right there at the farm or? Yeah. Okay.

05:45

sprawled on both sides of the farm, went up in English settlement. We kept pails and buckets in those days. It was all buckets, of course, and lug it all, and sap sleds, and then we had one tub on the wagon because we had some on the road.

06:01

We had to travel on the road some with the sap, and then the sun would melt the snow, of course, and poor sledin', but first of the season, we used the sled, but toward the end of April, we usually gather in the wagon with a pair of horses.

06:21

We had some nice, good teams over here. Dad always had quality stuff, good horses and quality cattle. We fed good. He was a good farmer.

06:32

Good to the animals.

06:34

and pushed hard, raised good feed, and uh...

06:38

Well you needed good feed to keep the horses and cows in good shape. I mean you couldn't just feed them nothing. So 30 cows, was that a pretty big farm for those days? It was.

06:53

And we, when I was in high school, we went 45. We'd make the heifer string bigger so we could milk 15 on the heifer side

07:27

So anyway, after I grew up, and that was the long, hard years, and, uh...

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When you were sugaring, how many people were involved? I mean, how many of you were working the trees and the, and the boiling and all that?

07:43

Two at least and a lot of times four when the sap run we get extra help together

07:48

Yeah.

07:49

Dad was always in the sugar hills, boiling and running things. And my step-brother and I we were together, and then we'd have a hired man, too, sometimes, a single man.

08:05

But it was a lot of work, a lot of work.

08:08

A lot of handwork nowadays, yeah.

08:10

Yeah.

08:11

See, we got the first Farmall C. tractor in Chittenden County after the war in 1947.

08:18

the first one for the tractor.

08:19

First Farmall C. that came into Chittenden County after the war. Oh, I got pictures. I'm gonna show you

08:26

Mmhmm.

08:28

Um, that was a big deal. Seven, \$799 for that tractor.

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At that time, that was a lot of money.

08:38

and a sickle bar mower that clamped on the X and I set up two bottom trailer piles they were \$100 each that loan was \$999 for that C. tractor and those two items and he farmed with that for years it was a money maker.

08:55

Did he have to get a bank loan to buy that? Oh, yeah. Yeah

09:01

You didn't have ready cash in them days. Milk checks weren't very big, you know In the 40s milk went from three dollars a hundred after the war it was like two dollars during the war I mean barely survived, you know, yeah, and Of course a lot of people I made two three four hundred pounds a day move a little closer and and No, he did business with production credit that was the farmers loan in those days production credit that was his buddies and they the banker had come to the barn and You know do your paperwork and talk about what you're doing That's the way we operated.

09:48

Yeah, so did you have friendships and working friendships with other farmers in the town? Yeah, we

09:58

We do, neighbors work together, you know. There were other farms on Poker Hill. Oh, it was covered, everything, it was all there was. It was all farms, yeah. It was all there was. And some people had just two, three cows in those days, and you could milk two, three cows and put your can of milk outside the road and milk truck pick it up every morning.

10:22

Could you survive on that? It was extra money.

10:26

extra paid the taxes or yeah a lot of places you'd see like four cans at night you know two milking night and morning yeah outside the road I remember as a kid and I remember the milk trucks that picked him up I knew all them guys because I went to Creamery every day I knew everybody that's why I know so much because I went to Creamery every day and knew every farmer down there and when that milk went from three dollars to six dollars in 1946 after the war that's when they started buying all them little new trucks and that Farmall tractors like I'm telling you mm -hmm and the Farmall A tractors were all over Underhill and Jericho they were \$600 apiece A was a size smaller than the C and they were everywhere I can name the people that had them I can you name

11:16

Some of them, can you remember some?

11:18

Oh, Haylet had a Farmall A, and Albert Bentley had a Farmall Cub, he was down on the Lee River Road in Jericho, oh, there was other A's, and I said that. Then the Fords come out too, the Ford tractors were a big deal, and the Laid -In Fords, them little gray ones, people loved them, they were only \$595 cheaper than the Farmall, but they were smaller, and people bought them, they were very popular everywhere.

11:55

So did that sort of eliminate the use of the horses?

11:59

Horses went away, we kept one team. We always just fine with one tractor and one team all along with some boys. Did both. But the neighbors, most of the neighbors kept teams too. And some little 10, 12 cow operators just kept the teams, you know, and we'd hay for them if they'd get behind.

12:18

We'd go and hay with the tractors. We'd hay them farms on Poker Hill when I was in high school. We'd get ours done and we'd hay Eugene Metcalf, dad's uncle's for the Poker Hill, he had 12 cows. We hayed his every year.

12:33

And then we went up to Joe Metcalf, we did Joe's for years. He had 12 Guernsey kills.

12:40

We're here Guernseys.

12:41

They were, when he bought, when Dad bought the farm from his father in the '38 and 9 they were Guernseys. Everybody had Guernseys then because they sold butter fat and Jerseys too, but a lot of Guernseys.

12:57

But he, in the 40s when artificial breeding came, he wanted Holstein, the black and white, they bigger and they gave more milk. More milk. And they brought more for beef and so he started breeding artificial breeders in 1949, I remember that, 48 and 49.

13:20

Mm -hmm.

13:21

And he started breeding those Guernseys to Holsteins. In three years, we were all black and white. We started raising the black and white heifers. Okay. And we were all, we had 30-something black and white.

13:34

And the heifers were your job when you were young?

13:35

We raised a lot of calves and heifers.

13:39

Did you have to work a lot on fencing?

13:42

Oh yeah.

13:43

Barbed wire.

13:44

Barbed wire, yeah. Dad believed in good fences and all the neighbors through the woods and he didn't like neighbors whose cows got out

13:53

Did your cows ever get out? No...

13:56

No, because we were fenced, we drove them out of the barnyard and across the road or down the road. We rented the Colonel Constant place that was the old Blakey farm by the intersection of English Settlement Road, that was 80 acres.

14:15

We rented that for years.

14:18

How many acres was the Metcalf farm? More or less?

14:23

It was 150, the home farm and 75 acre woodlot up in in Tupper in English settlement was 225 total but 150.

14:33

And and then you supplemented that by by other farms other lots of

14:39

and we hayed, like the Colonel Constant place, we were able to graze a lot of that and had two meadows on it we reclaimed and yeah that was right next to us you know just down the road

14:51

That was one of the biggest farms in Underhill.

14:54

we were pushing we were pushing we in that when dad bought 1949 like when the trucks got after the war and people had a little more money they were buying all these little half -ton Chevy's and GMC's for seven eight hundred dollars he bought an International 1949 International pickup from E.W.

15:16

Clark because Clark got the international dealership and uh '47 I think and and he clustered it down with International pickups dad bought brand new one 1299 dollars

15:32

Wow, I bet that was exciting in the family when you got that.

15:35

I think it was 1299 and we drove that truck for years and we could put 14 cans of milk in it with a tailgate shut in the spring. But when the grass was good, we were making 16 cans a day, you had to leave the tailgate down and put the chain around.

15:54

I had to get your 16 in

15:58

And then off you'd go to the creamery with the 16 cans?

16:01

Yup, and then July when the grass dried up a little.

17:36

We're doing this interview on Kinsley Road in Fletcher. To get here from Underhill, I came up the North Cambridge Road and then turned off and drove quite a ways up the Kinsley Road and never been here before.

17:58

It's beautiful. This is a beautiful fall day with all kinds of lovely colors. We're fortunate to have such a beautiful state to be in. Okay, good job. Good job, Fred. I guess we've got a quiet dog now, huh?

18:39

Okay, keep asking me questions. I'll show you them after.

18:42

okay that's great so um as a kid you remember getting up at 5 a .m 4 a .m

18:51

No.

18:52

6 30 not till 6 30 so you would go help in the barn and then go to school

18:58

Yep, fed the calves and got back to the house, get washed, eat your breakfast, brush your teeth and the milk truck could come up around. Dad would eat a quick breakfast and jump in the truck or dad would go to creamer.

19:12

We had to ride the truck or else walk.

19:15

Right, did you ever have to stay home from school to work work like especially during hang time or

19:22

Sugaring time and when I was a senior in high school or junior and senior I missed 30 days of school my junior year helping dad sugar and draw manure and stuff because I loved it you know. Yeah that was important.

19:38

And I was good in school I mean the teacher would I mean I run B average all -time or better. Good for you.

19:49

Do you remember your teachers?

19:51

Oh yeah.

19:52

Who did you have for elementary?

19:56

Oh, I had Mrs., my first grade teacher was a girl from Jeffersonville, Ms. Leonard. Benny Leonard was our first grade teacher, but she didn't come back the second year, and then we went and we had Mrs.

20:13

Aldrich, and she was there, I think she retired there, done the Underhill ID school, and there.

20:20

Were your classes combined? Like there were too many, I mean you had like first, second, third together and one room? Two groups in a room, okay.

20:30

Every room had two grades.

20:32

We had quite a few children then, actually, and it was grade one up to eight, right?

20:39

Yeah, 12, 12, average 12 kids for grade.

20:43

Well, that's a nice number for a teacher. Really? Yeah.

20:47

Each room had 20, 20 plus kiddies.

20:49

What did you do best at? What did you like in the way of school classes? Reading, math, music.

21:00

Oh, I liked him all. I feel like I know it all. I mean, I could do them all. I love them.

21:05

were a good student. Yeah. So you were happy to be going to school.

21:09

I did well in high school with the writing stories and stuff like that, yeah. Yeah. Biology in high school, I didn't like much. Algebra and biology were not my favorite classes.

21:26

not the sciences as much as like english or history

21:30

I loved history. History. History is my big thing.

21:32

You obviously remember a lot of history of Underhill I'm very impressed with that because some people don't remember that much. Yeah. Yeah

21:42

I loved it. I go into creamer every day and seeing these people and these farms that brought the milk. I can tell you where they all live. We drive around, I can tell you where they all live and how much milk they sent.

21:57

Did you have special friends that were in school with you from the area that were like same age as you?

22:08

Oh, I had good friends growing up, yeah.

22:12

Is there anybody who still lives in an underhill that you know of? Randall Clark.

22:18

Randy Clark. Kitty Blakey. They were in my grade. Uh -huh. Beverly Ridley. She's over in Williston. Yeah. I can't think of any others down there.

22:31

Was Burnett Rawson there at the same time the man who became a doctor later were there any

22:39

He was dad that he was next generation. He was Winston's brother. He was Winston. I knew him.

22:45

Yeah. OK. Any other Rossins?

22:49

his brother Winston and Kent farmed up on Cilley Hill. Right. And I'd work for Winston two winters. You did.

23:00

Yeah. So when you finished high school, then did you decide to just work? You didn't want to go on to any more education.

23:15

Right, right. Yeah, I didn't want to go. I could have gone to school, you know, but I opted not to. I went to National Guard in high school. Some of us in the Guard, we joined the National Guard when we were seniors in high school.

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We could get that obligation taken care of, and then we went and did our six months.

23:41

so all of you really had to go to the national guard it was required or get drafted yeah right

23:48

or take two years in the army. Right.

23:54

So you still stayed on the farm.

23:57

Yeah, I did my six months at Fort Dix in New Jersey and then came back and I started working on that. Oh, I worked on the farm and I come back, helped dad a while and then I got a job and I got, I'm trying to remember now, I did not.

24:19

You got a job off of the farm, the first job not working.

24:25

Wheeler I worked for

24:27

I was over in Bolton.

24:29

Zen Wheeler, I paid for him after I got out of high school, dad said your obligation here is done when we got done hayin' and I went to work with Zen Wheeler running John Deere tractors till snow flew.

24:45

Hahaha

24:47

Sounds like a busy life. Ten hours a day, dollar an hour. That was the pay scale then. And even when I got married in 1960, the pay scale was ten dollars a day, no matter what you did. That's all you could make.

25:04

so and you didn't work on sunday so you had six days of work a week yeah 60 bucks a week

25:11

That was it. It's about for years. That's all you can bring home.

25:15

So you really had to be careful how you spent that money.

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You didn't have a lot of it to play with.

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They take out \$2 .85 for your social security out of that 60 bucks, too, way back then.

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So at least there's Social Security coming back from that. Yeah. Yeah.

25:38

That's a good thing.

25:39

Yeah. Did you go to Burlington much?

25:43

that was a big treat my mother used to like to go down there toward the holidays big deal to go down to Church Street that's when you could walk Church Street and drive Church Street and park and shop and yeah that is an end of the 40s yeah early 50s

26:00

And earlier on, there was a train. Yeah. Did you ever take the train in?

26:06

Train went away before I, train went away in 38. So I missed the train and none of it.

26:11

I missed it by a couple few years. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

26:15

Yeah, that was too bad.

26:17

Any of your memories of what it was like in the flats during that time, where the school was?

26:23

in the buildings. Dr. Town's office right across the road from the flats. Right. From the school. I mean right from the schoolyard and he'd come out and holler at us kids a lot of times and try to know who we were and we all knew him you know.

26:38

Dr. Town was a big fixture in town. Yeah. Everybody, he took care of everybody you know.

26:44

and he went and visited senior people in their homes.

26:47

He used to come to our house when my mother's was sick. He got a brand new 1947 Ford, a black one. When the 47 Fords and them V8 engines come out, and the game wardens got him and tell him about a black on his own car.

27:05

He could go like the dickens with that thing.

27:11

Did you ever have any medical emergencies on the farm? Or was it everybody stayed pretty well.

27:19

No, we'd have pneumonia once in a while. I remember having pneumonia years ago with the doctor, of course, and he was a big believer in penicillin. He had a syringe or the needle about that long and bent over and two shots of penicillin and he was good as new.

27:39

That took care of almost anything you might have. It did.

27:42

Yeah. Yeah.

27:44

Interesting, yeah.

27:46

Yeah, but mostly that was it, pneumonias and stuff, uh, no broke.

27:52

bones or anything like that that's good you were lucky yeah that having a doctor right in your town doesn't happen nowadays as much yeah

28:08

And George Mullen used to drive his horse and buggy from North Underhill and bring his wife down the horse and buggy and tie the horse to the fence with the school. There was a couple of maple trees along the schoolyard between 15 and he'd tie his horse under that tree and they'd go to Dr.

28:29

Town's office.

28:31

Cross it and have to cross the road or cross over. Yeah

28:37

I remember George's buggy going up by our house, they never had a car, he just had the horse and buggy, they'd come down once a month maybe every two weeks, come to Jacob's store, we had three stores in town in those days.

28:52

Jacobs and what else?

28:54

We had Parker Rice's, it's a brick hill store on the corner, it used to be Kirby's store. And then Frank Simpson right on the way in the road where you went on Park Street, I was Frank Simpson. And then Jacob's down where they are now, it used to be Mark Oles when I was a kid.

29:15

And then Jacob's came there in 49, eight or nine, I think.

29:18

So anything you needed you could you had plenty of choice. Yeah. What other businesses were there that you used? Was there any kind of drugstore at all? Could you get for

29:30

It was a drugstore, right on 15. Marcoux had the drugstore. Just, yeah, it's just beyond the Methodist church there on the left.

29:42

so was it the kind of drugstore where a doctor could prescribe a prescription of some sort and you could get you see medicine there yeah yeah okay

29:52

I remember that. I think they got it down that's the junction and we go down there and get it. I seem to vaguely remember that. Yeah.

30:02

and there was a blacksmith shop oh yeah

30:04

King had blacksmith's shop right there on Park Street he went around and shod horses traveled around so i remember a few village horses as a kid seeing horses standing out back being shod when I was a kid and the

30:21

And almost every place had some kind of barn or shelter for animals. Yeah.

30:25

Yeah.

30:26

Did you remember them moving any buildings? I kept hearing about, I have heard about buildings that were moved. They don't do that anymore much, but...

30:38

I remember going to the movie theater down there for 10 cents and they had the movie theater right on the

30:44

corner there.

30:45

Right. Yeah. Yeah. Park Street. Yeah, big deal. They only run it a couple days a week.

30:52

What movies would you see?

30:54

Roy Rogers, Gene Autry, those are the ones I can remember because that was

31:01

That was a big deal on a weekend, you'd probably go.

31:04

10 cents. Yeah. People go. There were some good movies there. They had some black and white mostly. Mostly, but the western movies were colored. Yeah. Gene Autry, Roy Rogers things like, that was 49 and 50.

31:20

49 and 50. We got a TV 1953 dad did. We got a little black and white. 21 inch TV 1953. That was a big deal. Yep.

31:35

It's amazing to think about it, how many people in those days grew up without any kind of TV now we're used to it.

31:43

But Harlan Machia moved the old school house up on Poker Hill. Okay. His house burned. He farmed second place above us on Poker Hill. Harlan Machia. Harlan Machia.

31:58

Yeah.

31:59

and they converted their little lean tool shed, one roofed tool shed, wallpapered the inside and put some windows and doors in it and lived in it.

32:09

Hmm.

32:11

for health, because his kids were little and it was in the 40s. I remember going up there to the kid's birthday party, you know, we were probably five, six years old, you know, into the 40s. But then he, he bought the old school.

32:26

When they changed the school, shut down the one -room schools, we had one above us on Poker Hill. I can't remember the number of it, but it was up there on Taylor Hill, just as you go down Taylor Hill towards Big Russin.

32:41

And Harlan bought that from the town and they moved it down to his place, up the top of the hill, down by the cemetery in his place.

32:52

What did you use it for? Made it into a house. It may, ah. It's there. Moved it and turned it into.

32:58

a house. It's there today it's they added on to it is I could show it to you today. Huh. It's uh and we rolled that down I was there I got I can't find the picture of it I got a picture of it somewhere the two girls in the window the house says we're rolling rolling on logs but it held in the road and uh what's it

33:21

Did they use horses or tracks?

33:23

No, we had somebody, a name, had an old Caterpillar tractor, sounded like a flock of geese going over it, just rattling back. Ephraim, oh, lost his last name, an old French guy, he owned the tractor and he logged around town.

33:45

It'll come to you. And he went and jogged that down there, but it took a lot of manpower and a lot of moving along. It took two days. It just, you know, it was a good size building.

33:58

But it went intact. It didn't fall apart or anything. It just went right down.

34:02

yep and he made the foundation to put it on yeah and he got it over there on the rolls and then winched it you know with a lot of poles and skids and winched it onto that foundation and made him a house and it sat on that and then he converted

34:22

of the inside into a house.

34:24

lived in it for a few years. Can you tell me?

34:27

where it is exactly on Poker Hill, I'm trying to picture he came down the hill with it

34:38

You know where the cemetery is in Poker Hill? It's on the left at the top of the hill.

34:43

Top of the hill. Yeah near there

34:47

just below there. Just below there? I don't know if there's, it used to be a big meadow between the cemetery and that was Ireland's meadow way to the cemetery. You know, I don't know if they built houses, I think there's hills held in that meadow now.

34:59

Okay.

35:00

It's below the cemeteries you're going up.

35:04

But it was definitely way up above the Machia farm, I mean the Metcalf farm. Second place up. Yeah. Second place up. You can run up there now. That locates it, yeah. So more about the flats and what it was like.

35:23

The church was there and two churches. The smaller one and then the big.

35:30

This is my one and the big one right? Yeah

35:33

when people, quite a few people attended.

35:36

And the funeral home right beside the big church.

35:39

Yep.

35:41

H .P. Brown in the funeral home there, had a lot of viewings there, and some funerals there, yep.

35:50

Yep, and then the GAR hall was there.

35:52

That was quite a popular building too. We used to use that a lot for functions, fundraisers

35:57

Were you ever in a play over there on the stage or did you ever use it?

36:05

the dances, the Ed Ward family had a family band in the 50s that they were a family band and they did dances, country and western square dances, taught us kids to square dance, two hours, seven to nine every Saturday night.

36:23

They played over there for several years. Ed Ward. Ed Ward and his family, Ed and Doris Ward,

36:29

Mmm.

36:31

and his boys all played, I'm surprised you don't have some history on it, Ed played guitar, Doris his wife played piano, Roger played guitar. Those are all Wards. I think Bruce paid banjo,

36:55

Did they do that all volunteer? They didn't charge money. No, they just go there and people would come and dance.

37:04

Bruce played mandolin and Carl played banjo, I believe it was now. And they taught us to dance. The girls, June Ward and Pauline Ward and Susie Ward were the girls and Susie was five years old and she used to sing, Your Cheatin' Heart, when she was five years old.

37:31

Your Cheatin' Heart. Yeah, that was Hank Snow's big hit. That was when Hank Snow was making records.

37:39

Yeah.

37:40

She was for life and they'd let her sing her. Susie lives there, Underhill, you know her?

37:47

What's her last name now?

37:49

I think she's the award she lives with, she lives with Ronnie Seymour right there in Route 15 in Underhill. Okay.

37:55

Susan Ward and Ronnie Seymour. Yeah.

38:00

They're younger than me, and in my history, I...

38:04

right along 15 right on 15 on the right there on the right as you're going down yeah near Jo McClellan in there

38:12

Now back this side.

38:14

Okay. She's still alive? Jo McClellan.

38:17

Yep. You know, you knew her.

38:19

Yeah, my friend Debbie just called. She remembers. She said she's talking about her the other day Because they lived there.

Yeah, no

38:28

Jo McClellan is one of the people I have interviewed and she she

38:32

Her husband was my step -dad's cousin.

38:36

Oh, and his name.

38:39

was, he was, uh, he was, uh, Donald McClellan.

38:46

Right, Donald McClellan was her husband, and he was Neil Metcalf's cousin. Cousin, yep. Okay.

38:56

Yeah, his mother and dad's, wait a minute, they're cousins anyway. Yeah. I can't tell you.

39:10

I'm amazed in talking to people how many people were interrelated and part of it was that you had a real big community of people, farmers, and you didn't necessarily go anywhere much. You grew up there and you worked hard and you had good lives and fell in love and married People who didn't go very far.

39:38

So then let's see if we have we covered everything in the flats that we can think of that was there the churches the blacksmith stores

39:49

Underhill Garage was a big thing, big hub of the town, Elwood Clark's Garage, you know, right there by the park. Oh yes. That was a big, big thing. Right. Employed several people and fixed tractors and, well, he started selling army surplus stuff after the war, you know.

40:08

You ever interviewed Randall Clark? He told you anything.

40:12

He's on the list. I haven't done him yet. I haven't talked to him.

40:15

I want to elaborate on how I let him tell you about his dad.

40:17

Okay, okay that Elwood was Randall's father. Yep. Yep

40:22

Yeah, they were in

40:25

involved with the Clarks' Garage

40:26

I wanted to mention that because it was a big hub and then Parker Rice's store and Jacob's store. I mean you could buy anything at the store. You could buy 22s, .30-03 deer rifles, boots, winter pants, shoes, and your meat and vegetables.

40:51

It never happened.

40:53

to go out of town to get what you needed and you probably did you have a garden at the farm yeah so that was and there was a fair amount of canning and oh yeah putting down stuff before freezing people didn't have freezers in those days they did a lot of a lot of canning before the freezers came in the 50s yeah.

41:13

in the fifties.

41:15

So then Fred after you got when you got into your 20s did you how how old were you when you married? 20. You were 20 okay and who did you marry?

41:30

Rosalie Aiken

41:32

Rosalie or Rose?

41:34

Rosalie.

41:35

Rosalie Aiken. Okay. Any relation to George Aiken the Vermont? No. Pretty common Vermont name, yeah.

41:43

to pick on them better. And then I farmed. I worked on farms. That's all you could get for work them days. Then I worked for the town. I just wanted more money. I worked for the town of Underhill two years in the 60s.

42:01

you do for the town of Underhill.

42:02

Plowed snow and do gravel.

42:05

You were on the road crew. Road crew, yeah. For two years in your 20's.

42:09

Forest Lamphere and Carl and I and the Road Commissioner, Carl Lamphere, and then Leslie Fuller beat him in the election there in the 65 or six. And then I worked for Leslie one year. Then I went down to Jericho cause they paid a little more money.

42:31

Kept moving to make a little more money. You know, when you tried to get from that 60 to \$70 to get towards a hundred dollars a week. That was the big thing. To try to bring home a hundred bucks. And I finally did.

42:44

Then I milked cows for, I worked for the town of Jericho. I worked for Bob Strang for three years. I milked 70 brown Swiss cows for Bob and Libby Strang.

42:55

on the Lee River Road, yep. Did you and you were still living back at the Metcalf farm or?

43:05

No, I had to rent, Bob didn't have a tenement now, so I rented a apartment in Jericho Center over the store.

43:12

The Jericho Center store has an apartment upstairs and you rented that.

43:18

The first store not the not the one that's operating now. There was a first store right across my high school They had an apartment upstairs and that you lived there. While you worked for Bob Strang?

43:28

Yeah.

43:29

He had 70 cows there.

43:31

wow nope 70 yeah and 30 some half first head hundred plus head most

43:36

So you're pushing up towards 30 by that time.

43:40

I worked there for him three years. Three years? He shoveled a lot of corn. I milked a lot of cows, a lot of milking. And he grew corn. Built them big silos and grew a lot of corn.

43:56

There's a big farm there.

43:57

Yeah, he was a pusher.

43:59

Yeah, and the Hunt farm was along that road too.

44:05

Bud Hunt was his neighbor.

44:08

Bud and Marge. Yep.

44:10

Bud Hunt used to bring milk into that creamery I was telling you about. I wish we had more time, but I'm gonna run out of time here.

44:18

Well, we're getting there. So just tell me quickly, when did you move to Fletcher?

44:29

I bought a house in Binghamville in 67 and then I came up here, Donald Kinsley used to have this place, this was a Kinsley place.

44:37

This is the Kinsey Farm.

44:39

Yep, he was born and raised here and he was losing it here in 68. I sugared up here 500 buckets because I was laid off on the road with Campbell construction. I sugared 500 and then after sugaring he came to my house, I went back to work and said you want to buy my farm and he was milking 12 cows here and of course I wanted the farm bad.

45:04

You couldn't borrow any money then, you couldn't get a loan for nothing, you know, unless it was big. I had no backing. Dad wouldn't sign the note with me and nothing. But I come up and looked at this little place and I started milking his 12 cows.

45:23

He was tired. He was working nine hours a day down the bound gate sawmill and he was losing it. The buildings were falling down, the chimneys were leaking, the windows, it was a mess here and he was struggling.

45:36

I said I'll take you to Donald and I rented it for two years and got some cows going. Kept working my eight nine hours a day to Campbell construction and did that until and then I in uh 68 I took over the Donald's whole thing.

45:55

and moved here.

45:57

And we moved the trailer up here beyond the barn and the snow, so I could be near the cows because the snow was four feet deep and you couldn't.

46:05

Couldn't get from the house to the barn

46:07

And I bought it, I bought it from him in 70. And,

46:12

So that's 30, that's 60 years ago, Fred.

46:16

50, yeah, I've been here 54 years.

46:19

been here 54 years. Yeah. And and your wife was with you until five years ago.

46:25

She left me in '92.

46:26

Oh, okay. Your first wife did. Okay. That was a first. Your first wife was Rose. Rosalie. And then you married again later?

46:35

I got a little Filipino uh -huh out of Canada and she was with me 20 years

46:42

cool and she was

46:43

a goodie. She pitched right in and helped me, the barn and great housekeeper but... What was her name Fred? Her name was Filipinas. Filipinas. And she went to Canada to take care of sick relatives five years ago.

47:01

Yeah. And says she wants to die up there with her relatives. She's 78 or 9. She's still up there. And we talk on the phone.

47:12

You must miss her.

47:13

yeah she was a goodie this is Bud Hunt he used to pick up 200 cans of milk a day and bring them into Underhill co-op creamery that's so

47:23

Fred's showing me a picture of Bud Hunt in Jericho with his yeah there's MR Hunt trucking Jericho nice picture

47:32

That's Perry Kinsley's barn. Yeah, I think

47:36

we're going to end the tape and then you can show me pictures. Anything else you want to say at all for the Underhill Historical Society that we've left out?

47:50

No, there's a lot more I could say, but no I've... Yeah. Let's, let's...

47:55

let's just stop for now we could talk again sometime yeah thank you very much ending the tape now.