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This is Jean Archibald. I'm recording today for the Underhill Historical Society. It is January 29th, 2024. And I have with me Pat Goudie O'Brien, who is daughter of well-known writer and book expert, book knowledge, knowledge person about books, Marie Tedford, who passed away last year.

We were lucky to have her living among us and I'm delighted to have Pat here today to read to us from Marie's writing and tell us a bit about her mother.

Would you like me to read the one about the rooster? Rebecca? Yeah. Read that. If you want to.

Oh sure, well I'll just tell you that this one is really true. Okay. Mom always wanted to live on a farm and she always wanted to be Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm. Either that or Anne of Green Gables. Yeah.

Depends on how old she was with it. But she had idyllic ideas about what a farm would be like. I think we all did. So one day they had moved up to Milton and she went up to Bryce's Hill and looked down the valley and saw the fantastic valley that Underhill is in and said, I'm going to live there.

That's my valley. And she did. And they did. And when they moved there, they got a whole giant barn and they had a roast start. But I'll read the story and you can hear about it. Forever of Rebecca.

On the spring day my husband announced we were moving to Vermont, I resisted. Uh -oh, I said. Uh -uh, I said. Not unless I can have a rooster. Why did I say that? Were spring breezes softening my brain?

Or was I remembering another rooster in residence from years past, an industrious bird who performed his daily ritual at dawn alongside the old weather vane atop the hen house in my aunt's backyard at an aunt who lived in Connecticut.

I was certain that rooster crowed every morning just for me. Perhaps that was it. Somewhere, I suspect, in that vast labyrinth of childhood memories, I sheltered an image of myself as Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm, gathering eggs in a little basket as chickens cluck gently in the kitchen door yard.

Okay, Ted conceded, and how about some hens to keep him company, Midge? We had a deal and that image of Rebecca faded back into memory as more practical and urgent tasks such as buying a house absorbed my attention.

We took hurried trips to Vermont to select a location with a competitive assistance of no fewer than four realtors and two intense weeks of, and this is the kitchen, the living room needs some work, and it's still cheaper than real estate in New Jersey.

We settled on an old farmhouse handyman special with a lot of promise. The house sat back from dirt road on six acres of velvet pasture cut through by a brook that ran cold and clear next to a huge barn with its very own hen house, a huge red barn with its very own hen house.

In early August, we packed our belongings into a moving band, shed tears with our married children, swore to keep in touch with friends, and waved farewell to the garden state. At last, Rebecca dear, I was going to be countrified.

Shortly after settling into the rhythm of Vermont country life, living, Ted and I bought our first batch of chickens. An old timer in the valley was culling out his flock and he let us have 15 assorted hens.

Rhode Island reds and Plymouth rocks for a song, a dashing rooster enormously plump. His comb peaked in symmetrical spikes over sharp narrow eyes, kept the hens in line. We called him Sylvester. He strutted around the barnyard displaying bright red feathers with a sweeping iridescent black tail, like a chic supervising his harem.

I could hardly wait for next morning to hear his noble cockadoodle doo. Sylvester didn't disappoint me. His no nonsense call commanded, Get up, get up. Obediently, I fetched my antique egg basket and strode out to the hen house.

Pushing open the heavy wooden door, I stepped inside the newly whitewashed room. It resonated resonated with a low chicken sound like so much grumbling. Some of the hens were poised like tightrope performance on their roosts, while a few squatted on their nests producing their quota of eggs.

Others wandered about clutching soft clucking softly under their breath. This is my day off. Sylvester approached me with slow deliberate steps. I swung my basket gently at my side and greeted the hens.

Good morning, girls. Sylvester came closer. Nice rooster, I purred. But before I had a chance to inspect any of the nests for eggs, Sylvester puffed up his feathers and charged. I waved the empty egg basket at him, but he kept coming.

I repeated, retreated quickly shrieking down boy down and backed out the door. I tried to be rational about his behavior. Sylvester felt threatened. No doubt, he probably returned required more time to adjust to his new surroundings.

But the next day he attacked again, and I was forced to play a new game. I grabbed an empty grain bag and waved it at him. Toro, I shouted, planting my feet firmly on the cement floor. Sylvester didn't understand my Spanish challenge.

And he's sharp, beak, pecked at the bag with the persistence of a jackhammer. Rebecca was so much. No match for this warrior rooster. And again, I retreated in defeat. On the third day, I prepared for my outing to the henhouse carrying a huge cardboard shield and a straw broom.

It was tricky fending off Sylvester, but I soon discovered that vigorous broom work kept him off balance, mostly off his feet. Actually he flew a lot. Whatever eggs I could find, I quickly stuffed into my pockets, so much for the tiny little basket.

After this, after that, time and time again, I made overtures to Sylvester. I was chatty. I was aloof. I was a friend. I was goliath. Nothing worked. Sylvester's behavior eloquently informed me that I was, and ever would be, an intruder in his realm.

We had decided our chickens would roam free on the range, as they say in the country. It was a bucolic scene, chickens in the door yard extending their quaint choreography, two steps forward, one step back, scratching the ground and pecking at whatever they peck at.

Sylvester kept himself busy alternating between servicing the hens and chasing me around the yard. One fall morning, I was making an attempt to be punctual for an appointment to have snow tires put on the car, and keep a luncheon date with a friend.

When I approached the driver's side of the car, Sylvester was standing guard. I slowed down, giving him time to withdraw. I came to a halt when I realized that Sylvester had no intention of moving on.

Shoo! I said. His eyes seemed to narrow as he planned his attack. Help! I cried as we went around and around the car, Sylvester at my heels, flapping his wings and extending his spurs. He would have followed me into the kitchen, but I slammed the screen door on his beak.

That's it, I screamed. It's either me or that nasty rooster, one of us has got to go! Ted was having a leisurely lunch, and he looked up, surprised. What do you want me to do, he asked. I don't know what Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm would have done.

I don't know how Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm would have dealt with Sylvester's antics, but at that moment, I concluded the only good rooster was a dead rooster. Off with his head, I said, forgetting that Ted took everything I said literally.

So much for Sylvester. Anyway Rebecca, honey, wouldn't a few fleecy sheep look sweet, bleeding playfully on the velvet pastures?

thank you you have a poem to finish ah the final yeah read the poem

This just reminds me of the mom. Sweep winter out. The page is 187. This morning, I woke early to sweep winter out of the house before the sun had a chance to change its mind. But when I opened the kitchen door, a chorus of birds invited me to a concert.

So I sat on the stoop and listened.

Thank you very much.