

Transcript

00:01

Okay, we're here today on May 30th, 2024 at Zilda Bolio Metcalf's beautiful little apartment in St. Albans, Judy Boardman and I, and we're going to talk to Zilda about her life, especially as it was in Underhill.

00:21

So Zilda, when were you born and tell us a little about your childhood?

00:26

I was born in Hardwick, Vermont.

00:32

I was born in Hardwick, Vermont in 1928, May 26th, 1928.

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And went to low school there on West Hill, and went through the eighth grade there, then we went to high school in the Hardwick Village. And at that time, I couldn't travel back and forth to high school from my farm, so I went and lived with the Spheres, Alan, and I can't remember what her name was, Alan Sphere, anyway, his family.

01:04

And they lived on the road just above the dance hall. I can't remember the name of the road even. But anyway, I stayed there through my high school years. And then I went to work in Winooski at the Woolen Mills.

01:22

And I worked there. And at that time, Bob Bolio, or Robert, lived in Underhill. And his sister used to be on the farm two, three doors down from us where I grew up. So I knew her. And when she'd go to visit him, when he'd come home from the service for a week or two, I would go with her.

01:49

And then he got where he would ask her to bring me the next time. Don't come if you don't bring Zilda. Anyway, I got acquainted with him. And I ended up marrying him back to go back a little bit. We do want to hear about this.

02:05

But were you one of a number of children on the farm? Well, we were eight children. Eight? Oh, where were you placed in the middle? Well, see, there was Rita Tom and Jeanette and me. I was the fourth.

02:23

You were the fourth. Okay. And the whole family. And you farmed, actually. You had cows. Oh, yeah. Oh, yes, we had a farm, a regular farm. Yep. Did you have to work on the farm? Did you work with the cows?

02:36

No, no, no, no. But my older sister, Rita, she was the oldest child. She used to go out and milk with them. But we also lived near the resort, their children's resort. I'm forgetting the name of it. That's what it doesn't matter.

03:00

Well, they called it the farm. And it was not too far from where we lived on the farm. And my father used to go over there. He was a farmer, but he also was a builder. And he built a lot of the cabins that were over there because people would come and spend the summer.

03:22

They'd have one month for boys and one month for girls. And so he was doing that in addition to farming. And he ended up selling the farm after we kids kind of grew up, kind of left. So he didn't have the help anymore.

03:39

And so then we lived in the village after that in Hardwick. So that was easier to get to school then? And well, by then I was done school. I was working at the Winooski Mills in Winooski. And then after that, Dad used to do carpenter work.

04:03

Different places. He'd build barns or whatever. So anyway, so that took care of that. And my mother outlived my dad and my sister, Jeanette, who was next step before me. Before me, not next. My mom went and lived with her.

04:23

And she was in Connecticut, but Mom had a place in the village in Underhill. And so they'd come and spend the summers there. And that's how you ended up in Underhill? Yeah. Well, I lived in Underhill.

04:41

I guess. I'm trying to think, was I born in Underhill or was I born in Hardwick? I was born in Hardwick. So the early years were Hardwick and then later when your mother- I think after high school then I left to go to work and earn some money and stuff.

05:04

So when you were working at the Mills in Winooski, you were living in Underhill. So you had to go from there. Well, we had a friend of mine, Betty, I think her last name. Anyway, she lived with me and we had an apartment in Winooski.

05:21

And she was going out with Bob's brother, so we would go for the weekend and stay there with them every weekend. So then finally, when I married Bob, he was working in the grocery store and me cutting from Tippy Jacobs, the IGA there in Underhill (Jericho).

05:47

And so we used to live in a little apartment across the way from the store. And then after Tippy learned how to cut meat, he decided he didn't need Bob anymore. So Bob went and we bought Tippy, we bought Terrell's store in Underhill Center.

06:11

And when we did that, then we moved upstairs over the store. So that was the first working or involvement in the Underhill community, was owning that store. And you were there for quite a while. We ran the store.

06:27

We had the store until my husband died. And then when he died, well, just before he died, there was a man that used to come and visit, and he'd visit with Bob all the time. And then he got sick, and he was, who was the town clerk then?

06:50

Lamphere. Luella. Luella. Okay. And then her son was going to go to high school in Essex Junction, and they didn't want to travel back and forth. So she had him come and work in her place as town clerk, and she moved into Essex so that they could go, she could be there, and they didn't have to travel.

07:13

So then he got sick. And so then he came to the store and he said, Zilda, come and be, work in my place to keep the town clerk's office open until I come back. Well, he never came back. He died. So then the selectmen said, well, what are we going to do?

07:34

We're going to have to appoint her because there was no election coming up until the next March. So they appointed me town clerk. And so from then on, I ran as town clerk every year, and I would only run for one year.

07:47

So people decided, if they didn't want me, they could vote me out.

07:51

It's hard to think of all the dates, do you remember any dates of things? Or maybe your own age, when you were in the store, you were, you and your husband, Bob, were running the store.

08:05

And that was when you were asked to go to be town clerk. You remember about when that was? And when would it have been? Boy, I don't remember. No, it was quite a while back. Earlier than that. Anyway, so then did you, did you have to keep running the store and be the town clerk at the same time together?

08:34

No, no, because by that time, after Bob died, I rented the store to I can't remember who he done. Anyway, they were renting the store. They hadn't bought it. But you were still living upstairs. I was still living upstairs.

08:52

Okay. Yeah. And then Kelly, was it Kelly? The Kelly's were part of it, but it was two families that bought it. Yeah. I can't remember the name of the other ones. I can't either. And that was before Phil Jacob's brother was the store clerk after that.

09:12

Oh, and Jacob's. He didn't come up to the Center. Mike. Mike. That was later. I was later. Mike did come down. Yeah. Mike, Mike, Mike did. He, and I think he took it over for me. Maybe. I think so. I think so.

09:28

Yeah. I think so. Yeah. And so you were that but but you you were just appointed at first sort of slid into the town clerk office and you really didn't mean to be that forever. But then that wasn't my you know yeah my purpose but it happened like that because somebody was ill they went to the hospital they never came back and I was taking their place and somebody had to do it.

09:55

Somebody had to do it. So they appointed me anyway. Yeah. Then after that I was there for twenty four and a half years at that long because I was that long twenty four and a half years I decided at that point that it was either I was going to stay or I was going to leave and go somewhere else and do something else.

10:17

But why did I leave. Was I going with somebody else at that point. The twenty four and a half years. No. No I was I was married to Bob while we own the store. And then after Bob I married Wendell. Wendell Metcalf.

10:38

And so oh I know why I left because we wanted to go to Florida. Right. And so I said well I can't be a town clerk and go to Florida too. So at that point Lou Farmer was treasurer. So she took my place as town clerk.

10:56

And at that point I had said you know because I would have had twenty five years if I had run again for another town for another year. But I decided I was going to go to Florida instead. So I gave up my job and Lou took it over.

11:11

And so then we bought a place in Florida. So we'd go there for six months and be in in Vermont for six months. I think that was in the 70s somewhere sometime that that happened. And then it was funny because Lou took it over.

11:30

And I figured she she would be there and take care of things while I was gone. Well the next year when I went to Florida didn't she come down to Florida. And I said what are you doing here. Aren't you supposed to be town clerk.

11:45

Did she come down to stay or to visit you. No she came down for the winter. But she had. Who was her friend. Nancy Bradford. That doesn't sound right. She had one of her friends take it over. You don't remember.

12:05

So anyway they ran the store while she was down there. And I don't know if she was there for three months. So when you decided to go to Florida you didn't intend to space to spend 12 months in Florida.

12:19

You always felt no. It was a it was a winter home. And then I come home for summer for the for the six months here. And

you bought a place down. So did you buy. My father had died by then. And my mom had money that she was giving to all those kids.

12:39

So I went in to see her and she gave me the my share of the money. And I used that to go to Florida because by then she was going to Florida with my sister Jeanette. Mom was. And we'd go and visit her.

12:57

And we liked it. And we decided we decided well we might just well buy a place too. So then we went down to stay with them and we looked around and we bought a winter home there. Well it was a summer home for us there.

13:13

But anyway so we bought a place and then we'd go down for six months and we'd be here for six months. So. And and when you were here were you still living it upstairs in the store. By then we had sold sold the store and we bought a house that was being built on what was the road I lived on

13:36

Lower English Settlement Road?

13:39

And that was being built by Lamphere. What is his name. A Lamphere that was a builder. So so. Oh Tinker Tinker. Yeah Tinker. Yeah. So he was building it. So yeah then we had him finish building it and we moved in.

14:01

And Mendel was also a part-builder. You know he was he would work on everybody's homes. So he finished it off. Anyway so we lived there then. Then we'd go in the in the winter we'd go to Florida for six months and we'd come back.

14:19

So on the town clerk job. Did you have any. What would you say were your problems as town clerk? I mean were there any was it just a Clear headed job for you. We could see what you had to do and well deal with people and I just had to I was in charge of Getting stuff for the selectmen to take care of the reason like me Mm -hmm, and we had a meeting once a week and I would go to the meeting Mm -hmm, and I'd bring them whatever problems we had they had to take care of and they got involved, too So they knew what needed to be done and the roads that needed to be done and stuff like that.

15:03

So It's town clerk I was sort of in charge of seeing that everything got done and in town meetings and all that stuff I was running all those things. Did you find it hard or easy? No, I enjoyed it I got to meet the people so I knew who I was working with right.

15:20

I enjoyed everybody knew you and they all knew me Yeah, but I Enjoyed my job as town clerk. I would have probably stayed there except that except for Florida except for the Florida I couldn't I couldn't bring the summer up through the winter to meet the winter Anyway, so so that that ended that really you were instrumental in starting the Historical Society Well, I worked with them.

15:47

I don't know if I was instrumental but Our place at down clerk's office was sort of the Center for things to happen and So I worked with them anyway, who was it you worked with at first? Well, you mean who from the Historical Society, yeah Well, there was Irene Linde and there was Who was it this died lived up on the hill?

16:16

Lucius Jackson. Well Lucius Jackson started all of that. Yeah historical society. I only carried over Yeah, Mary Fell. Mary Fell was involved and What was her name that she died? She lived Oh Tinker Lamphere's mother Yeah, Luella, she was involved with a lot of stuff so you had actually a really a board a group that we meet together Yeah, yeah, and we would make decisions about what had to be done.

16:45

Yeah And I was also treasurer for the Historical Society because they had no place to put their money So they would put it in

in their town things and when to keep track of it. That's Anyway, what were the early projects that you and your other people felt needed to get done?

17:06

For the Historical Society what were kinds of things to begin with the building needed some repair It was in bad shape and I remember leaving him \$25. I said buy some paint for this place Well, they would paint the outside at least Anyway, and I came back the next year to the meeting the paint and the place was painted but you know inside it was like an old building and needed and needed care and I Really didn't have that much to do with the inside except that I knew the people that were working on it.

17:43

Mm -hmm Lorraine Dwyer was yeah. Oh, she was involved at that time. Yeah, it was quite a few people involved with that building Well, they were involved. They were listers, you know, and they worked there as a lister Oh Everything that that happened in Underhill was surrounded in that office, you know the meetings they had the selectings meetings there The some the the the listers work there I don't know every year You know getting the books already And during your time that it was not a talent the town administrator No, that's more of a recent thing And as though they now have a zoning administrator a town administrator Lister people, you know, just more people working there now.

18:44

Well, I think it got more involved It was more than what one person could handle anyway after a while Want some water? I'm fine. You're okay It was it I enjoyed working there Everybody was so good to me just You know, I couldn't do it not for everybody.

19:11

It seemed like and in it then the work was easy because everything was there Mm -hmm. So I don't know They're talking now about adding two people to the select board to make it five instead of three.

19:25

What do you think about that? It all depends on the people that are running it, because three people can probably do what they need to do, but maybe they figure that as the town grows, they need more people involved.

19:40

I don't know, because I'm out there now. Well, there are some people who are running who are new to town that I don't know of, but the one person that I do know who is running is Dorothy Blodgett's son, Harlan.

19:54

Okay. So, you know, that's the only old time that I know. And whoever they appoint now will just be two extra people, and then the next town meeting a year from now, they'll have to run. There will be an election.

20:12

Oh, yeah. So, they're just going to appoint two more. And I think they see it as an experiment, they see how it works, but once they do it, I suppose it'll stay there. I don't know. Yeah. We'll see. Well, it all depends how well it works out, you know, if they all get along.

20:27

Well, this is it. If they all get along. And sometimes, you know, you'll get a person in there that wants to run the whole show, and they don't get along then, but most of the time, I know when I was there, it seemed to me everything was running smoothly.

20:43

You don't remember controversies in your time. But, you know, we weren't as busy as they are now, I'm sure. There wasn't as much involved. I think every year, things as the town grows, there's more things that need to be done.

20:58

With so many state regulations and that changes everything. Sure does. How about telling us of your children and who they are at this point? Well, I have seven. Seven? Yeah. I decided I wasn't going to have eight like my mom had.

21:22

I stopped at seven. I stopped at seven. And Alan, my oldest one, he is dead now, and he was involved with a lot of stuff. He did construction work, and he worked for the town, different ones. And he had two children, so I have two grandchildren from that.

21:45

From Alan? Okay. And he used to live two doors above me. On English Settlement. Then there was Alan and Elaine. Elaine is here, has an apartment here. Right near here. She's a neighbor. So that's a neighbor, sort of, yeah.

22:08

That's great. And she's she was in the Navy for a while. And but she never married. She worked as a clerk in different places, insurance company, particularly. And she stops in a couple of times a week, see what I need, so forth.

22:34

Because I no longer drive. They don't want me having a car anymore. I said, you don't need one. So I had to bring you food. And that's, you know, they come to get me and I go grocery shopping. Yeah. There you go.

22:46

And I had one in Florida and they had me sell that one too. So I have to have the help both places. But anyway, so there was Elaine, Alan, Elaine, Dennis. Dennis is still around. He's a he works as a carpenter and he's busy all the time.

23:08

Then there's a there was George and George died. I see. Alan Chico. OK, after me, there's Elcid and he's still alive. And he comes to Florida of winters. And then there was George and George died. And then there was Georgette.

23:36

And Georgette was just here this last weekend from celebration birthday. She lives in Connecticut. Yeah. So that that's my family. Now, are there any children still living in Underhill? I don't think so.

24:01

It's Underhill's loss not to have a Bolio Metcalf there. Well, you know, they all had their own places where they were working and they own places to live in. But many of them are in Vermont. Oh, most of them are here.

24:17

Most of them in Vermont. Georgette is in Connecticut. But the rest of our all see the different areas of Vermont that they're in. I remember Penny. Penny married Brian Dubie in Essex Junction. She lived in Essex Junction.

24:38

And is he still involved in politics? No, he's kind of retired. They were at one point. Oh, yes. He was very well known. He was. Well, he worked for the school board too a lot. Right. And did a lot in Essex Junction.

24:55

No, he gets involved. So all of your children went through the Underhill School System, the elementary school and the middle school and high school. Well, they didn't all go through the same school in the elementary school.

25:11

That's why then I was no longer on West Hill. That's where the elementary school was. So they went to the one in Hardwick. Oh, you're thinking about your own siblings. Yeah, those kids, wherever their families live, they went to school.

25:28

And they lived in different areas of Vermont. Well, I think you need to know how beloved you are in Underhill. Well, I was there. Well, I said, we're going to see Zilda. And they said, oh, Zilda. Well, I was there for a good many years.

25:43

Between running the store and being town clerk, they all knew me. And you knew everybody else. You knew everybody. The good and the bad. And it's something special to know a community like that, isn't it?

25:58

I mean, it's like a bigger family than your own family. Well, when you get in the town offices and stuff, you get acquainted with different types of things going on. And naturally, you get involved. So I don't know.

26:16

But it's a wonderful community. And you still live there, huh? So do you have many neighbors that you still know? Yeah, you do. Well, it's interesting because I go by your old house on English Settlement Road, and I think of you.

26:36

I don't know, but it's for sale again. It's for sale again. It's moved quite a few times. It's probably costing a little bit more than in your day. I'm sure, I'm sure. But I still have a good visit with Jerry Aldrich.

26:50

Oh, you do? Jerry Warren. They're still there. Yeah, yeah. And the Warren, the boat's still alive? Carol Warren had passed a couple of years ago. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Is there anything else you can think of about Underhill or anything that you want to say about your life that you haven't already told us?

27:13

I don't know. It was a wonderful community, and I had a wonderful life there. I enjoyed it. Met a lot of people, nice people. Well, I think we're going to give you a rest.