

# Transcript

This is Jean Archibald. I'm sitting here with Michael Luck. It is November 19th, 2024. And Michael's going to tell us some things about his relationship to our lovely town of Underhill. Off you go, Michael.

Good morning. I'm thrilled to be here and thank you for even asking me. I was just sharing with you when I came in that I had done the first, I think, and only history in 1970, I mean more than 50 years ago, on the Duran Family Cemetery on Pleasant Valley Road because it at that time was in ruin in the sense that there were no stones standing at all.

In fact, I don't think anybody even knew it was a cemetery. And I went literally, as a good anthropologist would do with a coat hanger and poked around the ground and got all the stones up, cleaned them off, and did the research to find out who the Gills were and who the Duran's were.

Mom and dad, seven kids, all dead, diphtheria within six months of each other, which was sad. And that's why the cemetery is named that. As well as the one-room schoolhouses in Underhill, which are quite a few of them.

Some of them are still alive and clearly the Underhill Historical Society particularly, but on Pleasant Valley Road on the way over to Cambridge, there's one on the left there that's unless someone does something, it's going to go away pretty fast.

So it's a pleasure for me to be here. I'm Michael Luck, born in 1947, born in Burlington, Vermont to Mary Leddy, and my father Bill Luck, lived at 3080 East Avenue, which brought me great joy because I obviously spent most of my time on the Mary Fletcher Hospital Hill back in the day when it was called Mary Fletcher.

and not UVM Medical Center, sliding on cardboard in the summertime and sliding in the wintertime and but the nice part about it is that the history of my family goes back to what most of you probably know of as the old Maple Leaf Farm that now is called Retribe but the Maple Leaf Farm actually was most of it was built the farmhouse itself in the barn by my great-uncle Peter Leddy who came obviously as all the other Leddy relatives did back in the potato famine back in the 1840s when basically at that time the landlords in Ireland I mean the English landlords actually as they did for the Leddy family paid for their passage I'm actually it's almost like here's 50 bucks get out of town kind of thing which is very kind of them to do because they weren't normally used to being very kind.

The landlords, the landlord not being a landlord of the place you're renting, but the landlord of the land and your whole life. I was sort of working for the coal mines back in... Was this around 1850s?

Yes, 1847, 1848. My great-great-grandfather was Michael Leddy. He was born in 1777 and eventually came to America and settled in Underhill with his family and relatives and his son. He died in 1865 at 88 years of age.

All the Leddys came here to Underhill to the, as most of the Irish immigrants did, during the potato famine. They were really the first Leddys that came to Underhill in 1847. Their passage was paid for by their landlord in County Meath, Ireland, and their ship is called The George.

I don't know quite how, it's a kind of interesting name for a ship, and it arrived in Grosse-Île, Quebec, as most of them did, on July 28th. And on, and it, I think, or actually they left, I was trying to think, I was remembering it because the dates I looked at shows that it, like, took seven weeks from leaving Dublin to get to Grosse-Île.

I mean, it seems like an awful long, I mean, that's a long time at sea. So long that on the ship was obviously my great-great-grandfather, Peter Leddy, and his wife, Margaret Sheridan. And they had three children, and had a fourth one, who actually was born on the ship on the way here kind of thing, which happens sometimes.

So, they settled in. Michael Leddy, my great-great-great-grandfather, I mean, came with him. He was probably in his 60s then. I mean, his wife had died, actually named Mary Leddy, interesting, the same as my mother's name.

She had died in Ireland, and I think he felt it was time for him to move on. After they arrived in 1847, Michael, who, they had another child named Michael, born in 1849, so they had the one on the ship on the way over here, three children, one on the

ship coming over here, and a couple of years later another child, which probably was, they were probably being good Irish Catholics by doing this, having lots of kids.

And Michael... This latest son of Peter Leddy and Margaret basically eventually married Mary Gill. You'll see them in the cemeteries around Underhill. They had three children, Rose, who's my great aunt, John, my grandfather, John Leddy, and a baby that died in infancy.

John Leddy, my grandfather, eventually met Anna Marlowe, who lived on her father's farm over just beyond Krug Road, now the Underhill firing range. I don't know how they met exactly, but I'm guessing they obviously were taken with each other.

They married, and Anna Marlowe's dad, Frank Marlowe, actually decided that he would, and did, give them the farm or deed it over to them on the condition because of his age that they would take care of him for the rest of his life.

He actually wrote up a paper and made them sign it. He wasn't going to take a handshake and, oh yeah, yeah, we'll take care of you. Well, if you looked at the farm and the things you owned as being pretty much your whole dowry, if you gave that away, you basically had no income and no other way.

And there was not much of anywhere for anybody to go. They needed to stay home until the end of the life. Exactly. As my mother told me when I was growing up, there were a lot of babies that died at birth, partly because you were 20 miles away from Burlington, the idea of hopping in a car or even calling up the EMT simply didn't exist.

A lot of illnesses that we take care of now. No drugs at all for those kind of things. So they had a great time, and eventually, obviously, they grew up there, John, Leddy, and Anna, and had three children.

Bernard Leddy who basically is well-known and actually I think ran for governor in 1958 as a Democrat with and 112 years of Republican rule with Leddy and lost by so few votes like 563 votes. He lost.

He lost. And they did a recount and it was ended up being 426 votes he lost by nobody and no Democrat in 112 years that even come remotely close to that. He was in Burlington. Yes. Yeah. They were in Burlington then.

Eventually they obviously sold the farm the on at the end of Krug Road about now in the farming range. John and Anna my grandparents simply because they the government said we're gonna sell it to a server just gonna take it and give you what and they were actually happy to do that.

I have to say that my my grandfather John Leddy was not as I understand from history, probably not an optimal farmer. I mean that wasn't his forte. He actually was town representative for Underhill to Montpelier, taking a train from Underhill Flats to Essex Junction, then Essex Junction to Montpelier.

I mean these are back in the days when you just didn't hop in the car and hey it's only going to take me 42 minutes clearly. And he always had some hired help of a young man or a young woman or both on the farm with him.

So I think he wasn't like a typical farmer going out at 5 30 in the morning coming in for breakfast at 10 and then going back out and spending all day long on the farm. Do you have any idea how big the farm was or how many cows he had?

I don't know. Probably there were a lot of hill farms and a lot of 15, 20, 30 cows. That's my guess because it wasn't some spacious well-to-do hotshot farm. I think actually my great uncle Peter Leddy, who actually sort of built Maple Leaf Farm or at least the original buildings that are there, I think at some point had a much larger, I mean the Maple Leaf Farm itself probably was 130 acres of land.

I don't think Anna and my grandfather John had that many acres. I don't think Frank Marlow had, again most people were what I call subsistence farmers. I mean they were typical used to that in Ireland.

In Ireland you didn't have a hundred acres you had. They lived from the farm. Yeah you had a chunk of land that the landlord rented to you and you kept some of the crops and most of them went to the landlord.

So that was what they were comfortable with as long as you had enough food and stuff like that. So it worked out nicely I think for most people. The other three children were Mary. born to John and Anna Leddy and that's my mother and Frances, my aunt, Frances who actually became Frances McGarry at some point after she married and it's funny I mean looking back on it now my my grandmother Anna Leddy was born in the farmhouse obviously that's where she was that's where her dad was and then my mother Mary Leddy was born in the same farmhouse so it just it sounds odd to say that today because

none of us I mean we were all born in a hospital I'm guessing for the most part so it was very hard for them the family to leave and have to go to Burlington although they were excited about going to the big city but it was tough I think for them because it was they were leaving the only place they ever knew yeah at some level that's true yeah So,

I was thinking that he, I never really got to know my grandparents at all because they both, both John and Anna Leddy died before I was born, at the Bishop DeGoesbriand Hospital, now part of the UVM Medical Center.

And both of them of pneumonia, which again, as you and I talked earlier, there was no drugs for those kind of things, so you've got pneumonia, and within a week or ten days you were dead, and you're thinking, I mean, out of the clear blue, it isn't like you're reasonably healthy, running around, often in the winter, so you've counted your blessings, I think, every day, a lot.

I was thinking my grandfather, John ALeddy, actually was a, I think he was a constable for Underhill for a number of years, I mean, that's what he, I don't know how busy the job was, I doubt it was probably very busy at all, but it was, yeah, but I never got to know them because they were, they died, and I say that only because I think most of us today are used to, at least we knew our grandmother or grandfather or,

or both of them, perhaps before, probably because people were living longer. So, today, my aunt Mary Leddy owns a still, or did, she's died a long, long, long time ago now, there's still a plot, if you go past Maple Leaf Farm on Maple Leaf Road, used to be Stevensville, but now, just before the Stevensville Brook, on the right hand side, there's a little piece of land, a postage stamp, and it's still in our,

it's still in the Leddy family, Jimmy Leddy, your former Vermont state, state senator in Montpelier, owns it, pays the property taxes every year, and they've lost long ago. grandfather clause to build anything there, because it's too small.

Well it's too close to the Brook, it's too, it's everything. There's nothing right with it at all in terms of building, except maybe putting up a tent. Do you live up near there? Yes, and they were just on the, if you go over Stevensville Brook, there's a big field on the right that belongs to Retribe, or used to be the Minkley farm field, and the next driveway to the right going up there, which is 100 feet,

goes up at a 45 degree angle. And I, we live on a, I call it a glacial meringue. It's a gum drop, but it pops our house up, so the view we have is pretty much 360. Nice. The Adirondacks as well as Mount Mansfield.

But I know that land well, and I bought the land way back in the early 90s simply because you can't buy land around anywhere. Everybody keeps it, the family members. and then wills it to the next generation, but this one was Dr.

London on the land and the place, their summer place burned one year and obviously was torn down and but I played up there, they had the best Blackberry patch anywhere in Underhill and a great view, the problem is that the trees grew up and over times I kept asking would you sell me the land, he said no no my kids are going to rebuild this summer camp and so eventually I kept remember every two three years I'd be in touch with him and left him my phone number and all that stuff and eventually I called him up and he said basically I sold the place I said how could you sell the thing I've been asking you for 20 well he said I didn't hear from you for a while and I mean he had it was a pretty lame excuse I could good thing I was on the phone with him because I would have punched him in the nose if I'd seen him and he's a nice man but I still would have punched him in the nose and he sold to Mr.

Von Turkovich who works for the State of Vermont I don't know if he bought it because he was actually going to live and do something with it or whether it was just kind of a so I asked him if you'd be willing to sell the land he said well I actually bought it and you really can't see anything on this land there's there's no view at all of course I'm thinking to myself yes there is shoot you've got a few trees yeah so he told me the price I shook his hand and wrote him a check there wasn't any research about what you wanted no dickering or whatever it is and then had the land which I didn't build on until 1998 Tom Moore one of your Underhill residents and stuff built the house because he was an old friend which was great for Tom because he hadn't ever used old materials the house has old floorboards out of farmhouses from 150 years ago that were painted gray or something like that and the man who sanded them after they finally Tom installed the wood floors said he'd been doing sanding for 25 years and this is the most beautiful floor as I've ever seen because they're just and I didn't even know I don't think Tom even knew that because we didn't know quite was what was under all the grime and the paint.

After the fire that was what was left. Yeah so it's fun so we have a turret on the house which Tom had never done he'd been learning from his dad how to build houses because he was still pretty young then but there were some things you he hadn't

Anyway back to the Leddys. Yeah yeah yeah yeah so it's actually my cousin Johnny Leddy John Leddy who lives in Burlington is probably the guardian of the Leddy. family history because he's I think every well not every family but most families have one child or somebody who decides I'm going to be the keeper of because otherwise if your grandma and grandpa die or mom and dad die everybody comes into the house and there's Photographs and all kinds of memorabilia and if you take some and your sister takes some and your brother takes some It's get scattered and it's lost.

Yeah Because I think some people go into a house and say who's in this picture, I don't know who it is You want to remember something you can go to John and he's got it, right? Yeah was a lot of this history I've gotten from John.

You have it Yeah, I mean I for instance like my mother Mary Leddy luck Was you know often on ill most of her life from time to time and I had no idea till Maybe ten years ago that she had early on her life gotten hepatitis.

Oh, no, which is Like other things you can get it you can get over it, but you hit the scourge of what it does does to you sort of sticks and Has an impact on your the rest of your life. So it's uh, I Mean so John's been really Johnny's been very good at I call him Johnny, but he's John is more of his That you are in touch with I mean are there still oh mom my cousins.

Yeah, Jimmy Leddy John Leddy Johanna Donovan Leddy her Leddy Donovan TJ Donovan has her son. Yes, but you're the main one in Underhill. Everybody else is probably what? They're all Burlington Leddy become Luck in your family.

Well cuz my mother Mary Leddy My grandfather John and Anna Marlowe Leddy Had three children Bernard Who ran for governor and Francis and Mary and my mother Mary married Bill Luck, okay I got it and they lived in Burlington already They had they had come from working in the mills in Amsterdam, New York and down in Springfield, Massachusetts So that's a whole other side of the family, but I was talking trying to speak more about Underhill part where there's We go back to the earliest days.

I mean in terms of through the Leddys When was what do you know about the building of the Maple Leaf Farm? Well when Peter came over here, obviously they like most people they didn't really have anything and I think there was something there in his rudimentary stage that they on that corner on that corner yeah yeah he bought the land or however he did it and then began to if you want to call it homestead it and build most of the old farmhouse that's still there and the barn if you go up in the barn all the beams in the roof of the barn actually are these literally logs cut in half the smooth part is obviously facing the roof tiles the rest of us just bark under the underside it's been there for now 175 years the house and the barn yeah it was all Peter do you have a date a year that it was uh i don't exactly but i mean my guess is it had to be in the 1860s yeah okay about that i mean i think he i mean when they got here i don't think they started building right away i think they took them a little bit of time to get their feet under themselves but it uh but i think a lot of it came from the farming that he was trying to do which was he did farm there oh yeah yeah and that's why that that as i know from many the things the the most of the land was cleared then uh or a lot of it was cleared um and so how long did he live there before it got sold i don't know okay i don't know i think that that eventually i think he actually sort of if you want to call it on the farm died there but he had been born quite a bit earlier so it was you had these succession of folks that are the great great great grandfathers a great great grandfathers great grandfathers and then but the point i was making was trying to to demonstrate that at least from the Leddy perspective they've been here for a long time and uh actually i was writing down i was Even the kid growing up,

I'm going to mention all these names only because it's the Donzies, when they used to live, the Beebe's. Colonel Beebe and his wife, I'd go up fishing up Stevensville Brook from our little summer camp that we had there.

Just past Maple Leaf Farm, if you're driving and you're going north, was the old one-room schoolhouse that burned. The next piece of land is still open, was where the Luck summer camp was. My Mom and Dad in 1947, about the time they adopted me, basically built a little summer camp.

So it was not directly next to this schoolhouse, but one lot up? Well, one lot over. On the right-hand side as you go? Exactly, maybe it's from the schoolhouse where it used to be. to this open land is 150 feet.

I mean, it wasn't very far. And it was small. Small. It was probably one acre of land. And I wanted to have a childhood memory of going there in the summer. Oh, all the time, yeah. 1940s, all my life, and since for 75 years.

In fact, we'd go up. My mother was a school teacher in Burlington. And we basically spent the whole summer up there. My

father just commuted from Underhill down to Burlington. At that point, he was working for the Internal Revenue Service.

Like trains. No, he would drive down. It was after the train. This is 1948, 1949. Well, after the train. So we spent all of our summers there. So I know that territory or that land like the back of my hand, because I would go out hunting with a 22 and fishing all the streams.

The Beebes, Colonel Beebe and his wife actually had their place now that was literally sort of overlooking Stevensville Brook. So every time I was fishing there, one of them was outside. And there's some more names on them.

We'd wave. Yeah, the Ellis's that live in the place where the Doherty's live now, because that's an old farmhouse and barn, too. The Wheelers, the Trask family that live on Stevensville Road are dead.

Stevie McClellan was my best friend, Carl and Louise McClellan's son.

So so he's an exact contemporary age wise of you I mean, yeah, he's like I think one or two years older. Yeah, but we played you were buddies. Oh Total buddies. Yeah play with this group He's still we still when I go down to visit him talk about his German Shepherd dog named Chief and we would play all day long, you know throw a stick the dog would run then we go and hide thinking I don't know why we thought every time it would be different the dog would never find us but It was I think the dog actually had smile on his face Sometimes it looked like the dog was thinking you guys are really just pathetic in terms of trying to hide from us.

Did you go down from from the camp down to Underhill Center often? I mean, were you? Yeah, yeah So there was a store then where you could get some the Underhill general store. It was there. Yeah And what I remember vividly is more Bob Bolio and Zilda.

Yep running the store I mean, I don't think I ever I know I never went in without Bob slipping me a Candy bar some grapes or something whatever the hell he had it was he was the kindest man. I could ever imagine This don't it was too, but I mean it was Bob who was Literally and figuratively giving away the store because I don't think I was probably the only one but I was thinking other families like the Montgomery's obviously read or Tom Montgomery go on pastor place absolutely know them very well Mrs.

Pope long before the Jeff and Karen Davis live in her house now but I mean a wonderful lady the Shannon sisters they lived on Maple Leaf Farm long after Peter Leddy left but I mean they the deal I had with them is what I went trout fishing I would stop and let them pick out three or four trout that the two of them could have and I in exchange for some cookies so we had a we had a good I never told my mother that because my mother loved trout and I never hate when you bring them home absolutely but if she knew I had actually given away three or four of them she probably would have killed me so I mean because I when I went trout fishing I caught my limit at 12 trout and they were all eight to twelve well she would have eaten all of them if she had a chance to do that um there's a pond back in there that was uh uh part of the Maple Leaf Farm property a pond a swimming hole swimming hole it's still there kind of in semi-pathetic shape repair i think because way back i used to go up there with my kids and swim yeah yeah no it's it's still there it i don't it it uh well like most ponds if you want to kind of make it look pretty and be a really accessible you have to no no there's they've they've that's grown up too much i feel badly about that because i think it i think it's part of their culture at Retribe now that to kind of let things be wild but i at some point the popular trees and everything grow up and all of a sudden the view and the openness disappears uh and i think that's sad yeah now i was thinking of other people uh the Allens uh Stevie McClellan and i swam down at the Allen pool all the time we're just where there was a dam across Stevensville brook if you went to maple if you went to Maple Leaf Farm today yeah and instead of going in their driveway you turned left and walked down to Stevensville brook that's where the Allens had okay they're a summer place uh up on a hill but also there was a huge smet dam that had been put up when there was a mill there many many years ago and do you remember the mill i don't know that was torn down by that time but there was a sluice gate in the dam and eventually the State of Vermont said you got to take the dam down too and it's gone now but there was a giant pool there which was delicious for Stevie and i to swim in we'd get up on the rocks and one of us would like pretend they were a cowboy shoot the person the person would like fall in the water I mean,

it didn't take very much to entertain us, I will say. Now, I was thinking about Dr. Towne, Doc Towne, just an amazing guy.

Famous Underhill man.

Down Underhill Flats, yeah, I mean, he, I could tell you doctor's stories, the Clip Terrill, absolutely, Bob Bolio, of course, as I said, Mr.

Gallup, Don Underhill Flats, running the hardware store. I mean, you can go into hardware stores today. They're nothing compared to what Mr. Gallup had and a great, genuine Vermont character. I mean, he- That was in the Flats.

Yes, down Underhill Flats, right, actually right within a couple of doorsteps of the current Jacob's Market that's still there. Mrs. Cushing, Dr. Fogg, my mother, who horse and buggy came around to the houses.

I mean, they actually did house calls back then and. I don't really know how they got paid, but the Smiths family, obviously, are all around the place, still are, that's the whole, the point is these families don't really always sell something.

Levi Smith, and the Smiths from Burlington, yeah. In fact, Charlie Smith's a dear friend, I mean, one of the, who's been headed up, I think, more nonprofit organizations in Vermont than anybody over the years, because it's called, if you're in between presidents and CEOs and people running things for whatever reason, you called up Charlie and he would step in and get things right on the track again.

The MacArthur family, who just live, Mac MacArthur was, Mac MacArthur was a great guy. And, and we will go over there quite a bit and just visit with him before he died because he was a great character and a professor and a teacher so you had, had lots of interesting things to talk about and still friends with all the kids I mean, Keacon and his children who now use the place it's I'm saying, most of the old families don't sell outright it's somebody in the family who actually owns the property and keeps it up and,

which is wonderful I think it's a, that will be the heritage for your family. Yeah. And then I learned from Betty Moore which I think all of you have a history and stuff I mean of the Underhill Ski Ball and how all of Underhill is going to be a ski area like Stowe was going to be and things didn't quite work out the way they were supposed to.

It was very nice for local people. Oh, totally. Did you see there. That's how I learned how to ski. Yeah, I mean that was the only downside of that is they hate that way back in the day when Bill and Emily Durbrow were running the place, way a door they were like second parents actually they because your mother and father were just drop you off at the old ski ball and so we're coming back.

and get you about four o'clock. Everybody just dropped their kids off and knew they were safe. And Emily took, you know, if you didn't have it, I didn't bring my money with me and stuff. Amber, here's a hot dog.

Here's a hot dog, yeah. Hot dog, but yeah. They had a rope tow, and I don't care who you were and how strong you are, how much you work out at any age to grab a rope on the front and then put your hand behind your back and grab the back of the rope.

After about an hour or two and going up and down with these were quick runs, like three minutes and you were back down again, the rope starts going, I mean, sort of running through your gloves and you're not holding on to it.

It was bad on gloves. And then you fall off and everybody behind you, of course, the rope swings. I don't. And I think we spent most more of the day getting, recuperating, I mean, that is getting up off the ground and trying to get up back up to the top of the mountain.

Because if it wasn't you and you were okay, you got knocked down by somebody else in front of you. Well, going up was definitely as much of a venture is coming down absolutely absolutely but that's what made it fun it was it was I mean nobody ever got hurt in the process it was just a lot of silliness a lot of people laughing and joking about it but there's no way any kid could go there particularly young kid and last more than two hours before you're just you just didn't have the muscles in your hands anymore then you have to go in and get a hot chocolate yeah yeah so if it growing up in Undale was great for me I mean cuz I even though it was only in the summers we were here permanently for three and a half months or whatever else every year and I knew the you know a little bit of the family history so we didn't walk right as you still can do if you sneak a little bit up at the end of Krug Road you can kind of wiggle through the the fencing area or whatever it is and go up to sea and the big maple tree that was at the old John and Anna Marlow Leddy farm I mean so if you go up in there which would be kind of sneaking in but if you do you you can really identify John the Nana's farm I mean you have what you can because there's still on the right side of the little bit of a ramp that clearly went into a barn I mean it's you have to look for it but it's clearly an unusual undulation of the land and on the other side is still the old maple tree that my mother talks about my mother Mary Leddy talked about she wrote some fact I need to give this to the Underhill historic these are all of her head with the notes about her life growing up on the farm and obviously getting married later on to my father Bill Luck and the rest of her life that's a copy I mean you could do copy no no I'm going to make a copy for it I just realized after I



would when I was bringing with me that I don't think anybody I don't think they have one we should have that yeah yeah because she's the the original she actually talks about her the ideal schoolhouse she said when she went to because they wouldn't get in a horse and buggy every morning to go down to school Bernard her brother and her sister district five schoolhouse yeah and they would drive down and Becky was the horse who loved going downhill didn't terribly fond at the end of the day of dragging them back uphill because it was pretty much an uphill climb yes it would be but she said there was four grades on the first floor and four grades on the second floor so it was two stories by the time she was going there yes it had been only one and then it was expanded this would have been in 1915, 1916, 1917 something burned in the early 30s just in her memory does she talk about being there and how many kids and all that teachers well trying to Well,

she does I mean a little bit. I mean that in the sense that yeah, you have to trust her memory, I guess That's all her handwriting School school for my mother began when she was six years old and in the first grade No, there's no kindergarten back then it was like for and we had a two-room schoolhouse with four grades on the first floor Four on the second no running water No electricity and no inside bathroom.

Yeah There was a big wood burning stove in the middle of the corner of the room and he did the whole building Yeah, I don't know how they did that either but As he said school is a happy time for her She shared a desk with her Best friend Emma Breen Breen And Emma was my mother's best friend for her entire life and then they Yeah, that's a good that's a good document to have this she talked about Emma Breen breaking her collarbone Hiking up some hill they were going on and So it's a nice Recollection diary.

This isn't a diary. It's my mother later in life deciding that she needed to write down Yeah, yeah, so she it's beautiful. Yeah, I mean it looks really clear when nobody writes like that anymore cuz back in those days Cursive writing was a critical item We'll get a picture of the outside of that and then we'll get a copy from you Yeah, because you want to keep that but you put it if you can make a copy Yeah,

well, I've made several copies for my children and yeah things like that and that's Yeah, so it's kind of a fun, you know, she died in 1993, my mother. So it's been, I mean, a grand life for me because I've had phenomenal adoptive parents.

Right, a wonderful situation. Yeah. So you didn't have siblings then. You were an only child. My Mary Leddy Luck and my father Bill adopted three children. My sister Nancy Luck Edwards died just only a couple of years ago.

She was 11 years older than I was. My joke with her, she died, she was 88. I'm 77 now, so she's 11 years old and my joke was, of course, that you must have been a real pistol. as their first adopted child that they waited 11 years before they decided, oh, let's give it another shot.

Maybe we'll do better this time. I used to rib the hell out of her about that was fun. So, and then they had another four or five years after they adopted me, they adopted a young girl named Rosemary and she died of cystic fibrosis when she was like four and a half.

Again, like we were talking earlier, back in the day, back in the day when they all you could do is bang on their back and hope that you could. So that means that growing up and coming in the summers, your older sister was 11 years older than you.

Yeah, for the most part. I mean, so there was a gap there. Oh, it was like growing up with a sibling close by. Yeah. I mean, by the time I was five years old or six years old, my sister Nancy was graduating from high school and off with a boyfriend got married and he was in the army, went to Germany.

So I was basically an only child. So it was really great that Stevie was there, it sounds like. No, Stevie was great. Yeah. We had, we, we had, we laughed. We had the, the black marauders, we would put on capes and we would hide from cars.

We'd walk down the road and be going somewhere. We're going up to swimming or whatever else. When car came or we heard a car coming, we'd go in the bushes and hide. We still laugh about that today. I think we were thinking, I don't even, we don't even remember.

You hide from cars. Why? That's the point. We just, we always did that. It was just kind of like we were secret agents. No, no. Any car coming, you were up in the bushes. Because we had this fantasy that somehow we were, people were looking for us.

And, you know, and then we'd go out and play some. When Maple Leaf Farm was there, we would go up and, and, you know, knock on the windows at nine o'clock. It was dark at night and then run. And I don't think anybody even noticed.

knocked on the window, but we thought we had just created total havoc. You probably thought you had more power than you had. We had great imaginations, and you had to have that, only because there wasn't, it wasn't like there was toys to play with, it was just, you either went fishing or played or swam and swam.

By Halloween, you were back in Burlington. Yes. You weren't out here then. No, no. And it's funny, because we've been friends for 70 years, and we would just say goodbye to each other and hug each other in September, and rarely communicated until we came back in June.

I mean, looking back on it, it was kind of an odd thing, it wasn't like, of course, without the internet and all the other things today, I mean, two guys aren't going to like write letters to each other, so that was out of the question.

It just didn't seem... No, or call on the phone or anything, because they're going to... Exactly. And do you think of any other stories you want to tell about it, right? Anything you can think of, or you're winding down soon there?

Well, I love Underhill. I've had the great fortune of my life of being an anthropologist and a professor and also a university senior university administrator at MIT, at Rutgers University in New Jersey, Wayne State University in Detroit.

All those classes you worked with. The University of Massachusetts. You taught at each of those. Was a senior administrator. Senior administrator. And also taught classes for free. I mean, I would like, at least once a year wanted, and had permission to go and call it, teach a class, and didn't cost them anything.

And most of the time it was in anthropology.

Could you emphasize certain aspects of anthropology, certain times?

Mine was kind of unusual. It sounds silly, but I would teach American humor.

That's not silly at all.

As I shared with the students, which immediately after, before and after the 16 weeks, if I know what you laugh at, and I know the jokes you tell, I know you. And where do you come from? Because humor is spontaneous.

Either it's funny or it's not funny. We've all been in situations where someone tells a joke, and everybody's goofing and having a great time laughing, and we're thinking like, I don't get it. We're in a movie theater.

Everybody's roaring with laughter or dead silent, and you're laughing. And you're thinking, okay, this is a little embarrassing. So everybody's humor is different. And then you start looking at humor in America.

Cartoons, stand-up comedy, mostly the written humor in the early days back in the 19th century. Local, rural humor. Rural, totally. its own and it's a perfect humor culturally is a perfect blueprint or of culture at that time I mean you can look at everything else study everything else imagine everything else with value if you just looked at the humor you could describe almost perfectly what everybody was thinking about in terms of religion politics the gender issues everything like that I mean you can see still today cartoons from the New Yorker magazine back in the 50s that were hilarious then that you wouldn't even dare show anybody today because they would mark you as being somebody because most of the stuff is making fun of women not being not knowing if I mean that one of the cartooners wife and mother-in-law jokes totally exactly yeah that that's what I'm getting at if you look at it the So I would teach these courses.

I ruined everybody's sense of humor. I mean, they all admit it at the end of the 16 weeks because they were so cautious then after the course about what jokes they told and what they laughed at. And it was OK if someone tells an off-putting, not necessarily obscene, but just something that just isn't funny, but you usually laugh because everybody else is laughing to go along with the whole stuff to actually not laugh and actually maybe take your friend aside and say,

that was really not the right joke to tell in front of those other four people. They laughed, but they didn't really mean it. And we've all had friends. Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, you're right. I shouldn't have told the joke.

I won't ever do it again. And two weeks later, there's some other situation. And they just don't get it. And it's not because they're stupid. We just laugh at what and tell jokes about things that tickle us.

And so I had a great time teaching the course. I mean, at Rutgers University, I signed up to teach the course. And the registrar's office called me. At that point, the president of the Rutgers University Foundation.



I was like 28 years old. And I signed up to teach this course. And they said, well, how many students do you want in the course? And they said, I don't know, like 18, 20, 24 would be a nice group. And they said, well, you didn't check that off when you sent in the thing to register the course.

And there's 118 people signed up for the course. They liked the sounds of it. So they put it in an auditorium over in the Douglas campus of Rutgers University. I taught in an auditorium. But the nice thing was, I mean, it's odd to be standing on a stage with a microphone, I mean, with the students.

But I set up a telephone system so that I could call comedians. on a loudspeaker system, the students could ask questions and talk with them. So we, Imogene Coca, I mean, a whole bunch of comedians that we called.

Live calls. Live calls. And at that point, the Crindler family ran the 21 Club in New York City, which I used as my other base when I'm seeing Rutgers graduates to get them to give some money. And the Crindlers, of course, had this black book of the real phone numbers, how you get directly and set up.

And you got access to that. So every week when we had our class, it was a three and a half hour class, we would spend an hour talking with the legends in comedy. Was Rutgers the place you taught for the longest time?

It sounds like you were in different places. No, that was just when I left Rutgers, went to Wayne State University. Senior vice president there and taught courses there in the evening and then Went into health care for 10 years in Allentown, Pennsylvania and then in El Paso, Texas Wow, you've been around working for the same man and then became vice chancellor at UMass University of Massachusetts and then vice Chancellor For the SUNY system all 64 campuses in Albany That's 64 colleges and universities.

Yeah huge system. Is that your last one? Yeah. Yeah, and you're tired Yeah about that and I went actually went decided that I wanted to do consulting Fundraising consulting and did that for about seven or eight years It at some point Maybe most people don't I did I mean part of the jobs I had because they were at the senior level You you serve at the pleasure of the presidents of the chances of the universities when they go Sometimes you go to yeah,

not because you want to not because you did a bad job Simply because the new guy wants to bring it or new gal wants to bring in their own Provost or their own that they know from their previous work So I recognized when I decided to do this for a career that I was going to be live a somewhat nomadic life Going around but it's been great because I've seen a lot of the country and yeah, and your retirement is Yeah,

well you have a greater appreciation from where you came from And that's where you want to go back to it and you come home Yeah, and I it if there's a nicer place or a better place in Underhill I don't know where it is because I've traveled all over Europe and all over place.

Oh, I And I'm fond of other places, but not nearly as much as I am of Underhill

Alright, thank you very much. Well, you're very welcome. My pleasure