

**CONNECTICUT 20TH CENTURY AGRICULTURAL HISTORY PROJECT
ORAL HISTORIES**

Interviewer: Luane J. Lange, CANR, Extension

Name of Person Interviewed: Bill Hindinger (A)
Ann Hindinger (B)
George Hindinger (C)
Liz Hindinger (D)
William Henry Hindinger (E)

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Interviewee Address:

LL: Thank you very much for agreeing to do this? Will you go back and introduce yourselves again so the transcriber can get your names?

A: Bill Hindinger; Ann Hindinger; George Hindinger; Liz Hindinger.

LL: Thank you very much. Would you start first and tell me the ... where were you born?

A: Right here. Right down the street.

LL: All right and this was a family farm?

A: Right.

LL: How many generations have been on this land?

A: This is my son, my daughter, fourth.

LL: And what kind of produce ... what was produced on the farm?

A: Originally, the farm started out as a ... my grandfather bought it in 1893. It was originally an all-

purpose farm. Dairy, fruits, vegetables, chickens, pigs, turkeys, that's the way farms were in those days. Then as time went on, they got rid of the dairy cows.

I believe there was a disease came in from what my father has been...has told me, that affected the cows. I think they got...they bought a bull that had some kind of a disease and the cows all aborted the calves and that. They either had to take and buy all new cows and new bull or get out of the dairy. So they got out of the dairy. Then they went all to fruit and vegetables. That was in the late '20's and it's been that way ever since.

LL: Okay. And then...how many acres do you have?

A: It's a hundred and twenty acres now, right now.

LL: What do you remember growing up here?

A: A lot of hard work. But no, I remember having a good life. I really do. I mean, people ... I was born in 1930 and as kids, we went through the Depression I never knew there was a Depression. I mean we got one or two gifts at Christmas. We got a stocking full of oranges and nuts and stuff and you know, we...we...I'm sure they all suffered but we said---there's no problems, you know. And then a...I had my father's sister which was my Aunt Ella. She was...worked on the farm all her life. There was my father and then as they got older then I took over and now it's my son and my daughter and my wife, the four of us.

LL: What...what did you do...what were your chores?

A: Well, I was a 4-H member. When I was in high school I had...well, actually I...I think I started in my last couple of years in grammar school. I had pigs, chickens. I had capons. Every morning I had to go across...go up and feed the animals and my job was to feed the horse all winter long and general farm work. Yeah, I know I did something bad one time, I still remember it. I forget what it was. I think I started a fire down in the woods, something like that. We had a few of the carrots you know? And they gave me a basket (this was my punishment,) a bushel basket and I had to go through all the loose stones in that field of carrots. Took me about three weeks. But I mean, it was always work you know. And I was...I guess started driving the tractor when I was around ten or eleven years old.

LL: Now did you switch from horse to trac...did you use the horse on the farm ...

A: Yeah, I used the horse because we had horses. We worked the tractors for plowing and harrowing but we always had a horse for cultivating, marking our rows and we used to use a horse for planting. They used to have what they call, "king of the cornfield planter" and we used to plant stuff in the...I cultivated with a horse all through my high school years. And we got rid of the horse I think it was about late '40' s after the War.

LL: Did you...when did you get...do you remember or did your parents ever talk about when you got electricity here? I said your--- because in different parts of the state, they go from the '20's to the '40's.

A: Yeah, I think...I think they got electricity in the late...I'm trying to remember now. In this house where we are now, we had down in the cellar we had big storage batteries and they had a windmill out in back to generate...for generating electricity. It was a different voltage and had the wires run all over the farm and as long as I can remember, we had electricity. But I think it came in in the late '20's, early '30's.

LL: What about the roads? What were the roads like?

A: Very narrow. Very narrow. There was...as a matter of fact, the road here ended right up the street and we knew everybody. You know, there was only like three...three more houses up the road that lived there. There was no traffic here at all. You know, there was...this was really country.

LL: Were they finished roads?

A: They were paved.

LL: They were paved.

A: But very narrow. Just about two cars could pass. You know, one could pass the other....I could always remember in the wintertime we had a lot of problems 'cause there's all high banks you know. They used to fill up with snow and we'd be snowed in here for four or five days sometimes you know, before we got out.

LL: And so the roads would fill in?

A: Fill up and drifting full of snow. Yeah.

LL: What did you do...we went to...where did you go to school?

A: Hamden High. I went to Hamden schools. I went to...my first three years of school, I went right down the street here. We had a three room school. It was the first open classroom school in the state and we had first, second and third grade one room. Fourth, fifth and sixth in another on and seventh and eighth in the other one. My two old...my oldest sister finished there. My second...my second sister, second oldest sister, I think she went through the sixth grade there. I went for the third and then they...the school wasn't modern. We had no indoor plumbing or anything so they moved us down. They closed that school up and we went down to another school down in town. We were the first students to have to be bused too. There were...it was kind of rough for us when we went down there because we were the hicks you know and the kids down there didn't want...you know, they weren't too pleased with us. Took...took a couple of years to get...have them get used to us. We were different I guess.

LL: Do you...how do you think?

A: Well, we brought our lunch. They all went home. They all walked you know, and we were just...you know how kids are? We were the hicks. I mean, you know, they...they're the country bumpkins I guess. I don't know. I don't know why, I mean, we weren't any different but it's just that...

LL: You were new?

A: Yeah, that's it. That's about it. Yeah, you're right there.

LL: Now where did...so then you went into Hamden to high school?

A: I went to Hamden High School, right. And then from Hamden I...I was having too good a time in school...in public school so my parents took me out and sent me to a private school my last two years. They wanted to go to college but I kept telling them, I wasn't...I didn't want to go to college. They kept insisting I was going to go to college. I finally got accepted at the University of Connecticut. Come time to go and I had to pay the entrance fee. I said you pay, but I'll flunk out the first semester. So they finally decided I meant what I said. I never went to college but I probably should have. I was kind of...kind of headstrong in those days. These days. They're laughing because I'm still that way I guess.

LL: Did your parent...did your mother and father come from farming families.

A: Right. My mother, no. My father did. Yeah, my father was grown up on the farm same as I was. Yeah.

LL: So where did your mother come from?

A: My mother I think, originally came from Boston and then they moved down New Haven. She was a school teacher and I don't know where my father met her. Probably some dance, that's how it used to be in those days. She came up from the city. She had a rough time when she came up I'll tell you. Yeah. Just like my wife did.

LL: Okay, now let's talk now. How...so how did you meet your wife?

A: At a dance.

B: Barn dance.

A: Barn dancing. That was a big thing in those days you know.

LL: Yes. I have to write myself a note. Where are you from Ann?

B: New Haven.

A: City girl.

LL: Okay.

B: Yep.

LL: Want to talk to us about how you met and did you expect to live on a farm?

B: No. I met my husband at a barn dance. Went with him for a year, got married, was frightened to death when I moved to the farm. My greatest friend and ally was his mother. She was a dear friend to me 'cause she knew what it was like to come from a background like ours and come to the country and be a farmer. And if you're married to a farmer, you're a farmer. And it was very interesting. I was frightened to death at first but now you couldn't move me away from the farm. Actually, it took a few years but after that you couldn't move me from the farm.

LL: What did your family think when you were...?

A: They were glad to get rid of her.

B: They...

C: Whose family are you talking about?

B: Remember, your mother bowed down to me.

A: I was older, she was a child bride.

B: They were a little apprehensive for me too. They were. They could see that I would have to begin a very different new life and they were aware of it. But they loved Bill and they thought well, it'll be all right. They absolutely adored him. But I came from a big family. We lived in a big two-family house. We always had children to play with, things to do and to move out here as Bill told you how rural it was when I moved out here. I was just...so his mother was a great, great friend to me knowing the I would...what I would go through.

LL: So you shared the house then, here?

B: No.

A: No. No...we...we lived up there.

LL: All right.

A: This is my grandfather's house. My grandfather built this and my aunt, after my grandfather died, my aunt moved in but... and then she left the house to me. So stupidly...

LL: So where did your parents live?

A: Right down the street.

LL: Oh, all right. Okay.

A: Where Joe's...Joe lives there now.

B: Where my son now lives.

A: I moved in here with...I had a lot of sentiment for the farm and the house and everything but I never should have...I should have stayed where I was. It was a better house than this. This is a pain in the neck, this house.

LL: It's a...it's...the stones are beautiful.

A: I know. It's...it's a nice house.

B: It's a lovely house.

A: It's a nice house but I mean, it's very c...you know, it's like a mausoleum I guess. It's cold in the winter. It's nice in the summer. In here it is a little cooler in the summer but it is...it is cold in the winter.

LL: Well, talk about your neighbors. You said there were...there were three neighbors?

A: Well, we had very few neighbors. Right up the street there was three families. The one over...the house is still over there, there was a farm right next to us over there. There was another farm right down the street and over...on the following road over there is Main Street. I don't know why they ever call it Main Street but it's...there was oh, probably four or five farms over there. It was all farmland all around really.

LL: And they were all general farms?

A: Yeah, yeah. There was dairy farm father north. There was a couple dairy farms up towards...well, went out to maybe about two, three miles from here. One of them, well the family's still there but the dairy's not there.

LL: Did the...did the people...have they been...had they been here as long as your family had been or were they newcomers or...?

A: Some of them, no. No, I'm trying to think, now. Actually, there were...a lot of them were here before when my grandfather came. He had a hard time when he first came here my grandfather. He was not a farmer. He was an accountant.

LL: Go on, talk about that.

A: And...

LL: Why did he come?

A: He just for some unknown reason, he wanted to be a farmer. I don't know...he...' cause...

LL: So where did he come from?

A: Came from New Have ... from Hamden actually and he moved it...he went...went to Arizona and was, going to make a lifestyle out there and he wrote a letter back to his brother John, lived here. Their parents were dead. He told John to sent him his money he had in the bank and John wouldn't do it. Otherwise, he probably would have ended in Arizona. He loved it out there. So he came back and he met my grandmother and that was the end of that and he bought the farm.

LL: And she hadn't...and you said, she hadn't been a farm person either.

A: My grandmother, no. No she came for...

LL: So they both came up knowing little.

A: Yeah, she...she...let me see...I don't know exactly where she was born. Her brother and family lived in Milford. I don't know if she came from Milford originally or...or was.

B: He's talking about his...not his mother and father. He's talking about his grandparents.

LL: His grandparents. That's right. That's right.

A: My grandparents, right.

LL: Oh, thank you.

A: And when my grandparents you know, my grandfather, the old...well, the old farmers were...were all mostly all Yankees you know. And...

LL: So, they'd been here for a while.

A: Yeah. He'd ask them a question, they'd tell him everything wrong you know. Because they didn't

want him make a success out of himself. This is...this is the honest to God's truth and the...because he was of German descent. I'm...maybe I shouldn't talk like this. But there was nothing...I mean, they resented...they resented like somebody coming from...you know, foreigners. And they would you know...so they really didn't help a dam bit. There was the Lewises over here the Warners down there and the...and like I said, they...they never...they never told him anything that was right. He had to learn from his own...own...own self. He had a great friend right down the street here. Name was Bradley, he was a great family...and...

LL: Bradley?

A: Bradley, yeah. Then a...he was...he actually he was another Yankee but he befriended my grandfather you know. He helped him a lot you know. He used to tell me tales about him but I mean he was..they were good people.

LL: So then when you...how did... when...did you know you're going...you knew you were going to come back and go into farm...after you graduated from high school.

A: Oh, yeah. I was going to be a farmer all my life, yeah.

LL: And did you have any transition with your dad turning the farm over to you?

A: No. Actually, he never turned the whole thing over to me. He turned about maybe half, a little bit at a time. And then...and then when the time when he died, the way it was left in the will, he left to my mother then to me...But then he sold the development rights, you know because we sold our development rights to the state. And it wasn't that bad for a transition because the value wasn't there you know. I mean, the value was there but not like it would have been if it wasn't...if we didn't sell the development rights.

LL: Um hmm. Let's go back to your now being in this farm community. What kind of days did you have?

B: Well, I had children right away so it was...I was a stay at home mom and that helped. And I, part-time, did things on the farm. Mostly I supported Bill and did everything I could to save him for just working on the farm. That was my biggest role then.

LL: Like what kinds of things?

B: Well, like do the things that a father or a husband would do in the home to make life easier for him so he could keep...spend all his time on the farm.

LL: What kind of hours did you put in?

A: Oh, unbelievable.

B: Unbelievable.

A: Seven days a week, them days. And then you know, from sunup to sundown. My wife was great because you know, I used to make believe that I was sleeping when the kids were crying and she... she... and she probably knew it but she got up anyhow.

B: I think my biggest role was as a young person when I...

A: Did all my errands too.

B: We did, my husband and his father, they had a wholesale business and they only did wholesale on the farm. And I as a consumer, would go to the store and not believe what I had to buy and the people had to buy. I always told Bill, "We should open a place and meet the people with our produce." Because, at that point, wholesale was not going well.

LL: Where was your wholesale market? Where did you go to?

A: We used to...we used to...in those days...well originally, in New Haven they had a big farmers market when I was a young kid up until I guess, about the early '50's. We used to go down, you know, my father'd go every afternoon. You know, we used to pick stuff all day and then he'd load the truck about 4:00 o' clock in the afternoon, went down to this farmers market and sell it you know. Then this was before all these major highways came. So we had a lot of buyers. There wasn't that much ---before that major market down New York too at ---Point. They used to come down from Westport and even as far as New York you know, and buy you know, they was big buyers.

LL: So these were...were people who had stores?

A: No, they were whole...what they call, "jobbers." They would buy...they would buy today, like say, buy from me today...

LL: Like this afternoon?

A: Right. And they go deliver it to stores.

LL: Okay.

A: And they made it, you know, they made whatever they made on a package and then after that market finally closed, the jobbers were still in practice. We had five or six of them we used to sell to them. You know, I used deliver around at night usually. We did...they call at noontime and give their orders and you'd bring them that night you know, and they...they would go to a market and...and sell. Some would go to Hartford, some Waterbury, Bridgeport. That's...those three...those are the three major ones of markets. I remember going to them.

LL: So then you gradually made the transition to retail?

A: Yeah, a little bit at a time. We're still selling most of the...you know, we're doing more and more retail all the time.

LL: So what are you products now? What do you produce?

A: You want to start from the start?

LL: No, right now.

A: I mean from what...what we grow?

LL: In meaning, the beginning of the year to where the seasons you mean? Yeah, sure, go ahead.

A: Well, first we start with strawberries. We sell strawberries. We pick them for...we sell to stands

because most of the...mostly the big stores won't buy any of the strawberries. And then we had a big...

LL: Why not?

A: I don't know. I think it's the shelf life mostly. And there...there...there...there hooked with California strawberries and they stay there. California strawberries have a big shelf life. Native strawberries maybe you know, a couple of days and that's it you know. So mostly the stands like them because I mean, they're native you know, yeah. And we have a big pick-your-own business my wife and daughter take care of. They do a big job on that, really it's great. And this year is the first year we opened our stand in June on weekends to sell strawberries already picked to the public. And we were actually amazed the amount of strawberries we sold. I never thought we were going to do that but I think just now everybody...the...the times have changed. The husband and wives are both working and they don't have the time to go out and pick. So you know, they're...they just want them so they'll just come and buy them. Then we go from that and we start, when we open our stand, we have string beans, corn. You guys better start talking 'cause I'm going to forget everything.

LL: Well, I'm going to get to them. Well, you...yeah, chime in but I'm going to get to you as we go, in time.

A: String beans, corn, tomatoes, shell beans, cucumbers, pickling cucumbers, I have to say...peppers and eggplant. Sweet corn's a big item. We grow about twenty acres of sweet corn. We got sweet corn every day. We grow a very good com. We're widely known for our sweet corn but it is good. And then we go into our fruit. We start our peaches about the...oh, it's about the third week and fourth week in July. We go all the way up to almost the end of September with peaches. Then we start with our early apples in August and we go right up to now we're still with apples and pears.

B: Prune plums.

A: And prune plums. Then the fall, we raise cauliflower, broccoli, cabbage. A lot of broccoli, cabbage we wholesale and plus selling it retail. And we raise collard greens and what else? I guess that's it.

LL: Did...did you can?

B: Oh, yes.

A: Other than she...yeah, when we first got married.

LL: Do you still can?

B: No. I don't have the time.

A: She works too hard on the ---. No, I the...her time is consumed in the retail end of it. She has no...so we don't even get time to freeze our own com anymore. It's...it's unbelievable.

B: It is.

A: And it's too bad. I mean, I wish we did have the time because you can't buy anything like it but...but it's just that's the way it is.

B: Up until a few years ago....

A: Oh, we love the corn.

B: ...we always did corn.

A: I used to...I used to love when they did the corn because they used to...to parboil...boil it here I guess, and they used to bring it across the street in front of the cooler to chill it. And I was always sneaking an ear out of there you know, and it...

D: Yeah, now we find out.

LL: Well, did you have any connections with any of the organizations like Farm Bureau or the Grange or...?

A: I'm a member of both. I was never very active in either one. I was...I was the Director of the Farm Bureau for a few years. I've been a committee member for Agway for quite a few years. As far as agriculture, I guess that's about it. I left the Farm Bureau as a Director and my so took over. You'll talk to him later so you'll get the whole schmear on him.

LL: What about when you were learning all these things, how did you learn them? Did you... magazines, articles, meetings?

A: Yeah, I read a lot. I read probably every farming magazine that comes out. And then trial and error too, you know. And help from my father and my aunt you know, on the farm you know.

LL: Was Extension out here very much at that time?

A: Yeah, you know Extension at that time...early...early on, Extension was big. Extension now is a waste. Well, I shouldn't say that because...but I mean, they have nobody. You know, the fruit...Dan Cowles was a fruit Extension person. He... he retired and nobody took his place. And the same with the vegetables. I don't know who's in the vegetables now. I never see anybody really. We...we don't...if I have a problem now...before I had a...well I still...we still do it. If I have a problem or if we have a problem...I shouldn't be saying I all the time, if we have a problem with something, I either take it down the Experiment Station or I call a private consultant. The chemical companies do have people in the field but I find that they have changed more from a consultant to a salesman. And we don't...you know, years ago we...if we had problems we called these guys and they were pretty good. If they didn't know the answer they would find it out for you through their...through their companies. But now I don't see...we don't have too much luck with that so mostly it's through either private or the Experiment Station.

LL: Do you have any connections in town? Were you ever on any committees or things?

A: Oh, yeah. (Chuckle) Yeah, I'm on the Hamden Housing Authority. I've been on there about fifteen years I guess now.

LL: The Housing Authority, the Hamden Housing Authority?

A: Yeah, I'm the Chairman of the Commission. I've been a member of our volunteer fire department down here for fifty-four years I guess, fifty-three years I think. Not active anymore but I was active with them many years.

LL: How did you get into the Housing Authority?

A: Oh, one of my neighbors was on there and he said, "Bill, I think you'd be a good commissioner." He said, "Why don't you give it a try?" I wasn't sure that I wanted to do it 'cause I didn't have a lot of time. I got hooked into it and now I...I don't know. I...I just seem to got stuck into it. I enjoy it. I do. We do a lot of good. We have three...three complexes in town. I think there's like two hundred and some odd units for the elderly and we got a big section eight program. We have a congregate program where you know, that's where people that not ready for a convalescent home but can't live by themselves and there's thirty units there and we...and we give them meals and the whole schmear there. Yeah. It's...it's rewarding. Takes a lot of time to...I'm not so sure my family's so happy with it because...well, this fall's been tough. My Executive Director was sick and man, they called me for darn little thing you know.

LL: Ann, would you go...what were....what were your farm wives did you get to know or have an association with if any.

B: I didn't. I never had any time for...

A: Belonged to the Community Club at that time.

B: Well, wasn't heavily involved, no. I...I really never had extra time for much really. I didn't do much outside and I still don't. I belong to one thing and that's with our church, our Legion of Mary We go out and help people That's the only thing I belong to and I found the past...it's a yearly thing where you go once a week all year. And the past couple of years I've had to be just winter member because it takes too time.

A: She's got a slave driver for a boss.

LL: Well, this goes on and then we'll get to the other people. What kind of help did you have on the...on the farm besides your own family?

A: Originally? Back in the '30's in Depression we had a lot of women. Actually, they were mostly all women. There were Italian women from down in the city, I remember during strawberry time we used to go over to this place they call Fairhaven We were going over with my mother and father riding around in the car and they used to go...used the contacts over there. We used to get a lot of Polish people to come in and pick strawberries then. It was always a big joke because my aunt was on the farm and she had the Italian women. My mother used to take care of the Polish women. My aunt had all nice strawberries and my mother used to get stuck with all the lousy ones. I can still remember that. Because the Polish women were in year round so they that they had to pick lousy strawberries. But until World War II, that was the whole thing.

You know, you never had a lack of help because if you needed more help, you'd just tell one of the women and they'd bring all their friends. In the... World War II came along a lot of these women went to work in the factories. We still had a few. All during World War II it was a little tough to get help. And then in the early '50's we started off-shore labor with the Puerto Ricans. And that went on for years until what George? About five years ago?

C: Seven years ago.

A: Seven? Boy time goes by. Seven years ago, the Puerto Rican labor got to be...as the older ones left and the younger ones came along, they weren't...

C: As dependable.

A: They weren't dependable at all. You know, they'd leave you, and they were starting to have problems with fighting and this and all that. So we...we went to the off-shore, the H2E program which is Jamaican laborers. We had them...they....they work very well.

LL: Hey George, we're talking about labor...when you and your sister were growing up, what kind of chores did you have? What did you do?

C: Oh, gosh. I think you know, as young kids we started working at a young age too. I mean, a little bit at a time and that...I think Dad always brought us up to, you know, no job is too good for the farmer's kid. So, you know, we started doing everything. It could have been the worse job imaginable. It didn't matter and I think that that was a good way to do it.

D: I was in the stand more.

C: Yeah, Liz because at that time, by the time Liz was old enough to work we...the retail stand was not as busy as it is now but it was...it was starting to grow a little bit.

A: She worked all her summers there, that's for sure.

C: Yeah. And then I was, out in the fields and doing whatever we had to do. I started driving at a young age, too. Of course, we always had tractors then so I didn't have to worry about the horse thing. So I was doing tractor work even at fourteen and fifteen. You know, a lot of weeding and a lot of hand labor. Back then when labor was cheaper we did a lot of hand labor. And just kept at it, after schools and weekends and all summer. Before baseball games and whenever there was work to do we worked.

LL: So when you went...you went to school in Hamden also?

C: Yes.

LL: And then did you...how was the idea of being from the farm? Did that...?

C: Well, for Liz and I it was...well, I'll speak for myself. I don't want to speak for Liz, she'll hit me and she's right. But we're...we weren't in high school at the same time were we? Or for one...

D: No. No, 'cause it...it was ten through twelve then.

C: Right. So there was only three grades in our high school but it's a...it was a very large school. At that time I would dare to say there were...there were eight hundred and twenty kids in my graduating class and the other classes were almost as big.

LL: How big was your class?

A: From Marcus? About thirty-five.

LL: And when you went to Hamden, how big was the class?

A: Well, in Hamden there was probably five or six hundred, yeah.

C: A-l high school and Hamden has fifty-five thousand people. So out of let's say, two thousand plus kids there were only two farm kids in the whole school. That's...that was it. So...

LL: What year are we talking about?

C: I graduated in '78.

D: '81.

LL: Okay.

C: And you were the same, there were two farm kids in yours, in the same families. And that was it. So for us to hang around with farm kids, it didn't happen. I didn't go to Lyman Hall which is the vo-ag school in...in Wallingford. I chose not to. And my parents didn't push me into anything. So...

LL: Did you anticipate coming back and staying in farming?

C: Yes, it never entered my mind to really do anything else full-time. You know, this is what I thought I was going to do. And it turned out that's true.

LL: But you mentioned playing baseball.

C: Oh, sure. You know, I grew up like any other kid. I loved playing baseball. Oh gosh, I mean, that was my favorite sport and the only organized sport that I played.

LL: You could fit it around your chores and things?

C: Yeah. You know, it wasn't...it wasn't that bad. I did like playing golf. Why don't you tell the story?

B: No.

C: No, you tell it.

B: No. I wanted to make sure the children had as much of a diversified life as they could. How can you choose unless you know? So I tried to have them have as normal a life and that included Little League Baseball for George. It was very important to me as...as their mother and thought that with the farm and with everything, whether they went to college. George started U...at the University of Connecticut himself...but father of course, thought differently George tried to get into golf. I sent Bill over to pick him one...up at the golf course one day when I couldn't go. He told him to get in the car and no farmer's son was going to play golf in this family." So that was the end of George's golf career.

C: I wasn't that good anyway.

B: One sport was enough.

A: I don't remember that.

C: I remember that.

LL: I have things happen in my house like that. My kids really...I don't remember you know.

C: It was really you know, in retrospective it was no big deal.

B: That's right, they had enough of an outside interest.

C: Yeah, my father wasn't an ogre. I don't want you to think that way.

B: No, not at all.

C: No believe me, we...we got in plenty of trouble and we did plenty of outside that we had plenty of outside interest.

LL: Did you ever pick stones out of carrot patches?

C: Picking stones was a big job you know. Oh gosh. We...I had to...I had two friends that worked on the farm with me. Two main guys and they were very good friends of mine. They worked throughout their high school here.

LL: And they were not from farms?

C: And they were not from farms. We picked up a lot of rocks. That is for sure. We picked up a lot of rocks. And again, we did just about anything that anyone else was doing you know. So it was nice to have other kids working there. They...they still remember it fondly, now. I think...personally I think every kid should work on a farm. I really do. I think it builds good character.

B: After that, everything is easy.

C: That's right.

LL: Say lis...so Liz, you followed a few years behind.

D: Right.

LL: And you did chores around and then worked in the stand?

D: Right.

LL: What are some of your remembrances?

D: I remember working in the stand mostly. Even some of our customers now are like, "Oh, I remember you when you were a little girl." And you've eventually grown with these people. It's kind of nice because some people you remember now that it's amazing how long they've come to the stand. You say, "Oh, my God. It's been a long time." I remember doing a lot of that Then I went to college and worked outside the farm for two years, still coming home for the summers; cause I worked in food service at a private school. So I was always here all summer and then after that I joined the business full-time. And in '88...

B: I used to manage the stand and Liz used to help me. Now Liz manages the stand and I help her.

D: We both manage the stand. Then we got more into different things with the stand, now that there's one extra person. It's hard to do different things and there's....yeah, the more people the merrier, I guess. So...

A: Well, we hire help in the summer in the stand. High school girls you know.

LL: So how did you all learn to do your marketing for your stand?

D: My mom and I actually have really to go to a lot of marketing conferences, and we've hired Don Rogers from Farm Credit, who's excellent. He's a financial consultant in marketing. I think that helped us the most and to have somebody from the outside come in. My mom and I go visit a lot of stands. In the wintertime we take a lot of trips and look at different farms. Of course, you have to kind of travel 'cause there's really not too much around here. And we're thinking about what we're going to do this winter; but there's a lot of conferences, a lot of stuff out there that it's...it's important to go to and 'cause I don't think we marketed ourselves as well before.

B: No. That was my one...I...I always thought if you had great produce, which they produce wonderful produce, that the people will. But I found out that was helpful to begin with, but then have to broaden it.

D: We had festivals recently and different things and you had to entertain people as well as having...

B: Yes, we really...yeah.

A: You got to schmooz 'em.

B: No, it's really important. I always thought we could just...people would be so appreciative of what they grow and everyone eats every day. You need food to eat everyday. But as it goes on with the household, two family working you have to broaden and we did. In order to stay, we had to broaden. As Liz said we had to learn how to market ourselves. Really market ourselves. I was very deficient in that and we hired, as Liz said, the consultant and it really helped open my eyes to what we needed to do. And...

D: And so we all worked together to do all this festival. Which my father really liked. My brother George liked it.

LL: Do you do flowers too?

D: Yes, yeah.

B: Yes, we have discovered that.

C: Only cut flowers. Liz does the whole...

A: Not the greenhouse.

C: No greenhouses.

D: Cut flowers, yes. We do a lot of cut flowers.

B: That was one of the things we launched out into besides produce, food. Liz growing all the flowers and selling custom flowers which did extremely well.

LL: So what kind of festival was this?

D: We had the peach festival and we have a pumpkin festival. We have two festivals a year and we do hayrides. We have a lot of food, ice cream, hay jumps. We have a costume contest for the pumpkin festival, moonwalk. You know, we try and...

C: Games, prizes.

D: Games, prizes.

A: People...people love to bring their kids out to the farm. We bought some goats you know. We got three goats. The kids love to go look at the goats. The goats love to have the kids look at them and that's it.

LL: It's a mutual...

A: Yeah, it is.

D: It is.

C: 'Cause the kids feed them so you know.

A: They're pygmy goats you know.

B: They're huge.

C: Fat pygmy goats.

A: And they love to go out...I don't know what's the big fascination about jumping on a wagon with a bunch of bales of hay and just ride around the farm but they just love it.

B: Well, nobody sees farms nowadays. Yeah. It is...

A: You just go from the minute you're open to the minute you're closed. There's always about twenty-five or thirty people waiting to get on that wagon. You know, it's...it's quite a thing. It really is. Our pumpkin festival is ... actually the peach festival, we didn't rain all summer; and it didn't rain enough that day to do any good either. But, it's just a day like today. You know, a dismal day We didn't know whether to keep it or not, do it or not do it 'cause the next day was a rain day. So we did it. We didn't do as well so we stayed open the next day. We did it the next day too. We ran that for two days and...but the pumpkin...it wasn't...it was a good success. But wasn't what it could have been because of the weather. But the pumpkin festival was unbelievable. It really was. I mean, I think we did just as well on the pumpkin festival as we did on the peach festival as far as moneywise is concerned.

LL: So where do people...where do you advertise and where do people come from? You say your stand people come back.

D: Yeah, we send out newsletters on...George writes newsletters, he's got a computer a couple of years finally.

C: About six hundred or so?

D: Yeah. And that's...

C: Every month.

D: That's actually helped a lot because we've had people that just come for strawberries, people who just come in the summer, people who just come in the fall. You have certain seasonal people. The newsletter...once you grab them on the newsletter, it helps them come for a longer length of time all year 'round. And then we do a couple small papers. And I think that's about it. We should advertise more but we don't.

A: You know, it's funny talking about advertisement, the all the...radio station down here WELI and they got this guy whose name is Brian Vernon...

B: Does a food schmooz.

A: ...is a food...whatever he is. I don't know. He's a food...what would you call him?

B: He's a cater...he's been a caterer and he's...

A: I hear a little segment on the radio every day. He comes to our stand. Little do we realize we sell pies, frozen pies and he works for this company that makes the frozen pies you know, and...

LL: The same company?

A: Yeah, and he...for three...I think he gave us three plugs about those pies 'cause it...I swear it was unbelievable.

D: It was nice, the free kind of advertising.

A: ...Vernon, we didn't even ask for it you know. But something like that, you got to get a niche someplace. I mean, it's just...I think the advertisement, you got to get something that strikes their eye. That gets their attention.

D: And every year Mom and I say we're going to do press releases because we went to this one conference where they taught you how to do a press release and everything and then...and then you get so busy it's like you just don't.

A: We use you know, we use two local papers for advertisement. And one of them is...it's...We're not going to use it again as far as I'm concerned. Usually once a year we put in a coupon in there like, two dollars off every ten dollar purchase you know, some kind of little gimmick. There's one paper we did them in...what did you get, one back?

D: Yeah.

A: So that shows you nobody reading that...

D: Good way of checking it.

A: Yeah. Yeah.

LL: What do you think now? Now you worked your way into more of a...of a different kind of relationship with your Dad in this now. What do you think has been your biggest challenge?

A: Putting up with me.

C: I think...

LL: It's hard. It's always...it's awesome.

A: It is hard. Yeah.

C: Well, because we've gone from...and it's the same with Liz and my mother and it's the same with Liz and Dad, We cross over many lines which can be difficult sometimes too. If we all try and...you know, we all have fairly specific areas that are our main interest. You know, mine is the orchard and the vegetables mainly the orchards. You know, Dad is the vegetables. And of course, Mom and Liz is the...the retail. But we cross over that a lot too.

D: We all like to give our opinions to each other.

C: Well, that can get...which can be good but it can be bad, too.

A: We have meetings you know.

C: Yeah, we might have family meetings and you know.

LL: It's actually a business. I mean, you're....

C: Right, that's right. It's just like any other business you know. But unlike any other business. Really farming is unlike any other business. I don't care who I talk to, it's unlike any other business out there. I think one of those is because we cross so many lines. You wouldn't usually see that unless you have the CEO in charge of everybody. That crosses over as much as we do. But I think we're a small enough family so it can work that way.

LL: When you say cross over, that means on any given day something may come up and someone pitches in?

B: Right.

LL: But you share decision?

C: Both, it's both.. It's both.

B: Like when we finish at the stand, which we will. December twenty-third is our last day, Liz will join George and --- in the orchards.

C: Right, her and I, just the two of us prune all winter and we get it all done.

B: We have our specific jobs but if George needs help, we'll help him. When I need help, George will help us. That's what we mean.

A: Well, I work....I work in the stand every weekend, Fill in for lunch so everybody can have a lunch. They have the kids working and they take a lunch and Everybody's got to have a lunch hour so...they don't like me out there because I usually --- I'm not very good public relations person. But I...I do it and so I fill in for them. Or if I'm working in the back...sometimes; cause in the fall...(during the

summer it doesn't happen this way because I'm always out in the field in the summer, but as soon as we start harvesting a lot of stuff and lot of field work is done as far as I'm concerned) I'm in the back packing. If they get in a jam I'll go out and help them. Help them pack or help them do something. 'Cause there's certain times in the summertime when they're just right out flat. They can't even get enough corn on the table sometimes because the people are buying so fast.

C: Back to your original question though, and I think the difficult part now is, we used to be, Dad's way up here and you know, we're down here.

LL: You're the children.

C: Yeah, right. And now we're it's a little more like this That's good because a lot of the decision making is taken off my Dad's shoulders. But that's bad, because, also, I can be a little strong-willed and opinionated about how things should go. My father is equally as strong-willed and opinionated as he thinks..., I think farmers as a rule can be very... You have to be strong mentally to do the job every day and physically and again, you have to be strong mentally to keep going like this. So we're all pretty strong mentally and sometimes that can be a little difficult and not...I don't mean it to sound like we fight a lot...

LL: No, no.

C: ...you know but there's that little transition thing going now that's...that's a little harder you know. So I don't want to be sitting there telling my Dad what to do. He knows more than I do. He's been at it longer than I have. Yet, I do have opinions, now, of how I want things done and how I think they should go or how Liz thinks they should go. And that's where, it gets a little difficult.

LL: Where do you get your information from? She mentioned going to conferences. He said he reads a lot. Where do you get your...?

C: I read a lot and I think...you know, he was talking about the Extension people and well, I think part of the transitions we made as far as...was going into like the IPM methods We had a lot of... I worked very closely with the people from UConn on the vegetable side and the fruit side.

A: That's good.

B: That's ---. It was an excellent program.

C: And it's still good and they're like, they're all by their lonesomes whether it's Lorraine Lorraine **Los** Jude Boucher They're two of the most easy going and easy to work with people...

B: Knowledgeable.

C: ...from UConn I've ever encountered.

A: Yeah, they're very good.

C: SO once I started to get hooked up with that and it just seems like, it steamrolled a little bit and a lot of my knowledge came from...from that end of it.

B: And talk about your college.

C: 'Cause I never finished college so that you know, I had to do it...

LL: Were you in an...

(End of side one.)

Were you in ag...were you an ag major?

C: Yes, I was an ag major. But I never got to the point where I was actually learning anything agriculturally related. My Dad...certainly I learned most of from him, most all of it from him. Then the little other changes that we've made along the way whether they be to make the business run more efficiently or better technology.

(Tape interruption.)

LL: ...decided to look into. We've gone from...I found some Experiment Station bulletins that talked about covering your milk pail to keep out the flies. This was a research project...now we're cloning a cow, right? And so here we are and this is an amazing hundred years. What kind of technology came in and...and changed your life on the farm?

C: Good or bad?

LL: Yeah, that's right. Yeah. Oh, yes, this is true.

A: I think it's been a gradual process when I think about it. Before the War...World War II or even during World War II and right after, there were only a few basic pesticides that we had to use...I mean, I remember arsenate of lead, nicotine sulfate. We used to spray our peaches with this spray line with no... 'cause you couldn't use arsenate of lead on peaches 'cause it will burn them. And just apply it as a deterrent. Then after the War, they started coming in with all these new chemicals. Of course, DDT was the first. That was the start of it. It just evolved from there into more and more things. But I wonder personally, if we haven't defeated our own purpose by all these new chemicals. We've been killing off all the natural predators and now the...now the newest and the latest thing is to go back and try and preserve the natural predators to do the job that all these chemicals were doing. George knows more about that. He's been following it more than I have 'cause I've kind of gotten away from the...from the food end of it. But I really think we've...I mean, we never had the pests years ago we got now. You know, we had a few basic pests. I mean, it wasn't a big deal. And of course too,...when I start to think back, people weren't as fussy years ago, either. I mean, you could sell...I mean, if you had not a total inferior fruit crop but. If you had some...some little bugs or little specks on them or here and there and you could always, sell that stuff. You could always sell some small fruit. You could always sell what we called seconds. But today everything's A number 1. That's all anybody ever wants. But as far as the fertilizer's concerned, I haven't seen a big change in fertilizer. We're still using the same basic fertilizers we did when I was a kid. The idea was when we were younger...when I was younger, we used to use a lot of manures you know. And I hauled manure in my early years. I used to get a lot of chicken manure, horse manure. You know, we used to...I used to cover all my vegetable ground in manure every year.

C: That's how we spent time with our Dad on Sundays. We used to go with him.

LL: Quality time, yeah. (Laughter)

C: I'm telling you, we had a ball.

D: Go see the baby chickens.

C: Yeah. We saw little baby chickens. Yeah, I thought it was great.

A: People always ask, "What were you doing the day that President Kennedy got killed?" Well I was hauling a load of chicken manure --- I heard on the truck radio. But we got away from manures you know, from all the manure and this is strictly chemical fertilizers now and cover crops. But...

LL: Now, tell me about cover crops.

A: Cover crops to...to...to protect the ground in the fall and to build up you know, Take like, take mostly we plant mostly rye. We plant some oat. Back during World War II, when we couldn't get a lot of help. (When I was a kid we always...we always raised hay and we used to sell hay.) During the War we planted quite a bit of hay because they couldn't...you know, you couldn't get the help to do that much work. So, we used to have the hay. It was in hay you know, For a few years boy, when we plowed that hay down the ground was in really good shape. But now it's mostly just one one piece of ground somewhere. Every year we try and rest it and keep a cover crop on it and see it to build up. But as I said, the chemicals have really changed but as far as the fertilizer, I don't see much change at all.

LL: How about other equipment.

A: I think George is going to talk more about that 'cause he...now on the fruit, they're using some stuff. I don't know, early...I don't know what the heck they call it. But it's nutritional stuff you know. And it's helping, I really believe it is. Yeah.

LL: Want to talk about that?

C: Well, it's the advent of technology to me is more than just the different chemicals because...because in a way we're getting back to where they started, using...trying to use as much natural predators as possible. Having a healthy plant is sometimes a deterrent to many fungus...fungi and insects and a lot of those...A lot of these new nutritional supplements for fruit and vegetables are geared toward that. Then there is you know, it is the computer age and you know, Liz is more adept at...on the computer than I am but you know, I still use the computer for the business too. Whether it's weather which now you know, if you subscribe to I think it's **Biobet**, you can get and give them your longitude and latitude they...you know, you get your weather every day you know, where you are.

LL: It's like the old radio station weather forecast. Used to be.

C: Yeah, and I mean, it does. Let's say I mean, again we depend on the weather like no other business that there is. We're constant weather watchers and weather listeners. And I think my Dad's a better weather predictor than anybody But, that's...that's one of the things that the computer can do for you. I mean, then there's even GPS Global Positioning Systems. We're probably going to be doing that next year where they come in and...and take soil samples from a specific area of your farm and it's on a big satellite map and that's...they can come back next year and take it at the exact same spot. And to know then, how the nutritional value what you did through the year, is that what you were supposed to do? Is it doing any good, what you did? And, should you continue to do what you've been doing? So that the computer age has certainly made everything a little more technologically advanced. I don't know if it's any better or not. You know, these computers on tractors now in planting systems. You know, a lot of you...

D: We don't have.

C: We don't have that but a lot of your high tech planting systems on tractors are computer generated. The information available now on the internet alone even for our business is tremendous. It's just huge how much information you get off the computer and I don't need to wait for the newsletter to come out. I could just go on their web page and find out what it is and it...

A: Don't even talk about the newsletter.

C: Yeah, I know it. And it's not only more easily accessible, it's more up to date. And I don't need UConn's either. I could go to Cornell's or I could go to Penn State's or you know, you could go all around and just find what you're looking for.

LL: Do you access it by topic? How do you...

C: No. You...you...the addresses are easily gotten so I've never accessed anything by a topic. Not...not farm related. Others --- stuttyeah, fire related or something But I think to me the biggest change (and I wasn't around or I was around but I was much younger.) The biggest change in our business has been from wholesale to retail. But why is that? Well, it's because we couldn't sell much wholesale anymore. The markets were drying up. But why is that? Well that was because anybody can get anything anywhere at any time. And why is that? Well that was because of transportation. I mean, they can now just with trucks and roads alone, then can go from California to Connecticut in three days straight and they're here. Or they can...they jet in California strawberries and it's here in twelve hours after it's been in the field, and it's here. They jet stuff in from Chile and South America and Mexico and it's just... everything...everything. New Zealand for crying out loud, which is half way across the world...almost all the way across. So we're in competition here with the whole world. So for us to be able to continue a wholesale business with a hundred and twenty acres just wouldn't cut it. It's either to get bigger or...or change the way we're doing things and I wasn't...Dad didn't want to get any bigger. He did the right...you know, my parents whether they knew it or not, were going in the right direction instinctively. You know, they just said. "This is..." you know, they saw the writing on the wall. So this is ridiculous, we...you know, we're going crazy here. So they started the retail and that's...it just keeps growing and growing and growing and our wholesale keeps going the other way. Oh, we'll always wholesale some things.

LL: What do you think is your market? Who are these people who come and buy from you?

A: Yuppies.

C: No...no.

D: No. Is see everybody...I mean, there's all...

LL: Now why aren't they going to the chain stores to buy....

B: 'Cause they want to get back to good food. They want to get back to good food. It's an atmosphere too, for sure.

D: And it's a --- Lily and I were talking about that. They want to come to a nice atmosphere, wholesome type where they know their kids are going to eat something that they know where it came from. And, we are entertaining their children as well with all this other stuff and they're grateful of that.

A: Oh, that's a big thing. Another big thing is the quality of the merchandise.

D: I mean, something that says Stop and Shop is not going to taste the same as what it's going to taste like here.

A: ...your tomatoes in a chain store, you have your peaches in a chain store. I mean, a lot of people don't even know what a good peach is. Really, they don't know...

D: Yeah, the peaches ripen in two days and the juice is dripping down their face. I mean, all we have to do is give somebody a piece of fruit and then they're hooked. You know? New customers.

A: The atmosphere has got a lot to do with it, definitely. Both. It's got to be both. If you start selling all junk you're not going to get the people back. It's a...I think people...people are going more and more to vegetables and fruits.

D: Simple, basic.

A: You know I mean, and healthwise yeah. I mean, there's all this about broccoli's good for cancer. I mean, it prevents, whoever the heck does all that stuff. That all helps you know.

C: Liz brought up a good point and it's the atmosphere. I think your basic person now, is at least...at least three or four generations removed from a farm. I mean we've all somewhere down the line come from a farm. Whereas in the '20's and '30's, maybe they were just one generation from...I mean, and a farm is no big deal to them. Now a farm is a huge deal. I mean this is like, "Oh man."

B: Rarity now.

LL: So you think it's nostalgia?

B: Yes.

C: Yes. I do. Yeah.

D: And then with everything else you know, with all the home and garden networks and the Martha Stewarts and everything else, people are I think...

B: More aware.

D: Want to get back into that.

A: And it's the country you know. It's...it's getting away from the hustle and bustle to come up here. It's kind of relaxing you know.

D: Except when we're fighting in the back, now. (Laughter)

C: Well, we try and go in the cooler and close the door when we do that.

D: You can still hear us.

B: They even go back, they do. They actually love it because it's a normal process. Everyone has it.

D: Yeah, but Dad is right too. The quality has a lot to do with it. It does, it tastes...nothing tastes like the...People just go wild. Somebody was just saying last night before we closed, "The broccoli and the cauliflower is just so unbelievable, it's so sweet." It tastes like cardboard when you get it in the grocery store.

LL: So, what do you think's the future for all of this is?

D: For our particular farm or for farming in general?

LL: Say, your particular place and then generically.

D: I don't know. I would...I'm thinking more retail...more retail for sure. You know, you always wonder if you could expand and get into a bakery or an ice cream shop or do this or do that. I mean, what exactly do you have to do to keep luring people up here? Or do we go into greenhouses and open up longer in the spring?

C: All of the above.

D: Yeah, we're not sure...I'm not sure what...what our future will hold. But I know it's towards more retail, you know for sure.

A: That's the fifth generation. (Grandson arrives home from school)

B: And this is our next generation. This is William Henry Hindinger.

LL: Do you want to say hello into this?

E: Hello.

LL: What grade are you in?

E: Second.

LL: Good, good, good. Okay. We're talking about the future. You want us to add something to this George?

C: Well, Liz was more specific. On our farm, if I could just be more general. I think you...and you've talked to a lot of people already I think it's safe to say the face of Connecticut agriculture has changed since the 1920's. And...I think it's going to continue to change. But I think Connecticut's really...agriculture here in Connecticut is very, very strong may be small but you know, we're powerful, I guess you could say. And I think you're getting more toward the entertainment farming type businesses that are going to be more successful than your...than your basic plowing, planting, I'm going to sell it wholesale type. And I'm not saying that there's not going to be any of that in fifty years 'cause there will be. There'll be plenty of those to survive. I think the farms are getting smaller and that for people to make a living they have to get a little bit more entertainment value in it. And I'm not even saying that that's where we're heading. I think we're going to have a little bit more of that, but not completely. I was talking to somebody the other day and I said, "You know, I think part of my problem is that I just like the farm too much." And that's my Dad's problem, too, I think. We just like the farm too much to bother with you know, a lot of the stuff you have to do to make things go.

LL: Why do you...why do you like the farm? Both of you.

C: You mean Liz and Mom? I mean...

A: It's a way of life. I guess I've never...well, I worked out a couple of time here and there a little bit. Not very much. I've never done anything else. I...you get a lot of satisfaction out of you know, plant the...just say okay, I'll plant a few of the corn right? And you fertilized it and, you planted it and you sprayed it and you took and watched over it. You may had to irrigate it. And you go and you get all these big beautiful ears of corn. Man, that's satisfaction. Yeah. I think I get more satisfaction out of raising a good crop than anything else. Whether it be corn whatever.

C: Yeah, whatever it is.

B: That's why this year was so frustrating 'cause it was so dry.

C: Because no matter what you did...

D: Nothing helped.

C: You know, it was...it was frustrating. I think you know, all of this prob...you know, we just like to...I mean, I love so many aspects of it. After you plow a field, I love the way it looks. You know, just nice and straight furrows (most of the time.) And just the way the grounds all turned over the same. I just love the way it looks. I love the way like, when the apples are almost ready to pick and they're all nice and red and the...the...the grass is mowed low and you know, it looks...I just love the way that looks. And it takes a lot of work to get to that. With Liz and her flowers? Man, when she has them all coming, sometimes they're all coming too fast.

D: Yes. Yeah.

C: But I just love the way that looks in the field. You don't see...it grows like over a half an acre of cut flowers now. That's a lot of flowers.

D: Yeah.

C: And they just love...love the way that looks. It's just...

D: People say, "Yeah, that's a nice..." Part of the hayride, people like that.

C: Yeah, and you know when things are almost ready to pick and they're looking good and it's just it's like "ohhh." You know, we did it. You know, it really looks good.

LL: Farming is a...a real...has to do with your own work ethic and your own production and so on yet your greatest challenge is the weather. So it's almost like even though you have...you're your own boss and all this but you have a greater boss.

A: Oh, yeah, that's...

C: Yeah.

D: And you could kill yourself and --- work a hundred hours a week and like this summer, no matter what you're doing it's equally as frustrating when people come in and say, "Why are the peaches so small? You know what? I don't understand. You know, what happened to those big peaches you had last

year.” You know, whine, whine, whine. And you feel like saying, *My God. It hasn't rained in three months you know?* You just...it's hard to...it's very frustrating when it...it's true, you have a higher power where you have to rely on is very frustrating people don't...basically people don't...I mean, there's some people that do understand but it can be frustrating 'cause generally the public does not understand. I mean, they have no concept that there's a big drought and you need water to size up peaches and whatever. You need water period. So...

LL: So to go into a business like this, any other business like a small grocery store or something has the same kind...and yet as you said as a family you have the interactions that go on and so forth. But they don't have the weather to contend with.
So what is it that you think creates that...

C: We have..we have no control over our prices either in many ways and that's what's a little different too. Not so much retail, definitely wholesale. It doesn't matter what it costs you to grow it. It doesn't matter in the least. You're only going to get what they're going to give you.
You can't say, figure it all out and spend a half a day figuring how much it's cost you per box to pick a certain item and say, *Well then, we have to charge X amount to make any money on this.* And if you go to a wholesaler and say, *See, this is going to be X amount of dollars,* they're going to go, “Yeah, well we're only going to pay you this and if you don't like it, see you later.” That's another reason why we're going more toward retail. So we have no control over the weather and in many cases we have no control over prices.

A: My father always said, supply and demand. That's in other words, you know, when you got a hot market you get your price on it you know. On a glut market you take whatever you get.

C: But see that's now...that's supply and demand thing is now worldwide. It doesn't matter that Connecticut just suffered one of the worst droughts in fifty years and we're picking direct per acre and the quality isn't even what it should be. We're still not getting the prices we should because this country or this state has Plenty. It's the transportation thing again.

LL: So why stay? What is there in...do you think, in your...in your soul for lack of a better word has you stay?

B: I think a lot of it is each generation is...does not want to fail what the other generation has kept for us. Like Bill's father gave it to him...

D: You don't want to screw up a hundred years. (Laughter)

B: I think each generation tries so hard too because it's been given to them. Unless I think, you inherit a farm it's very difficult to farm for a person going into the business, it's just too...it's not realistic. Farming is not a money making project per se unless you have something else put away. It's a way of life. You make a living and I think each generation that it's handed down to, says, “Well, I'm going to succeed because my Dad succeeded and he gave it to me and now I should do as well. I think it's example and that love flows through their veins, I swear it does. Flows through my children's veins. Imagine being mother of...I had two children and both decided to follow us in business? My cup runneth over. My cup runneth over.

A: People ask me why and I always say, “I'm either too stupid or too old to quit.”

LL: But when you think of the other...but you're the only farm here that's staying in the area.

A: Well, we have some...we have two other pretty good sized vegetable farms in the area. That's about it though..

C: A lot of little Christmas tree farms and...

A: Yeah, that's probably the only sizable things.

B: Of earning their sole living in it and sustaining.

LL: Connecticut has a history of part-time farmers because...because we're between markets and near cities, our rural areas have always been near industrial or mills or something. We have a strong history of...going back to the '30's.

A: Yeah, actually part-time farmers are always a nemesis to the full-time farmers because when a part-time farmer's got a income coming from something...a steady income coming in...say he has fifty bushel of beans or whatever. He probably wouldn't have, but whatever. Say that fifty bushel of beans that I'm getting ten dollars a bushel and he comes and he could sell them for eight dollars a bushel. What the hell does he care? He's still --- they...they always hurt the full-time farmer. They have for years and years and years and years. I don't know about now because I don't get involved that much with it but I mean...

C: It's true, yeah.

A: When I was yo...when I was younger that was definitely a...you know, we used to really complain about that. My parents before me.

LL: If there was something you know, we talk about this commitment to carry on, how is that different in the...in the world that other people are working in? You worked for a while in the school system. You had a nine to five job basically or whatever hours you worked. And, you had stipulated things that you had to accomplish. Then you traded all this in for uncertainty.

D: Um hmm. Well, you know, it's a desire to...

C: Boy, that was a stupid move. (Laughter)

D: Well, it's a desire to help your family. You love your family you know, a lot of it for me was the desire to help my family. A lot of it...you know, it's just like certain aspects of your personality, my personality, being somewhat of a perfectionist, liking what I do and trying to succeed...driven...driven is a good word. Driven is a very good word in trying to succeed in what I'm doing. You know, you...you the master of your...not the master but you know...

B: You are.

D: You have.

B: It's up to you to make it.

D: Right. But most...I guess the biggest thing was commitment to my family. You know, I don't want to see my mother and father killing themselves because...

C: So all four of us have decided to...

B: Kill ourselves. (Laughter)

D: Yeah, that's what it is. It's a very good problem and I like it, and I am driven.

A: You talk about differences in people. Now, I go down every morning five o'clock Dunkin Donuts down the street opens up. I'm there to get the coffee and I bring one back to my wife. I drink mine on the way home. And you know, there's three or four people always outside waiting on their way to work. I get so sick of hearing them you know, because, *Oh my God, I worked three weeks days straight, I haven't had a day off. Oh, I need a vacation so bad.* And you know they're only working five days a week. *I can't wait for Saturday to come.* You know and sometimes I can't help it.

I say, "You know, you don't even know what the hell...people don't even know what the hell work is." But I mean, I don't mind doing this but see most people won't commit themselves to doing that. Why do I do it and they don't?

LL: That's what I'm asking you.

A: I don't know. I don't know. And when you say...that's why I say I'm too stupid or too old to quit. But I don't know why we do it you know. I mean, most people won't do it. They...they're...like you say, nine to five job.

D: There some sense of pride in accomplishing what we...nobody else can. I mean, that's kind of --- and here it is...nobody else can do what we do.

A: I think you have to be born into it. I don't think...

D: You have to be stupid.

A: I don't think you can do it without being born into it. See...seeing your people do it, they saw me do it, now George's kids are going to see him do it. I mean, I...you know, I think that's got a lot to do with it.

C: I hear a lot of people say, "Well, isn't it great. You must do it because you're your own boss," That is so far from the reason because you're not your own boss. You are so married to...you are your own boss but it's not like being your own boss in another business. They say, "Oh, you can take off and do what. You can take off here and there and do what you want because you're your own boss." But we never take a second off. I mean, you couldn't possibly 'cause you're married to the farm you know, and it's...that's not the reason. A lot of people thing that's the reason but...

A: Maybe it's because we're not big enough to delegate our authority to other people. Now like you went to Lyman's down...of course, John Lyman got more kids. I mean,...

D: John Lyman works hard.

C: Oh, yeah there all hard working. We're not saying...

A: But I mean, I'm sure you know, he has enough people...

C: That's a different business.

A: ...under him that...that he can take and go 'cause he goes to all these meeting. He's a Director for the First pioneer Farm Credit. Something, you know.

B: Our George is Captain of the Fire Department.

A: Yeah, but that's different. That's different.

B: President of the Farm Bureau in our district.

A: It's different. I don't know. It seems like we...I think sometimes we do do too much. It doesn't bother me but I feel for the kids sometimes more than me 'cause. I been doing it all my life. It doesn't bother me. I'm used to it. And they're used to it by now too, I guess.

C: And when you die Dad, we'll start taking days off. (Laughter)

D: Yeah, who knows why we do it.

A: I don't know. That's why I'm trying to...I think that's what Luane's trying to find out.

C: But I...I think we're working toward a better...

D: Yeah, but I'm---. We're working toward...we're trying to change our business around so we're more successful but we're working harder than ever.

C: Yeah, but we're trying to be more successful at it.

A: I know it. I'll tell you another thing Luane. Where will we find...it's hard to find somebody...

C: That's part of our driven perfectionist part though.

A: That you could take like our stand. As far as the other end of it I mean, outside of it...side of it. If you take off for a couple hours here and there you know, if you have to go someplace or go to a meeting or something. But the stand I mean, you have to have somebody there all the time when you're open.

C: Yeah, but we're seasonal and we also can't afford to pay a lot because we...we're not going to pay somebody more than what we make 'cause we don't make that much.

A: And even if you pay more, I still don't thing that...I don't think that they're that good. I mean, that's the thing. Nobody's got the commitment unless you do it yourself. That's one of the problems you know. They haven't got that commitment. I mean, it's just...for them it's just a job. I mean, you know, you're always got to tell them, well go do this and do that, do that and do that. They don't pick it up themselves and do it by themselves you know.

B: No.

A: Where if I walk by...if I just walk through the stand, and I don't do a lot in the stand, but if I walk through and I'll just look and ---I'll see something wrong I'll fix it as I walk by. Why, you get the rest of them, they walk by all day and they won't do a damned thing you know what I mean? Unless you tell them to do it. Yeah, so that's why I think you have to be...I'm always hard at my daughter and my wife because I tell them that they're crazy, that they should get somebody that...that they could leave there you know. And they always think they got something and then it turns out they turn out to be useless and it doesn't work out you know.

LL: I keep thinking...

C: I hope she doesn't write that one down and our help reads it. (Laughter)

LL: You're going to see this before it goes anyplace. And I keep thinking and going back to the mom and pop grocery store whatever size it might be and some of what they must feel must be the same thing but they don't have the unknowns that you have.

A: No, no.

C: No.

B: Right.

LL: And I keep thinking, is there a risk factor? Is there a gene that runs a lot of people to *agriculture that says you know, we either are big gamblers or risk takers or determined to show that we can...* I mean, I don't know this.

C: ---show that we...to do is pretty much...

B: No, but I'd like to live without the risk factor. I...there were many, many, many years when the transition from wholesale to retail and the farm was in jeopardy. I would live very happily without that risk factor. I don't know about how my family feels because I never asked them.

A: I think...I think you mean ---from that man upstairs. Don't you?

B: But I do feel...

LL: I didn't hear the first part. We are more...

A: I think you mean more the risk factor more from the man upstairs...

LL: Well, I think of weather but then also ---security.

B: I'd be very happy to live with more security and not have ---that's why we're trying to turn things around and be more successful at what we do to earn a better living so that we can maybe take a couple of deep breaths. I'd be very happy to live without the risk factor. I don't think we thrive on the risk factor.

A: 'Cause out west they have price support you know, but you know --- unfortunately but ahh...

C: Plenty of farms out west didn't make it and we're still here.

A: Plenty of them went through some tough times yeah.

LL: In the midwest I think they said. Is there anything else you'd like to add? I've gone through...you don't...you haven't realized it but you know, most of us in here on my list is...you've covered. So I thank you all very much for taking the time. I know it's a busy time.

B: You're welcome.

A: No problem.

C: Now it's raining.

(End of Interview)