

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

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Name of Person Interviewed: Lucille - Oliver Manning, Interview #3
Date of Interview: January 26, 2001
Draft #: R-1 January 27, 2020
Transcriber: Charter Oak Scanning, Adam Smith, Machine
Contract Firm: Charter Oak Scanning
Interviewee Address:

LL: [Side Conversation] You said in 1872?

LM: January 1st, 1872.

LL: She has come as a housekeeper, and then she continued to move on to [Unintelligible] manager. What were her responsibilities?

LM: Catering the house, as far as I know.

LL: Was she usually [at the house] or the stores?

LM: She was a farm manager. Then, it was her family. They had five children.

LL: Her whole family was there?

LM: Yes, their family. They lived nearby.

LM: Yes, she was married.

LL: I know. I meant when she went there as a young woman, she was not married, and her family was not with her.

LM: That's right. Then, she stayed. I have a letter. I'm not sure which one is this. [Unintelligible] her five children. She was born in 1839, Marissa Jenkins.

LL: She was here in 1872? She was 33, and she was young.

LM: Yes.

LL: I thought she was older.

LM: Our grandfather was the oldest. He was born on September 26th, 1870. [Side Conversation] Anyway, grandpa graduated. He went to college and graduated. He was having problems with the elementary school. He was getting in trouble. It was his first job in the school district. His younger brother and younger sister wanted everything [Unintelligible] away. [Laughter] His comment was, "My parents were just a little bit too old when they were born." [Laughter] They kept things going all their lives. My grandfather was a member of the class of 1891. He's the oldest surviving member, and this is a picture from May 1961. [Pause] He married Judith Streisand who was also a local.

LM: She always wanted to live in the city.

LM: The story was he always wanted to live in the city like a [Unintelligible], but he was [Unintelligible]. It would have been lonely, maybe.

LL: She thought she'd always leave town. [Laughter]

LM: Well, she wanted to live in the city. They have a beautiful location. Strangely enough, it was his mom who went down by Dallas on her way to school, and I found the invitations [Unintelligible] grandparents moved, my grandparents. In fact, that's what got her reminiscing when my mom came back to the farm on 1952. She was shocked that we didn't know everyone would buy the farm. Anybody travelling up and down the road knew who he was. [Unintelligible]. In fact, if someone was desperate, he welcomed them. Even if he was there, he would gladly take care of their needs.

LM: I couldn't remember, because she wasn't around. She took the [Unintelligible] and took [Unintelligible].

LL: To distribute or to sell?

LM: To sell.

LM: My grandfather paddles milk [Unintelligible].

LM: In 1970.

LM: He had a dairy farm.

LM: [Unintelligible] milk out of a [Unintelligible] or a small...

LM: He'd go around to the backdoor steps and fill a container. He had a horse, and the horse was trained to go down the street and wait for him. [Pause] I remember my mother saying, when she was going to school, one morning she slipped when she got off the carriage. She fell down under the horse. She can remember being on the side of the horse's hoof right above her. He was holding it up. Our grandfather has found a helper who told her to be steady and told she had to roll out of the way, because he didn't want to have the horse change his position.

LL: What is this?

LM: This is the [Unintelligible]. We have more pictures in here too. These are some of the awards that he received at the farm. This is my grandfather. My father was a pioneer in the poultry business. [Side Conversation] Back then, we had chickens. [Unintelligible]. He liked the chickens. He just freed them. He built this farm.

LL: As a teenager?

LM: Yes, as a teenager. He didn't have money of his own. The family that he lived with wasn't that interested in education. He earned enough money for his [flat]. He went to business school in North College, [Unintelligible]. He got a license, and he transported other people. That's where he got his business education. He is interested. He stuttered in speech, but he was still [Unintelligible] and he was doing business [Unintelligible].

LL: Isn't that interesting.

LM: This is a picture of the farm. [Crosstalk] Yes, we had open houses at the farm, and people brought in some animals. [Unintelligible] the property. [Pause] My grandfather was in dairy. My mother was there. [Unintelligible] high school. [Pause] Then they have one, two, [Unintelligible] in there. I have pictures of some of the earliest chicken coops. We had some horses in there. This was a big poultry at the time.

LM: There were [Unintelligible]. There has to be 66, because everybody [Unintelligible].

LM: Yes, 66 pieces. My mother had marvelous pictures of the new house that they built.

LM: [Unintelligible] this is 1931. I would have been there in 1932, because that's when we were married.

LM: This was the model picture that my mother had.

LL: This was the time she was married to your brother? [Crosstalk]

LM: No, this was way before.

LM: This was about 1931 or 1932. [Unintelligible], a refrigerator and sink with [Unintelligible]. Whereas when I first got to the farm, there was a cast iron sink in one room, a refrigerator in another room, and a stove, and a fire corner in another. [Unintelligible] [Laughter] That didn't last long. [Laughter] [Pause]

LL: It looks like she stayed.

LM: This is [Unintelligible]. This is [Unintelligible] stood too.

LL: She stayed too. How about this?

LM: My father liked to travel.

LM: He was taking pictures everywhere. He was out west [Unintelligible] [Laughter] to get to that thing. We were kind young that time too.

LM: This was in 1942. He has a garage and [Unintelligible].

LM: [Unintelligible]. I was in high school. There were days that I didn't go to school.

LM: My mother and my father [Unintelligible]. They met at a store in [Unintelligible]. I have a picture of their wedding. This is my grandfather. [Unintelligible]. They lived at the [Unintelligible], in the hospital. [Unintelligible].

LL: Trace back to how we got the stores. The stores that had the property would have been his great-great grandmother's?

LM: No, distant cousins from the other side.

LL: They were all in the area?

LM: Yes.

LL: This is what, even in my own [Unintelligible], the unusual one that I left here. This one, this is not your money. This picture's [Unintelligible]. Is that you on top?

LM: No.

LL: That's you driving?

LM: No, that's her father.

LL: On top of the truck?

LM: It looks like, to me, they were cutting some of the surface hay and the poultry rings and taking them to our grandfather's. That's what it looks like to me, because I can't imagine driving along that hay. That shape wasn't going to have to go a couple of miles.

LL: Because it wouldn't travel, otherwise?

LM: Yes, we would need to make so many trips.

LL: That's on top of the pick-up truck?

LM: Yes, almost.

LM: I used to walk between my father's place and my grandfather's place. [Pause] [Unintelligible]. Then, my grandfather's land had been sold. Now it's [Unintelligible].

LM: He had hoped that maybe the town would buy it, but he was screwed. They actually held the property for more than 10 years after he died. They were hoping that something would materialize. He decided that it was time it would get sold, because somebody else would die, it would go on another generation. It was just too much. [Laughter]

LL: I understand that.

LM: In fact, two outlaws managed it for 10 years, basically. My presence was on the outside.

LM: After my grandfather died, [Unintelligible]. [Pause] This is him. [Pause] After we were married, we just got [Unintelligible]. I guess I told him before.

LL: Amazing. It is amazing.

LM: [Unintelligible].

LL: Well, I want to thank you very much. Is there anything else you can think of?

LM: [Laughter] [Side Conversation] I could give you a resume of trying to finance things, working with the bank.

LL: Well, yes. Let's do talk about that, because the questions that I usually go through are your experiences with insurance and banking.

LM: Well, when I first wanted to take over the farm, it's the [Unintelligible] credit. He didn't want to do anything, basically, to stop me. They'd basically lend you about \$2,500.00. They figured I could pay it off [Unintelligible] for somebody else.

LL: You bought the farm for what?

LM: About \$15,000.00.

LL: That included the house and the tractor?

LM: No, just the house.

LL: Did you get a special deal, because you are a relative?

LM: "I owned half of the farm."

LL: You were only buying half of it is what you mean?

LM: None of the business.

LL: Explain that. You own the land?

LM: I [am] interested in the land, but it was the land was worth over and above the mortgage. I owned half of that. The cows and equipment all belonged to my brother, and he built up his business.

LL: You were buying half the land and the business?

LM: Part of the business.

LL: You took part of the business with it?

LM: Yes. Basically, I bought the rest of it. I married my business partner. This transpired over the next year and a half. I actually did business in his name for six months. I wrote checks [Unintelligible], and all these.

LL: How old were you then?

LM: I was 21, I think.

LL: They loaned you the money that you earned?

LM: No, it was on paper that – but that's all they wanted. [Unintelligible] I was making connections. I got to work in [Unintelligible]. He used to give me credit, as I moved a lot through [Unintelligible] bottom. [Laughter] When it originally started out, it was just in the [London] county, [Unintelligible] credit, I guess. [Unintelligible] and of course, knowledge. [Laughter] I didn't know about it. Here in the United States, it's all going [Unintelligible] credit.

LL: The local bank is one of them? [Crosstalk] even helped you.

LM: Even though I didn't have notes.

LL: These [Unintelligible] notes, they would give sometime?

LM: They didn't really do much. I paid them. I went ahead and met with them, and I paid that note for six months. [Unintelligible] years. After that time, they finally did change the whole mortgage when I started borrowing money out of my own [Unintelligible] production credit note. It was in 1948. The first was Farmwell [Unintelligible].

LL: What was it called?

LM: It was Farmwell International. That was the [Unintelligible]. Actually, because the way that it was going - that equipment, [Unintelligible] I used it to plant corn all along at [Windham] County before I finally [Unintelligible]. I knew that if they had, I'd go on to demonstrations and get it on the floor at Christmas time. Come in spring, [Unintelligible], the tractor come in, finally. [Unintelligible] see if I can negotiate for that, and this is my understanding. [Unintelligible] was supposed to be yours. [Laughter]

LL: It wasn't.

LM: It wasn't, yes. [Laughter] We're not [Unintelligible] as well if you buy all the intricate equipment. It's designed to go with it, but they had [Unintelligible]. It was just under \$2,000.00. This is [Unintelligible]. This is one of my other gripes with the bank. They always tell me how they are hoping young people go farming. They lent me the money to buy this tractor, but they wanted me to pay it off in six months. Then, after December, they didn't take it. All of you, you've got to go buy that \$2,000.00 again and buy next year's fertilizer. I had to pay an income tax on the \$2,000.00 because I...

LL: That was an expensive lesson.

LM: I used it a lot of times in the last 15 years, [Laughter] I can tell you.

LL: You learned fast after that.

LM: If I looked like I was going to be a little bit ahead, I'd bought a month supply of grain in December [Laughter] and things like that for the next couple of years. I was always having discussions with them on banking. In the spring or fall of 1955, we went to the institute of cooperation. We went out, and we stayed in the car. A lot of the younger people, high school kids, they've got a picture that shows she was the only [Unintelligible].

LM: Yes, that was in 1954. It was in the summer.

LM: Late 1954, it was after you were pregnant. I was supposed to tell them how cooperatives can help you get started. I told them, "If cooperative is going to really help young farmers get started, the bank is going to give [Unintelligible]. They've got to lend you more money, so that [Unintelligible]." You're buying that from the other dealer. You know [Unintelligible] thousand dollars. I was a little bit outspoken. [Laughter] Some people weren't very happy about it. [Laughter]

LL: Sometimes it needs to be said.

LM: Anyway, we kept going back and borrowing money and paying it off, because I had some of the original money in the farm. I think it was 3.5% to 4% that I was paying, the original mortgage on the farm that I took over when I bought it. I kept that for several years. The short-term, I didn't have to pay a big monthly payment, because you can borrow for seven years in the short-term. [Laughter] I had a lot of arguments [Unintelligible] do want it. [Laughter]

LL: Did they ever change the regulations?

LM: Yes, even with the – soon after I was in, I got farm credits in New York and they were lending farmers money, but they were conservative with it. We had two or three people who really went through the depression. You can have a farm and [Unintelligible]. You can do what you do, but you can't do your [Unintelligible], we can't teach you. If you can [Unintelligible]. [Laughter] I'm nasty. That just gives you a little insight in my thinking.

LL: You went on the board for the farm credit in your town?

LM: No, I never was on the board.

LM: He was on another one.

LM: I wasn't director. I was a representative to Easton, which is a program for genetics, reading association. I sat on a couple of little committees, but I was never really on the board with them.

LL: I asked the other board members for assistance [Unintelligible]?

LM: One time, they had a director, but then they had a board that went through the overall process and everything. It was in 1950, and I wanted to buy a new tractor. It showed that [Unintelligible]. In 1966, when I had to buy that truck, they said, "We don't want a truck [Unintelligible]." I said, "I'm going to [Unintelligible]." They found out that I can use and defend that.

LL: Some of the people there were really putting their finger on what was happening in all these people's farm by determining what they would borrow. They were keeping them into whatever process of farming they remembered.

LM: Yes.

LL: They were [Unintelligible].

LM: The next time, it was in 1959. I wanted to buy the land next door.

LL: The adjacent land?

LM: The adjacent land. I've put an application with the representative who came to see me. I felt it was a pretty reasonable request that I was making, to buy an additional land if I was going to keep [Unintelligible]. I got that letter two or three days after the board met, and nobody denied it. [Unintelligible] The office was [inactive] at that time. [Unintelligible]. I said, "I want to talk to [Unintelligible]." He got back to me on the phone, and he came to see me that afternoon and the next morning. [Laughter] They finally figured out that I was serious about wanting to buy this land. [Laughter]

LL: What did you think prompted their first reaction?

LM: The representative came to me, and he said, [Unintelligible] [Laughter] it went along a little bit further, and I wanted to do something. He said, "Well, you're borrowing an awful lot of money. Why don't you go to the home administration?" I said, "I've been doing business with farm credit for 20 years, and I've always paid you, and now you're telling me to go to a government program that drives you completely frantic? [Unintelligible] every little they did. I'm not going to get involved in that." Then, we finally got talking about building a new barn in 1965 or 1966. I said, "When somebody comes down from the head office other than [Unintelligible] who I can talk to, I want him to come over." I even started dreaming about building a barn. The next time the guy [Unintelligible].

LL: Sterling? [Unintelligible]

LM: I think that was his name, yes. He'd come over, and I told him what I was dreaming about. [Unintelligible], because I say that's basically [Unintelligible] up until today.

LL: Was it harder because some of these things have never been done before?

LM: Maybe I was too progressive. I don't know. [Laughter]

LM: On the other hand, when we finally did get the money for that farm, they said, "That property isn't worth anymore, and that farm [Unintelligible]. The basis on which we can lend you that money is not because it has that barn." [Pause] Someone may want to buy it and may not want use the barn.

LM: In the last 10 years we were farming, we had giving customers certain discounts all the time. [Unintelligible]. I didn't want to do it, because I think it's [Unintelligible]. I feel that all that much is the same place in the world without irrigation.

LL: Is this the one now that you bought at that point in time, or is this...?

LM: This is the original farmland that I bought in 1959.

LL: Is this the one that you've put in the development rights farm preservation?

LM: Yes, both of them. [Side Conversation]

LL: It's large though. [Laughter]

LM: The other thing about it is that we [Unintelligible].

LL: They loaned it on a potential farm?

LM: Yes, they did agree to it.

LL: They had it, and then they...?

LM: Yes, they could get their money back. The testament was besides building a barn and a tractor [Unintelligible] wagon in this particular package, other than just that, we were [Unintelligible] buying for around \$30,000.00, I think. Five or 10 years later, it would have cost me over \$100,000.00. I'm not even trying.

LL: You've mentioned the kids before and working with international students. In farming, what has brought you the greatest satisfaction? If you hadn't cared so much, you wouldn't have worried so much about what happens now or in the future. You still have this love of agriculture. With all the hardships over all these years, and farming has been hard, why do you think you still feel this way?

LM: It's still basic. [Laughter] If somebody don't farm, how are people going to eat?

LM: [Unintelligible]. On the other hand, he's active, and he never had to go out to workout anywhere else. He's going out to see his animals now during his workout. It's healthy with a hard work. He's physically fit. People are made to be physically functional. Emotionally, we can [Unintelligible]. If you hear a guy singing on the tractor, always – at least he seems like he knew every hymn in the book, can't be anything too bad about [Unintelligible]. [Laughter] Where else can we go out and work off your frustration, [Laughter] or you can work when you feel the need to be physically functional, and you have time to think. I'm so glad we don't have to go [Unintelligible], like medical checks that I don't have to do every month. There's something about the hows and the processes in life that life and death is for real. One fascinating thing I've found even with the pharmacies [Unintelligible]. They all have a similar walk. When I watch at the gate, I can spot a city walker or a farm walker. I know the difference.

LM: Basically, I can walk out across the fence and into the barn. I can put my feet down and not stumble. When I walk down the street and run in a 16th of an inch raise in the sidewalk, I can trip over. [Laughter] Very interesting, one day we were at the Marriot outside of Boston. [Unintelligible]. There were 150 farmers that were [Unintelligible]. They started down the hall. They act like they were going somewhere, but they [Unintelligible] talking about it. [Laughter] It was striking. This is a different group, like you said. [Laughter] I remember I used to go up there, [Unintelligible] in circles. The hotel is always overbooked, because everyone is coming in town, they're bringing their wife and their bible. They signed for a meeting -[Laughter]

LM: They're reading the 10 Commandments and [Unintelligible]. [Laughter]

LM: The hotel is always overbooking for all these other conventions, because some of the people who are supposed to go to the conventions or the meetings or the other things, [Laughter] they're angry because there's always [Unintelligible].

LL: They've used all the facilities?

LM: They'd pay for them and never use them. [Laughter] They're not on the banking [Unintelligible]. My sister's and her husband's land [Unintelligible], I wanted to buy that. I bought that back in [Unintelligible]. I said I've got to have enough money so that I can do it with all my other loans and I'm just going to make one payment on a long-term basis to do it. By that time, I pulled \$200,000.00. Of course, with any other seniors. The first year, I was [Unintelligible] needing to borrow \$1,000.00. The next year, I had to borrow \$2,000.00. The next year, \$4,000.00. [Laughter] Of course, I finally got out of debt when I paid when I sold the farm.

LL: That's in taxes, right?

LM: Yes. [Unintelligible]. [Laughter] I'm just trying to figure out where is - it cost me an awful lot to have employees to pay with [Unintelligible] maybe some positions when somebody needs help, then I'm going to help him, whether it's a portable generator when the power is out or if there's a snowstorm, or it might just be one in the driveway [Unintelligible]. I put the chains on the old truck and I drive around. [Laughter] When I had this thing, it costed me an awful lot of taxes to do it. [Laughter] You can figure that any way you wanted, but I guess I get more satisfaction [Unintelligible] in those things than at the casino.

LL: You've mentioned about [Unintelligible] property too. You've decided to go into a different business rather than buying a land. [Laughter] As I said, life decisions that people make.

LM: I don't know. [Laughter]

LL: How do you feel about your daughters now? They grew up in this kind of lifestyle that was basic and home-oriented.

LM: Yes, it's a little bit like when we were working with insurance agent and on estate planning. He said, "Why do you going to leave your kids? You've got to buy insurance for this and this and this and this. What are you going to give them by the time they're 21?" I'm [Unintelligible]. [Pause] It's [Unintelligible]. [Laughter] [Side Conversation] I think she'd rather figure out she'd be about third cousin, but she didn't [Unintelligible] her neurologist and she found right in the - that [Unintelligible]. She says, "It's not for me. The Arnold man don't write."

LL: I didn't - an Arnold?

LM: Yes, Arnold men don't write.

LL: Okay. You're talking about that you incorporated it back in 70s, because of the value of the farm and what would happen in case of your death?

LM: Yes. At this point, it requires us money because to get out of it, because it's still on the property because of the capital gains of the property to get out of it.

LL: The reason for the incorporating it was to...

LM: Basically, to prove that half of the farm was in [Unintelligible].

LM: Because of my work input and I also had...

LM: She inherited about \$10,000.00 from her grandfather from trying to sell this farm.

LM: [Unintelligible] buy more of the land.

LM: She gets [Unintelligible], and she also gets to invest it in the farm.

LL: You [Unintelligible]

LM: Yes.

LM: In 1955.

LM: It was a year later.

LM: In 1956.

LM: The only reason I didn't drive was because I was pregnant. I couldn't drive. [Laughter]

LM: She's probably [Unintelligible].

LL: Did you have the buses?

LM: Yes. A different brother and I ran the buses [Unintelligible].

LL: [Unintelligible] the number of people who drove school buses, but when the town's incorporated or regionalized and all of a sudden the whole school district - then the insurance problems begin to multiply. How is it in the 50s and earlier?

LM: Four wheel [Unintelligible]. Each driver owned his own bus.

LM: It was the individual drivers. At that time, we were the first to become incorporated in the group, or one company if you would. We in turn hired the fellows that have been driving their own buses. I was among the first women bus drivers in the state. I wasn't the first because I couldn't get behind the wheel, because I was pregnant. The other women, they were among the first women [Unintelligible] drive. It was very natural for them because they've been driving their own trucks that was the same chassis as the school buses.

LM: I've been driving [Unintelligible] took it over. I said I expect them and I'm going to drive [Unintelligible], and you're going to... [Laughter]

LM: I drove the [Unintelligible].

LL: You were with the kid?

LM: Yes. If there was a problem on the route, I generally worked it out in the morning, and I get the kids off to school, and then I'd drive in the afternoon, and we could start getting ready for [Unintelligible].

LM: Only one morning that I had to come back and finish [Unintelligible]. [Laughter]

LM: In fact, I enjoyed it. It gave me a chance to visit with some of the others and the kids. The older ones. The older kids. [Pause] Then, shortly after that, I go through [Unintelligible]. Then I was a substitute teacher.

LL: When did you give it up?

LM: When we lost the contract. I drove for two more years after that.

LL: Did you have to carry a special insurance because of the schools?

LM: Yes. At that time, we had to have \$200,000.00 I guess it was.

LM: We had to have an extension of \$120,000.00.

LM: We were carrying somebody else's kid.

LM: At that time, there was a regulation by the school board.

LM: That was an excuse for not [Unintelligible]. [Laughter]

LL: We've covered a lot. He's a little surprised we're at the end. [Laughter] I want to thank you very, very much. Thank you. [Side Conversation]

(End of Interview)