

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

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Name of Person Interviewed: Bohdan Nazarko
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Interviewee Address:

LL: This is the Luane Lange interviewing. You pronounce it Bohdan Nazarko?
BN: Bohdan.
LL: Bohdan, and they call you Duke. I'll call you Bohdan because I don't know you very well. [Laughter] When you first started out – where and when were you born?
BN: May 26, 1920 in Waterford.
LL: In Waterford, Connecticut?
BN: Yes.
LL: What were your days like when you were growing? Were you born on the farm?
BN: Yes.
LL: Where was the farm in Waterford?
BN: Right next to Lakes Pond Church. It was a farm that belonged to my father's uncle.
LL: What road would that have been off of?
BN: Hartford Road.
LL: Hartford road. Lakes Pond Church?
BN: Yes.
LL: Is that a Greek Orthodox Church?
BN: No, it's Baptist.
LL: A Baptist Church.
BN: It's near Lake Konomoc.
LL: All right.

F: You might know his cousin or aunt, Anne Valish. She was papa's school teacher in Waterford?

LL: Anne Valish?

F: Yes.

LL: No, I don't. Teacher in Waterford?

F: Yes. She was a [Unintelligible], was her maiden name.

LL: His aunt?

F: Yes.

LL: Did you have brothers and sisters?

BN: One brother.

LL: Older or younger?

BN: Older.

LL: By how many years?

BN: Two.

LL: Two years, all right. Had your family had the farm for very long? Tell me about the family farm.

BN: The one in Waterford they rented but this one here they owned.

LL: They rented that one and then they, eventually, bought this one. What year would that have been?

BN: 1927.

LL: 1927. What kind of farming do they do?

BN: We had a dairy farm.

LL: How many cows back then?

BN: We started off with maybe 10, ended up with about 40.

LL: That was a good-sized herd back then.

BN: Yes.

LL: You went to school there in East Lyme?

BN: Yes.

LL: To which school did you go?

BN: Flanders.

LL: Flanders which is just the one - it's still Flanders?

BN: It's still Flanders School, yes.

LL: Is it the same building that they add on to?

BN: They had [Unintelligible]. The original building is back to the front.

LL: It's the security? It became a Fire Department, the two story building?

BN: No.

F: Isn't it the front end that's school?

BN: The front is addition. The original school is the back [Unintelligible], the four rooms, I believe. Yes, there were eight grades, two grades per each room.

LL: How big was your class?

BN: I don't know, maybe 20.

LL: In your own school or in the whole school?

BN: Just my class.

LL: Did your brother also go into farming afterwards?

BN: No, he went into grocery, meat cutter. He became a meat cutter.

LL: You said you had a dairy farm and about 40 cows, what did you do with your milk?

BN: For 14 years we had the milk route in New London, we used to bottle the milk and deliver it every day. Then in 1948 we sold the milk to Gregory's Dairy in New London.

F: Why don't you tell her about you used to get up in the morning?

BN: Because I'm answering the question.

F: She also said that you could...

LL: We're going to ask about what kind of days you spent, what were your days like?

BN: Prior to milk business, I used to get up at 4:00 in the morning, milk the cows, bottle the milk and then I go with my father and we deliver it. Then, after we deliver the milk, I used to get off and went to high school, Bulkeley high school.

LL: How did the milk work, you bottled it at the farm?

BN: Yes.

LL: You had what kind of refrigeration back then?

BN: Electric. We had a big refrigerator where we put the – it had shelves, you put the milk inside of that. Later on we had a big cooler that we could store in the cans, you cool it in cans and then you bottle it. Then when we sold milk wholesale, we just used to put cans out.

LL: When you sold it wholesale, was that before or after you had your own route?

BN: That was after.

LL: After.

BN: The reason we sold the retail route was because, when we first started, it was raw milk, it wasn't pasteurized. The old-timers they used to buy it, no problem. When their kids grew up, they didn't

want unpasteurized milk so we started losing customers so we started to sell the routes and going to the wholesale.

LL: Now, you said, it was electric, do you remember before electricity in what...?

BN: Yes. We came here in 1927 and we didn't get electricity until 1936.

LL: When it came out, did you have to pay for your poles?

BN: No. I don't know. No, I don't think so. I think that the power company put in the poles, stronger wires.

LL: Did you have to guarantee using so much electricity?

BN: No.

LL: It came down the whole road at one time?

BN: Yes. That was during the rural electrification period. I think later the governments have paid for it or what but we didn't have to pay. All we had to pay for was what we used.

LL: The hook-up to your farm.

BN: Yes.

LL: How many other dairy farms were there in the area at the time?

BN: There was next-door and the next-door up on the hill, five, six and there were some small farms up on Chesterfield Road, someone up [Unintelligible], small farms. There were quite a few. I don't know exact number but there were a lot of small farms.

LL: Did they have their own milk-routes or did they also...?

BN: Some of them did. Some had, not this next-door but the next farm over, they had a milk route first and then they also went to wholesale.

LL: When you went wholesale, did you run cooperative?

BN: Yes, it belonged to an association, CMPA they called it, Connecticut Milk Producers Association.

LL: Where did the [runway] come from?

BN: New London.

LL: What had they [Unintelligible] as before that? Had they been a dairy?

BN: There was always a dairy, as long as I can remember.

LL: Before you were competing with them and then, when you decided to wholesale, then you sold it to them, they bottled it and then they had the milk routes.

BN: Yes.

LL: How many customers did you have when you had the route?

BN: I would say [Pause] probably 75 or 100.

F: Didn't you have a book that your father [Unintelligible] somewhere?

BN: Yes, but I don't know where it is.

LL: How much did you get for your milk?

BN: \$0.10 a quart. That was when we first started and then it kept going up and up. When we quit after 14 years, it was \$0.21 a quart. [Unintelligible] to it.

LL: [Unintelligible] business, yes. Now, when you sold, you said you got to 40 cows, is that – is cows...?

BN: Yes, between 30 and 40.

LL: Forty milking cows, yes. How many acres was on the farm in [Unintelligible]?

BN: Hundred and fifty.

LL: Is there still 150?

BN: Yes.

LL: Are there any other dairy farms still – is anyone still farming in the area?

BN: Not in this area, no.

LL: When did they all stop? When did you stop?

BN: We stopped in 1956, I believe, yes.

LL: Then what did you do regarding work?

BN: I went to work with – I got a job as a plumber in New London. Then I worked that for two years and then I got a job at Pfizer's and I worked there for 27 years.

LL: What's the biggest adjustment you made when you left farming and went to work with someone else?

BN: [Pause] I don't know.

F: Don't forget you didn't leave farming right away, you worked for a couple of years. You helped your father and [Crosstalk].

BN: Yes, we sold out in '56.

F: Right but you did farming, you did the milk...

BN: My father got sick.

F: You had two jobs, one was the farm...

BN: I was working on the farm and then I worked outside for two years.

LL: Did your father turn the farm over to you?

BN: No, not to me myself. Actually, when my both mother and father died, they turned it over to my brother and to myself. Yes, that was after she died.

LL: What year was that?

BN: '85, I think. Yes, 1985.

LL: Was there any farming going on around here during those years between the time, let's say, when you went part-time plumbing and then you went in the...?

BN: No, little by little every so often they would go out of business and then the next-door farm, they lasted the longest.

F: Who, Sullivan?

BN: Tom Sullivan, yes. All the other places, they all quit farming.

LL: What did they do?

BN: Most of them got jobs in either electric [Unintelligible] or went to private.

LL: What happened to the farmland?

F: Did you care about it, cutting the A deal?

BN: You mean this farm?

LL: The farmland in general around you, what happened to it when people stopped farming?

BN: Most of them sold, like, Donovan sold theirs to developers, right?

F: Right, and Daniels' sold...

BN: Daniels, yes, to developer.

F: Sullivan sold theirs...

BN: Sullivan sold theirs to developer.

LL: Did these people do less farming because of – farming in Connecticut has a big history of part-time farmers, people who had jobs because they live near the town. They have a prehistory of part-time farming. Now we're going back to people who are doing small parts of land, people who want to grow up with [Unintelligible]. What happened to the children of each farm?

BN: Like I said, they got jobs. You mean like our children?

LL: Yes.

BN: They all...

F: They went to school.

BN: ...went to school and got jobs in the outside like my sons who ended in contracting business building houses. Some of them got jobs in ED.

F: Not ours.

BN: Not ours, no.

LL: So, farming wasn't that they passed on to next generation?

BN: No, none of them went to farming. My oldest son has horses now and he cuts the hay but he doesn't farm. It's just what's left from – the hay that was left when we quit. He still cuts it. He doesn't do anything new.

LL: I've forgotten, you still have 150 acres?

BN: Yes.

LL: What did you do for fun when you were younger?

BN: Fun? [Laughter]

F: Not much. He actually worked all the time.

BN: Not much, that's right.

LL: How did you meet your wife?

BN: [Laughter] That's funny. I went to a friend of mine back to her cousin.

F: Yes, I have cousins in all lines [Unintelligible], I don't know [Unintelligible] but anyway, it does [Unintelligible].

BN: Anyway, I was friends with the boys and then one of the older ones died.

F: Thirty-one years old. He was a fine boy.

BN: Thirty-one years old, he died from cancer. I went to the funeral, she happened to be there and that's where I met her.

F: Yes, I came from Boston.

LL: You're not from farming?

F: No, never been to the farm before. I lived in a small town outside of Boston [Unintelligible].

LL: Can you talk that way, we won't be able to hear you? What was school like at Flanders? You said you had four rooms, two grades in each room. Boys and girls both went to school. How many of them went on to Bulkeley High School? Only the guys went to Bulkeley.

BN: Yes.

LL: Where did the girls go?

BN: The others went to Chaplin Tech, those that went. There were a lot of them that never went, they just graduated eighth grade and that was it. They went and got jobs, whatever.

LL: The girls went to Flanders School and the guys went to Bulkeley?

BN: Bulkeley was all boys but Chaplin Tech was both boys...

LL: Okay.

BN: From East Lyme there was only maybe half a dozen boys who went to Bulkeley.

LL: How did you happen to decide to do that?

BN: I don't know, I just liked...

F: I think he went because they had a good sports program.

BN: I don't know. I don't remember why but probably some of the other boys that went before me, probably talked me into it. They were saying what a great school it was and I decided to go there. My brother went to Chaplin Tech.

LL: Did you play sports?

BN: No, not really. I went out for baseball in my senior year and, after practice, I was lucky I got – one of the boys that graduated a year before me got a job at The Day Publishing and they used to print and type early afternoon. It happened that I'd get out to Boston Post Road just when he was coming from [Unintelligible] and he used to give me a ride all the way up to Lake Konomoc but he got transferred, different route so I walked all the way from Mercer Field – I had one little ride from Mayo and the rest of it I was walking all the way home. That was the end of my...

LL: Mercer Field was in New London.

BN: Yes.

LL: What was East Lyme like then? What was here?

BN: Really nothing, just the school. I could have stayed, there were a lot of small farms, like up the Chesterfield Road, every house was a small farm. Same in New London, it was all small farms. That's why I say that, in my class, most of the kids were from the small farms.

LL: Had the people been there farming for a while or were they new to the area?

BN: Not new, for a while.

LL: They've been here for a while. Because they have a lot of the immigration up in Northeastern part of Connecticut of the entire state. Were these Yankees or were they immigrants?

BN: A lot of them were – like I'm Ukrainian. Next-door is Ukrainian. Next-door is Jewish. On Chesterfield Road there were all Ukrainians, mostly. So yes, they were immigrants, most of them. There were some Yankees, yes, up here in [Unintelligible].

F: There were Scots.

BN: Who?

F: Scots.

BN: Scots, yes. Yes, there were a few Yankees around but most of them were immigrants.

LL: Now, did your family come in before you were in Waterford? We found out that – again, my family came in from New Germany across – I'm thinking they had walked across the state [Unintelligible] in the winter. [Laughter] They may be illegal back then, anyway but a lot of Germans came in and they settled in the Midwest. You said there were a lot of Ukrainians who settled in this area. Because they knew someone and they came?

BN: Yes.

LL: Had they come into New York first?

BN: A lot of them came to New York, most of them, then they moved out here.

LL: They've been farmers to begin with in the old country.

BN: No, not exactly. My father was a...

F: Tailor.

BN: ...tailor and my mother was – she was just growing up, she was only about 16-17 when she came here from Europe.

LL: They married young.

BN: Yes, she was probably 20 or so.

LL: He didn't go on doing his tailoring, he went into farming instead?

BN: Yes.

LL: What did you produce on the farm besides cows and milk?

BN: We had to raise corn for the cows, hay. We had a garden and we used to raise quite a few potatoes to try to sell it in New London on the milk or we were selling the eggs.

LL: Eggs were a big profit then at one time.

BN: Yes.

F: We had chickens and eggs.

BN: Yes, chicken and eggs.

F: Vegetable garden.

LL: When you met and your courtship happened, how did you do that if she was in Boston and you were here?

BN: I had a new car.

F: Every other week he'd come for the weekend.

BN: I had a new car.

LL: What did you think about going on to the farm? What did your family think?

F: They were surprised because I was one of the youngest, second, from a large family, 11. My mother had two families and everybody was older and then there were cops. We haven't really grew up [Unintelligible]. He had [Unintelligible] and I just did everything. I was spoiled.

LL: They thought you were spoiled. [Laughter]

F: Yes, they always thought I was spoiled. That's why they were very frightful. When you're young and you're in love, you don't think what's going to happen, you just smile instead. My family all liked him. My brother said that's not because I wasn't interested in him because they were talking about this farmer that was 40 years old. I was in my early 20s. Boden was like my father's age so I didn't pay much attention but I thought he looked pretty good for his age. [Laughter]

BN: I wasn't.

F: He wasn't 40, he was thirty...

BN: Three. She mistaken me for somebody else. [Laughter]

F: They were talking about somebody else, I thought they were talking about him. Going home my brother said, "Now, that's the kind of guy I like you to go out with." I said, "I'm sorry that I didn't encourage him," but in the meantime he was going to my cousin's house asking about me all the time. Then my aunt died. It was in the hospital and they called him up and said, "Edna from Boston is here if you want to see her." That's when he came to the hospital because I happened to be there.

LL: You happened to be there. [Laughter]

F: Yes.

LL: How many years did this take before you...?

F: We went together from...

BN: Eleven months.

F: Eleven months and we got married. I know that people here said, "She won't stay. She's a city girl, he's the farm boy." We've been married for over 54 years so I guess it took...

LL: What was your biggest adjustment?

F: The people here. I thought they were very unfriendly. They thought I was different and all I wanted was a friend. I thought I was very high. Yes, I thought I was very high until my children because we had one after another after another. Now we had three in five years and three years after we had Steven and then, five years later, we had Melinda. I was wrapped up in bringing up the children. I didn't have time for friends or partying. It's not that we were not speaking to anybody although we liked to go to pond. When my children started going to school then I got friends with some mothers that they [Unintelligible]. I took on about [Unintelligible] young neighbors. They tend to be polka-friendly. Maybe I'll quit but I didn't find it here. I found it very high. I don't think they were friendly.

LL: What kind of things did you learn to do when you came to the farm? What did you do? Did you plant?

F: I still can. I make pickles and I make jam with my daughter-in-law as well. Yes, I did want to can but now I do [Unintelligible] instead of canning. The only thing I can is [Unintelligible] and jelly.

LL: Was your family surprised that you turned domestic?

F: Yes.

LL: You must have loved it.

F: Yes, and I also worked at the Federal Reserve Bank in Boston. I worked [Unintelligible]. We had to balance – one girl had all the bays in Connecticut. Another one had Rhode Island. Another three girls had Massachusetts divided. We all had our state that we had to balance the other thing.

LL: When you came here then, did she do the bookkeeping for the farm?

F: No, I had nothing to do with the farm, my mother-in-law was in charge, right?

BN: Yes.

F: My husband did everything on the farm. He had a brother but his brother did nothing, just my husband and [Unintelligible].

LL: Eventually your brother did not join in the farming.

F: No.

BN: No.

LL: Let's see. Where did you buy the supplies you needed?

BN: It's divided from the grain stores, from the implement dealers who...

LL: Where were they?

BN: Norwich and North Franklin. Hardware stores along the...

LL: When you took the canned milk, you stored it in your refrigeration and then you took them or did they pick them up?

BN: They used to pick them up.

LL: They picked them up. Because I'm thinking of stories I've heard about different kinds of trucking that took place as when the trucks took them out. Did they have a big tanker or did they have cans?

BN: No, that was later. On the two farms down, they had the tanker come in but we were out of the business by that time. We used to have truckers come and pick up the cans. We put them up on the road, the truck would come, pick up some cans and leave the empties for the next day. You keep circling the cans. They used to take the full ones and we got empty ones. That's the way that it...

LL: Did you sell any other produce than the milk? Was all the rest of the stuff that you grew was still new?

BN: Just potatoes.

LL: Where did you sell those to?

BN: Just people in New London, stores.

LL: Which stores?

BN: I don't know. Mostly mom and pop stores. New London was small in the days. Remember I told you there must have been at least 75 grocery stores in New London, little mom and pop stores. They were all over. Every corner and every street had its store.

LL: The people lived upstairs usually.

BN: Either upstairs or next-door.

LL: You said you didn't have any time for fun but what did you do? Did you go to dances? Were you part of the Grange? Was there a Grange?

BN: No. Before I got married I used to go square dancing different places. They used to have them – almost every town had a place where they would have dances.

F: You used to go to a lot of dances, you told me. You used to go to polka dances.

BN: Yes, that's what I'm saying.

LL: Where was the place in East Lyme? Was it the Inn of Four Corners that – remember it used to be there? Did they have any dances? Remember where McDonald lives now?

F: [Unintelligible] and Union, is that...?

BN: No. There used to be where the fourth garage was before they knocked that out.

LL: Yes.

BN: There used to be a come stock [Unintelligible], they used to have dancing in there. That was when we first came here. I think that burned down. Then they had the Colonial Inn. That's where – what's there nowadays?

F: Near the fire station?

BN: Yes, in that area.

F: [Unintelligible] store?

BN: No. In between that and the post office there was a Colonial Inn.

LL: On Boston Post Road?

BN: Yes. In fact, right across from that, they had a big house there that – what do they have there now?

F: The beauty school. No, that's [Unintelligible] old place.

BN: Yes. Next-door. It used be owned by a family by the name of Barbara and they owned the middle of it. They used to own it, the Mill Road. I think it was Mill Road. They called it the factory [Unintelligible] past the post office. They're not even back again.

F: You mean Mill Road?

BN: Yes, Mill Road.

F: Where we wanted the candle's furniture. All of that is down that – yes.

BN: Yes.

F: There used to be a mill, yes.

BN: There used to be a mill.

LL: Huge one, there used to be a mill on Gorton Pond too. The old – I don't know how long ago that might have been.

BN: Where?

LL: On Gorton Pond down toward the village where...

F: Yes, that's the mill where they made [Unintelligible], on Hope St.

LL: That's a different one. This is the one right here. You know when you take a right turn and there are town garages. [Crosstalk] It's that corner and it's the end of Gorton Pond where the dam is. At the end of Gorton Pond there used to be a mill right on the new road there.

BN: I don't remember that.

LL: That must have been earlier.

BN: Yes, because I don't remember anything.

LL: We're talking about this end of town and then there was the village. Did you have much association with the people down into the Niantic area?

BN: We used to go there to buy stuff. They had grocery stores there.

F: You used to mark all [Unintelligible] there.

BN: Yes. Also the post office was there. When we first came here, we belonged to Niantic post office. The mail carrier used to come from Niantic. Then they opened up this on in East Lyme so we became...

F: East Lyme.

BN: East Lyme. Everything that passed the I-95, it came from [Columbus] and if we're going to the other side it's Miami.

LL: Do you remember when they did 95?

BN: Yes.

LL: What was it like before then?

BN: Having Boston Post Road was – that's the main road from Boston to New York.

LL: It was a two-lane?

BN: Two-lane.

LL: Just like it is now.

BN: Yes. Worse. When we first came here, Boston Post Road was a black windy road. In fact, there are some sections in old lane still left from the old road. Somewhere in 1930s they put the new blocks across the road. I remember that.

LL: They straightened it out.

BN: Yes, they straightened it out. Even now there are a lot of curves. Now, Chesterfield Road was dirt. To describe dirt road was, all the roads around here were all dirt when we came, even Chesterfield Road because I remember when my father got stuck one time. It was mud. In the spring time it was all mud. He had to go to one of the farmers with a pair of horses to get his car pulled out of the mud. I remember that.

LL: Some things you used horses for and meanwhile you had actual cars and trucks too.

BN: Yes. When we moved here, we had – it was a horse and buggy. When we moved from Waterford here, we had two horses, two buggies. My mother drove one and father drove the other one. They hired somebody from Chesterfield to move the furniture but a lot of the stuff they used to go back and forth, put it in their wagon.

LL: When did you get your first car?

BN: First car was in 19, probably, '28 to '29.

LL: Now, was this yours or your dad's?

BN: No, my father's. Yes, I was...

LL: Because you were kids.

BN: Yes, I was only seven years old when we came.

F: Tell them about the time that you drove car. Although we...

LL: Wait, just a second.

BN: I used to drive. In fact, both my brother and – we used to drive around the farm with the truck, the old trucks and stuff. My father bought an old Studebaker from [Unintelligible] New London. In those days they used to pay some, I think, \$65.00 for the car then they went to register one by weight and this was a big eight-cylinder black Studebaker. He went to register it. It cost more to register it than he paid for it. Usually it was standing in the garage. Of course, I knew how to drive. One day my mother and father went to New London shopping, or whatever, so I figured I take a little spin. Backed her out, started going up to the road and they're coming down the road. [Laughter] They caught me.

LL: How old were you?

BN: I was probably maybe 12 but then, this happened when I was 14 when we had the milk routes already. My father was delivering milk and the guy hit him with a car. He took him to the hospital. He was talking with the police chief. His name was [Unintelligible]. He used to drive a truck. He saw him. He was going to work and he saw the accident happen. They took my father to the hospital. There was a truck with milk and just me. The police chief says to me, "Can you drive that truck?" I was only 14 years old. I says, "Yes." He said, "I'll tell you what," he says, "I'll give you a permission. You're clear of driving to deliver the milk and take this truck home. Don't ever drive anymore." I delivered the milk. On State Street and Main Street they used to have cops directing traffic. I was going down there. I wanted to show them my – they could stop me but I'd show them my permission. I was going up the street and down the street, nobody pays any attention. [Laughter] I had to go home. The guy that hit him, he was good enough, the next day he came and he drove the truck for me to deliver the milk. He brought me back home. He did that for two or three days until father came back. Yes, that was my experience. I was hoping they'd stop me so I could...

LL: You could show off your permission. [Laughter]

BN: Yes.

LL: Do you remember any banking or insurance issues you had when you were farming? Was it hard to have an account with a bank or how did you get insurance?

BN: I'll tell you what, my mother and father, like most of the Europeans, they believed in paying cash, if you didn't have cash, you didn't get it. If you didn't have money to buy something, you just didn't get it. I don't remember them ever having some borrowing because, whatever they made, they used to save. Not like today. Today the kids live from paycheck to paycheck, they don't save nothing but in those days every little bit they'd save. When they had enough to buy something, they would buy it but there was no payment plan but I do know they did have savings account from the banks.

F: Yes, they certainly had farm account too.

BN: Yes.

LL: Did you have insurance on the barns and things?

BN: Again, they had buyers. They didn't call it homeowners, they had buyers insurance, they called it. So yes, house and the barn but auto insurance no. My father didn't believe in it.

F: They didn't believe in any kind of insurance.

BN: Yes.

LL: No, it was all new phenomenon kind of thing.

BN: Yes. I remember taking the truck. People weren't – in fact they had, I don't know if you remember, they had that WPA they called it and then people who made \$12.00 a week that had to do for

everything, rent, food and everything else. You wonder how they did it but somehow they did it but we on the farm, it didn't affect us that much because we had chickens, we had eggs, we had milk, we had vegetables of our own, more or less, self-sufficient but people living in the cities, I don't know.

LL: What about Second World War? Farming people were allowed to be excused, if you had so many cows or something.

BN: Yes. My brother was drafted but I was deferred until 1945. Then there were three busloads of farm boys. They went to New Haven for a physical exam and most of us were accepted. The guy called me, he said, "You're in the navy" but, luckily, the war ended and they didn't have to go but yes, most of the farm boys were exempted.

LL: Did people come out and check? I've read someplace that, eventually, they began checking to see how many cows you had, how big your farm was and so on. Did they ever do that around here?

BN: Not that I remember. No, they knew. All they had to do is check with the town. They knew how much...

LL: Where was the draft board in this area, was it in New London?

BN: Old Lyme.

LL: In Old Lyme.

BN: Yes.

LL: Did you have more association with Old Lyme because you mentioned Old Lyme too? Did you have more association with Old Lyme than New London?

BN: No. Most of our business was in New London, Waterford, New London.

F: We have a lot of friends in New London. It's really the [Unintelligible].

BN: That's now. She's talking about early.

LL: Did you have any connections in town? Did you ever get out of the school board or do anything like that with the town?

BN: No.

LL: Do you remember the hurricane at '38?

BN: Yes, very much. What do you want to know about it?

LL: You tell me.

BN: I know that it rained for maybe, it seemed like a week before, every day, rain, rain. The morning of the hurricane, it started to get windy a little bit. Around noontime, along the road here, we had six big-ass trees, they were big, around this big. There were six of them in a row right along the road. Around noontime branch fell off. It started to get windy. Branch fell off right across the road. I said to my brother, "Maybe we should go and clear it up." He said, "No, town will take care of that." About an hour later it started. Out of the six trees, four of them went over completely. They were all big and the two that were left were so beat up that the town had to cut them down. So, for two weeks there were using our front yard as a road. We went up to Bank and then down the other side, because they didn't have chainsaws in those days, they had two-man saws. Like I say, those WPA guys were fun to watch. There'd be two guys on a saw. They take about six things, then they stop and the other two guys would come. It

took them forever to cut them big trees. For about two weeks we had no power then. All the power was gone. We got the souvenir, addition.

F: Yes, newspaper.

BN: You wouldn't believe the damage that it caused. We had the milk group at that time. We had to walk most of the time to deliver milk. Couldn't get near the house. Tree's down. Get as close as you can and walk the rest of the way. Bank Street was almost wiped out. There was a big fire there. The whole block had burned down. There were big yachts washed up on Bank Street. Ocean Beach was flat, leveled. Pennsylvania Avenue and Niantic, all the trees were down all over the Pennsylvania Avenue. Boats up on the down here in Black Point. There were boats up on people's lawns. Couple of houses were wiped out in the ocean. It was unbelievable. All over there were big barns. My, gosh, they went flat, wiped out. It was unbelievable. I watched all that out of the window in the living room. The house across the street was the farm house and we stood and pointed to them and watch one by one [Unintelligible]. There have been hurricanes since, nothing like that.

LL: Your barn didn't go.

BN: What?

LL: Your barn withstood it?

BN: It stood it but it was bent over. We had to pull it back with the tractor and pull it back as much as we could. There was a big maple tree across. It all threw that. It landed on the house. We pulled that back and, eventually, it rooted again and started to grow again.

LL: Were your cows in the barn or out in the pasture?

BN: They were on the pasture and, luckily, nothing happened to them. [Pause] Yes, we had a - we didn't use that old house. We got it [Unintelligible] in 1936. We had inside bathroom with it. We still had the - our house on the corner was just a little, it was a little odd house, stood up the whole [Laughter] time, didn't go.

F: That's funny.

BN: Like they said, that was the mother of all storms.

LL: If the power was off, how did you keep your milk refrigerated to deliver?

BN: How did we do it? [Pause] I think we used to go Niantic. There used to be a place where you could buy ice.

LL: Yes, there was.

BN: Yes, we used to buy ice and throw it in a tank to keep the milk cool.

LL: I heard there used to be a shoot too down on Dodge Farm. They used to put ice. What do you think was the greatest change you adjusted to in farming, not after you left farming but while you were farming? What do you think were some of the greatest changes? On your own farm, did you go - how many horses did you have to begin with to farm?

BN: Just two.

LL: Two. Then you went to tractors eventually.

BN: Then we went to tractors, yes. That was a big change from horses to tractors. You had buy your own tractor equipment, your own big [Unintelligible], plows, hay-loaders and stuff like that.

[Pause] The biggest change was when they required – you had to have milk tanks, tanker trucks to pick it up. The dairy stopped picking up cans so you had to sell them – at that time it was expensive to buy the milk tanks so we decided to – my father got sick. He was in the hospital for over a year, was it?

F: Yes. I think the biggest change was when, remember your father and you used to pick the hay up by hand. The biggest change was when you hired somebody to bale it.

BN: To bale it, yes.

F: Yes, that was a big change because they used to do it. Their father would be on the truck. They load [Unintelligible]. You know how much hay there is on the farm? That was a lot of work.

LL: You and your dad did most of the farm work yourself. Your brother did not farm.

F: Nothing.

LL: Did you ever hire help?

BN: Once in a while there would be some people in New London, single men that needed some work so we'd hire them for a couple of months during the summertime to help out but other than that, just me and my father did it.

LL: When they helped, they came for the day, they didn't stay here?

BN: They stayed here.

LL: They stayed here.

BN: Yes. That was part of the deal. When we brought them, they worked for whatever, I don't remember what they were paid but room and board was included. It wasn't bad for somebody that didn't have a home.

LL: Now, I missed this. Your mother and father lived across the street, across the road and you moved here?

BN: No, after we got married...

F: After we got married...

BN: ...I built this house.

F: ...he built this house.

LL: Immediately, basically?

BN: Yes.

F: Yes. When we were planning to get married, he started the house but we lived across the road for a few months, maybe a year.

BN: Not a year.

F: Maybe six, seven months. We moved into this house. It was unfinished but it had tubes, electric. We had Paul, right?

BN: Yes.

F: First year we were married, little after a year, we had Paul. A year and a half later we had Tom. A year later we had Michael. So, immediately we created the place but he built it on his own.

LL: You built this yourself?

BN: Yes.

F: He wouldn't buy board.

LL: That's something. That's really something. Had you ever built anything before?

BN: No but I look around now, [Laughter] I did a pretty good job, I think.

LL: I guess you did.

F: We had to have new floors underneath the carpeting that he put in.

BN: When I started building this, they were building houses at the end of the road so I used to go down and watch the guys for a half an hour or an hour, get some pointers and then I said, "I can do it." I still say that this house is built better than anything that they build today. I got braces in all corners, top and bottom.

F: What about the beans?

BN: Yes.

F: They got beans than anyone.

BN: Yes, they got across things, yes.

LL: Did the wood come from your own land? Did you cut your own wood or did it come from a lumberyard?

BN: No, it used to come from the lumberyard but yes, I look around at some of the work I did, I say it must have been pretty good.

LL: How did you know the plumbing? You said you worked in plumbing for a while so you knew plumbing but you learned wiring?

BN: No, I didn't do wiring. I didn't do the plumbing either because, as I was building, I had to hire a plumber because I couldn't do both, I couldn't the work in and work on the outside job. That's all I didn't do is the plumbing and the electricity. Even to this day I don't mess with electricity. I'm afraid of it.

LL: That makes sense. Over the years did you ever go places with other farmers like meetings and so on to know what people in other parts of Connecticut were doing in farming?

BN: I used to go to the meetings for milk cooperative. I used to go to them, meetings. I used to go to – we belong to the Eastern States Cooperative, I went to their meetings. Remember I went to spring with Louie down to [Unintelligible]?

LL: How do you think farming in this part of the state may have been alike or different than in other places?

BN: It's smaller for one thing. The farms that are left today, they have two-three only cows and you'd see that when we had small farms around. Today, if you're not big, you might as well forget it, you can't make a dollar because everything is so expensive. I bought a new tractor in 1941 or '42, it was only \$650.00. The second tractor I bought 1953 was \$1,800.00. That same tractor today is \$25,000.00. Same with trucks. In 1935 we bought a new Ford pickup, brand new, \$560.00. Two years later we bought

another Ford pickup, it was \$570.00. Two years later we bought a Chevrolet, it was \$620.00. Then two years later we bought a Studebaker, that one was already \$800.00. I bought a new Hudson, nice car...

LL: We used to have a Hudson, 1948.

BN: That's what mine was.

LL: Really? Yes, the same Hudson.

BN: Yes.

LL: There's a new low one, [Crosstalk].

BN: Yes. Mine was the '48 four-door sedan. They called her, what was it, deluxe model, two-tone green. It was quite a thing. That was a nice car. \$2,900.00 brand new but today this latest car we have now, Hyundai was what, \$22,000.00?

F: I guess. It's not [Crosstalk].

LL: What brought you the greatest satisfaction with your land and your farming in your life?

BN: I liked farming. I still do. I still like doing – I always have a garden. I go up there. I told you yesterday, it's one of the things I enjoy most is watching them grow and watching the stuff.

F: You like family get-togethers. He likes get-together with the boys when they come. Great times. Good family day.

LL: Really big choice [Unintelligible].

F: Yes. Like I said, once I chose instead of going to school, [Unintelligible] and then I went back to work.

LL: You did?

F: Yes. I had to in order for the kids – they were born, they all went to Saint Bernard except Steven and Linda. Our three boys went to Saint Bernard, they graduated and they all went to college. One pay is not enough so I went back to work so they could have a good education.

LL: I'm going back to neighboring. In some parts of the state people help each other when they...

BN: Not around here.

F: Not around here, no. You try to borrow – something broke on the farm.

BN: Yes, a rake.

F: A rake broke and they needed it because they have to – when the hay is dry, you got to get it in and usually you're expecting a storm, a rain storm, so you try to get it in fast. The neighbor up here, Daniels, they had one, they weren't even using it. We went up to ask them if we could use it and his answer was, "Jeez, no." He said, "I might need it." It stood in the barn to this day. That's the way they were.

LL: Interesting. I keep talking about how it was because of the two. Why do you think is it this way around here?

F: I don't know.

BN: I don't know.

LL: Did your dad and mother know this?

F: Yes.

LL: In one part of the country, state that I was visiting and interviewing a family, they were Jewish. They said they had a problem because they were Jewish but here you're talking about everyone being Ukrainian.

F: Right but there was that – I don't know what it was but...

BN: I don't know what it is, whether it's jealousy or what.

F: They didn't help out when you needed help, no. It's very strange because my brother was, when he was in the service and they were going through the Midwest, he said people stopped the train and [Unintelligible] and fed them sour dish and donuts. He said they were very friendly. Farmers weren't [Unintelligible].

BN: No, just like – I don't know. In Pennsylvania where the Amish live, yes, that's common. If a barn burns down, the whole neighborhood comes and puts up a new barn for you but they don't do that around here. I never knew why but people just assume that...

F: They weren't friendly.

BN: ...everybody is for themselves.

LL: Interesting. Were they basically the same age?

BN: Yes.

F: Yes.

LL: The first electric...

F: They do work together too. To this day they're not really friendly. The next-door neighbor, we had little kids, we were building a house, she wouldn't be friendly or anything. She'd come over and she'd sigh, "My husband and I like nice things but if you don't care," and I said, "I care but my kids come first." That's the way they were. I don't know what it is but the same lady, I don't care if they never talk to me because I've outgrown them now. I don't really need them anymore, which I did when we first got married but they never were, they were never friendly to Bo and his family. I don't know why.

BN: I think all New England was the same.

F: The only one that was nice was Mr. Ritz. He used to live in the corner, that [Unintelligible] house on the corner of [Unintelligible]. It's real old little house. He was very nice.

LL: Once your kids started school and you got to meet the families that were going to school, then you had other friends and friendships.

F: Yes. Then I'd go on to the PTA. That was another thing. She had a little girl in March and we had Tommy in July. Before this family here, they were outside talking and Ted said, "It would be nice if two kids will be going together." She said, "I don't believe in people being friendly or going to PTA together."

LL: Where was she from?

F: She was from here, Diana. She would go on her account to PTA and I would on my account to PTA and I'd meet my friends. It's strange because now you see people, where Mike lives and Tom lives, they get together and they come through. She didn't believe in that.

BN: Right, just like next-door neighbor. Never had any words, never had any...

F: Never says "hello".

BN: Never says "hello." He'd be mowing grass on his side and I'd mow grass on my side. He don't say nothing so I don't say nothing. [Laughter]

F: I knew that he was – his second wife, I knew her when she was married before. Her husband died young. She always said "hello" and she still does but then, after quite a few years after first husband died, she married this other guy. Whether he doesn't like us, I don't know because, like I said...

BN: We don't know if it was his wife.

F: He worked, I worked, we were never home so we never could...

BN: We never had any arguments, nothing but they choose not to...

LL: They just don't neighbor.

F: We have a porch out here, a real nice porch, we never sat out there because the neighbors before, like the one that had the daughter, she said, "One thing I don't like," she says, "Is you should never have a picnic if somebody is looking." We have a porch here. We're quite away from them so we never sit out there because she used to make this remark. She thought we were sitting out there to watch them so she put up this fence so we wouldn't see them having a picnic. We don't get out here. We never use this nice porch here that has a roof on it. It's really the nice little room.

LL: Maybe you could know them. [Laughter]

F: We probably could now but I don't know what she would [Crosstalk].

LL: Let me just check. Can you think of any problem that you faced while you were farming? Did you ever have any, beside the hurricane which felt like [Unintelligible], any years of storms? Did you have any fires, any sickness in your cows? Anything with...?

BN: No. No fires. Nothing like that.

LL: You got a good life.

BN: Yes. [Laughter]

F: It was hard but it was good, yes. It's a hard life being a farmer.

LL: Yes. I think of it, you have to be very – you have to be a self-starter because no one else, especially if you and your dad were doing it all by yourself, whatever you didn't do, didn't get done.

BN: That's right.

F: People didn't look up to farmers like they do now. They were on a little bracket.

LL: It's interesting because I work at the cooperative extension system and this is one of the things that began in 1914 was to bring more education to the rural areas for the women and the men. At that time, they couldn't often – sometimes they don't want the farmers to come so they'd be there to talk to the children and [Unintelligible] started but the corn crops weren't started and then, once they got the

kids coming in, then their dads were coming in and pretty soon the whole family was coming in and then it just grew because you get your information from experience but there are magazines out. There are places you can go to get information about what's new. You had to learn about the new equipment. You learned it from the Milk Producers Association or you may have the farm bureau used to send out information.

BN: Yes, we were going through [Unintelligible].

F: You should have that magazine sent during the whole time.

BN: Yes.

F: In fact, we still got [Unintelligible] from the virtual magazines.

LL: You're right, the people looked at farming different but there were so many more people in farming. I interviewed some people who didn't get electricity until after the Second World War up in Northeastern Connecticut, which is hard to believe.

BN: Yes, I used to have, even in regard to high school, some of the white kids, as we call them, calling you a hick or farmers. I used to tell them, "If it wasn't for farmers, you wouldn't have nothing to eat," because everything that you would eat or even your clothes that you wear, everything comes from the farm, originally. If it wasn't for farmers, they wouldn't have nothing. They'd probably work around there. [Laughter]

F: Now the farmers are – people will talk to them because their land is so expensive. It's so valuable now. They're no longer poor farmers.

BN: Now they list farming as a profession. Before you were just a...

F: Hick.

BN: A hick. [Laughter]

LL: I don't know. I'm from Michigan and we were farming way back.

F: Are you a farm girl?

LL: No, I was born in Detroit but my great grandfather was a farmer.

BN: They're different out in the west anyway.

F: I think so too.

LL: The difference, as I do reading is because, in the Midwest, they farmed and they didn't cluster, whereas in New England, the farms clustered around New England and then the land went out from their hands. There was a different kind of – there was a more European kind of thing whereas what you have here is more like the Midwest farming. When you are out, you're not in a community per se, you're out on your own farm. You have a mixture up here. You've got the New England mindset and the layout of the Midwest. Is there anything else you'd like to add to this?

BN: I don't know. Whatever you want to know.

LL: If there's anything that's come up in your family that you think would be a good [Unintelligible].

F: We used to help them out.

LL: As they were growing up?

F: As they were growing up they used to drive the hay trucks. They used to help with the baling the hay, loading them in the barn. They help each other out now.

BN: They still help out.

F: Yes, they still help out. They like the farm.

LL: They didn't want to live that life though?

F: No, there's no [Unintelligible]. They aren't living in the farm, and I'll tell you, it was a good place to bring up the kids because they couldn't go anywhere. They couldn't hang around street corners. They couldn't get into a gang, or trouble, or anything because my kids weren't the type that would walk, like my husband, a mile or two high on [Unintelligible]. In fact, if you go baling on this road, the original kids on this road, even the next-door and these others, they have it wrote on the walls, on the [Unintelligible] pass there. They wouldn't even think of it. Now the kids, every time they painted over, the kid's gone, they write on it. We were talking about it when they and the boys did – they had fun to do something actually because you knew that he could [Unintelligible], could be in trouble. It's just like with them going to school, "We told you to listen to the teacher. You don't answer that. Come home and talk about it." Nowadays the kids – one boy said, "Then I can stay home instead." Now, the teacher [Unintelligible] this boy and the boy says, "My mother is attorney, she will be talking to you." I said, "If you had ever said that," because you wouldn't dare even tell your own father. It's maybe the way the children are being brought up.

LL: Not all of them.

F: Not all of them. [Unintelligible] still one. I see, Michael's got two boys, the nicest boys, very polite and listen but a lot of people, like Patty, Michael's wife, would say, "Everybody on our road thinks we're the meanest parents in the world" because they don't let their kids do this and do that, they just say "no". The oldest boy who's 18 now, yes, he just turned 18.

BN: Yes, he graduated high school.

F: Right. He got his license last year when he was 17 or something but he has to be home at a certain time. They don't want him on the road 2:00, 3:00 in the morning unless it's something unusual. The other kids, they can go any day they want, stay out any time they want. They're not allowed. They got certain rules.

LL: Where do they live?

F: They live on a...

LL: Here in town?

F: Yes, they live, do you know Spring Rock Road?

LL: Yes.

F: As you're going to Old Lyme, it's a new development on the left-hand side.

BN: Just before the curve.

F: Just before the curve. They developed – they built the house.

BN: They built most of the homes.

F: Yes.

LL: This has where Diane...

F: Diane [Crosstalk].

LL: Diane the little girl. Not so little anymore.

F: No, she's not.

LL: How old is Masha?

F: Masha just turned 12. Beautiful girl. Very smart. All doing As. She takes care of the little one.

LL: How old is the little one?

F: Little one just turns six and she's just gotten to speaking. She didn't know a word [Unintelligible]. Masha [Unintelligible] and Masha, she learned so fast. It's the little one [Unintelligible]. She's just been [Crosstalk].

LL: What's the little one's name?

F: Nadia.

LL: Nadia.

F: They've had her since January.

LL: Because I thought that they already were going to adopt earlier.

F: No, they had to wait until all the papers went through. We got on it.

BN: Where?

F: He was playing around but no, they went through a lot of red tape and everything, to get these two little girls, third girl. A nice mixture of – and you have to wonder what goes on in their little heads. Like this little one, having all these years on a plane, leaving all her friends. They're adjusting so well. I guess that building a lot of love can help that moment. You could say [Crosstalk].

BN: She's funny. She has her own name in Russian.

F: We answer to her name, Roosh. [Laughter]

BN: She doesn't know what she's talking about.

F: It was so funny, one time we had to bring up my pickup to Tom, he was getting something serviced or something. I had my telephone.

BN: Cellphone.

F: Cellphone in my pocket if things go through [Unintelligible], I said, "I don't have anything in here anyway." She's fooling around with little numbers and everything and, all of a sudden she's going, "Alo, hello, blah, blah, blah." I hear her voice answering. I felt, "It must be operator saying you can't make the call. It can't be reached." I took the phone from her and I said, "Hello?" Linda said, "It's me, Linda." [Laughter] Linda was talking in English, this little girl was talking in Russian.

BN: She pressed the redial.

LL: She pressed the redial.

F: Redial. She was fooling around with it.

LL: You know this is [Unintelligible]. They tend to understand more before they start talking, they're able to understand...

F: Yes, she understands it. She'll tell you what she likes. The other time she said, "I love waffles," so I'll make her waffles. The other day she said, "No, no waffles." She said, "I love jelly sandwich. Not peanut butter." I said, "Okay, no peanut butter, just jelly." She said, "Criss-cross," [Laughter] so I had it criss-crossed.

LL: She's just like a kid, just a regular kid.

F: Yes.

LL: I want to thank you very much for taking the...

BN: You're welcome.

LL: ...time to do this.

F: It's been nice.

LL: We're going to shut this off.

(End of Interview)