Q: This is Luane Lange on December 14, 1999 and I'm interviewing Diurna Kibbe in Somers, Connecticut. Thank you very, very much for agreeing to do this as part of this Agricultural History Project. Would you start be talking about where you were born?

A: In Willimantic.

Q: And was your family an agricultural family?

A: Yes.

Q: What kind of farming were they doing?

A: Everything. Did all types of farming. Mostly dairy but had sheep, goats, donkeys, ducks, geese. You name it, we had it.

Q: Was it for your own family use or did you sell anything?

A: Sell milk.

Q: And how many cows did you have?

A: Oh, probably two hundred head or more. Was milking probably a hundred and some head.

Q: And on how many acres?
A: About five hundred.
Q: In Willimantic, Is that land still farm land now?
A: No, it’s Mansfield.
Q: Oh.
A: Yes. My brother farms it now.
Q: How many were there in your family?
A: Five.
Q: Boys, girls, how was it...?
A: Three boys and two girls.
Q: So when you were growing up, what kinds of chores were your responsibilities?
A: Well. Oh, I don’t know. Feed the chickens, whatever. Up to haying, a little of everything. When I was a teenager in the ‘50’s say.
Q: Had your mother and dad had the farm? Was it in your dad’s family or your mother’s family?
A: Well, he put three farms together. One was in his family and the other two he put together. So it made three farms together.
Q: Were they next to each other or did he have to travel between them for land?
A: No, they all connected together, property-wise.
Q: And your brother is now farming that?
A: Yes.
Q: As the same size that it was back then. Is he still primarily in dairy?
A: He stopped milking a year ago. ‘98 he stopped milking.
Q: How is the farmland being used?
A: He still has the cattle and still has the goats and sells the calves for oxen and the other calves for veal or whatever.

Q: What kind of cattle?

A: Well, he raised Devons and then he has Lymebacks and whatever, Fats Herefords or whatever breed.

Q: When you were growing up, did you anticipate that you were going to...to...to go into agriculture in your later life or whenever you married? Or had you ever thought about this?

A: Nope.

Q: Let's go back for a minute then. You went to school in where? High school?

A: High school in Willimantic.

Q: In Willimantic. Were there many farm kids in your classes?

A: No. Not even then.

Q: Was that a regional school back then?

A: At that time. Yeah, all the surrounding towns went to Willimantic at that time and I was in the last one to graduate from Willimantic before they built E.O. Smith.

Q: Oh, I see. All right.

A: 'Cause I graduated in the spring and they opened E.O. Smith in the fall.

Q: What year was that?

A: '58.

Q: So that wouldn't have been as far to travel either. You took the school bus?

A: Yeah.

Q: Did you have time to be in any school activities?

A: No, 'cause we had no way to get home 'cause it was what nine miles to Willimantic.

Q: So how long was your bus ride then in time? Hour?
A: No. Well yeah, we went around and picked up other ones but probably wasn’t an hour. I don’t really remember now.

Q: Did you...did you take your lunch, did you buy your lunch?
A: No, we carried lunch.

Q: Did they have a cafeteria?
A: They did then, yes, at the high school at Windham.

Q: Were you ever active in 4-H or FFA?
A: In 4-H. When I was little.

Q: What kind of projects did you have?
A: Well, back then all they had was the sewing club or dairy club and I was in the sewing club. My sister and mother had it. I was in the sewing club.

Q: What were your neighbors like?
A: Most of them were older people. There was no kids around my age within walking distance.

Q: So is this how then your dad was able to buy the adjoining farms ‘cause they were older people?
A: No, not really. Well, the one farm there, he was older was just a man and a lady and he was old and he sold to him in ’45...that particular farm.

Q: How did you meet your husband?
A: Through a friend of my brother’s at a square dance. Out here the Grange, all had them.

Q: We’re your parents involved in the Grange?
A: No.

Q: What about Farm Bureau or any of that?
A: They were Farm Bureau.

Q: Okay. Um hmm. So when you were married...did...what was your maiden name?
A: Green.

Q: All right. Are you related to Pat Green?

A: Not really but probably way, way, way, way, way back somewhere, yeah. 'Cause she's married to the ones from over there in Eastford.

Q: Yes. Did...when you married then, did your husband have this farm right here?

A: Yeah.

Q: And he was already raising the cattle?

A: No. Well, we...he used to have I don't know how many thousands of layers and he used to have layers and broilers. He did like a hundred and some acres of potatoes and he had just half-breeds to sell for freezer meat when we got married. But he had gone...he had really gone out of the chickens by the time we got married 'cause he went out of the chickens in the '60's. Then we got married in the early '70's. He'd done all the chickens. You know, we just had the potatoes then, a few beef animals you know, like the Devons.

Q: Now tell...talk about your interest in the Devons. You said that...that this breed and the blood lines have been important in what's happened within this breed around the area.

A: Well, there's not very many of them left. The ones that I have came from my father and they came descendants, were the last of some of them that came out of the University of Connecticut in the end of the '40's. And I have one that's the last of Colin Campbell's and one that's the last of Dr. Ziegler's.

Q: Then talk about Colin Campbell and Dr. Ziegler.

A: Well, Colin Campbell was from Lebanon and he had...he had Devons probably thirty, forty head. Then I got the last bull that he had and Dr. Ziegler...Ziegler was from New Hampshire and I have an offspring from one of his. He no longer has any.

Q: What is so special about the Devons? I know nothing about cattle.

A: Well, now it's...it's a rare breed. It's an old English breed that come from England. They were dual purpose for milk, meat and work at the time but most of them now have gone to being beef, polled. They're not the type that I have with the large horns, they're used for oxen for pulling like you'd see at Sturbridge or pulling at Williamsburg. Oh, there's a pair that come from my brother up at Hancock Shaker Village. You don't, you know, you don't seem them around.
Q: So people breed them for a specialty use or for beef. When you buy the beef do you know they’re from Devon? You don’t know they’re from Devons?
A: No, not necessarily.
Q: Where is the market for the meat? Is there a processor, is there a...
A: Well, as far as the meat today you just sell at a regular auction.
Q: Where are these auctions held?
A: Well, there’s one in North Franklin. There’s one in Middletown and then there’s one in Northampton, Mass.
Q: And these auctions aren’t just for Devons, they’re for beef?
A: Anything, anything. Any kind of animals, livestock.
Q: Are there any kind of cooperatives connected to the beef industry?
A: Not around here, no.
Q: And where did the...the meat used to be processed? Is it different than where it’s processed now? Where they go for the slaughterhouses and so on?
A: No. They used to have a big one right in Stafford. The coop in Stafford used to be. ‘Cause that’s gone out, that’s been out now probably ten years. And then of course, Copaco in Bloomfield and that’s gone out too as far as killing...killing plants.
Q: You may not know this but have the sites of those businesses been used for something else? Has another business come in?
A: That one over in Stafford, I don’t if they did butcher pigs for a while but I don’t think they’re even doing that. I really don’t know. Or whether they’s doing for individuals as far as slaughtering now.
Q: Did you grow anything on the farm for your own use? Did you have a garden?
A: Yeah. Always had a garden and then we’d grow sweet corn to sell at the neighbor’ stand down the road.
Q: Did you have a family?
A: No. We had potatoes which this is the first year in fifty-one years he...he didn't grow potatoes.

Q: Was this a choice or was it partly because of the drought?

A: The potatoes?

Q: Yeah.

A: Well, they used to have a potato coop that went to what, forty thousand acres here in Rockville and that went out about ten, twelve years ago. So we just kept cutting back, cutting back and we sold at the flea market and off the tailgate and finally we got down to where we had about an acre last year and you know, with the price of spray and everything, the environmental and stuff, so he just said you know, "Why kill ourselves?"

Q: So now when you had your own garden, did you can? Did you use it for that...

A: Oh, years ago I used to yeah.

Q: Did you use to freeze things too?

A: Some. I used to can mostly when I first got married, I used to can, I don't know, five, six hundred quarts a year or more.

Q: I came home from my honeymoon and canned peaches I remember.

A: I still got canned stuff.

Q: Who helped on the farm? Now in your family when you were growing up, you had brothers and sisters. Did you have hired help?

A: No.

Q: So it was all family labor?

A: Yeah.

Q: Did your sisters marry into agriculture families?

A: Yep, she married a guy that got college too.

Q: When you came here as a bride, what kind of help was there on this farm?
A: None. The only time that he hired help was when he dug potatoes. He hired women to work on the harvester and then we hired teenagers at night to grade potatoes. That was all.

Q: I think I've come across some pictures of the potato industry and at Eastern States, I remember they were graded...I have some pictures from the files. Where did you buy your supplies for either your cattle or your potato business? Like your fertilizers and your...?

A: We used to get...well, he belonged to Eastern States. Eastern States Coop and then he bought some from Old Fox as far as fertilizers. But mostly Eastern States which is now Agway.

Q: Someone else mentioned Old Fox. I'm not familiar with it. Is it from the Midwest someplace or is it...?

A: No, it was here in New England. I don't know if there's any even left of them. They did have a plant right out here in Enfield.

Q: It's called Old Fox, I'll have to check on that. Do you remember any banking or insurance issues you had?

A: No.

Q: Now with some of the pick-your-own and so on they're having to have to get more insurance pieces. So then when the potato industry was bigger, where did you sell.

A: Well, when he belonged to the Potato Coop they all went down south because they had a broker and the broker sold to like the Carolinas, Georgia and Florida. They had a potato broker.

Q: Did part of the business go...because of them growing more potatoes in the south?

A: No. The Canadian market put them out. The Canadian market, because they’re all subsidized and bringing the Canadian market in is what put them out.

Q: And this is in the last three or four years with...?

A: No, about the last ten.

Q: The women that you talked about hiring during the...during the harvest, where they from this local area?

A: Oh yeah, right around town.
Q: Were they farm wives in town who worked in the summer months for extra income?

A: Well, they just worked for a month during potato harvesting time. They had other little part-time jobs or whatever. Like one lady worked for him for twenty-some years. You know, her kids were in school and she worked on the harvester for about twenty-eight years.

Q: Did you ever have any help that was from out of state or out of the country?

A: No.

Q: What town connections did you have? Were you and your husband on any of the boards or commissions or things?

A: No.

Q: What about the Farm Bureau now? What has been your activity with the Farm Bureau?

A: Oh, I've been in the Women's Committee from Tolland County for probably I don't know, twenty-seven, twenty-eight years and I was Women's State Chairman. I was Co-Chairman first and I was State Chairman for four years for the state. Plus still County Chairman and I was County President for what...five years, five or six years.

Q: Farm Bureau President?

A: Yeah, County.

Q: Within the...both the Grange and the Farm Bureau, men and women shared equally in the offices and the running of the organizations I've found.

A: Yeah. I was never in the Grange. I never got involved in the Grange.

Q: What kinds of things did you do then with the Farm Bureau? What...what was your...what was the...what were the goals of the Farm Bureau when you were President? I...things change over time, I realize that but what kinds of things were your...?

A: County President? Well, 490 for tax...for land taxing for the farmers and...

Q: Had that come in at that time?

A: Oh, yeah.

Q: I don't know what year it came in but I've read about it.
A: Yeah, 'cause I...I just...I was President up here until last year. Well, taxes, spraying, now all this forestry that they came in with and now all this...what do you call it? Buffer, all these stream buffer rights with a hundred feet off of any stream that runs through your property for buffer rights.

Q: Did those pass this last couple years?

A: As far as I know that hasn't passed yet. You know, the Farm Bureau's fighting that because when you start taking a hundred feet off a field that's running up against a brook, you're losing a lot of land.

Q: And the forestry one was about certain sizes of trees?

A: Well, then they went...I guess there was a lot of things on that. I didn't get involved with that one that much but it was like you can't clean off your land to make a new pasture or to make a hayfield. You got to have it all approved by the Environmental and...and no wetlands and all that type of thing.

Q: I don't thing that one passed either. I think it had...you had to bring in a forester to...to approve all your plans. Was that what it was?

A: Yeah.

Q: What do you remember about any of the key problems you faced? Either if you remember anything about your own family back in Mansfield. Anythings, weather comes to mind. Sometimes like when sons had to go off to be in the service or all come back, this changed. This is when a lot of people sold their herds when they're sons had to leave. Some of they stayed because they had deferments during the Second World War but...anything like that that you remember growing up?

A: I remember my brothers going to have a physicals 'cause...well, they were like a little too young at the end of World War II but they did get called up and then they got called in the Vietnam deal. Wait a minute, not Vietnam, Korea. The one in the '50's.

Q: Korea, all right.

A: About the Korea conflict they had...they got called up in that but they got deferred on the farm.

Q: Um hmm. You mentioned before we started the tape about what happened with the drought this year. Think back to either...well, in the '50's there was a big flood and there was a drought also a couple of years later in parts of...and I notice that different parts of the state had different things happening to them. Just like the hurricane hit in '38 on one side of the state and did a lot more damage than on the other side of the
state. And then in the '55 flood, up Winsted, up that area got a lot of flood and then someone started talking about a drought. Do you remember anything about droughts in the '50's?

A: I don't remember being dry but they...you know, people seem to say it was dry and the '55 flood, I remember the flood. 'Cause I remember we had some cows in the pasture in Mansfield Depot in a meadow...on a meadow and we went over to see if they got out because the cows were calving. And the water was right up to the edge of 44 and somebody said they didn't know if they had gotten out or not and we went back...it was about two hours later and the dam in Stafford had broke, come down through and it was like four feet of water going right over 44 there. But the cows had swam across and got out on high land because of the water coming up.

Q: Amazing.

A: And when the water came down, the Willimantic River, we was watching it out the window of the house 'cause the house set back about five hundred feet from the road and then another five hundred feet to the train tracks and the river and the water came backwards up the little brook because so much water was coming down the big river that it came backwards up the little brook and went into the hay fields and covered the hay fields and it was like a foot of water going right across Route 32 in that '55 flood.

Q: How long did it take for things to...to drain off and get...what happened to the hay crop and so?

A: That was in August I think.

Q: Okay, so...okay.

A: I remember it went down I guess, right away.

Q: And the cows were all right? They calved there and everything?

A: Yeah, oh yeah.

Q: Really traumatic births.

A: Well, it washed out the train tracks and washed out pretty near every bridge up and down...up and down the Willimantic River.

Q: And no one's talked about that before. So now, what about this last summer's drought? We're talking about 1999 now and we had one of the driest summers in many, many years. And some people happened to get their...their things planted. If...it can make a difference of two or three weeks as to whether it was good or bad as
to what happened to their...their planting season. So what kind of things happened up here?

A: Well, we got like half the corn we normally get with the same amount of acreage because we just didn’t have any water. And the hay, you only cut it once instead of two or three times because it just didn’t grow. Just fried right up in June and July.

Q: And you said your own pond went down how much?

A: About ten feet on each side.

Q: And that ‘s where your cattle ---for your water. So then how do you make up the difference. Do you...did you have to move your cattle? What did you...how did you water your cattle?

A: Well, they still drank ’cause it didn’t go totally dry. That’s what I was saying about with the geese. You know, --- was so bad in it, they would...they don’t pollute it on them. ‘Cause it’s just a spring fed pond, there’s no in or out.

Q: How many cattle do you have now?

A: About twenty I guess.

Q: And these are for breeding stock primarily? Would you say that some people use Devons now as hobbies?

A: That’s what most of them are, yeah, I’d say so. For Arts, you know, just that they want one of the rare breeds. They’re buying them for rare breeds.

Q: And when you...and people know of you or do you go to breeding...I mean, how do you go about...how do they know about you to get your own cattle?

A: I advertise in the Rare Breeds Association I belong to. And I advertised in the Rural Heritage. Then I advertise also in Recording Stockmen paper.

Q: You say Rural Heritage?

A: Magazine.

Q: Okay. If you have a copy of that, I would...I would like to see that. No: right. What is the...the greatest change you think, you and your husband have adjusted to in farming?

A: Oh, I don’t know. Plus we’ve just done less and less because he got older and it was the price of everything and so that’s why he you know, quit potatoes as a...he wasn’t
getting any price for ‘em and plus the spray was so much more money and he’s seventy years old and you know, doing all that work you just...hey, can’t do it anymore.

Q: What...what do you think’s going to happen to the farm after you?

A: It’s all the property we used to grow potatoest, like the hundred and some acres. That was all originally small old dairy farms and the people we used to pay rent for and used it because they didn’t want to see it sold to build up into houses. Well, now they’re old men and died and either it’s up for sale or, one place we use, they’ve built like four houses because he’s giving it to his children. So, in the middle of the fields. That’s what happened.

Q: So, your own land, how much of it is cleared?

A: Right here, about may twelve, thirteen acres. Power line runs through thirteen acres there right through the middle of what we have here.

Q: Did that happen before you bought it or after?

A: Well, my husband and his parents owned when the power line went through. I think they...they went through around in the ‘50’s.

Q: Does he ever talk about how that happened or how they were compensated them for it?

A: Well, they paid at that time, so much for an acre going through it.

Q: I have some background on rural electrification. Connecticut was one of the three states that had nothing of federal money in their electrification progress in the state. And the last lines went out, I think, in the late ‘40’s. So there were parts of the state that didn’t have electricity out in the rural areas until after 1947/48 which was a surprise because some of them got in the ‘20’s. And so there’s a great discrepancy between different parts of such a small state.

A: Plus these...these are high tension. These are like I don’t know how many hundreds of thousands volts. I mean, cables are like the size of my arm. They’re like this you know, big huge cables.

Q: So they’re the transmitting cables between major areas?

A: Well, I don’t know if this one runs from Niagara...just exactly where it originated from I think. Runs down through and it actually branches off down here in a to two different areas.
Q: When the power companies come in, do you have a choice? I mean, can you say no to them? They take it by eminent domain? Is that what they do?

A: Yeah. Don’t—run through...wherever they’ve set the...run their lines through same as the gas line. Whatever route they’re definitely going through. And why they took so much out of this small place was because they’ve got a bend up here. They come like this and then it goes like this. They got a corner. They took like thirteen acres right out of the middle.

Q: Do you have a gas line too?

A: Not here. No.

Q: I’ve interviewed some people who have gas lines.

A: Had one when I lived in Mansfield. It went through my father’s property in the early ’50’s.

Q: How much notice do you get? What is the process for them doing this? I mean, they notify you of their plan and you go to meetings?

A: Yeah, I guess. And they offer you so much money. They go on through and whatever they come up with.

Q: Did you ever get any problems with...they talked about power lines and cattle health? Have you ever come across anything? Did anybody ever talk about that?

A: They say it does. I thought as one time, maybe it did here but then for a number of years they said these lines were very low voltage. They weren’t the high...you know, they had reduced the amount of current sending through them. And then I guess, they even actually had them turned off. But I know at one time we did think it caused a problem with the cows calving but that was back like twenty years ago. Recently, no. But then I don’t know if they were up to their full, how many thousands of volts or what. I don’t know. ‘Cause there is...well, like today now, you can go down there certain days and you’ll hear ‘em zapping. Can hear ‘em zip, zip.

Q: What kind of things were happening with the calving?

A: Well, it caused the cows to have a problem calving.

Q: They...they had fewer calves or they had difficulty...

A: They had difficult calving.
Q: Were there any machinery or technical things that changed? Did you ever use artificial insemination?

A: No.

Q: Some people have talked about how dangerous bulls are. Your cattle are much larger and they have these big horns. So, was that ever a problem managing the bulls?

A: No.

Q: Interesting. What do you thing brought you the most satisfaction from what you have here?

A: Well, I’ve met people all over either through Farm Bureau or through the different cattle associations; all over the country plus all over the world.

Q: Talk about the Devon cattle people from around the world. You go to conferences? Conventions? They order and you send them off internationally?

A: I don’t no. Some people do but I go...I belong to both associations here in the states. The old original Devon Cattle Club which has gone all to beef and then the American Milking Devon Cattle Club which is in the New England area. here. I belong to both of them and then I’m going to go in February to the Worldwide Devon...Council on Devons in New Zealand which is going to be worldwide.

Q: How heavy in pounds are these cattle.

A: Average cow probably runs about twelve hundred, about twelve hundred pounds.

Q: How does that compare to a milking cow?

A: Well, it’s larger than a Jersey but not as big as a Holstein.

Q: Okay. And then their horn breadth is about how wide across?

A: Average cow, probably three feet maybe.

Q: Just so we have this on the tape. Can we talk about...a little bit about the Farm Bureau Women’s Committee, now. What kinds of things did you do as you worked with them?

A: Oh, we toured different farms or different places and I went to the Women’s Conferences. They have a multistate Women’s Conference every other year and on the opposite other year, the Women’s Chairman goes to Washington D.C. to meet with
their Congressmen or their aids. They have a three or four day meeting in D.C. for that.

Q: So would you say that the Women's Committee, one of the things they do is...is advocate for agriculture from the women's perspective?

A: Yeah.

Q: What kinds of things would you talk to the Congress people about?

A: The---same as to Legislators, about spraying or about animal rights. About property rights, right to farm, that type of thing.

Q: So basically, it's the same message only just coming from the female side if you will. The men did the same thing? The men on the Farm Bureau did the same thing?

A: Yeah. Well, sometime they'd go to Washington too but our Women's Committee National would go every other year. The Chairman from the state would go.

Q: Does the Farm Bureau have legislative committees all over the state or a representative on one legislative committee? I...I'm not familiar with...

A: Well, each town we have somebody that you know, works more on that legislative committee. And then of course, we have the hired legislative one at the Farm Bureau office.

Q: So the Women's Committee is separate from that. They work on legislative issues but it's separate from the legislative committee?

A: Well, not really in a way. Well, they always want you to write letters to your legislators and they push the women more to do that.

Q: I've talked to Alice Block and she happened to be getting ready to go off the next day and do her own workshop so she had a display set up. Do you remember, when you've been involved with the Women's Committee, any specific kinds of educational programs that you enjoyed doing?

A: We doing a traveling farm which our Women's Committee here in the state came up with. We go to the various schools in our Counties. (Grades) One through three and do a farm display like to learn them that milk comes from a cow not just from the bottle and french fries come from potatoes not just from McDonald's or whatever. We go to the schools and do that.

Q: Do you remember anything with the kids that...that was surprising to you or...or...?
A: Well, I remember one the first times we did a school, my friend and I did them. We asked them what they had for breakfast and they were saying they had waffles. And I’m thinking, “Gee these have got good parents, good mothers. They’re getting up, cooking these kids waffles for breakfast.” Never dawned on my friend and I ‘til we got out to get in the car. They’re not cooking waffles, these kids are putting frozen poptart things in the...in the microwave or in the toaster.

Q: It’s a different kind of world, that’s true.

A: One question I always ask ...I ask ‘em what kind of farms we have and they’d tell us. Then I ask what kind of farms do we have that grow things but we don’t eat them. There’s about six things right here in this County. Well, anyways there’s this one particular school I asked them this question and I’d never more got it out of my mouth and the kid says, “Nicotine farms.” Well, my friend and I we just about died laughing. That was a year or two years ago when they were pushing about tobacco farms on TV and stuff. And this kid pops up, “Nicotine farms.” Never thought of them as nicotine farms.

Q: No. Is there much in the nursery industry in this part of the state? Is that the other part that you were talking about?

A: Yeah. Oh, we got one of the largest producers and growers right over here on the other road. He’s got what....I don’t know if he’s got sixty acres, thirty acres under plastic.

Q: Oh, who is this?

A: Growers Direct.

Q: Growers Direct. That’s the name of it, okay.

A: One of these van wing..van wingading or ...

Q: Van Winkerdon. I called him trying to...Leonard...yes, I called and left a message on his answering machine as a matter of fact, last...it may have been this weekend. It may have been the last week because I knew I was going to be up in this area. I’ve got to come back up again so I was trying to reach him. Yep.

A: Another big supplier from this County that supplies all the greenhouse growers and vegetable growers or whatever just passed away this past week. Malinkowski.

Q: Suddenly. Yes, I had an appointment with him.

A: And he was on our County board.

Q: Tell me more then about the Farm Bureau Women. What do you think is the greatest
thing that you remember in your time that they accomplished?

A: Well, we’ve got this traveling farm program that you know, the Counties all work on a lot. Of course, our state is small in comparison to other states but...

Q: So is there one exhibit that different groups can borrow and take with them to the schools or are there several exhibits?

A: Each County has their own.

Q: So in Hartford County, they get into the city schools more with this. I would think that would be a real challenge.

A: If they do.

Q: Just like other organizations, different parts of the state are more involved than other parts of the state? Is that what happens?

A: Yeah. I’d say so. Like, now here I have the schools that I’ve been to, call me and ask me to come back. Or I’ll call them and go to them.

Q: So about how many of these do you do then in a year?

A: Depends on how many I call up on or he calls me?

Q: With the Farm Bureau Women, was it ever any kind of like a...I don’t mean a social group for farm women but like a support group for...for people who were living the farm life that was different than what the city women were living? Did that ever come in in any way?

A: Well, we have the ones that come out, they’ll come out from the National Headquarters and talk to different women’s groups and stuff. And when we go to the National Convention the Women’s Committee Group there for the State Chairmans is a whole separate set up program strictly for the State Chairman Women than from the other people or from the men’s.

Q: As I’ve talked with people who have lived longer than we have, they’ve talked about how sometimes how isolated they were and then many times how hard they worked; and the hours that their husbands put in that they also put in to keep the farm going. Husbands and wives talked about the fact that the women many times kept the books and managed that part of the...the business, if you will. So it’s not only a lifestyle but it is a business. Do any of these things seem the direction of the farm women in this part of the state, that you recall?
A: I think most of the...most of the women do the books. I don't 'cause he always did them before we were married, his being so much older than me he does the books. But most...most of the farm women, the women do the books.

Q: And now they're the ones that are going into computers probably so that's a different thing. Hmm.

A: But I know when I...when I went to Washington the first time with the State Women, as State Women's Chairman, somebody said to us, "You know, you guys don't look like farmers. You look like business women going to an office in the day." 'Cause everybody had either skirt, suits or pants suits on and that's the way they dressed when we went to Washington.

Q: We were talking about the perception of farm people and on how they are more mainstream and people think of it now as...as not as different. When you are talking to other farm people, do people think of it as a business?

A: I don't know. I think a lot of them don't think of it as actually down-to-earth dollars and cents. The actual public don't 'cause the perception the public has today of a farmer because they own property, they're all multi-millionaires. My father always said he was land poor, couldn't even pay his taxes back in the '30's. But you know, today's perception is everybody's a millionaire 'cause you got a piece of land. And like, we grow our own meat; we have our own meat. Everybody says to me, "Oh, you're so fortunate." And I'll say, "Yeah, but where are you guys on Fourth of July when it's ninety-five or a hundred and five out handling hay? You're sitting at the beach or sitting in the cool shade drinking beer." You know, they won't work, put the hours in like we're always is in.

Q: So why stay in the business? What is there that keeps you?

A: Well, like us you know, like now my husband doesn't do potatoes anymore because he's just plain old, there's no money in it so why keep killing yourself? And like with the cows, I don't make no money out of that. I just do it for the love of the animal, meeting people and selling them and like that. Certainly ain't getting rich.

Q: Connecticut does have a different land use thing. This whole ideas of land development rights is going to come up again this Legislative session I think. The Farm Bureau's working on this again. Talk about your friends from Arkansas. You said you met them, here, through Farm Bureau Women and they were just here visiting you. Talk about what they farm.

A: Well, they do live forty-five hundred acres of crops. About two thousand rice...two thousand cotton and about seventeen hundred, soybeans. Of course, they have to irrigate everything or they don't get anything. Now, this year he said he had seven hundred acres of soybeans. He was unable to irrigate so he lost them. You know,
there was nothing, they fried with the heat. June and July they had the three figures every day so...

Q: So that’s the whole unknown with this.
A: Yeah.

Q: Again, I go back to what is there in the gut of someone who would make their living in this? Did they inherit their land?
A: He doesn’t own the land. He only owns about three hundred acres but most all his land he leases. They rent or lease. And in a way he’s lucky that International Paper Company is right in his town. They have four thousand acres and the International Paper sits in the middle so people won’t bitch about the smell and the water and the trailers and everything. So he leases the land on the outside for crops from International Paper.

Q: You mentioned something else that’s a sad piece for this particular couple but it does speak to what happens to...to families. You said their son was electrocuted?
A: Yeah. He went to check the irrigation pumps that evidently shorted out and when he went to shut off the switch, it electrocuted him right there.

Q: And he had a family?
A: No. He was just married no children.

Q: But he was the one working with his dad to continue the farm so then they’re going to be facing something else in the...in the future then too.
A: Um hmm. He was going to take it over eventually. He was...they had like a three farm operation and he was partners in with the three farm operation. Then he was eventually going to take it over. His father said he was always going to give it to him when he turned sixty-five, his portion. They’ve had to sell...sell off equipment and you know, to settle things up and cut way back on their crops this year because...because of that too.

Q: Is there anything else you’d like to talk about related to either your Devons or...or the land here or your work with the Women’s Farm Committee?
A: Oh, I don’t know. My father always said that to be a farmer you had to be your own doctor, lawyer, veterinarian and the whole thing. It’s true.
Q: Now this is something else. I’m glad you mentioned that because with large animals, the veterinary medicine field has changed too. How many vets are there that deal with large animals?

A: Very few. Like we’ve got three vets? Three vets right here in town within about four miles of each other and there’s one that will do large animals if you bring the horse there. I don’t believe he does cows. But he will do ---- Test on horses if you bring them there. And he’ll do sheep if you bring them there. But elsewise they’re all just cat and dog vets. We got three right here in town.

Q: So then, what do when your Devons get sick?

A: They don’t get sick. When I have to have calves...calves have to be vaccinated for TB to go out of the state. Then I need to call a veterinary from Granby of Mordasky from Stafford. They do big animals.

Q: It sounds like you’ve also learned to do a lot yourself in caring for them.

A: Yeah, but we don’t...we don’t have to use...very little medication. We don’t use any at all really. Like I say, I generally call a vet when I have to get a clean bill of health by the State of Connecticut to send them out of state and they have to have their calf--vaccination shots, that’s all.

Q: Thank you very, very, much. (Tape interruption.)

We’re talking about some things she found in her baby book looking for her birth certificate for a passport to New Zealand.

A: Well, this is December 18, 1941 and my mother wrote this on the back.

Q: “Rode to Springfield on the Blue Line Bus with daddy and mother to the first Devon Club meeting at hotel. Daddy and mother to their first Devon Cattle Club meeting at hotel Willington. Mother and I there had our dinner and Mr. John Dickering of Sutton paid for them. Diurna had mashed potatoes, carrots, peas, sweetcorn. We ate the raw vegetable, ----“ So this was from 1941, you’d gone to a meeting with your folks.

A: Yeah. I was like twenty-three months old.

Q: Maybe that’s how it all started when you were twenty-three months old. So she put this in your baby book?

A: Yeah.

Q: What it is, is a list of people who attended the ---.
A: It was new breeders, this is their annual report, the New Breeders...

Q: Club Incorporated.

A: At that time there was a lot of men in Mississippi and Texas that was buying. I told them at the Devon meeting when I took this with me this year to show them I said, “See. Must be in my blood from day one.”

Q: Yes, we have...now here’s Carpenter Brothers in Eastford Connecticut.

A: Um hmm. Yeah. They bought from my father and they had Devons too. It seems like all the ones that my father knew and associated with were all bachelors. Carpenters, Penfield, ----They were all old bachelors. All the ones he had...that had been --- at that time.

Q: I’m just scanning this and there was a --- from Stepley Connecticut? I don’t even know where Stepley is.

A: I don’t know---.

Q: And there’s one from ----Candy and Sons, Connecticut and Rhode Island.

A: Now the funny thing was, this one right here...

Q: Bartlett from South Pomfret. Oh, that’s Vermont.

A: We met this guy at Fryburg fairs through Jerry Mullins who had Devons. When I looked through this I said, “Oh, that’s Moosie, the guy we knew.” ---Call me Moose but that’s his real name.

Q: And here you have like...like all these years have gone by. That’s remarkable, that’s remarkable.

A: Yeah.

Q: When are you going to New Zealand?

A: February.

Q: When you showed or when you....how does showing these kinds of cattle, cows, differ from other kinds? Does it at all? You just showed me all these pictures of --- and places that you were in here nine, ten years old and then up through your teens. So, you learned this from your dad?
A: Yeah, when I was little you know, teenager there. I showed, you know, the oxen and — and then when I showed the cow that was just down here at Four Town Fair, I showed seven head one year and they made a special class for me and I showed them down here at the regular Four Town—.

Q: You’ve sold some...some of the cattle and there is now a pair up in Sturbridge Village?

A: Yep.

Q: ‘Cause they wanted to have some working animals and so they still do exhibit them and work them up there?

A: Yeah, they do that for demonstration shows but they have a cow of mine there that I sold them as a calf too. Plus the ox...

Q: Because they’re breeding afterward?

A: The cow they have. But the oxen originally came from my brother.

Q: The oxen are not Devons?

A: Yeah.

Q: That’s what I thought. Oh, that’s a nice picture.

A: That...that’s the same pair. That’s the pair right here.

Q: Really. And how old are they now?

A: This pair right now. They’re about fifteen.

Q: You mentioned this other pair that you had, that they lived to be thirty and their horns just keep growing. I guess they’d have to learn to handle that with their head wouldn’t they? Have on...where they go fit through doors and so on.

A: Oh, they do. That...that was just taken this fall.

Q: Was it?

A: That there copy, yeah. See now, this is from Australia. They don’t even look like what my Devons look like.

Q: No they don’t, no. Now are their horns going to get bigger?
A: They don't have horns.

Q: Now just those little lumps up there?

A: This?

Q: Yeah, those little lumps.

A: Oh, yeah.

Q: Do you think they'll grow? I mean...

A: Well, she's young. I think they said she's a two-year-old. So it might grow but you see they're totally different than mine. There more like a Seminthal.
Q: I showed this to a Seminthal man the other night and he said, "Oh gee, that's a good looking Seminthal."

A: Now where do the Seminthals come from?

Q: I don't know what country they originally do come from. This is New Zealand.

A: If someone saw these, they would think they were buffalo without the hump on them. They look that big. Now where was this taken?

Q: New Zealand. This is New Zealand. A man sent me from New Zealand.

A: Oh look. ---Huge. My goodness. See the head looks like a buffalo.

Q: Yeah. Well, I notice in this one article here that it said that...’cause I’m looking at the size of their body and how long they are. There’s a lot of usable meat on...if they choose to raise them for meat.

A: For beef yeah.

Q: This is interesting. This is the Royal Heritage Magazine. It’s interesting because it’s in support of farming and lobbying of horses, mules and oxen. And it was evidently formed in the '70's. So these are people who promote and work with large horses and then oxen.

A: I had a lady call me from Pennsylvania the other day, she had gotten my name out of there ‘cause I advertise in there. She’s into Percherons, she’s not into cattle you know, she had like seventy breeding mares.

Q: UConn used to have Percherons. I found, in fact, I’ll tell you an interesting story about what happened to something. Very interesting. I have learned a lot. I appreciate you taking the time very, very much.

(Tape interruption.)

We’re talking about a picture of...of Diurna’s father up at UConn in the 1900’s leading oxen. He was probably eighteen and now she’s talking about prior to 4-H...yeah, go ahead.

A: They called it the Connecticut Corn Club and he belonged to that. ‘Cause I remember, well, it was after my mother died so I was probably sixteen, seventeen and they had something at UConn and him and I went. And he was the only still living member at that time of that original Corn Club which I think, is what the 4-H start from.

Q: That’s right. That’s right, it was. It was.
A: And he was a member of that Corn Club.

Q: Very interesting, Thank you, thank you. And I'm going to check the photograph that I have to see if it's that same time.