Q: This is October 4, 1999. Luane Lange, here, interviewing Eva Loew of Hampton, Connecticut. Eva, thank you very, very much for agreeing to do this interview for the project on Connecticut Agricultural History. Would you start by telling us where were you born?

A: I was born in Berlin, Germany.

Q: And how did you happen to come here?

A: It’s a long, long story.

Q: All right.

A: Do you want to hear it?

Q: Fine, I have two tapes.

A: Okay. Well, I had a normal upbringing. My father was a physician, my mother studied medicine. He said, “One way to get rid of female medical students is to marry them,” so she helped him in his practice. His practice was in our house. I grew up, went to school, went to high school until about 1935 when we were told being Jewish, we could not attend the high school anymore. So my parents sent me to England to finish high school. When I finished high school and came back I wanted to go to an agricultural training school. I had belonged to a Jewish youth organization which at that time was the only way you could socialize with other young people. And a lot of them went to this school and it was in Silesia which is now Polish. And I went there...
Q: Would you...do you thi...would you spell Silesia?

A: S-I-L-E-S-I-A. The German word would be S--.

Q: Okay.

A: And anyways I was there with...the girls were in the usual girl things. We cleaned house and we learned to cook and we learned to launder and sew and darn socks and we learned to milk cows and take care of chickens and bake bread in one of those outside ovens. Then in August, 1938 from one day to the next, my father lost his license to practice medicine and my mother decided that was the time to leave Germany. So my mother and father sent my younger sister and myself to Switzerland to stay with some friends 'cause that was the only country you could get into at that time. They left for England and then the United States to see if they could start over again. And they were told they had to leave the country to come back in legally so they went to Cuba which was a country that would take them in. And they sent us a cable to come to Cuba. You want the whole story?

Q: Yes.

A: So my younger sister and I...my older sister and my younger brother had been in England for a while. They stayed in England. So my younger sister and I flew from Zurich to London because we couldn’t go through Germany to go back to England and France wouldn’t give us a transit visa. We were supposed to catch a boat in England to come to Cuba. The direct boat that we were supposed to catch was gone already so we had to take a boat to the United States and from there to Cuba. And with some minor and major interruptions, we got to England just when Chamberlain was in Munich to make “Peace in our time,” so to speak. And when we got to England everybody was walking around with gas masks on their arms and they were sand bagging all the public buildings because they thought that war would be imminent. There was a big rush on the American Consulate to...because a lot of the English people wanted to send their children to America to have them safe. A good...a very good friend of my mother’s was married to the son of Sigmund Freud so he was instrumental. He asked his father to write a letter on our behalf to the American Consul and I think that’s what got us a transit visa to go to the United States which my sister and I did. We came through the tail end of the 1938 hurricane on the high seas, got to Hobo...Hoboken, I guess New Jersey. With some friends that got us off the ship, finally we got a visa to enter Cuba and after four days; we were only allowed to stay four days in America, we took a banana boat to Havana. We were there for six months. Then my mother emigrated into...immigrated into the United States and came back right away because both my sister and I were minors so we got in on what was called a preference quota. And we came to this country. My sister hadn’t finished high school and I went to a farm in Virginia which a philanthropist in Richmond had bought for Jewish refugees from this farm school so that we would have a place to go to. We farmed there for two years. I was in charge of the dairy which consisted originally of
two cows but eventually I had eight cows and a bull and my husband was there also. He was in charge of all the horses. When war broke out all the boys on this farm, and there were by that time there were thirty of them, went into the service. The Quakers helped me to get a position in an orphanage as a housemother’s assistant for the summer and then I went to Detroit to...into the home of a...two psychoanalysts from Vienna originally. They wanted somebody young to be with their children. I stayed there as a maid and then went into Wayne University and into nurses training and that was three years. After I graduated as a Registered Nurse, by that time, it was 1945 and my future husband was coming back from Germany. He’s been overseas all that time and we got married and started looking for a farm.

Q: Can you tell...why did you go to the ag school in Germany to begin with?

A: I always liked agriculture and I knew...I was...we had a big garden at home and I was always growing things. I told you about the radishes.

Q: Oh, tell...say...tell again.

A: I was growing radishes and I tried to sell them to our cook for five cents apiece. And we knew there was no future for us in Germany. Originally, I would have studied medicine and taken over my father’s practice but there was no hope for that. And we needed to...we felt we needed to have some kind of a skill as we left Germany and that was it.

Q: And how did your father get here? You said your mother came in from Cuba.

A: Well, my father who was born in a part of Germany that became Polish after the First World War, came under the Polish quota and that would have taken forever. He had some connections with the Quakers who had been some of his patients in Germany and who had then come to this country. They helped him get what was called “a non-quota visa” by proving that he was a teacher. He had taught Red Cross nurses in Germany during the First World War. He was in charge of a Military Hospital. And so the first summer he was here he worked as a Doctor in a work-study camp that the Quakers had at what is now Goddard College in Plainfield, Vermont. And then he started to learn English which he didn’t know and took his State Boards, the American State Boards and eventually practiced medicine again.

Q: Okay now, you’re married and you were living in New York at that time when you got married? Where were you?

A: Yeah, I was in New York for just a few weeks after I had graduated from school. I was working in actually, twelve hour shifts in a maternity hospital in...in New York. Then when my husband...my future husband came back from overseas, I told my mother we were getting married the next month and she said oh no, she couldn’t get
ready for that but we did. They gave us a small second hand car and we went looking for farms.

Q: And so that’s how you came to Connecticut. Did you know anyone here?

A: Yes. My...my husband had an uncle who had a farm in Franklin, Connecticut and they also had a boarding house so we made that sort of our point to start looking for things.

Q: What was his name?

A: Pardon?

Q: What was his uncle’s name?


Q: And so you looked around that area and you found your first farm in...

A: In...in Norwichtown on Wawecus Hill. We started out with twelve cows and we were shipping milk in cans in those days because that was the way milk was shipped. We took the cans down the hill every day on our pickup truck. We were shipping to Beebe’s Dairy which, I don’t know if it’s still...

Q: Yes, well there’s Beebe’s Restaurants. (Yeah.) It’s called Beebe’s Dairy.

A: Yeah. And of course, all the work was done with horses. All the fieldwork was done with horses. I hated the big white horse because he was mean but the other horses were nice. I had to lead the horse for planting corn. Make sure that the rows were straight and then, actually with the birth of our first child which was two years later, we fin...he bought a tractor. Those two things came together.

Q: So what year would that have been? 19...194...what year would that have been?

A: That was in ’48. (Okay.) Yeah. And I had worked...in the winter I had worked weekends at Backus Hospital in Norwich in the maternity...on the maternity ward.

Q: Did you...how many acres did you have? Do you remember?

A: I can’t even remember. It wasn’t very much. It maybe was seventy-some acres. A lot of it was woods.

Q: And so you planted enough corn to...to feed the cows, the twelve cows.

A: For silage, yeah corn and...and hay. We had a big garden and I did canning and
we bought a freezer which by the way, is still out there. That freezer is now almost sixty years old.

Q: And still running?

A: Still running. If it ever shuts down I don’t think anybody would know what to do with it but it hasn’t so far.

Q: So then, were all of you children...how many children did you eventually have?

A: Six. I had...the first one was a boy and then I had five girls. They came in pairs of twos. When the first two were ready to go to school, I had two more and the same thing again. So the older ones were always able to take care of the two younger ones while we were in the barn here. We had...we started out here with twenty-six cows.

Q: And when did you come to this farm?

A: In 1950. Fall of 1950 we bought this farm. We felt that the other farm wasn’t...there was no way of expanding it. It wasn’t big enough and it wasn’t really city and it wasn’t country and I didn’t feel that the schools would be adequate for our children so we found this farm and I’ve been here ever since.

Q: Did your husband come from an agricultural family background?

A: Somewhat. His parents had a brewer...brewery, a brewing factory up in near Meinz in Germany and he was used to working, of course, all their wagons were pulled by horses. He was a big horseman and he loved horses and he loved riding. All our kids learned to ride horses bareback. (Oh, oh.) He wouldn’t let them put a saddle on until they knew how to sit on a horse bareback.

Q: Interesting. And have...so did you have...when you came to this farm then, you had how many acres?

A: One hundred and ninety-six, more or less. That’s the way the deed...and there were about sixty acres open and it hadn’t been worked very much. In fact, some of the hayfields when we started working them, and of course, we put...we worked very closely with the Extension Service and the Soil Conservation Service and with proper management and proper crop rotation and fertilization and soil testing, we I think, tripled the output of most of those fields.

Q: Why did the other people sell and leave?

A: They had this farm only five years and...and his wife was from Arizona and she didn’t want to spend another winter in Connecticut. So they were anxious to sell.
Q: Did you ever have any hired help?
A: Any what?
Q: Hired help?
A: In the summer. We usually had somebody, an agricultural student who had to put in some...the summer on the farm in order to qualify to be in...in an agricultural college. Other than that it was mostly...for many, many years it was just us and the children. As they grew up, they all learned how to drive tractors, pick stones, drive trucks, milk cows, chase cows, pull calves. You name it.
Q: Did you have any other animals beside cows?
A: Well, of course, we always had cats to drink the extra milk and...and chase rats and mice and we always had horses, one or two horses for our pleasure not for working.
Q: When you moved here you didn’t have horses anymore? (No,) I mean work horses. Did you have chickens or pigs?
A: One summer we...we raised broilers in an old chicken house. We raised five hundred...five hundred broilers and sold them. But then it got to be too much and we figured our main income was from milk so that’s where our energies were. That’s why a lot of our big farm work, like with the baling of hay and the harvesting of the silage corn, we put out on...it was custom work because we felt our main energy was in the milking barn.
Q: What do you mean by custom work?
A: Somebody came in to...we...we cut the hay and I did all the hay...tedding and raking of the hay and then somebody came in to bale it. And the same in...in with the corn. We had somebody plant it and we cultivated it. In those days you still cultivated corn and then for the cutting of the corn, we again hired somebody, an outfit that had came with their trucks and...and their chopper. Of course, we also felt that for the five...five or six days that it took to harvest it, it wasn’t worth the investment in that kind of machinery and the upkeep of that machinery.
Q: Where did these people come from?
A: It was a neighbor usually.
Q: So that some neighbors invested in more equipment and they contracted out?
A: Yes.
Q: Interesting. All right, when you said they...they went...were ag students, were these high school ag students or college...?

A: No, no. In fact, most of them came from Cornell. (Okay.) Cornell Agricultural College. We let them know we needed somebody and they’d send somebody and there was one, well he was a boy then. He was just nineteen. He came to us for several summers and we stayed in very close contact with him. He’s now a grandfather. And his children and grandchildren were here last summer. Yeah.

Q: Oh, that’s wonderful. What were your neighbors like?

A: It was hard first to get to know them but after a while very often we worked together on something. Yeah, and it was strange. When we first came here one neighbor came and said he’d been in the service also and he said that another neighbor had said they (we) were DP’s which were “displaced persons” which was sort of a derogatory term. But (with us) buying this farm, this neighbor said to them, “He couldn’t have been a DP because he was a Captain in the American Army.” So, my husband was active in the Reserves and retired as a Lieutenant Colonel. He went on active re...training every summer. He was Military Intelligence and so most of the summers, the children and I ran the farm.

Q: Oh, that’s a major...major workload for all of...

A: Well, it was mostly the milking and then you know, for some of the fieldwork again, the neighbors helped out.

Q: With four...with five daughters I was thinking that Cornell young men probably enjoyed being here.

A: You know, I never thought of it that way.

Q: You probably had the pick of the crop there.

A: Well, the children weren’t that old you know.

Q: At that time, that’s true, that’s true.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: How has this farm changed over the years?

A: Well, we had a big fire. We had what you would call a conventional barn with...with stanchions. One day in June of 1959, at night, the barn burned down and we were...we never found out what caused it. We were lucky the herd was outside already for the night. We lost two calves. That’s all we lost and we rebuilt at a loose housing ...
the loose housing concept which is... which you can still see out there; the big --- barn and a hay barn and a milking parlor, a double five milking parlor. That was a big change that the cows came to you into the parlor to be milked and I hated it at first. It was hard to get the cows used to it, to come in that way. We had to beat them and pull them and push them but after a while I found... and I said to them, they wanted to put a double six in, which was the herringbone type parlor which they thought was regular and I said, "No. I'm going to be alone for milking sometimes. I don't want to have a double six. Can you cut it to a double five?" And they did and I felt that I could handle.

Q: Who... who designed the barn and built it?

A: Well, the... the designs were done by an agricultural engineer from the Hood Company because we were shipping to Hood at that time. Rodney Martin was the engineer and he designed it and then a local contractor took it on and they used the plans and they built it. The barn burned in June and we were in the parlor, some of the finishing touches there were still being put on the barns, but we were in there by September.

Q: Talk about, if you would, the change in... in the processing of the milk or the collecting and distribution of it. You said before you took the cans down the road and then someone picked them up in a wagon... in Norwich you did that.

A: In Norwich, we took them down to Beebe's Dairy. (All right.) And then when we started out here we still had a regular milk cooler. You know, with (Ice?)... with water you know, cold water in it and the cans went in there. And a truck came every other day, a milk truck, to... to pick them up. Then we had to put in a bulk tank because they wanted the milk in bulk. So, we put in a bulk tank and the milk was pumped out of that every... every other day.

Q: When did refrigeration trucks get start? Do you remember?

A: When did what?

Q: Refrigerated trucks. Because that would have happened along that time someplace.

A: Yes. We were probably... let's see. In '55, the year of the drought, we still had the regular barn. So it must have been in the middle '60's I would say that we started. We had to get a bulk tank. And then the fire, the milk cows which was on the far end of the barn, the bulk tank was not hurt so we were able to put the bulk tank and the milking machine motor in the new barn.

Q: It's some distance from the house so the house wasn't in any danger.
A: Well, at that time, what saved the house... it was terribly hot, was these two big maples that we have out there. They were all scorched on the side of the barn because the barn was right across the... the driveway here. (Oh.) And it was a horrible sight.

Q: How helpless because there's no way to... once it starts...

A: Yeah. I was... everybody was asleep and I was waiting for the 11:00 o'clock news and all of a sudden I heard the dogs barking and I looked out the window and the far... on the far end of the barn the flames were shooting through the roof already. I called the Fire Department and they made me spell my name three times and then we had I think, six or eight different departments here, Hampton and Chaplin and Ashford and Brooklyn came up. --- came up the hill and lots of fire co... and they pumped out of our pond and the neighbors pond. They were relaying the tankers but once a barn goes up, especially with hay up above the barn, there was... you couldn't save anything.

Q: Did any of your children express an interest in going into farming?

A: Not... Well, my... my son who was always a big helper with the machinery did go to Ratcliffe Hicks College at UConn. And then he went into the Navy for six years. But the other children, not really, but they all worked and helped. And my son, as I told you before, came home... when he came home on leave he tried to do it during the corn cutting time so he was able to run the chopper.

Q: That's amazing. Amazing. Now did your daughters go off to school in any way?

A: Yes, they all went to college. They all... they didn't all finish college but they all went to college. One went to college... two of them went to UConn. One went to Springfield College because she liked the sports. One went to what was Post Junior College which is now under Japanese... she went there for two years and she was interested in recreation. Then she finished her degree at Eastern and got her Master's Degree in Math Education and is back teaching math now. When my son came out of the Navy, he came back up to the farm and he worked here with us.

Q: Now, recently... well let me go through this. What parts of the farming have not been continued on this farm? (What, what?) What... what has not been continued on this farm? When did you give up the dairy herd?

A: I gave up the dairy herd in 1981 or 82. My... my son was married by that time and did not want to continue being in farming and I couldn't go on by myself. My husband was gone (Note: A divorce) and so I sold the cows and the machinery to someone who's young son was taking it over. Of course, he didn't want to take any advice. I told him which cows were bred and you know, I have all the schedules so after two years he's... they sold the herd. And the guy that bought them... it was a home-raised herd, the guy that bought them said it was the best herd he ever bought because we had a good herd average. We had good cows.
Q: So the second owner...

A: The second owner of the...he didn’t buy the farm. He rented the farm and he bought the cows and the machinery.

Q: All right. So the first one who bought the cows did not...can’t...did now know how to handle them well and the second one...

A: Well, he...yes, he wasn’t...he didn’t know that much and he just felt that he couldn’t go on. It wasn’t profitable. They...the production went down and all sorts of things happened so they decided to make a clean break and...and they sold it.

Q: All right. But you were still living here?

A: Oh yeah. They didn’t tell me they were selling it, the cows. One night I heard a lot of commotion and I looked out and there were trucks pulled up to the barn and they were loading up the cows. And you know, when you home-raise them and of course, all the cows have names. We knew all the cows and what their...did and didn’t do well and which ones kicked and which ones didn’t kick. So that was quite a shock.

Q: So then later, you talked to the new owner, the new owner of the cows.

A: Oh, I heard through the grapevine that that was the best herd he’d ever bought. That’s Amarel Farm on 44.

Q: Spell Amarel. (Hmm?) Can you spell Amarel?

A: A-M-A-R-E-L, I’m pretty sure. It’s a big farm. You go by it on Route 44 when you go to Putnam. It’s on the right hand side. I don’t know if these people want to be mentioned by name.

Q: No, well we can...but I just need to get the spelling for the transcriber. (Oh.) Where did you buy your supplies, those that you did buy? You grew your hay and corn but where did you do your other shopping for....

A: Well, the home supplies actually were minimal because we raised most of our own food. I never had to buy fresh fruit or vegetable or canned goods because we raised...we always had a big garden, raised a lot of vegetables. We had our own milk. We bought the eggs from a poultry farm and we bought our...we tried raising our own beef but it didn’t work. We were...you get too attached to the animals. The kids got too attached so we bought our beef wholesale at Manchester Packing and they wrapped and froze it for us and we just brought it home. Our grain came from Agway for a while which...which was originally Eastern States and then became Agway. Then we got some grain from Blue Seal and at the end all our grain come f...came from the...I guess it’s the Manchester Coop.
Q: Now this is in Manchester, Connecticut?

A: Yeah.

Q: And Manchester Packing was there too?

A: No, that was different. That was you know, but I think it's called Manchester Co-op. I can't...it was a farmer's co-op for grain. And that's where we bought our grain. (Okay.) And our fertilizer we bought from fertilizer companies, Agrico and Old Fox.

Q: Did you go and pick it up or did they...?

A: No. The fertilizer was brought and ---spread. They came and spread it. (Oh.) Yes, that was part of the deal. They came with their big trucks and the fertilizer was spread. The same with when the soil test indicated that...that we needed lime we got the lime and it was spread.

Q: Interesting. No one else has mentioned that. Do you remember any banking or insurance issues you had to deal with when you...

A: Not really. I mean, we had Farm Bureau Insurance which I still carry for the farm and everything else here. And we banked with what was then CBT and is now Fleet Bank and heaven knows what it will be tomorrow.

Q: Did you...did your...

A: We...we did business with Production Credit and the Land Bank originally. We had our long-term mortgage and our short-term loans with those two companies.

Q: What is Protection Credit?

A: Production.

Q: Production Credit. Where are they out of?

A: I think they're still in Dayville, Production Credit PCA it's called. Federal Land Bank, I don't know. You know once we got the mortgages paid off we didn't have to worry about that anymore. We took just short-term loans out sometimes for if we wanted to buy a tractor or extra fertilizer and they got paid off.

Q: It was seasonal, yeah. You talked about selling for Hood. When did you make the change to...to sell as a Hood...you were a contractee with Hood. When did that happen?
A: When we started here. I think we already...we made a contract with Hood. I'm pretty sure. And then it became...oh God, what is that called...not Dairymen's League...that coop...Agrimark. (Okay.) It became Agrimark and we...that's how our milk was sold.

Q: Did they...did all...most of the dairy farmers in this area sell to them?

A: Yes, some of them. There weren't that many farms left here but I...I know our neighbors sold to Agrimark and I don't know where they're selling now if that's still...it might still be Agrimark.

Q: How many farm are there still in this area farming as dairy farms?

A: As dairy farms? One. And those...those other people that farm all my open land.

Q: And....where do they live?

A: Half a mile up the road.

Q: All right so...and does he farm anyone else's land also?

A: Yes, he has other land that he rents.

Q: So he has gotten larger. How many cows does he...

A: Well, they have now at least maybe a hundred and twenty, hundred and fifty cows. Yeah, you have to get larger. When we...we started out with twenty-six cows and when I sold, we had eighty. When we built the loose housing barn, we built with eighty free stalls to make sure that we had enough space.

Q: Now when you have a dairy herd, you don't get away very often.

A: Oh, we never got away. We never went away. My husband got away every summer on active duty. It was a big thing when once in a while we took the day and went to Misquamicut to the...to the beach or something like that but I never had a...not...never had a vacation until I sold the farm...I mean, sold the cows.

Q: I see your pictures of other times you've traveled to...what did you do for...for leisure when...I mean, you put in long hours but...

A: There...there really was no leisure. I got involved in...in the Board of Education right away because I figured when my children started school, this is the only way I would find out what was going on in the schools. I think the first time I ran for the School Board was in 1955 when my children were starting to go to school, the first two. And I was on the local Board for many years. Then we decided to build a regional high school and I was on the Building Committee and then on the Board of Education for
that, so I put in a total of thirty years on the Board of Education serving this town. I was instrumental in helping (get) a Public Health Nursing Agency going for Hampton, Chaplin and Scotland which worked very well for quite a few years and then for some reason was absorbed by other agencies. And my husband was very active in many agricultural things; Soil Conservation, DHA Dairy Herd Improvement Association and of course, he had his regular duty with the Army.

Q: Did you use...did you have bulls or did you use artificial insemination?

A: That’s the first thing we did. We...we sold the bull already on the other farm. We sold the bull and started with artificial insemination which was something very new. This was in 1946. I remember some neighboring farmers coming around to see if the calves looked any different. And here we...we had a bull and I remember when the vet came to do the yearly blood testing for B--- disease and TB I ha...he was afraid of the bull. I won’t tell you the name of the vet. I had to hold the bulls eyes (ears?) so that the bull wouldn’t see her but we sold the bull very fast because a...a bull...in the first place it’s not safe, and the second place if you breed only your cows to one bull, you have all your eggs in one basket. Where artificial insemination you had a variety of bulls that you could choose to breed with certain cows for production or for conformation of body or the other things that go with it.

Q: So they had like a...a registry you could pick?

A: Oh, yeah. Yeah, and these were all registered bulls, proven bulls and our cows were not registered. But you know, by the time we got through raising the calves and raising the calves of those I figured we were 99.6 per cent registered. But we never had registered animals. We were interested in production.

Q: How many gallons did you produce? How many pounds.

A: Oh God, let me think. I don’t know anymore.

Q: That’s okay.

A: It could be something like two thousand pounds every other day. But I can’t remember. We had a herd average of about sixteen/eighteen thousand pounds per cow which was good. I remember when we first hit that ten thousand pound barrier we thought we were doing very well but then of course, we bred more and more for production and you fed for production.

Q: Were you involved with the...you mentioned Farm Bureau Insurance, were you involved with the Farm Bureau in any way as they did their...they used to do a lot of lobbying in...and...
A: Yes, yes. In fact, my husband was on the legislative committee for the Farm Bureau and he was very active in seeing that things got through the proper people and that people, you know...

Q: What about the Grange?

A: We...we joined the Grange but we never were very active Grange members. There just really wasn’t enough time.

Q: What about 4-H? Were your kids in 4-H?

A: The children were in 4-H and we had a horse...a group here in Hampton and especially my oldest daughter was very active in 4-H. And they went to the 4-H Camp but that’s...they were in 4-H but they were also in Girl Scouts. I was never in as such, personally involved because I didn’t have the time.

Q: If you had to think about...you’ve already talked about some town connections. Was it different for your children living on the farm compared to anyone else who went to the schools who lived closer to town?

A: I think in many ways it was because they had their chores to do. They had certain things and that they were expected to do. Like in the mornings, one of the children always got the cows in the summer. They had to go down in the pasture and round...round up the cows usually with one of the dogs before they went to school. And when my son joined the Navy, one of the girls was always there to help me milk in the mornings. Then they took a shower and went on the school bus. And they had to be...one of them always had to be here for the afternoon milking. I told them as long as one of them was always here I...they could do all the extra-curricular things in school that they wanted to and they were all on sports teams and they all played in the band so they...I don’t think they missed out on the extra-curricular things. But I think it made a lot to do with bringing them up as very responsible people. But they knew they had to...that certain things they had to do. And we could send one out in the middle of the night and say, “Check that cow and see if she started to calf,” and they would come back and say, “Yeah, the water bag is hanging out.” So we’d get out there and sometimes pull the calf or maybe the calf came by itself. But they...they knew these things.

Q: What do you remember about any key problems that you faced? You mentioned a drought, you mentioned arriving during the hurricane when you were on the boat coming over. What other kinds of things did you have to face?

A: We it...we had a drought in Connecticut...I think it was ’55, or ’57. First we had a flood.

Q: Yes, that was ’55. I’ve come across that.
A: ’55. Yeah. Then I think the drought was in ’57 where things just dried up and the corn didn’t grow and the alfalfa was about twelve inches when it blossomed and then you have to cut it because otherwise it won’t start over again. Yeah, and there...there was a program. We got a drought loan. A loan, I think it was at one per cent interest or something like that and that helped a lot, yeah.

Q: What is the greatest change you think, while you were farming that you adjusted to?

A: That’s hard to say because the adjustment was so gradual that it was never a big adjustment. You had to have more and more cows in order to meet your bills and which meant more intensive farming on...on...on the fields. You had to get more production out of your fields but then of course, you’re always worried about the milk price. But other than that, as I said, change came so gradual that you wouldn’t really notice it. My husband probably made a good share of the decisions and but we talked about them and they were probably economically based more than anything else.

Q: Like a...like a family business...

A: Yeah, yeah and of course. The only difference with a regular business and farming business besides market prices and prices for the products that you have to buy, you have to worry about the weather. And that can deal you a real slap every once in a while.

Q: Did you ever have any early frost or things that like that...that stepped in there?

A: No, not really because we...we’d...we’d learned...we learned to listen to weather forecasts and we never had anything like that. In one year where there was a hurricane coming, all the neighbors got together and we all did everybody’s corn. With all the trucks and everything that...and we got everything in before the hurricane came; because, a hurricane can make a mess in the cornfields. I remember that year. I...I don’t know which year it was but I remembered we did that.

Q: When you began to...to make...when you were alone on the farm with your family, then how did you make your decisions because you suddenly had a lot more responsibility then?

A: Well, things just went along and then when it was just my son and myself we did have a hired man that would come in. And we just made the decisions as they came along. They sort of evolved.

Q: When he was in the Navy you made them yourself?

A: Yeah, but my husband was still here then when my son was in the Navy.

Q: Since you’ve been here, have you found it different being a woman running a farm?
A: Not really. No, no.

Q: Do you know many other women who had that kind of a...of a...responsibility?

A: Not off-hand. No. But I think...that’s why all my kids, especially my girls got to be such very responsible and strong women which sometimes is...don’t say that.

Q: What if now...machinery and technology changes. You talked before about the milking, cooling and so on. You talked about when you got a tractor. Do you remember how much a tractor cost?

A: In those days, probably two or three thousand dollars at the most. That was in the 1940’s. Here of course, we had tractors and then we got into diesel tractors and of course, that’s what you had to do and the milking parlor. The milk went into the pipeline directly into the tank which was different so the milk would never...unless you contaminated it in the parlor with the cow, could never get contaminated. And those were changes but they were changes for the better in a way. (End of side-one)

Q: Now we have, you know, the soil conditions in Connecticut are so different in different parts of the State and so to have fertile soil is...is a gift because so much of it is, as you mentioned before, stones.

A: Yes, the only class what they call class A or class One soil is really is in Connecticut River Valley where they used to have all the tobacco fields and truck gardens and truck fields. Here it depends how...how you work it. We...working with the Soil Conservation people, we had some of our corn fields in contours. We had strips of corn and then strips of hay in between so there wouldn’t be any erosion because there is no such thing as a level field in this part of the State. So, we learned to do this and we...we were very careful that we treated our land properly.

Q: What about getting near the ro...the stone walls? Was your equipment able to get close enough to them?

A: We got as close as we could and we cut brush on the stone walls to...to make sure that we got as close as we could. Yeah.
Q: But...what about agriculture? Why did you love it so? What brought you the most satisfaction or...?

A: Just growing things and seeing them grow and producing things does a lot of satisfaction. That’s why I still have a big garden. I don’t really need a great big garden but I plant a big garden and a lot of stuff goes to my children. There is a satisfaction in...in growing things and doing things that are productive. There something very positive about that.

Q: But the picture of your house (In Germany)...you said you had a garden when you were a child but were there other people’s gardens near you?

A: Oh yeah, yeah. This was a suburb of Berlin and almost everybody had some gardens. We had a good-sized garden. We had fruit trees and raspberry bushes and then of course, lots of lawn too, to make it look pretty.

Q: Did you have relatives who had...did your mother enjoy a garden? I mean...

A: No, no. Not necessarily. My father did. That’s why when he...and while he was in New York, he wanted when he got ready to retire, so to speak, he wanted to move to the country. He liked the country and he liked it out here and he had...they bought a house here in...in Hampton, which by the way, is now owned by another doctor. And he liked to see things grow. He’s...and he was always interested, always asked. One of the first questions when we were still milking cans, “How many cans are you making now.” We started out with one or two and then it got to be six and eight cans.

Q: Now, recently you sold the development rights.

A: Yes, this is...I don’t even know when I did that. This probably was in the ’80’s.

Q: All right.

A: Well, I was faced with either...when my...when I didn’t have an income from the farm anymore, I was faced with either selling it and moving someplace else which I couldn’t see and they were...this was one option which also made...not only helped me stay here financially but it helped me keep the farm as a farm, ‘cause I have worked every inch of this farm and I’ve planted thousands of trees on this farm, mostly evergreens. All the evergreens you see around her I have planted. I just couldn’t see...I couldn’t see myself in the city and since both of my neighbors were going through the same stage in a way, I felt this was a good thing to do because I could stay here and the farm would stay a farm. So it was two-fold really. With the money that I got from the State and that’s invested. With that and Social Security, I can stay here and the farm stays a farm. And my children and I enjoy walking through the woods. Yesterday they were here and they were cutting grapevines to make wreaths and although...although it’s a horrible scourge now, the bittersweet, but it looks pretty and they take that
home. And I grow Indian corn and... They like to go down to the pond, see the fish and now I have some horses here and they like to see the horses.

Q: Who are the people leasing the land?
A: She is... she is leasing some of the pasture and she’s using the barn and she has three adult horses and a filly here now.

Q: You mentioned this morning, too, that another neighbor is subdividing.
A: Well, that farm was sold and we were afraid this would happen, that whoever bought it would subdivide it and that’s what there evidently planning to do.

Q: Why was it sold? Was there a debt?
A: It was an... her husband died some years ago. I don’t know how much. Seven, eight, nine years ago. Just came in from the field, from the garden, sat down and she called me and said, “Eva, can you come up? Andy doesn’t feel right.” So I went up there and he was gone. His pupils were dilated already when I... there was no blood pressure, there was nothing. So she stayed there and her family... I don’t want this on there...

(Tape interruption.)

Q: I asked you about your joy and your satisfactions. Is there anything else you would like to talk about, about your... your life with agriculture here that we haven’t hit? Anything that pops into your mind?
A: Not really, it’s been a very happy life in many ways. A very satisfying life and it’s been a good place to bring up children and if I had to do it over, I’d do as the song says, the same things again.

Q: Thank you so very, very much for taking the time.

(Interviewers note. During conversation on this date, and on a following occasion when L. Lange interviewed Mrs. Loew, again, for a Public Television segment, she spoke more about the events that enabled her to come to the USA. The Virginia landowner evidently put many names on the deed for the land, thus each of the ag school people was able to immigrate, here, more easily. (Was he, Baron von Rothschild?))

She spoke of how, because her father had been a respected doctor during the First World War, he had been warned about safety when the Germans began their anti-Jewish programs during the “30’s.” She related that one morning, she and her sisters went off to school, wearing layers of clothing, carrying whatever they could conceal in their school packs. Her
parents went off, also, on their regular routines. They told no one, especially their household help, of their plans. They never returned and began their “flight” that day.

She also spoke of how the men who immigrated, here, often enlisted and because they were bi-lingual were placed in US army intelligence positions.

A tape of her children and farm activities was loaned and used for the CPTV segment. Also, several essays about life on the farm, written by one daughter, have been copied for the interviewer.