

Interview with Ron Farr 2

Ron and Ellie Farr, Dick Baughman and Liz Marshall met to talk about Ron's work in Lebanon and Etna.

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Transcript

Liz

We're here today to talk with Ron Farr, Ellie Farr, and Dick Baughman, Ron mostly about some of his memories of people that he's worked with over the years in Etna. So Ron, I'm going to let you just start...

Ron

We bought a house down on Cutting's Corner 57 years ago, added on to it, and built a garage, and I started Etna Forge. I worked with Niles Lacoss from Hanover Center, and over the years, we've developed a business, Etna Forge. And over these years, I've worked for a lot of people in town, the generation before me, and so it'd be the class before me. So anyway, here's some of the people that I've worked for, and it's kind of what I did for them.

Well, I have to start with Niles Lacoss. Niles was a blacksmith farmer, earlier selectman. Niles was a jack-of-all-trades. He could do everything. And I came to know Niles. In the winter, on the farm in Lebanon, we used to log. We logged so we had to have enough money to pay the hired man. That's why we logged. And we took our logs to Niles to saw. He had a homemade—well, he had a mill up there that most of it he made. He cobbled up out of what he could find. One day, I was up there helping Niles, and he sent me in the shop to get something. I walked in, and on the wall was a hook that he made, a chain hook. And I couldn't imagine how you could make a chain hook. I just—how do you do that? So I asked him, and then over the years, I kept going back, kept going back, and I started—I was there quite a lot. I was there at the time that Niles built the engine for the years ago. As it turns out, the wheels on the rail, they have to make—they cast them, and they have to age. So these wheels were aged. And then Niles made arrangements to get the frame in. The frame's about that thick. It's unbelievable. And then I helped him set the steam chests and all that stuff in there. And it was pretty exciting for a young fellow. I was in the 20s and 30s probably during those times. Niles helped me set my shop up. He got me—well, the anvil that I had was one that was off the farm. The heel was broke off. So I had a horn and no heel, but it was better than no anvil. So Niles had been down to my shop, and it was the very beginnings of a shop. One day, Niles drove up the driveway in his little Volkswagen bug. He had a 185-pound anvil in the trunk of a Volkswagen. Can you imagine what—I don't know how we got it in there, and I don't know how we got it out of there, but we did. And that's the anvil I'm still using.

Ron

Niles was quite a guy. I told you once, I'll say it again. One time I went to Niles with a problem. I said, Niles, can this be fixed? His answer was man-made, ain't it? And that's how Niles was. He could just do whatever he wanted to. So I spent quite a bit of time with Niles. He passed, unfortunately, and his shop, they made a home out of it. And it's hard to believe when you go by there that there was a sawmill in a blacksmith's shop and a machine shop. And up by his house up there, you used to be able to look down and see the shop. You can't see anymore. That's all changed.

Liz

Do we know who lives there? I mean, would they ever open up the house so that you could go and visit and see?

Ron

I don't know who they are. And John LaHaye, he doesn't know who they are either.

Let me tell you about Cliff Elder first. Cliff Elder ran the store down here. Cliff had had polio when he was a young man, lost the use of his legs. Cliff did everything. He built houses, he roofed, he gardened, he worked for the town, drove a tractor, he was a can-do guy. Funny story, Niles, Cliff, when his kids were young, they went out and worked in the garden, and Cliff noticed that when his kids were weeding the garden, they all sat down and pulled themselves along like Cliff did. Cliff had to teach them to get all their feet into it. Back years ago, we used to go to dances with Cliff and the crowd from Etna, and Cliff, he couldn't dance. He took his chair right out in the middle of the dance floor, sat down, and he had a grand old time. He was quite a guy. Well, Cliff had braces on his legs, because I don't think he could move them at all, or very little. The braces that he had, Niles had made.

And after Niles passed, the Cliff got a new pair of shoes, and he came to me to modify the new shoes. And it was a typical fiber fix, but they worked.

Liz

Now, Cliff. What was his relation to Stan Elder?

Ellie

It was his father. Cliff is Stan's father.

Ron

Cliff, Stan, Jim, Victor, there was a girl, and Willie. The last one to live in town was Stanley, I think. Stan and Betty lived up on Etna Highlands. And they're both gone. I think Jim and Willie are the only ones left, I think.

Because back in those years, the Etna crowd would go to the Elks. It was a grand time. Every Saturday night, there would be a dance down there, and the place would be jumping. It would be full. It was fun.

Another one I worked for was Morris Hayes. Now, Morris was a Mason.

Liz

Morris Hayes, let's just clarify where these people live now, you know, or where they lived.

Ron

I should say that Cliff ran the store. Ran the store every night, and we know that Niles Lacoss lived up on Three Mile Road near Dana Road, and then Morris Hayes lived right next to the Etna Library, the farm right behind adjacent to and next to the Etna Library.

Now, I don't know if, how long they had lived there, if that was Ethel's home instead or not, I don't know.

Liz

I do know that a Hayes ran the store that burned that was adjacent to our house in Etna, and so that may have been in the family, somewhere in the family. We could ask Norma. I think it's been in the family for a long time.

Ron

Morris had a Mason business, and I made all kinds of stuff for him, and Frank his son. I don't know if they had a name for their business or not, but they did my foundation when I added on to the house. Morris was, you know, one of those guys who knew what they wanted, and you couldn't fool them. You had to make what they wanted the way they wanted it, or they'd catch you on it. You couldn't fool them. Elmer Dana is another one.

Elmer Dana lived up on Dana Road. He had a big farm. In the 50s, Elmer built that pond up there. That was one of the first ponds built by the conservation organization in the state. I remember when they built that.

Liz

So the pond, so if you are on Ruddsboro Road and you turn left on Dana Road, it's on the right-hand side. That pond there. And that was a great idea.

Ron

It was a gathering place back in those days they had a big fireplace down there and I remember Elmer, he found the horses. And I can remember him up on the side hill with those horses mowing. We had, I can remember going to, what do you call them? Corn bees, huskin bees? Huskin bees. Huskin bees at Elmer's, they'd cut out the corn and then they had to strip the corn off the stalks and throw it in the wild, so they'd have a party. And they buried an off-colored one

or something in it, and if you wanted, you got a pie or something, I forgot. But I remember going there.

Liz

So tell me about husking the corn, taking all the husks off the corn.

Ron

There were stocks in in a pile and you had to pull the ear off the stock and then husk it and then throw them into a I'm not sure what they did with them sometimes they stripped the kernels off and sometimes they didn't.

Liz

This is for feed, I thought for feed they would leave the husks on, but no?

Ron

Well they chopped it later on in a field chopper, Elmer lived with his mother and it was a beautiful house. Now Dana Robes has taken that house and moved it up to the top of the hill and done a wonderful job with it.

Liz

Yeah, it's beautiful.

Ron

I remember going up to Elmer Dana's when I was working. Elma raised Ayrshires, as my father did, so that was the connection, the Ayrshire breeders. He had a better year of grass, and he had a stalk of grass that went from the floor higher than the ceiling against the wall just to show off his successful grass.

Liz

The Ayrshire is a variety of cow?

Ron

Yeah, they're a cow. They're the red and white ones. They used to have long horns, too. Asher cows are rather wild. In our barn, we had to put bars over the windows, because ayrshires, I call them wild, they're nervous and they'll jump and get away from you if they can. I never understood that. I just thought all cows were like that. Until then, dad started to put some Holsteins in. Holsteins are big and lumbering and docile, they don't jump around.

Liz

So Elmer Dana, yeah, did you do some work?

Ron

Yeah, he was still farming some of my time. Niles had built him, I don't know if you built him or modified a plow for plowing dirt, and it had wore out, and I had to put a new point on it, and that's technical. And of course, all farmers break stuff, so he was down to fix this or fix that or hitch this back up, and he was great. No, I mean, I knew who he was, that was all. He had a voice, he talked a little bit like that. He was an interesting guy. His mother passed, and then he married Dean Croall's sister. Yeah. That was the connection. Divina. Divina. Right.

Liz

Right, right, right. There's a document where she was interviewed, Divina Croall Dana, and it's one of the items that Jeff is going to be posting on the Etna Library website.

Dick

Is that the one I wrote?

Liz

Yeah. You gave it to me.

Ron

She was from the old school. Dean Croall, he was an old-fashioned farmer, Dean was. I remember him coming into my chicken house and looking at my chicken to pick one up and say, this one ain't laying, you know how to tell. And he knew all the tricks, you know. His sugar house is just about falling down there. Yeah, it's a shame. It's a shame. Yeah, tell me how to get it. I hope you want to stop and get some pictures of it.

Liz

I don't think anybody's living in that house right now. No, I don't think so. I think that's it.

Ron

There's tracks in and out of it, so somebody's got some cattle or something. I don't know why. The house's kind of rough, you know. He had his chickens in the upstairs bedroom in the end of it.

His brother, Ernest Dana, lived on the right where you turn to go up Dana Road. On the right there was Ernest's place. Ned Lebo lives there now. Ernest had a greenhouse there and raised garden crops. Ernest, they sugared in the spring. They had built, modified a tractor with a way to carry jugs of sap on it. I had to do some tinkering on it, I don't remember what. So I did some work for Ernest and he says, what do I owe you? And I says, I don't know. Bring me down whatever you got the most of. We didn't have to worry about vegetables after that. He brought us down baskets of them. I think he was a headmaster of a school. He was a school superintendent up in the North Country. His other brother, I called him Aural, I don't know what his name was. They lived in the trailer there, you know what I mean?

Ron

JohnO. That's the one, John O. Yeah, yeah. He was a pretty old man by the time I came along, but once in a while he'd come down to the shop and sit in the shop and watch me work and visit.

Liz

It's not a trailer now, is it?

Ron

Is it an A-frame? There's an A-frame there.

Liz

And I think the A-frame was was updated too.

Ron

And then the next one I remember is Howard Reed. Everybody remembers Howard Reed. Howard Reed had a tractor and he went all over town, playing with it.

Liz

Where did he live?

Ron

Howard Reed. Depends on which wife he was with. Howard raised a few cows. At first he had that tractor that went around town and did jobs, and he had a truck, and he would truck whatever you needed. Howard was an unusual guy. He'd do a job for my dad or something, and dad would say, oh yeah, and Howard would say \$12 or whatever, and our dad would say, that's not enough Howard. He says, that's enough. He'd tell you what he wanted, and he didn't want any more than that. That's the way he was.

Ellie

He was also a mailman.

Ron

He also made butter and I could remember going there when I was very small and mother picking up butter there.

Ellie

We bought butter from him for years.

Ron

Now, who lives there now?

Ellie

She does the aerobics at the church.

Ron

Doesn't matter.

Dick

I can't think of her name.

Liz

Hmm So it's down at the low end of Dogford?

Ron

It's the one with the red barn by the road.

Liz

Oh, yeah.

Ron

The next one I speak of is Trumbull Nelson. Over the years, I did lots of work for Trumbull Nelson. When they put the new vault in the bank down there, they would bring me jackhammer points, those kind of parts. They would bring me a wheelbarrow load every Friday and come pick them up every Monday. And the way you do those is, this is very expensive steel. So rather than, when they use them, they get dull. They either wear off or they mushroom because they're not heat treated right. So the way to fix them is, you cut off the bad part and then you draw it back out again and make a point. And then heat treat it again. And I did them by hand. Oh geez. Four pound hammer. I can't believe I did that. I have a trip hammer now.

Ron

And then I did Danny Kudemash, I did quite a few of them around, I did. The Forge was quite active, as I remember, but at the time I didn't think anything about it. And they would have other kinds of projects, neither this or that, or a hinge, or something, and I did that for years.

Dick

Mmm

Ron

The white church in Hanover, you know where that is, I built them a railing one time. I see they've replaced it with a completely different thing now. I built a railing must have been from here to the corner long.

Liz

I wonder if they knew that it was handmade when they replaced it?

Ron

Well, it wasn't nothing special, it was just a railing.

Liz

Yeah, but still it's handmade.

Ron

They have another one there that's factory made and probably can't tell the difference. Handmade railings like that, there's nothing special about them, it's just a lot of work.

The Lutheran Church in Hanover. I built them an advent wreath with detachable candle sconces on it. Somebody came and I made it for somebody, it was a memorial to somebody, somebody, I don't remember who, and that's in there now. It's six foot diameter with chains coming up to a spreader in the middle. The band is about that high, it has a copper ring around it and it has detachable sconces that they put them on at different times of Advent. I'm not sure how that works. I think that's still there.

Liz

Did they work with you on the design of it? I mean, it sounds quite unusual.

Ron

I think so. Yeah. I remember some ladies coming to the shop and we were talking about it, and the problem was bending that hoop, it's like three-sixteen, no, it's probably a quarter inch or a three-eighths, so bending it. But I have a tire bender. The word tire comes from the iron band around a wooden wheel, that's called a tire, and in the old days, the blacksmiths had a machine, a rolling rig, that they would put the straight in and it would bend it around like this to make the tire. Well, Niles had one. After Niles died, Charlie Hughes got it, and then when Charlie died, his son Steve got it. So I know Steve had that tire bender and I needed it. So I went to Steve and I said, I'd like to buy that from you, you mumble, mumble, mumble, and he said, well, you might as well take it, I'm never going to use it, and I tried to pay him for it. He wouldn't take any money for it.

Dick

So— Now, Steve, did he live up off— Goose Pond Road?

Ron

Goose Pond Road. Yeah, out there by where Charlie lived. They had all that stuff. Trucks and tractors and piles and piles of farm equipment out there. They must have sold milk at one time. Steve died, you know. He's gone. Yeah, he's gone. He was a big guy. He's a nephew to Howard Hughes. Howard was a big man, too. So Steve wouldn't take any money for it. So technically, he still owns that tire bender that I have.

The Congregational Church in Lebanon, Billy Hubbard, a local guy. Billy ran an oil business for years, sold heating oil, and he was a carpenter. He made the benches that were around on the green in Lebanon.

Liz

Oh, yeah.

Ron

Billy came to me one day and he says, I need a door knocker. I need a door knocker. And I said, what do you want? He said, I don't know. And he went on to tell me that the old people couldn't knock on the door loud enough so they could hear them on the inside. The doors are like that thick, you know. So how am I gonna make a door knocker? So I looked up all I could. So finally I went down there and sat there on the steps for a while and it came to me. So that door knocker that's on the Congregational church in Lebanon, that's how I made it.

Liz

So what did you do to make it audible on the inside?

Ron

It's got a mounting bracket here with a thing that goes up and down like that, and it's quite heavy. And it goes on and hits a nail that's driven with a big head, a doornail. And it's been there for years now.

So the Congregational Church in West Lebanon, that's the one that's up behind the Dunkin' Donuts on Pleasant Street. Well, somebody wanted to—they had a weather vane on there, that got hit by lightning at some point, and they came to me and they wanted it replaced. They had a tin-type photograph of it, the weather vane's gone. So would I make it, I said, well, okay, so I didn't know what to do. So I went over there and measured the doors and the windows to be able to figure out the size of the weather vane, and I copied it pretty close. It's up there now. When we put it up, they hired Miller's big crane, that's a hundred feet up there. That's scary.

Liz

You didn't go up, did you? Oh, geez.

Ron

So I was going up, so I went up and I took a hacksaw and I'm sitting on this basket that's floating around like this, so every time I push in the basket goes out and it's a hundred feet down there. And I'm really nervous. I had made it so I could slip a collar over it and tighten it up to mount it. Well, like we got it all on there, and he took me down. He boomed me over, boomed me down, and cabled me down all at one time. And it's like the bottom fell out and the combi just fell and hit the ground. I about died. So I finally get on the ground and I'm shaking. Now they had sent a steeplejack up with me. I didn't go up there alone. And they thought that was funny. I didn't think it was funny at all.

So I stand on the ground, I look up, and the weathervane's crooked. He says, You want to go back up? I said, No, you do it. I forgot who I did that for. That's been there a long time.

I did some railing up to Hanover Center Church one time. It's been replaced. I did a weathervane for the Marshalls. There's a weathervane on the barn and a bunch of other stuff around there I've done.

Liz

You have done, yeah, that's a replica of Matt's boat that we had. I gave that to Matt for his, I don't know, 60th birthday maybe?

Ron

Yeah, yeah. You brought me a photograph.

Liz

We had a cupola put on the barn because Matt felt that the weathervane would look better on a cupola.

Ron

I tell people about it all the time, so check that out.

Liz

Yeah, it's beautiful and it moves around.

Ron

Then you also have the bird - the great the great blue heron on the garden.

Liz

Yeah, and don't forget Levi's silhouette - of our dog who died in January, that marks the trail behind our house that meets up with all the trails, and people walk it all the time.

Yes, I think it came from Quail, or Highway 38, I think. It came across there, I think, and it came down. There's a lovely stand of trees in the Stonewall with the road alongside of it. It had to have been an old road, and then it comes around a curve, and the roots of the trees have come up, I think, on these other sections of the trail. But I think it was definitely a trail, and I think it crossed an earthen dam in our backyard and came down here. And someone told us once, was it Bob Adams that we went to visit, that that's how people got to school, that's how kids walked to school here. People who lived on, you know, around Trescott Road.

Ron

There's a structure in the brook.

Liz

In the earth and it's just a bunch of rocks piled high and it serves as a dam you know but it's mostly a swamp on the other side but then water does come through it.

Ron

I always thought that would make a beautiful postcard. Yeah, well it's a beautiful structure.

Liz

It's lasted all these years. It's not unlike the one, I think on the Corey Road, there's a dam, an earthen dam, I thought. It's not that big, it's smaller, but the same idea where the rocks are just all piled up. And it's a beautiful view.

Ron

I've gone up there and looked a couple of times, you've overlooked the whole valley, it's really great.

Liz

It's really very nice, I know.

Ron

And then for Dick Baughman, I've done a few things.

Dick

Thank you.

Ron

I made a brass circular staircase for a dollhouse. Your daughter must have been not too old when I did that. I don't remember. She was young.

Dick

Melissa. Yeah? Yeah. You know how old she is now?

Ron

Well, I saw her a while ago and I couldn't believe it. She's 60 now? No. Really? And how old is Scott?

Dick

Sixty-two.

Ron

He would have been the same age as David. Yeah, they were yeah, yeah, super buddy. Yeah, Scott, Gary Conrad and David spent a lot of time. What a trio. And all three of them guys thought like I do. I remember we built a doodle bug one time and the gas tank didn't fit but Scott just knew that we could put it somewhere else or make another one. He just knew and he's gone on to use that his whole life I mean, that's what he does.

And I've done lots of things for Dr. Baughman: I don't know - fix this and make me a that.

Dean Croall lived out on the Dogford Road. Dean was an old-fashioned man. He lived very simply. His father had been a blacksmith. So when Dean came to me with something I had to be sure I did it right because Dean knew what right was. And he wasn't bashful about telling me. I used to be a little nervous when he came around. He he was an interesting guy. He maple sugared. He had cattle. I don't think he milked any in my time. Probably he had earlier. The buildings all fell down up there. The house is still standing.

Liz

Yeah, the barn fell down.

Ron

There's a couple of new sheds that are built—what's his name owns that now? John Richardson. I don't know if he has any cattle now or not. I don't think so.

Dick

You know how I know John? His father was on the admissions committee at Harvard Medical School, which I didn't know at the time, and John's sister was in my brother's class in high school. So I'm down in Massachusetts. So I knew that family going way back to high school

days, and so just ironic that when John finished medical school three or four years after I did, so I didn't know him in school, but I knew him after that. His sister introduced me to my wife, and I introduced her to her husband, who was a cardiac surgeon. That's another long story, but he was one of the most brilliant guys I ever knew. He was one of the four major cardiac surgeons at the Mass General Hospital. I mean, this is high class, and one could go on and on about this relationship, but he was skiing one day, and some idiot came over a mogul and hit him in mid-air, and he was never right after that, and he had significant injuries from it, and very sad, but he was a fantastic person, so that's how the Richardson family and our family were together introducing to spouses.

Ron

At one time, Willie Black was active in town. She was a teacher. She was Teacher of the Year once, and Willie was instrumental in building the Colonial Village at the Ray School, and I got to know Willie. Probably she came to the shop, I don't remember. Anyway, I built the hinges and the door latches and the hardware, and Willie picked up a lot, and then she ended up blacksmithing. Later on, at the Ray School, they were studying pictographs in cave paintings, the kids were, and they came to me and they wanted me to make them something. So I made them a sculpture with pictographs on it. I did a figure. It's out there now, and on the chest, I put the four seasons in, like a pictograph.

What I had done is, I took my shop to the parking lot there, and they'd bring the classes out one at a time, and I would show them basic, basic things about metalwork, how to bend, how to heat, and years later, some of those kids remember that, and they used that in their life. You know, you cut it with a saw and chisel in various ways.

And I spent a whole day there, one class at a time.

Dick

Now did you do all that when David was a student there?

Ron

No, I don't think it was. No, it was after that. After that, yeah.

Ellie

It was probably when Amy was there.

Ron

Well, Willie was real active then. They don't use the colonial village now. I don't know how they figure that, but they don't do it anymore. They used to have a colonial day and the kids would go out and do things, and they don't do that anymore. But they don't dress up for Halloween anymore.

Ron

So, Willie – I got to know her pretty well.

At the Richmond School - I forgot who it was. Who was the principal? Susan Finer. She started to think that when anybody retires—you know, there's a weather vane on the Richmond School. So every time somebody retired, I'd build a weather vane like that one up there, and they'd give it to them as a retirement gift. I did that for probably ten years until she no longer was there. So Cora had one down there, Moses had one for a while, and then you retired. So nice. Those were good jobs.

Liz

I'm just going to interrupt for a minute. It's ten of eleven. You have to be there at eleven?

Dick

I don't have to be there any time. I'm having fun.

Liz

You tell me because Matt can drive you over or I can drive you over whenever you're ready. You just speak up, okay. All right. Yeah, it's fascinating Ron.

Ron

Okay, another person that I got to know through the Etna Forge is John Lahaye. He had pulling ponies, and John had oxen, and John farms, and John's—he's got his foot in everything. Oh, yeah, chickens. John, so if you've got equipment out, you're going to break stuff. That's just how it is. I welded on all kinds of his stuff. And his family's stuff, too, because his fathers and uncles also hay around. I think John is still haying now. He does your field, don't he? Yes. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Tim Bent, there's another farmer. Tim is the only one in town that's got any animals now, I think.

And Tim bushogs around the town, and Tim's always got something broke. Recently Tim, his wood splitter, wore out, so he got a new motor and it didn't fit. So we got that together, and I forgot how many. We worked on it two or three times, we got it together. Tim is really an incredible historian. He knows a lot, and he has a lot of stuff. And I keep getting at him to write stuff down, but it doesn't do anything.

Liz

I hope we can interview him.

Dick

He has so much stuff.

Ron

I've given him things that, you know, it's so much fun like you and Tim and the exchange of information. I got a swage block from you years ago.

Dick

Possible. You did.

Ron

You gave it to me. Big iron thing, thick, heavy as hell. Yeah. And I use that all the time.

Dick

Yeah. So it's one of the best things about this history stuff we're doing. We care about exchanging ideas.

Ron

Another one was Bill Robes. Bill Robes was—I don't know what he did for work. He worked his teacher learning or something. I don't know what he did. He made furniture. He built furniture. He built the furniture. His son built furniture, too. Yeah, they know, yeah. I think Bill had had a career as—I don't know why. Bill claimed to have been the inventor of the Frisbee. That's it? Yes, that's right. Yeah. I think he even had a patent on it. Wow. And that big company just took it away from him. Said, if you don't like it, sue me. And, of course, it's David and Goliath story, but he'd always tell that story. Bill was very talented furniture maker, as Dana is, yeah.

Dick

When we moved into the neighborhood, he invited me up to the house, the log cabin. He built a log cabin. He had a flying squirrel up there that was running around. He had living creatures and stories to tell and furniture to make. He made a desk and a secretary, which I gave to Melissa for one of her very early birthdays when she was in school. So I'm just so happy to have a piece of furniture.

Liz

So now, tell us where he lives.

Ron

He's on Three Mile Road, right at the corner, the log cabin, the very first one on the right.

Dennis has been doing work to it for right along. I don't know what they're doing to it. They've landscaped it different. Those are stone walls, and they've had heating people in it, I think. The inside of that is beautiful. I love the layout. Has a balcony and the kitchen and dining area can be sectioned out from the house, so if the kids aren't home they don't have to heat the whole house.

Dick

Yeah, yeah, yeah, nice. Now, if you know any stories...

Ron

Ask Dana to talk about it. Yeah.

Ron

He told me a story about when he built that house, he snaked those logs down off Moose Mountain with a horse. Oh boy. And I don't know when that would have been, but probably before the war when he was a young man.

The technology changed basically in our father's time. The farm I grew up on was a very successful farm, as all of these farms around were before the war. Then they got mechanized, they got tractors, and to support the tractor they had to have more cows. In order to have more cows, you got to find more fields, and it just kept going like that. The farm I grew up on, probably in the old days, they milked ten cows, a dozen cows, and they had three hired men. When my dad gave up the ghost, there was too much work for one and not enough money for two. That's what happened to him. Now it's a development.

Bob Coburn. Bob Coburn lived down here at the end of the, what's the name of that road? Trescott Road. Bob was a retired army man. Bob survived Pearl Harbor. Yes. And Bob, you can tell he was a sergeant, just by the way he was. I liked Bob, but you had to give it right back to him. And Bob was always doing something. He was tearing down buildings and selling the parts, and he just had something all the time. He was in and out of the shop all the time.

Dick

The story goes that he and his buddy were in the privy early morning, December 7, 1941.

And so I remember December 7th like it was yesterday because we used to listen to the radio, no TVs, listen to the mysteries and so forth. Kids would go around, it's supper time. All of that was off. It was all news about the war and how the Japanese had attacked us in Pearl Harbor. So Bob said he was there and that they were stopped as they were trying to get back to their bunkhouse from the privy early in the morning out there. So he had a lot of stories, but I suspect some of them at least were true.

Liz

Ruth has been very involved with everything.

Ron

Yeah, when they changed the Trescott Road, when they changed it, and it goes down now, Bob put up that retaining wall. I was fascinated by that, and that's held up very well. Yeah. Well, the funny thing is, they had these great long spikes he was supposed to drive into a while on. He can be on, he says, cut them, cut them off. They're too hard to pound off, so I cut them off. So

those long spikes are probably that long. Oh, geez, wow. But it's held up, it's the railroad ties. Yeah, yeah, I know. I don't know how big this is. This by this, something like that, 10 by 10 or so. But then a lot of stone behind it. It's held that wall in very well.

Dick

Yeah, it's there forever.

Ron

The garage. There's been a lot of accidents there. Oh yeah. Another one is Dave Cioffi. Dave Coiffi, he ran the Dartmouth bookstore.

He's a weekend farmer. He sugars. He's got a sugar operation that always needed repair. The city's barren. I haven't worked on it lately, but I've had to work on it a few times. Interesting. He keeps chickens. He did. He did. The bear got into his chicken house. I went up and repaired the damage. The bear got into the chicken house again. I armored the door. The bear ripped the door off. Finally, I made a door the bear couldn't get in. And the state set him up with some kind of an apparatus to scare the bear. Electric fence.

Dick

Yeah, the whole time.

Liz

So Sam's wife is from Mexico, and when her sister was visiting one summer, we took them on the section of Appalachian Trail that starts on Trescott Road and ends up down by Dogford Road. And the two girls, we went through Dave's backyard, you know, the trail goes through there, they said, why are there so many garbage cans out in the middle of the woods? They saw the buckets on the trees, and they thought they were, why do people keep garbage cans for people to, in case they have trash in the middle of the woods? They'd never seen anything like it before.

Ron

He's all the time buying stuff that needs to be modified. He buys some buckets and they don't have the right hangers and stuff, and I fix that for him.

Liz

The Etna librarian: Jeff Metzler, but then Barbara Prince was before.

Ron

Oh Bob Keene? Bob Keene. Yeah. Bob Keene came down, he was building a bookcase or something, so I built some kind of hangers for it. So there's a bookcase up there, or a shelf or something, and I did the hangers for it.

Dick

Bob Keene's Lodge on Dogford Road: And then there was another family who was in it very shortly, and now the current family.

Liz

They've had it for a very long time.

Ron

I hauled cement for them one time for something they built out in the woods, they don't remember what it was.

Dick

Is that any part of what you put together?

Ron

I don't remember. I did something up there, but I don't remember what it was.

Ellie

Was it Bob's family that owned the lodge first?

Dick

I don't know who owned it.

Ellie

I mean, it was Keene's, but...

Dick

Yeah, I think they built a lodge, because they wanted to buy the beautiful house that's just up on the corner there.

Ron

Really? Yes. It's completely gone. They're building a new one. However, they restored the barn. They put the barn back together.

Liz

Up at Trumbull Hall, I think Barbara Prince was still the librarian and she sponsored it, and I think it was maybe recorded, you know, so he had slides and the whole thing talking about the history of the lodge. It was wonderful, a couple of years, several years ago.

Ron

Now, Charlie Hughes, he lived out on the Goose Pond Road when he spoke a little while ago. Charlie was Niles' helper. Charlie had lost his leg in a hunting accident. He laid his shotgun down against the stone wall and it tipped over and he ended up losing his leg. It didn't slow him down any. He modified his tractor so he had a hand clutch and how I knew Charlie, when Niles held up the sawmill, on a sawmill in those days, the old hand-operated sawmill, you had the Sawyer who worked the levers back and forth to bring the carriage back aboard and you had the guy taking away over here, the boards, and on the other end you had another guy that helped roll the logs on and that's what Charlie did.

Liz

Is that called an Alaska sawmill?

Ron

No. It was a regular sawmill. Alaska sawmills are ones with a chainsaw. It's kind of a homemade arrangement. Niles had a real active sawmill. He could saw—I don't know how much, but his was a real sawmill. Taken away, I'll speak of that. What was his name? I can't remember. There was a guy who had a sawmill built on an old bus body, and he would drive it to wherever he'd got a job, and he'd set it up, and he'd saw logs in your back lot. Well, he came to the farm to saw oak. We had a bunch of oak, and I ended up taking away. That means— and the Frenchy Demers is who it was. And the thing that they all liked to do was bury the guy taking away. Those oak planks were this big, and I probably didn't weigh over 100 pounds, and it seemed that they weighed 200 pounds. And his goal was to make me stop. I stopped, all right. I told him, if you're going to do that, you have to get somebody else to take away. I worked very big at that time. That was the joke.

Ron

Walker Weed.

He was involved with the Hopkins Center, the shops there. And I don't know how I came to know him. Probably he came to the shop. So I went to the shop and I got to know him and some of the other fellows at Hopkins Center. And I made, Walker made those basket chairs, you remember those? And the guy, he lost his blacksmith and I made some hooks and hangers for him. His wife came to me, I told you the story I think, his wife came to me. Her family had been iron mongers down in Georgia, I think it was. So she was interested in the shop. And she wanted to make a fountain for their pond. So she had figured it out. We made a flower that stuck up out of the ground about six feet and a big flower on it. And out of the middle of the flower came the water. I don't know if it's still there or not.

Liz

I don't know. Is the pond still there?

Dick

Walker's house was built in 1768 and was one of the real earliest houses because that's the geographic center of town up there. And his house and the home I live in now were both on the Corey Road while his address is 33 Three Mile Road. It actually is, the old Corey Road goes right through his door yard. So to get up to my house, which I have the exact measurements, how far apart they are, because his was done in 1768 and then mine in 1769. And he thought they were so similar that they probably had the same framer because the first saw mills up here didn't come until 1769 here on Mink Brook. So that stuff all had to be sawed somewhere else. And here it was, the geographic center of town, like so many of these other towns, whether it's Enfield, they all have, you know, got Enfield Center, but that isn't the center of Enfield. Right. I mean, maybe the geographic center, but not the population center. So it's very interesting how the town evolved, but nobody, well, I'll save this for when you and I talk about my place again. But it was very important for those early ones put together that the stuff had to be all hand.

Ron

When did they move your house down?

Dick

Around eighteen hundred. Walker, we said that stuff was well recorded. Niles told me it was recorded. I've never been able to find the details of moving, but they had how many teams of oxen dragging those houses three miles downhill, thank God.

Ron

The only way they could do that was a post and beam construction because it's a rack. Yeah The Benson's farm over in Lebanon by Sunset Rock. Yeah, that house that's at the foot of the hill used to be up on top. Oh and when I was a kid, we used to go up there and play around if there was a well and the foundations were there. I think there's a house there now. They've fixed it all up.

And the church down in West Springfield where Ellie's from, they moved that down probably pretty close to a mile downhill.

Liz

Dickinson's house was moved too, wasn't it? From someplace?

Dick

It was probably moved about the same time as mine. I've never been able to get him interested in it. He said it came from Sausville Road.

Liz

By the reservoir. Interesting.

Ron

Rick tells stories about gathering cows when he was a kid from his grandmother's. I'm not sure where.

Dick

They had the big brick house on the corner of Ruddsboro Road.

Liz

By the church. That one?

Ellie

No. It's on our end.

Liz

Oh, Greensboro Road.

Dick

That was a different house.

Ron

Levitt.

Dick

So George Levitt was the realtor who sold us our house, which, by the way, was owned by Tom and Anne Byrne. So anyway, if we're looking for other people of historic interest, these are ones that we could try to get more information.

Ellie

You know, we've got Will Lange. He lived on Elm Road.

Ron

Ellie did canoe seats for him.

Ellie

Yeah.

Ron

One time when his daughter got married I made them a branding iron. I don't remember what they did. Down in Texas.

Liz

Yeah, no, it would be good to have him come and talk.