

Breedsville Tapes

Number 7

Recorded in 1985

Leonard Lee – LL

Gertrude Tellander – GT

Sarah Hultmark - SH

Lettie Lee - Lettie

SH: All the deer in area gone.

GT: I hope so. I hope they are. The same thing is true with the pheasant. Up until the last two years, I've always had pheasants around here. I don't have them anymore. Pheasants would come to the feeder. I think they must have shot them all.

SH: We had about a dozen wild turkeys in our woods when the previous owners were there and they said every hunting season there were less. It's a shame.

LL: The deer when they go through grousing they have a very distinctive mark. They cut the little green sprouts at an angle just as if you'd taken a little sharp knife and cut it.

GT: I know all about that Leonard, because they practically did that on my privet hedge out here one winter. One used to come right up here on my porch and leave his calling card and when this happened the hedge out there was a sorry mess when I came home in the spring and this man who did the work around here, roofing and so on and he said "well I might just as well just bring the tractor around here and pull that hedge out. It's all done" I said No, I don't think so. Let's see what we can do with it because we'd always been told privet hedge will live forever like blueberries. So I had some, I guess you'd call it stove pipe wire— real thin wire, and I also had some cord and I'd take every branch that was knocked down and pull them back and wire them to something else and you see what hedge is there now.

SH: You know they say you can cut privet hedge completely to the ground and it will start over again. Because I did that one time.

GT: All right. The little hedge right along here that was cut right down to the ground. It was the same height as the other hedge, but there was nothing left. And you see what it is now. –  
(continued discussion on hedges)

LL: Maybe you remember Walter Buck?

GT: The Bucks that lived on the back street?

LL: Yes

GT: Who was Walter? Was he the father of Eva and Winifred?

LL: No, he was one of the brothers.

GT: Well I knew the two girls, Winifred and Eva.

LL: Well he was a little bit older than her. Well anyway, she had that picture. A picture of my dad in the blacksmith shop in 1918 –correction 1913 and Walter Buck was his helper. I was going to say something to you about hedge. He was working in the paper mill in Three Rivers and he wanted a hedge trimmer and there was no such thing on the market. So he made one. Oh that's wonderful – Won't you make one for me Walt. He says "Nope, too much work involved." Wasn't very long and they were on the market. Just made the one for himself.

GT: That's how we did it for years, like big shears. I wish I had a quarter for every time I've done it this hedge back here that way. But now I have the electric ones and they are – you just hold them up and go along.

LL: The electric ones that you hold up yourself? That was the kind that Walt made.

GT: That was the kind that he had? That was wonderful it was on the theory of the old time mowing machine or sickle bar and that was 1913. Walt worked for my dad in 1913 and he made the trimmer much later. Don't know when – 30 or 40 years later.

SH: Did you teach in Breedsville?

GT: For fifteen years. I was what was left of the Breedsville School. Before they finally consolidated with Bangor and everything closed up and that was heartbreaking. We shouldn't have done that, Leonard either.

LL: And you know you can say it, I can say it and so many others can say it and we feel sick at heart that it was done and if any one of us had really got on our hind legs and said no we won't there'd been a hundred people right behind them to stop it. But we never did.

SH: I saw a lot of documentaries of schools around the Midwest about consolidation and they push and push.

GT: You just couldn't help but to do it or you'd be like the Wood school. The only one around here that – every year they – the state – try to close it up. The kids go to high school in Bangor. After 30 – 40 – 50 years Bangor says they couldn't take them – nobody would

have them at first they went to Eau Clair. The hometown school wouldn't have them if you won't come in and consolidate, set out there.

LL: The Glenn school is the same way. They said we will not close up. They had a two room school and they continued keeping it.

GT: They did. They had enough children. You see that was one thing that was against us here in Breedsville. There were not enough children to make a good, what should I say, a good number of children so you could have competition and so on.

SH: Could you have taken children from outside of Breedsville?

GT: No you couldn't they were all consolidated and going into South Haven, or Bangor or Bloomingdale.

LL: There were many many fazes to this.

GT: There probably would have been ten children well that's not enough – that's how they got these children.

LL: Guaranteed they would transport them forever and look at it now. After we became part of Bangor and they wanted to build this mammoth big what do you call it – they put it up to a vote and they said No – They said No 12 different times. The 13th time it passed. (more discussion on Bangor schools and voting.)

LL: If you can build a good building in 1931 and then a very few years later say its inadequate, no good and tear it down. Somebody's using wrong judgment.

GT: I taught in the elementary school south of the light 9 years. My first year was the old elementary school by the light. That one was torn down and a new one put up.

LL: That one was built the year she (Lettie) graduated. The one on the corner. No, wait a minute. We got our certificates in 1931, so it was 1930.

GT: The same thing is true Leonard at least in my opinion of the school that was here in Breedsville. We didn't need the upstairs. That's true. Why couldn't they take the upstairs off, put a new roof on the two rooms that were downstairs? You had two rooms in the basement. If you didn't like the heating plant you could put in a new one and keep it as a town hall or as a Senior Citizen get together place where they could have their suppers, their crafts and all this sort of thing. No we've got to tear it down.

LL: I have seen a lot of different houses and buildings and just for instance stairways. They all very well built in better buildings and they use proper nails. Maybe they use spiral type nails

GT: And they use 2 by 4's that were 2 by 4's.

LL: But the stairway in the Breedsville School wasn't built that way. They were put in with wood screws all the way through

GT: I know that. I know that it would still be standing

LL: For another 1000 years, if they'd just kept a roof on it.

GT: They had to build a new town hall. They could've used one of those rooms for a Town Hall.

LL: They could've bought the whole thing for what they put into the town hall.

Of course they couldn't because it must be on ground level. That's why they, the Village Council is kind of interesting when we see what they've done down through the years.

GT: You also see what they haven't done.

LL: You can see some of the things that are idiotic, but still the sum total they have kept the Village going because you've got one group of people one time and another group of people another time. It levels out so it comes out to a happy medium. Not always the best but a long ways from the worse and that's just the common everyday man living on the streets in Breedsville so it comes out pretty good. Be darned if I'm ever going to do anything toward not keeping the Breedsville Council. Going to keep the Village of Breedsville. . I was on the Village Council for a time. If enough people got together they could disband the village. Then it would become a wide spot in the road

GT: And that's what I said to the gentleman that lives on the back street. Greiffendorf on the Village Council. This is when I first came home last spring. Breedsville is getting smaller, I said if I keep going away for another five years I'm going to come home someday and I won't know where to turn to get down to my house because there won't be anything left. He looked at me "Oh not quite that bad, Mrs. Tellander. I don't know it gets smaller and smaller and when your away and come back it jumps at you.

Lettie : When your folks first came out here it was such a nice little town.

GT: Yes it was. A lovely little town

Lettie: My folks came on the farm ten years or so before you did. They came from North of South Haven. My dad said it was a nice flourishing town. Nice school, main street and church.

GT: In fact at one time it had two churches. One church used to be right over there in the Blueberry field.

LL: There's quite a story connected to that.

GT: That church was gone before my time. My parents knew about it. They've seen it.

LL: The Breedsville Methodist Church. Well first, People of all denominations in Breedsville said "we've gotta have a church." Eventually among other things the Methodist Church said we'll come up with \$1000 towards it if you want it, so it became Methodist. Well there's more to it than that, but that was one thing. The whole community fell in to build the new church. Methodists or not. They built - I have quite a long history of Breedsville Church. They built it as you say where the blueberries are. This is part of the story that doesn't always come out. This wasn't maliciousness; it wasn't anybody working against them. There was a Tornado. And the building was all up. They had started putting the actual roof on. The Tornado leveled it. After that they wanted it somewhere else and Amos Brown gave them the property. I don't know - Where did he live?

GT: Well the house is gone now. There's a mobile home. You know right down here across the street on the corner is Mortensen's. The next place is a mobile home and a red Barn. On the south side of the road. It was a great big white trimmed in green house.

LL: Which way from Mark's place?

GT: The next place west on the south side of the street. It used to be the old Knickerbocker place. That's the old Brown place as far as I know. There was Amos Brown and what was the Brown that lived up on top of the hill in the Kriske place - There was an A. S. Brown, but I'm not sure.

SH: What happened. Did it burn down?

LL: No, no, no, no. First I'll tell you the first part of it as I know it. The Knickerbockers had that house for years. For a tremendously long time. They were farmers. They were good solid citizens in every way.

GT: They came from somewhere over south of Battle Creek in that area if I remember. How they happened to come to Breedsville, I don't know.

LL: Anyway Knickerbocker had that for a tremendously long time and of course they got ---  
They had the one son, Delos that I remember and a couple of girls – I don't remember the girls names. Delos was the one who stayed home on the farm and then I can not figure this next part out at all. You tell the rest of it.

GT: Go ahead and I'll fill in the Blanks.

LL: Delos moved down town and bought Harry Forbes house. Harry Forbes house which you talked about before which is painted blue and way Delos lived down town his folks, well everybody passes away eventually. His folks passed away and then what did they do with the house after that.

GT: I don't exactly remember if the house just got tired and fell down or it burned down. But anyway it came down.

LL: They did nothing to it.

GT: They didn't do anything to keep it up.

LL: They didn't put a roof on it when it needed it. They didn't repair any windows. It just went to pieces and fell down. It wasn't burned. She and I have been talking we'd talk about this house and this house and she'd say. What happened to it? I'd say well that burned. It just got left alone till it got tired of standing and it fell down.

GT: I think because it leaked so badly that made it fall down faster than it might otherwise have done.

LL: If you don't have a roof you've lost the house.

GT: I don't think he liked the farm. I don't think he wanted to be a farmer. It was his dad who was the farmer.

LL: One thing about Delos that many people did not know, Delos went to the service and he served his country very well in the service.

GT: He wasn't too well though really.

LL: When he got home he was sick and they didn't know what was the matter with him and eventually it came out that it was Pernicious anemia and at that time there was nothing you could do for him. He had no physical power to do anything. Eventually they came up with a treatment for pernicious anemia and he felt better and Delos was much better. That's why the old house fell down.

GT: I think so to Leonard because it was as though he just didn't have the strength to even think about doing anything in the way of rebuilding a house or that sort of thing. He just didn't care about anything. There was no power in him. They could not tell him anything except he knew he was sick.

GT: "raining again -wouldn't you know

LL: He kept the cows. Is that the one - let's get this straight now. Is that the one where Amos Brown lived? That's the Knickerbocker house.

GT: I can't remember Mr. Brown as a person, but I can remember Mrs. Brown. See I was just a child but I can remember her. I'll tell you why. She's the first person that I ever knew that dyed her hair. And she dyed her hair with butternut shucks, which when I don't know what she did to them, but anyway the juice was squeezed out somehow and I suppose diluted with water and it made her hair a beautiful brown color. But sometimes the brown showed, you know and dyed her skin. To me this was amazing because she was the first person I knew who had dyed her hair at all.

LL: Amos Brown and predecessors were among the very first original settlers. I don't know if Amos was

GT: They were some of the original

SH: He must have built the house.

GT: I don't know. It was there as far as I can remember.

LL: Have you a vague idea when Knickerbocker might have acquired it.

GT: No, I can't remember if anyone was in it between and Brown and Knickerbocker. Don't know of anybody.

SH : It's almost impossible to research these titles. I went down there to work on one of them and I never want to go to Paw Paw again.

LL: You might just as well forget it when it comes to trying to research a title for history purposes. It's so doggone expensive and you can go into thousands and thousand of dollars on one little piece of property.

SH: I used to do it in Chicago all the time because I was on the ---- Committee about our neighborhood and you go down there and there's a book and you turn to your address and it tells you who had this, who first platted it at the top of the page and every buyer and every mortgage holder and so on and so on. You come down to your name and all you

do is - they won't let you take them out or Photostat because they're enormous books , but you can sit and copy them in nothing flat.

LL: If you want some information, I wanted it on a certain piece of property and I said well so and so bought this from so and so about this year or this year and I went down there. They helped me. They were very helpful. We went down page after page "There it is!" They found it. All it cost me was the Photostat of the page

SH: I went down there I decided I was going to photograph the page. He came in there and said you can't do that. You have to get a Photostat. I didn't want a Photostat. I wanted a photograph of it. So I said OK we'll Photostat it. He came back and said we can photograph. I said I thought I could because I can in every other county in the state of Michigan

LL: It only cost me \$1.00 for that copy of that particular sheet.

SH: It's not terribly good for that microfilm

LL: You've got to have something to base it on before you start searching. You have to know somebody's name. I inquired in that same office. I don't know if I'll ever do it, an awful lot of work, but if I came down and wanted to trace this particular piece of property clear back to United States Government would that be out of the line to ask you to do that. I know it would take a tremendous amount of time. She says You can't.

GT: You can?

LL: You can not. Because our records only go back to 1880.

GT: Do I remember right the courthouse burned once? Didn't some of our records get burned

LL: I hadn't heard that.

GT: Something happened to some of the records. I don't know if they burned or got wet or what.

LL : They said they went back to 1880. That's all I know.

SH: I think the basement flooded and they threw them out. I wouldn't swear to that but I'm on the courthouse restoration committee and you pick up a lot of this stuff and it goes in one ear - really doesn't go out the other ear. I remember someone said they threw them out. I think they were in the basement and got wet or moldy or something.

LL: Don't think it was Indians. You know there's something interesting about the court house in Paw Paw, Van Buren County, compared to Allegan. They built a courthouse in Paw

Paw and then eventually they wanted another one and they built it where it is now. But the first one was moved over on the main street and it's still there it's used as a town hall. But in Allegan they've had four different courthouses. Three of them they just tore them down and threw them away and they got one that's left. In that respect Van Buren counties better than Allegan county.

SH: When I was hired to take a picture of the Allegan courthouse. That was like 20th century architecture. I think I'm going over there and I'm going to photograph ---- 1950. My husband's a civil engineer by trade and I'm an architectural photographer. We're really into architecture and as far as we're concerned. Everything built from about 1945 til about 1965 could be neutron bombed or something and the world would be so much better.

GT: Has no class, has no anything.

SH: It's impossible to photograph – it looks ugly to look at, it looks ugly in a picture. It's awful to print it and who cares, and that Allegan courthouse is an ugly one.

LL: Gertrude/ I've known her all my life so I still call her Gertrude.

SH: Well if you don't start calling me Sarah, I'm not going to answer you.

LL: I want to tell Sarah something I observed less than two years ago on the main street that one little section that goes one way I guess you'd call the East side of the street. There was a man there sitting there in a folding chair.

GT: What town are you in now.

LL: Allegan. He had just a drawing board on his lap. He was drawing a picture of the building across the street. He says I'm doing that of all the builds here in town. All the main buildings. They weren't little rough partial examples of what they might be. They were, they were right down to authenticity exact. Boy they would be some wonderful pictures to get.

GT: You have no idea who he was?

LL: No, he said they're gonna be available to somebody of real importance in Allegan. I spent a half an hour talking with him. He was just magnificent. Just a common little old man. Well he wasn't too old either, possibly fifty. If I remember it was just plain black and white. But every bit of those little architects – all those little peaks, all those little curly cues, dormer winders and things. Yes, he had it right there down to exact. He wasn't

using a ruler. While I was talking to him, he brought out four or five different sheets about the same size that he had in his little case and he showed me four or five of them that he'd already finished. He'd hoped to get them done by a certain date for an exhibition.

GT: I don't know if you ever knew, Leonard, but my husband's brother was a commercial artist in Chicago. The pictures in the living room are some of his.

SH: When was he a commercial artist: Maybe that's where I know Tellander.

GT: Well he had a studio right on Michigan Avenue. Oh this must have been way back – 1940's – 1945's.

SH: Was he there in the 1960's?

GT: I don't know that would've been at the end. He was fifteen years older than my husband. He probably would have been in South Bend when he was 60 because that's where he moved. He had shows. He was good enough to have shows.

GT: I was born about two and a half miles diagonally across here on the Ackley school road on a farm. My dad and mother lived with my dad's parents at the time. Then later we moved over to the Kane farm which is east of Breedsville (Al Kane farm). We were there for two years. Then we moved to this house that I was telling you about North of Breedsville.

LL: The Pulka house – Puckett house – Forrest Puckett.

GT: Yes, the house that we lived in burned. Not while we were there but in between times. Then and now and this was a new house that was built. But that was the first that I remember of Breedsville.

SH: Do you have any idea when that house was built, the one that just burned?

LL: The one you said you moved into. We've been trying to trace information on that house.

GT: That I don't know. I wasn't interested in things like that at the time. Five or six years old.

LL: We have done some reconstructing of this and that and we've come up with the date of 1928 when it burned. Close to that. Got quite a history on that that Harold Mortensen told me because he built it.

GT: Oh, I didn't know that. You see, at that time I would have been living in the house next to the church.

LL: When did you move into the house next to the church?

GT: Well, let's see. I lived 2 years; I was five when I moved in up there – about 1911 or 12. The house we moved into, I wouldn't say it was an old house. It was a middle aged house. Similar to the old Bush house. That kind of architecture with a main part and a wing.

LL: Of course her dad's name was not Montey. You tell just a little about the history of your dad as far back as know about.

GT: Well, my dad's name was really Lamott L-a-m-o-t-t. It got shortened to Montey and then Motty until he was known to everyone around – four miles in all directions as Motty Farrington and I was young Motty because I was the only child and my mother always said, "Oh Motty you just spoil everything I try to do. I try to make this youngster into a little lady and you try to make her into a little tomboy". I used to go hunting and fishing with my dad even when I was a little kid. Even came down here on this creek where I now live to help him catch minnows. I had a pair of boots just like he had a pair of boots and I would hold the end of the minnow net and he would wade out there and we'd have a half a nook can full of minnows to go fishing.

LL: Where was your dad born?

GT: I imagine over there on the same farm where I was born. I don't really know, but I think so.

LL: Now with some of the people we I told where my folks came from. First my dad followed it down – boom- boom – boom and then my mother. Of course, I told them were both – Pa was half scotch and half English and mother was 100 percent English. The saying has been around that Montey Farrington was part Indian. Is that correct?

GT: Not as far as I know. No, as far as I know he was French and English.

LL: You see these interviews - they're very worthwhile to straighten up some questions that are around.

GT: I've heard the same story because of course my dad always loved to hunt and fish and he was good at it. He could catch things when no one else did, you know. And this sort of thing and his father before him was a good hunter and a good fisherman. In fact my grandfather Farrington died on the lake over there on 43. There is a little lake over there where he lived in his later years. He was out fishing and right over into the boat. That was a wonderful way to do it.

LL: He was doing what he wanted to do

GT: He was doing what he wanted to do and what he enjoyed doing.

LL: We enjoyed ourselves growing up in Breedsville.

GT: Yes, I can say I did too Leonard. I often look back on my childhood and think what a lucky gal I really was.

LL: We had good neighbors all the way around.

GT: Yes and people friends of mine now say, well what did you do. We didn't have any TV. We didn't have any radio. What did you do? I can't remember that we ever ran out of things to do. We always found plenty of things to do. And we did most of them right at home, or at our neighbors home.

LL: And that doesn't mean that they was things that was out of the way or destructive in any sense.

GT: Not as comparison with today. There's nothing to do these days and they can't think up anything to do. I mean anything that's stable. What were some of the things we did. My mother of course taught me to sew and I made doll clothes and I played school with my dolls and my teddy bear. In fact I still have the teddy bear upstairs. He's missing one ear and he's pretty decrepit looking. But he's still kicking around.

SH: I don't think there's an awful lot of difference between your childhood and mine because I was born in 1930 and we did things. I played paper dolls passionately.

GT: I had all kinds of paper dolls. Boxes of paper dolls.

SH: My mother got old pattern books that I could cut papers doll.

GT: And I got all of mothers scraps because she did all of our sewing. I got all the scraps to make clothes for my dolls or get ideoes for my paper dolls or whatever. We wrote stores. Make up little stories. Ok, this was good practice for me in learning to write and express myself and so on.

#### OTHER SIDE OF TAPE

GT: Well anyway he didn't want to be a storekeeper where he got the idea, I don't know. But he wanted to be a fisherman on the ocean where he got it I have no idea. Anyway, he'd made some connection with someone in Washington State and the next thing a letter

came back. Yes if you come, we can get you a job on such and such a fishing boat and the pay will be so and so on. Uncle Bert had a home, a family, a wife and two girls in Bangor and so they made arrangements to sell the home and Aunt Emma and the two girls were to come up here in this house North of Breedsville to spend the winter with us while uncle Bert went to Washington to check out the job and living conditions. So we received letters from Uncle Bert about going out on the ocean and oh this was all wild. Nobody in Breedsville or Bangor went as far away as Washington State. Well the upshot of it was that in the spring, he sent home money for Aunt Emma and the girls to come to Washington State and that's the last time I ever saw them. We corresponded for a few years, gradually that simmered out too and the only one that might still be living is my one cousin, Dorothy. Aunt Emma, Uncle Bert and Mildred I know are gone, but Dorothy might still be living. But that was wild to just get letters from somebody as far away as that. Of course we had to answer them.

SH: That's kind of exciting when you think about it. About going all the way out to Washington in those days.

GT: It was, well now going to Washington wouldn't seem like much. For instance I go to California, Arizona and Florida every year and don't think much more about it than I do going to Kalamazoo. But in those days there was further away than China is.

LL: You know actually a trip to Bangor on the train cost 15 cents. Even that was a trip. Memorable event – only four miles.

SH: I remember when I was a kid we used to drive out to Lone Oak?? Which was about 3 miles. That was a long trip. But to go to Dallas – that was forever. When you got there you'd stay overnight with somebody.

GT: We had Model T Fords and it was all gravel roads between here and Kalamazoo or Benton Harbor, Oh yes, you speak of trips going to Bangor, well now trips going to Kalamazoo, now that was a real occasion. You only went maybe three or four times at the most in the whole year. Well now I run over to Kalamazoo like I was going down to the corner grocery and think nothing of it.

SH: Well too I guess the fast cars and good road. A friend I was talking to said going places destroyed Berlamont.

GT: And it is destroying Breedsville, you know and Bangor I think.

LL: It's going down – too many empty stores in Bangor.

SH: I walked in the other day and I said “What happened to Moskowitz?” I didn't know they had left.

GT: No, they've been gone quite a while. Moskowitz left a long time before. They have a nice successful store in Fennville.

GT: They did have at one time and really it was true that what you couldn't get anywhere else you could get at Moskowitz's. Seems like they had everything.

SH: I've wondered too if it's not that that's destroyed these little towns and not the tremendous changes in the population.

GT: I think that has a lot to do with it. Different people – Different times.

SH: Who are no longer interested in the town here you and Leonard love Breedsville.

GT: Yes. I can remember being told that before our time, Leonard, Breedsville was a bigger place then when we knew it. And when we knew it my goodness it isn't a drop in the bucket to when we knew it. Well let's say 50 years.

SH: Well from the looks of that newspaper in 1873 with all those ads there were all kinds of stores. Now there's nothing but a grocery store and gas station which is open once in a while.

LL: The only thing I can say is I hope he's there occasionally because I don't want to go to Bangor to buy gasoline.

GT: Well that's one of the reasons in my opinion that the grocery business and the gasoline business are in the condition that it's in now. So often they didn't have the things we wanted or needed. I can give you an example. Crackers. One time I wanted just plain crackers. We were having soup for lunch and I didn't have any crackers. So I get into the car and I run down town to the corner grocery store and I couldn't see any crackers. I said, “Walt, where are the crackers?” “Oh, I guess we're probably out if there aren't any up there.” And I said for goodness sakes, a think like soda crackers doesn't spoil and doesn't rust. It doesn't do anything on the shelf. Why don't you have them? He said well we just haven't had any call for them lately. Well, all right so when I have to go to Bangor to buy soda crackers, I'm gonna buy gasoline, I'm gonna buy butter, I'm gonna buy everything on my list, because maybe you can't get it . So they've brought it on themselves to a certain extent.

A discussion on gas station being closed a lot.

SH: At least the grocery store is open.

GT: And they do have a better stock of groceries now than they had a time back and before that you know and I won't mention any names.

LL: Less than a month ago, I wanted a can of spinach. Couldn't find it. OK here it is. OK give me two of them. No, we've only got one!

GT: Time to order another one huh?

SH: Apparently the Rabbit Inn does very well.

GT: That's the one place in town I guess that really booms.

LL: Booms in more ways than one.

GT: I'm glad I don't live down town. I remember when my husband and I first decided to build our home down here; my dad thought it was just terrible he didn't see why we didn't build in town. Why didn't we get up on a main street somewhere and build a home in town. Well we liked it out here. We didn't want to be right in town. The time came when he said well; I guess you two knew more about it than I did because he said I can see this was even this was in my dad's day. I can see being out here is much more pleasant than right down town. Especially on Friday or Saturday night.

SH: When did the problems begin?

Lettie: I did it before, Leonard his mother lived right across the street from there before the dance hall was there. There's a house there now. I said you don't want to be so close into town so we're still in the village, but out. Five acres that we can hang on to.

GT: Well that was another thing that Vic insisted on doing out here. We're going to keep land on both sides of us and in back of us so that we can decide who our close neighbors are going to be. We were going to be a little bit ropy I guess. Even in those days there were some people you didn't care to be right next door too. We'd have no choice if we'd built in town especially up in the East end of town.

LL: Right down in the main section there was a most despicable family you could ever ask for anywhere.

GT: I still don't understand why something isn't done about it to remove them.

LL: Is there any legal way of doing it?

GT: I don't know. Seems to me there would be.

LL: Everybody has spoken to me saying it should be done. I don't know if there's any legal way of doing it.

GT: I think there's a maybe little fear in the back of their minds. Well I don't want to be responsible for doing it. I might get my house burned down or something you know.

SH: That's part of it. I do documentaries of small towns and the neighborhoods of large towns and it does seem to me that the most prevalent emotion is fear.

GT: Well, I know this past spring I spoke with the supervisor was down at the town hall one day and we were on the same subject that we are right now. I said well just tell me why can't something be done. This was sort of his reaction There is no law that says you can do that and there are no police officers here to enforce it and everyone hesitates to say this is what we're gonna do.

SH: Think about it though, you have to have collective action. They would have to take revenge on every single person in town and that makes it a little difficult. Generally that used to work when we were young. There was in my neighborhood in Houston, Texas, there was a house and that is how I learned that a house is a house, because I heard my mother and father talk about and people came in, they set up their house within 6 months they were gone and this was not a hooliganous neighborhood really it had apartments, it had single families and everything but everybody concertedly walked back and forth in front of that house and drove back and forth in front of it of all hours of the day and night and made it extremely uncomfortable for those people and they left. I don't know where they went, but they left our neighborhood.

GT: That was good. It seems like something like that could be done but no one wants to take the responsibility.

LL: I have made the statement to quite a number of people and I never got a positive answer to any of them that I spoke too. I said of course you just across the road so this don't quite apply to you, but you know what I'm talking about. I believe the way things are right now if somebody started a petition to get a police officer, you would have to raise the millage to do it. I believe the majority would be for it to the point they'd vote in extra millage. The people in village are tight they don't want to spend money, but I believe they would do it for that.

SH: Bloomingdale has done it. They did it about three years ago. They didn't like motorcycle gangs from North of Bloomingdale. You couldn't set on your front steps. Motorcycle people would come by and throw things at you. I went over one morning and they had had a battle in the park there and glass was everywhere. Twelve of them were arrested. They went in the bar and people from the bar came out and they fought. It was horrible. They were tearing up everything you could not have anything in Bloomingdale and they hired a policeman.

GT: I thought Breedsville was the only one.

LL: The policeman work full time or at his own discretion?

SH: He works when he wants to or you can call him if you have a problem. Nobody except he and the city fathers knows when he's on duty. He may be lurking in an alleyway somewhere and he may be home sleeping. They don't have those problems anymore. Bloomingdale has 404 people I think.

More discussion on problems in Bloomingdale.

LL: I'll tell you to get anything like that done you've got to have one person usually three or four people.

GT: Isn't there a village council anymore?

LL: Yes

GT: I said there has to be

LL: If you could get three or four people willing to just get behind and push the idea. It could be got through. You could push it through. In the past they were gonna close down the Post Office and I was one of them that said, not if I can help it. I wasn't the only one. And it's the only case I know of where our petition actually got before congress. We worked hard. Doris worked tremendously hard at it and we saved it for the time being.

SH: When was that? What year?

LL: I can guess

GT: A long time ago I know and if they do that'll be the end of Breedsville. Period. They'll turn off the stop light.

LL: I'll call it fifteen years ago.

GT: At least.

SH: Once you lose your Post Office, they take you off the map.

GT: Yes they do. We're almost off now. I know I speak with people in Kalamazoo when I say my address is Breedsville. Breedsville where's Breedsville. You know where Bangor is – Yea – I go to South Haven. Many of them never saw the sign down there on 43 that says Breedsville.

LL: Not a very big sign.

GT: People may be going through further north or further south.

LL: I'm very glad that we have a very good road from 43 to Breedsville.

GT: I am too. And it took us a long time to get it through.

SH: Took them a year to make the thing.

GT: 10 or 12 years to get the paperwork done.

SH: Will they're working on 380 and are they really going to come into Breedsville with it?

GT: I don't know. I hope they are. We really need this two miles.

LL: That's strictly up to Columbia Township. Not somebody else. We can't blame that on anybody except Columbia Township.

GT: They're doing fine east of here. I noticed that they're working on that seemingly and that's good.

SH: Apparently they're supposed to come if we don't have too much snow. That's what my husband told me. They will have enough time and they'll finish it. Cause 380 beyond over there has been redone.

GT: From Bangor to Ackley School and from Ackley School to Jericho is just a beautiful road. Won't stay that way.

LL: The company that road South of Breedsville was built in such a way that it will stay.

GT: Well they expected that to be a link between I-94 and North, I think. At least that's what I'd heard somewhere along the line.

LL: There's been arguments for a long time. Shall 215 which will be the link from 94 to who knows where to North or will it go through Bangor or will it go through Breedsville. Went through Breedsville and 215 as a state road did exist from Breedsville to Lawrence. That was way back. 215 is now not a state road. It's a county road.

SH: This part is state now?

GT: No

LL: No

SH: They got state money for that because people who live on it were telling me they had to cut down all the trees and everything. They got money from the state whereas if it had just been a county road they wouldn't have had to do that. So there must still be some involvement.

GT: Well, that must be the rule. You know the road South of Bangor. The road straight South of Bangor – across the Lawrence Hartford road. That has been all resurfaced now with the exception of about three miles and that goes down through a beautiful – oh in October it was just lovely – because some far thinking farmers a way back had planted maple trees

SH: 1870 – They gave them away.

GT: On both sides of the road. It's just a lane down through there and it's just beautiful.

SH: Oh yes, but they're cutting them down.

GT: No, they're not. Some of them have to come down I'm sure. They're dying

SH: 1870 and they're all dying. I've been trying to get the Department of Agriculture to give away you see they grow evergreens. You can buy a whole package of evergreens and I called him a couple of years ago and I said look it here. I said who needs evergreens. All our maples are dying. He said well I'm going to have 45 or 65 or something and I'm starting some more from seed.

LL: Oh my lord. Come out to our place and you can get one hundred of them for nothing.

GT: I pull them out of my hedge all the time. They're all over the place down here. Little trees, so high. My point was, I realize they're cutting them down because they're getting old and getting to be a hazard – a safety hazard. They did not when the road you know what I mean. They didn't go along and cut down everything and make it a way out here. It's still just a two lane road and of course some people say it's dangerous because the ditch is right there. They could slow down you know.

SH: Have you heard about the trees in Portage?

GT: No. Yes, oh yes, Kalamazoo.

SH: I was out there the other day and I saw those poor miserable trees. It's an enormously wide road and those trees are so far off you'd have to be drunk twice in order to run off into one of these trees. I thought, gee, maybe I'd better slow down. Maybe one of these trees

will jump out and grab my car. I've got to write a letter to the Gazette because that's so dumb. I've never seen anything so dumb. Those trees are so far away.

GT: You couldn't hit one if you really tried.

SH: I don't think I could hit one if I worked at it. They're fairly well spaced part. I figure the probability of hitting one of those trees if you're blind drunk.

GT: If your blind drunk you got no business on the road anyhow.

SH: Yes, but they are

GT: I know they are much to the disadvantage of us who don't drink.

SH: My husband decided if they took all the drunks and all the heavy smokers and all the dope people off you know medical bills in this country would go down about 50 percent.

GT: Oh yes I know they would I wonder about the safety hazard of driving on the highway How much would that go down? You'd be safer.

LL: One road, talking about roads, talking about trees. It had to be about 1918 or so. We went to our Crystal Springs camp meeting and we took what's now 381 South to get to Red Arrow. Tea Pot Dome beyond that and then that was just completely dirt road from there on.

GT: Yes, down past the Decatur road

LL: Yes, there's a minute before you get to the Decatur road that I want to speak about regards to trees. There's the original Territorial road that you cross there.

GT: Detroit to Chicago.

LL: Yes, the original Territorial road.

SH: I've always wanted to go down that road but couldn't find it.

GT: It's there.

LL: Chopped up in pieces and so on.

GT: Yes

LL: But here was what was interesting to me to come from the North you hit Territorial and then there was a jog – townline job undoubtedly and then the road continued in 1916 after this jog to the left and here were all these big beautiful trees on the right. Big beautiful trees on the left. But it was getting awful crowded. Definitely even in those days it was getting tremendously crowded and then in about 1918 or 19 we went down there again. They didn't cut those trees down. They're right now to this minute.

SH: I know the road you mean. I was down there by the Historical Society to photograph those trees.

LL: It was about 1918 or 19 that they didn't cut down those trees at all. But straight down across territorial they had selected apparently acquired land from a farmer and they built a road. Now building a road is different than you'd think of it today. They just took the gravel in and hauled it in and let it set and when we went down there. We, I say we. I was just a kid. I was just an observer. We didn't want to drive through all that new gravel. We might get stalled in there so we still took the old road. But eventually

SH: It's right along and the new road. Is over here. The first time I saw it the fellow from the Historical Society called me and said you know that road that goes to Decatur with all the trees. It's got two sets of trees and looks like -- Well, would you photograph it. I'm afraid they're gonna cut down those trees because they're so old. I said I sure will. They are over 100 years old.

GT: Well that's what I said about this road south of Bangor that we were talking about previously. I said it would be a shame to take all those trees out and not replace them. That was such a beauty spot it seemed to me.

SH: I used to have to go down to Hartford quite frequently. I had a client down there but whenever I had to go down in the fall I always took that road instead of the other one because it's like going in ? land.

GT: In the spring too because there's a lot of dogwood along there.

SH: Its not exactly the safest road if you go down the other one. It's better but the world is full of not so safe roads but who wants to drive that all the time.

SH: I'm going to call him again. I've still got his phone number. He's down that way far far far and see what he's doing with his maple trees.

GT: He might have walnuts.

SH: You know they're not in -- they're ugly.

GT: They're such wormy things in the fall

SH: They lose their leaves so early. They're not pretty.

GT: They don't change color

SH: Then they dump a lot of walnuts on the road that go crunch. In the spring their the last ones to come out and look like ---

GT: Why don't you plant a beautiful tree while you're planting? It doesn't take any more work.

LL: We've got five hard maples on our five and four tens acres but we planted them ourselves.

We brought them down from Auntie Marie's place and River Street goes straight south towards great big massive nothingness and that's where we got those five hard maple trees. We got lots of maples otherwise on our place. But they're like soft maples and I know there are at least three or four different varieties of them. But I don't know.

GT: It's like this fall especially, the foliage was so lovely this fall and I had people from Kalamazoo and Battle Creek and even Mt. Pleasant over here and they said this was the most beautiful area they had seen anywhere coming along the road. I do have several what I call swamp maples and I know that's probably not the right name. But they seeded themselves and they come up here and about. Most of the colors in the back along the creek here is yellow and here will be this orangey red tree and then I have one dogwood that turns orangey red and then I have a few pines mixed in here and there. Really it's beautiful. I was wishing you'd come down and take a picture of it.

SH: I did.

GT: Oh, you did huh? Well good.

SH: I put all my color pictures in the deep freeze until I get around. I process black and white all the time, but when I process color, I take two or three days and do nothing but process color.

LL: Gertrude, let me tell you something that she's got. I've got, I don't which way you call it seriously, but she's got a book, about our centennial and I'm supposed to go out and show people,

SH: I think I've got it now.

LL: You've got the one, but I've got the other.

SH: I did bring these

GT: The first day of school and they want to know teachers name. She writes it on the board and says see now look. It's Tell – T-E-L-L and A-N-D er E-R. Tellander. And by the end of the day most of the children were spelling my name. So they could go home and tell their parents what my name was. That was their first spelling lesson in 3rd grade.

SH: But it is Swedish?

GT: My husband's name is Swedish as far as I know. He father was Swedish.

SH: I'll bet that is where I have seen it because we've walked through that cemetery

LL: When I was a kid course it was the four sisters and their off spring. We were a whole regular clan in ourselves and all of a sudden I discovered in 1913 there was some Swedes. There were other people than English.

GT: Before I guess you thought the whole world was English. I think the people of England believed that for a good many years. They had a pretty good try at turning the whole world into an English - Australia, Canada, all the Islands.

LL: Then when I started to school, I found out there was others besides the Swedes. We found that there were a lot of Native Americans if you want to call them that. I mean those who had been around this part for many generations at least and hear it was a great big awakening to me.

SH: I know my husband continues to tell me I had nothing to do with the Civil War honey. My ancestors were not here yet. And I said I think they were. But we won't quarrel. Actually I think his great grandfather left in 48 because that's when they all left because of the revolutions.

GT: 1848?

SH: Yes. I know my great grandfather did, but I know what his name was. He changed it too.

LL: 1848. One year after my grandpa was born.

SH: Well in England there were no revolutions.

LL: No, they have revolutions in the U.S. history early and they got over them.

SH: They were too proper by 1850 to have any revolutions.

Lettie: My grandfather came before the Civil War. Of course I'm older than you are.

GT: What nationality are you Lettie?

Lettie: I'm mostly English I guess. But some of it goes way back. Don't know what. Grandpa Royal was English. He was old enough to go to the Civil War. I don't know if he was a citizen or not, but he didn't go. Married and had several children. Then my Grandma Royal and my mother's father - they go way back.

LL: Lettie had an aunt who wanted to trace the Royal - not the Royal, but the other side of the house - the ancestry back and Daughters of the American Revolution - D. A. R. She attempted to do it, but there were two spots she couldn't trace because these two spots the Indians had come in and burned down the court house. So she's not a D.A.R. officially.

SH: I could be a U.D.C. if I wanted too.

LL: What's U.D.C?

SH: United Daughters of the Confederacy, you all.

GT: I'm sure that my dad was not in the civil war. He wasn't old enough for that at that time.

My husband was in the 1st World War; my son was in the 2nd World War. But that's it.

Lettie: Your father was probably about my fathers age.

GT: Well in fact dad was, if the 1st World War had lasted another year, he would have been in the 1st World War. My husband was in Navel Aviation. In France and in England.

LL: I want to say something about her husband. He was an exceedingly great genius in anything mechanical. Am I right?

GT: I agree

SH: What did he do?

GT: Anything. He built the shop. He built the garage. If something needed doing on the tractor, he fixed it, something on the car, he'd fix it. My son is a great deal like it.

LL: I've lost track of him.

GT: Yes, I imagine so. Although Bud looks much more like my dad, I mean he has Farrington characteristics. Dark eyes and dark hair, although it's getting gray. He looks more like my dad than he does like his dad.

LL: Vic had another characteristic. That's Vic Tellander, her husband. He wasn't only very good in mechanics, he was very good managing. He made 2 and 2 add up to 4 and when he got through he had the 4. Isn't that right?

GT: Yes he did. Well, he originally – when I first met my husband he was a linotype operator. This he had learned within the last five years before I met him. He had learned to be a linotype operator and back in those days a linotype operator was well here was where his mechanical ability came in. Yes when we were first married, we had a whole years honeymoon because when we ran out of money we were always able to stop and he could get a job at almost any city as a linotype operator and get what was considered to be fantastic money for those days for a linotype operator. So we could stay a couple or three weeks and go on another 300 miles or so. We were gypsies after a fashion but it was great fun.

SH: Where did you go?

GT: We wound up and spent the winter in Florida. That was my first winter in Florida.

LL: When was that?

GT: We were married in 1925. So it was sixty years ago.

SH: It couldn't be during depression or you couldn't find a job.

GT: Yes it was during depression. That was the strange part of it.

SH: 26?

GT: Yes it was.

SH: Well, it really had not hit here.

GT: Yes it had hit here. We were in depression days but that's what made it seem so fantastic that he could get a job anywhere – almost anywhere because there would be somebody sick or somebody wanted a few days off or somebody wanted a vacation. And you couldn't pick up linotype operations just anywhere. You had to send into Chicago some big center like Louisville or something to get one to come out to a small town or a small city.

SH: Well I remember linotype operators. Then it breaks down and you have to fix it.

LL: This is repetition of what we've already put on the tape. I want to tell Gertrude this. He was a mechanical genius. When he came to line the heat his house. I didn't see the whole set up. I don't know the whole set-up. But I know this one part. He had it all laid out and brought it down to Pa to weld. I was welding. Pa was welding. And we took a Model T frame about so wide, drilled a series of holes here whole series of holes here, a whole mess of them. Then the same thing on the other one and then put steel pipes right down through and then we would bronze weld each one of those pipes in separately. Then there another piece of the Model T frame like that was put on top welded in solid.

GT: Would you like that for a memento? It's right out here in the shop now.

LL: Oh boy!

SH: Oh really?

GT: And it was right there behind you. That was the heating cabinet.

LL: I did a lot of welding on that piece.

GT: It was right there. You can't see now because a new piece of plywood has been put in.

LL: I want to tell you one more step in that.

SH: What went through it? Gas? Electric? What?

LL: Hot water.

GT: That's how we heated the house.

LL: I didn't see the whole set up but –

GT: Well it worked beautifully, Leonard and it worked all these years since your dad did that up until last year I had a new heating system put in and the reason was these poor pipes were getting clogged with – same as a teakettle, you know.

SH: It's surprising they didn't years ago with this water.

GT: Well this water is mostly iron. I have spring water. Our well goes right down into a spring. Anyway the house has been heated all these years with that same thing. We had another one in there. You see the grill in the wall. You open the grill and there it is and that's how we heated this whole house

LL: Well I'm guessing at this. I want Gertrude to correct me, but that had to be in the neighborhood of 1926 or so.

GT: It was a little later than that because we had come home from our year in Florida and we had lived in Grand Rapids a year. We had lived in Allegan three or four years. So it was around 35 – 40 – somewhere in there.

LL: I worked with my dad a lot. For awhile I was away to school and I was away from this region in Fennville in my own shop. And there was a question. Now I did about half of that weld and Pa did about half of that weld. I was good.

GT: In other words if the need for blacksmithing had continued you could have had a shop right here that would have been a well meaning thing. You didn't need it anymore.

SH: In my opinion you're always needing somebody to weld something.

LL: No matter how good you are at welding there's always a possibility of one little pin hole coming up in the weld and so pa said as long as that's gonna be sealed in tight so we can't reach it, if there should be a pin hole, ordinarily I'd just go over it and seal it up, but you can't reach it. What do we do about that? And Vic said well I'm just gonna put water glass in everything. I've never heard of water glass before and I've never used it since, but he knew what he was talking about.

GT: And the strange part to me and to people when I tell them he'd never built a house before. He'd never put in a heating system before. He'd never built a fireplace or a chimney

before. Yes he had read about them. He had all kinds of books about those things and read them and would refer back to them time after time. But he did it.

[end tape 7]