

This is an Interview for the Woodbury Public Library's  
Oral History Project

With Larry Pond  
and Gloria Pond  
Good Hill Rd.  
Woodbury, CT

Conducted By Carol Sideli  
During the Month of April 2008

**Carol Sideli:** Larry, let's start by telling the people how your family first came to Woodbury.

**Larry Pond:** My dad, Sebastian Pond, wanted to go to Cornell to become a farmer, but his family knew the difficulties of farming in Connecticut. His family made him transfer to Yale. One of the things my dad started doing was flying way back in the early 1920's, and he owned old bi-planes. His first paying job was flying the mail in the really old rickety airplanes. He had a WWI Jenny, which was a bi-wing airplane that was his own. When he was flying the mail, one of his stops was Bethany airport, and he had to stop for fuel. It turned out my mother lived with her mother in a house right next to Bethany airport and that's how they met. With a partner, Ma ran a small coffee shop at the airfield. So they got married in the mid 1920's.

**Gloria Pond:** 1929, the day the market crashed.

**C.S.** What was your mother's maiden name?

**L.P.** Harkins. She was Marguerite Harkins. He was flying the mail and had an emergency landing on a weekend, about 1929.

**G.P.** Was it 1932? He married in 1929.

**L.P.** Okay, but I think he found the farm earlier.

**G.P.** Before he married?

**L.P.** Yes, I have in mind that date of 1929. When he was flying someplace in his old Jenny, the engine quit, which was not unusual in those days, and he crashed landed just to the west of Good Hill, in what was Nate Beardsley's and Pierce Beardsley's farm. The plane was pretty well damaged, but then he put a new top wing on it, and the Beardsleys who never threw anything away had that wing stored in their barn for many years. A fire in the blacksmith shop of the barn destroyed it or that wing would still be over there. Old farmers never threw anything away. But then as my dad was coming over here, towards Woodbury and over Good Hill, he discovered some 550 acres up here were for sale. He bought everything up here, and I remember this very well, for \$29,000. He gained 500 acres and old buildings and so forth.

**C.S.** So were there barns and a house?

**L.P.** There's the main barn and there used to be a twin to that main barn up to the west. It was a big classic barn, and for quite a while one of the previous uses of the farm was as the winter quarters of Barnum & Bailey Circus. I remember talking to some of the older residents in town; there used to be a railroad station in Southbury. When the circus season ended, all the circus animals would get off the train. They'd walk up what is now Route 6, through Woodbury; it would be a big parade, everybody out, yelling, and screaming. Then they would walk on up to Good Hill and spend the winter in the two barns. This had long ceased when my dad crashed here. He bought the farm and he added an L in the barn. He built what we call the shop area now, and then there is little house which used to be the farm manager's house, across the street. By the 1930's he was really getting into the farming business, and what he thought he'd do was to raise beef. He thought that beef would be a good farming product. I was born in 1936 and my

first memory of the farm was out looking at those Black Angus cows. The other story I remember from that time was every time an Angus sees a fence, it's a challenge. He actually had some Angus that broke through a fence, and he had to go into Massachusetts to get them back. But it turned out that Midwestern beef came in about then, and there was no market for our beef; he couldn't compete. So in the late 1930's, he switched over to a dairy farm. That's really where my memories start coming in, growing up on that farm. He really encouraged his kids (I had a brother Nate and my sister Nancy, too) to work on the farm because it was good experience. So we would spend our summers, when we weren't in school, shoveling cow manure, putting in hay, and so forth. He got one of the first bailers; they used to put in loose hay, which was very hard, and make the hay stacks. But he got an old Ann Arbor baler in the 1930's, and we pulled it with a tractor. It had its own engine going. Then he had two people sitting on the back, where the bales were coming out; you had these blocks to put down to separate the bales and you had to feed a wire through and the person on the other side could tie the wire off.

**C.S.** So it's much more intense labor then the things today?

**L.P.** Yes, I spent a lot of my summers on the back of that bailer, feeding wires and tying this stuff off. We do have pictures of those days.

**C.S.** Now Larry, lets step back a minute; when your parents first moved here to the farm, where did they live?

**L.P.** The main house was at the top of the hill, and it was built for Tyler in 1848, kind of a double story, shingled building. Before they actually moved into it, my father added to it. So when they moved in, the house was ready. That was the early 1930's.

**C.S.** You had two siblings, your brother Nate and your sister Nancy? It was Nancy that did the transcriptions of the letters from your dad concerning WWII, that are in the library?

**L.P.** No, that was her youngest daughter, my niece, Lisa.

**C.S.** Ok, so your father farmed here until the Second World War?

**L.P.** Well, when the war came along, first he was an air raid warden. One of my earliest memories is of our old Packard convertible. They had air warnings in town, in case there was going to be bombing, and they had practice runs. I would go out with Dad at night, and we had a siren hung out on the side of the old Packard, and I got to ring the siren. Then my Dad decided that since he was a pilot, and they were trying to build up the air force, he'd enlist. It turned out he was beyond the age they could use as fighters. So he got into what was called the Air Transport Command, the ATC. They flew machines like B24s to Russia. I remember one of the things he would do was fly down to South America, in a B24, get it all gassed up again and then they would fly to Ascension Island in the middle of the Atlantic. I remember him saying "if we don't find Ascension, our wives will get a pension. Then into Africa, where they would gas up again, and over India and up around Himalayas and into Russia, to deliver these B24s to the Russian air force.

**C.S.** Why did they take such a circuitous route?

**L.P.** Because if they went close to Germany, they would get shot down. So they thought this was the safest route they could do. One other thing; while they were in Russia, there was a big air raid from the German's that left a lot of wounded. Most of the planes were destroyed, but he got an old DC3 whose gears wouldn't work, and he then flew a bunch

of wounded soldiers to a place they could get medical care. He received the Distinguished Flying Cross for that, and one of my memories is of the award ceremony in Waterbury. Another crisp memory I have of that time is when I was in Mitchell school. Mrs. Dockum was my first grade teacher, and my dad called one night and said he was going up to Windsor Locks; that was an air force base but it's Bradley Field now. "I'm going to be flying the B24, I'm going to be coming up over Woodbury and why don't you tell your school to let the kids out and I'll come up Main St." I still have, etched in my mind, the B24 about 100 ft. over Main St., just roaring up Main St.

**C.S.** That must have been so thrilling and so loud.

**G.P.** I have one other crisp memory. He told me that after they flew the planes over, then a whole plane load of pilots would come back to ferry again. He had a little spider monkey, so small he could fit it in his pocket. But when they landed they were all fumigated with DDT, and it killed the monkey in his shirt pocket. It's a reminder of how vulnerable the military people are to policies like that. It's like Agent Orange but fifty years earlier.

**L.P.** Another striking memory of that time, he happened to be home, on VE day and VJ day, Japan, 1945. He happened to be home on VJ day and I can remember we still had the old Packard convertible; the whole countryside just erupted with people celebrating. We had friends over in Waterbury, and we were riding around with them all night sitting up on the roof and everybody just out all night long. They just thought once WWII was over, that was the end of all our problems. The euphoria, I can still see it, feel it from those nights.

**C.S.** How did your mother manage a farm this size?

**L.P.** We got a farm manager; this fellow who used to live next to us in Roxbury, Dick Green. He came and kind of managed the farm, although he wasn't very effective. But Dad always had, in a little house across the street from the barns, a farm manager, someone that was in charge and would run the farm on a day to day basis.

**C.S.** It still must have been tough for her? She had three children and a big piece of property and a house and animals. So was she a tough lady?

**G.P.** Before marriage she had a toy shop in Waterbury. Previously she had run the coffee shop at Bethany airport, and that's where she met Larry's Dad. Then she and a girlfriend had the toyshop, independently in Waterbury, and I don't know how long that existed but we knew the girlfriend in her senior years, and she remembered it very clearly being in business. I think Margaret was a pretty tough woman. Her husband lifted her spirits and gave advice from across the sea in that book of letters you can read in the Woodbury Library.

**L.P.** Buddy and Timers Voytershark both worked the farm during the War. They eventually began to farm over in Roxbury, on their own dairy farm. I kind of grew up with them. Timer went into the Marines.

**G.P.** Buddy was here, and his mother worked for Mrs. Pond in the house. Who were the other two guys, the Austrian skiers that were interned here?

**L.P.** Actually my dad got interested in skiing in the 1930's, which was a new sport here. He ran into a bunch of Austrian ski instructors, Michael Foyeringer and Zig Buckmeyer. When the war started, they were going to go to a concentration camp. But if someone could vouch for them, they could live and work on the farm.

**C.S.** So they were already here?

**L.P.** Yes.

**C.S.** And they were interned here?

**G.P.** They were allowed to be interned on the farm, if he would sponsor them. There was quite a group of people here during the war, and they were experienced, strong men. So Mrs. Pond wasn't just milking cows all day.

**L.P.** Zig Buckmeyer went on; after the war he had a store in New York City and at Sugar Bush, VT.

**G.P.** Ski supplies.

**C.S.** The big ski resort?

**G.P.** Yes, that was Zig Buckmeyer. He was killed in a sports car crash in the 50's.

**L.P.** As part of my growing up, I learned to ski very early because of those guys. Down hill skiing was a major family sport.

**C.S.** It sounds like you had four interned people?

**G.P.** No, those two were interns, the Polish guys were not.

**L.P.** Not to get into trouble with all these details but Poland had been invaded and here we had the Austrians and they didn't speak to each other.

**G.P.** But there were two other men here as well. Stockwell and Green.

**L.P.** Stockwell came afterwards, after the war.

**C.S.** This might be a good time for you to go back in history and tell us about your Lawrence connection.

**L.P.** Gloria can do a better job than I can because she spent a lot of time researching the family here. This was back in 1820 when Guiseppe Lorenzo came from Genoa. You

always think of Italians as being dark complexioned, but from Genoa many are blonde. He jumped ship in New London, got a local girl pregnant, and eventually married her.

**C.S.** Her name was?

**G.P.** Nancy Woodward Brown

**L.P.** He organized one of the early whaling trips. I think they had four boats that went off on a voyage, where they got whale oil. They were gone two, three, four years sometimes. They came back, and if you had a good whaling voyage in those days, it was like hitting an oil field. We were really set. Eventually the Lawrence family was a very public-spirited, very important family down there, and eventually their donations made Lawrence Memorial Hospital, and there is a library there, too.

**G.P.** I think there are the library, City Hall, and a statue.

**C.S.** Now the connection with you and the Lawrence family is?

**L.P.** My grandmother was named Lawrence.

**C.S.** What was her first name?

**G.P.** Nanen, and you see her name on the side of the hospital. She endowed the nursing school at the hospital. She used to live in the Mohegan hotel in her final years. It was in New London. She married her first cousin, Nicholas Pond, from Milford and her name Lawrence, disappears then. They kept it alive in the middle names of the children.

**L.P.** My father's middle name is Sebastian Lawrence Pond. My uncle's name was Larry.

**G.P.** I found that out in an interesting way. As a college scholar, I was allowed into the research library at Mystic Seaport, and I met a young man, Larry Farwell, who was finishing his master's thesis for Trinity College. He was doing it on the Lawrence

family. I was trying to research the Ponds. We helped each other. He promised me a copy of his thesis; I was very excited but it never came. Years went by and I started trying to call him. Trinity said no, the thesis never came in. He changed jobs, he was no longer at Mystic, he was now assistant director at Sag Harbor Whaling Museum. I got in touch with him and asked him what were his plans. He said “Oh I’m working on that thesis.” Another five years went by. He got moved into Searsport, ME. Showcasing not just whaling but all of Marine life. He was a very busy person. Still no thesis.

**C.S.** Isn’t there a time that you have to complete your thesis?

**G.P.** In desperation, I kept calling Trinity, and finally they said it just came in. They sold me some copies. Now, today Larry Farwell has his master’s degree and I spread copies around the family.

**L.P.** My dad was always very interested in photography, He had a dark room up in the house, and he would develop his own pictures.

**G.P.** On glass slides.

**L.P.** Here is a picture, about 1945 or 1946, putting in big bales, and that is my dad up here; this is me, my sister Nancy, and my brother Nate driving the D2.

**C.S.** How old is Nate driving?

**L.P.** Let’s see, he is four years older than I am, so probably about 14.

**G.P.** Well, he still looks younger than that.

**L.P.** Here I am, here’s my sister and Nate. This is Pat Behan and Happy Behan. They were living in the tenant house at the time.

**G.P.** Peg Behan was Larry's nanny; then she took care of Mrs. Pond in her declining years. Mr. Pond gave her life use of the house. Just a few years ago we lost her. We always had this wonderful neighbor.

**L.P.** Here's Buddy Voytarshark; he's the one that started a farm in Roxbury; he's still alive, living with his niece in Roxbury. They sold their farm. This is Ed Corrigan; he lived in a trailer on the farm, and worked here during WWII. This is Thomas; he was my grandmother's chauffer. During WWII, with gas rationing, nobody did much driving at all so dad gave him a job on the farm. Doesn't he look distinguished here, flipping hay in his tie?

**C.S.** After the war, your dad came home, went back to farming?

**L.P.** Yes, started the dairy farm. The severe food rationing came in WWII, and you had to have stamps for everything, particularly meat. We could slaughter dairy cows up here, and we had a freezer in the garage. People discovered it and while we were sleeping, people would come up and steal some meat.

Dad came back at the end of the war, in 1945 – 1946, and he started really getting serious with the dairy farm. I spent my summers working on the farm, shoveling manure; it's a good way to grow up.

**C.S.** Now your sister and your brother and you all went to Woodbury schools?

**L.P.** No, actually during WWII I went to Mitchell school, started first grade and went through fourth grade. I had Mrs. Dockum, Mrs. Fox, and Mrs. Curtis (I can still remember those names). My sister went to St. Margaret's school. My brother went to school here; he went through grammar school in eighth grade. When he graduated from grammar school, my father sent him over to the Choate school.

**C.S.** He boarded there?

**L.P.** Yes, he boarded there. I went for my first four years here at Mitchell school and then when Dad was back home after WWII, from fifth grade through eighth grade I went to McTernan school up on Columbia Blvd. in Waterbury.

**C.S.** You were a day student?

**L.P.** Yes, a day student.

**G.P.** That's the Pearl Street Community house now.

**L.P.** The head master actually lived here in Woodbury. Burt Hotchkiss lived up on the East side of town. So my dad would drop me off every morning, and we'd drive over and come back. Then when I graduated from McTernan's, I went off to Choate, too. But each of my summers I would spend here on the farm. My grandmother had a house in Jefferson, NH and we used to go up there in the winter to ski at Cannon Mt. and Mt. Washington. We ran into a guy called Ad Carter who turned out to have a house in Jefferson, too.

**C.S.** How'd you get up there?

**L.P.** Mt. Washington? Hump up, walk up and herringbone. Ad Carter was very interested in rock climbing, and he taught at Milton Academy in Massachusetts.

**G.P.** He was also captain of the U.S. Olympic team in 1936.

**C.S.** In the '36 Olympics?

**L.P.** Yes, so he was a really intriguing guy. He started Nate and myself, one summer out in Wyoming, doing serious mountain climbing. Summer of my sophomore year, we went to Europe, sailed across the North Atlantic in a student ship and landed in France. We all bought bicycles, and we bicycled all through France.

**C.S.** You guys were in good shape.

**L.P.** Then in Switzerland we did some real climbing. Talk about the way people change your life; Ad Carter is a whole other story.

**C.S.** So you think this guy introduced you to geology with all this rock climbing?

**L.P.** No, I got interested in that later on, when I was in college. So we are coming through the '50s and the farm is still going. I graduated from Choate in 1955, and I went up to Williams College in MA, graduating in 1959. My brother went from Choate to Cornell and majored in agriculture; he was going to be a farmer. But when he graduated from Cornell, because the dairy business was so questionable financially, to discourage my brother from farming, in the late '50s my dad sold the herd off.

**C.S.** That's a drastic move.

**L.P.** Yes, it was. He really just wanted to stop Nate from getting into this kind of a hassle.

**G.P.** But he put the farm in Soil Bank, which kind of preserved it. I don't know much about that, but I remember Batch saying you had to agree to clip the grass and let it fall. That was supposed to be enriching a natural resource. The government paid a fee, and the program was called Soil Bank. He agreed not to let the trees take over or build a housing development. Instead he agreed to mow it and let the grass fall. For the years of the soil bank he was in one of the country's earliest conservation programs to keep these beautiful farms farmable.

**L.P.** Another thing that happened in 1956-57, my dad heard about this guy Jacques Istel. He was French, but he was an American citizen, educated at Princeton, and he was a very early sky diver. Stabilized free fall was very new though it had been around in

Europe for quite a while. Over here, everybody used to tuck and tumble. Jacques was trying to organize the first American sky diving team in about 1957, and my dad read about it in the paper and called him and asked are you guys looking for a place to jump. Jacques said “Yes, we’d like to.” My dad had always kept an airplane. In 1949 he built a Quonset hut hanger, at the top of the hill. You could get these army surplus. Then he used it as the hanger and moved his plane there. That earlier model of the plane my brother and I still have, which our friend Ray Fulton sold Dad.

**G.P.** Is that when the wall was buried? Was that in 1949?

**L.P.** No, he buried those stone walls early on, to make bigger farm fields. On the flying field, there’s a buried stone wall halfway across the field.

**C.S.** Is the Western field, where the hanger is, is that in Woodbury?

**L.P.** No, just a sliver of it; the town line is at the intersection of Upper Grassy Hill and Good Hill Rd. Then it kind of runs diagonally south, a little bit into the field. At the end of the field, the town line is about 200 feet in. What I like is part of the Woodbury history, the first stabilized freefall in North America, took place here at Good Hill. College kids and my brother, who had just gotten out of the Air Force, would spend all of our weekends on the field here.

When I was going through college, all males had to do some sort of military commitment.

**G.P.** If you don’t mind going back a little. The first collegiate sky diving meet was held here. It was won by Harvard.

**C.S.** Did each team bring their own airplane?

**L.P.** No, there were a couple airplanes here.

**L.P.** Each school that was active could bring a team. The Harvard team won but I brought the Williams team. So they had several teams compete. Princeton had a team.

**C.S.** Did your mother put all these kids up?

**G.P.** Putting up teams means just letting them sleep on your rug, and you have to feed them. I used to do the sailing team when Scott was at Taft.

**C.S.** Now Larry, let's go back to 1950 farming. How many real active farms were there in Woodbury?

**L.P.** My estimate, dairy farms in Woodbury, about ten. You put the milk in a milk can and put it in a cooler, and in the morning we would drive down to the milk stand at the intersection of West Side Rd. and Rt. 317. There were three farmers that delivered their milk cans there. Lee King had a farm too, and Brookside Dairy in Waterbury would come out, take milk cans, give you back your empty ones.

**C.S.** Did you have a refrigeration system?

**L.P.** Yes when my dad first moved here in the early 1930's, the only electric power was along Main St. in Woodbury. He persuaded CL&P to run a line up here, so he electrified the farm very early. This is one of the tidbits that add to the history of the farm.

Electricity just ran along the main street in Woodbury. Dad wrote a letter to CL&P.

CL&P replied saying if you can get two other customers besides yourself, we might consider it worth while running lines all the way up Good Hill. So he wrote the

Windells, elderly sisters living next door to us, just down to the Woodbury side. He

wrote a letter to them, saying "*We've got a chance to get electricity*" and a letter came

back (which we still have) saying "Electricity? Why would we want electricity? It sounds dangerous."

**C.S.** Was Rt. 317 paved at that time?

**L.P.** No, it was a town road and it wasn't paved. Another early memory I have was out there looking at the town oiling it and putting the tar down. And my sister weeping, crying, because she just loved that dirt road. Another memory is in those days Good Hill was a lot steeper; there have been some modifications that made it not as steep. When it snowed heavily, and it snowed greater amounts than it does now, the town had trouble plowing the road up. Since my dad had that D2 caterpillar, they bought him a plow and asked if he would just plow down. He would plow that, and when there was no school I would get on my sled, and since they never used sand on the road, I could slide all the way down to the milk stand.

**C.S.** How did you get back?

**L.P.** I came back on the milk truck. So it all worked out.

**C.S.** So you would say in your life time, Woodbury has gone from a relatively rural community to a very suburban community?

**L.P.** It was really rural in those days and farming was a major business for some people to survive.

**C.S.** I heard that everyone on Main Street had chickens; chickens just sort of walking around.

**L.P.** Yes, everyone had a chicken coop in back. We had a chicken coop in the back of the farm and in the back of the house.

**C.S.** So they didn't even have a phone?

**L.P.** No. There were no phones. One other little tidbit mentions Oscar Johnson, an old Swedish farmer to the North of the farm. They had no electricity even after we had

electricity. But Mrs. Johnson was famous for her chocolate chip cookies. I can still remember bicycling or walking up there and into her kitchen, and she still had an old fashion pump on her kitchen sink, and we would sit and eat these unbelievably delicious chocolate chip cookies. Then back into the 50's, one of the big events up here was when Arthur Miller married Marilyn Monroe. They got married right up on top of the hill, not too far off the farm. On the day of the marriage, the roads were jammed with traffic; two reporters were killed in two different accidents.

**C.S.** Coming to interview?

**L.P.** Coming to cover the wedding. Then for years after that, when we were putting hay in, cars would drive right into the field and say "*Where does Marilyn live?*" So we got into a routine of saying "Marilyn? Marilyn who?" They'd say Marilyn Monroe and we'd say "Monroe, I don't think any Monroes live around here" and they would drive off all steamed up. I think I mentioned Pierce Beardsly's famous cider. I would go there and have cider with Marilyn Monroe. She was famous for coming down there to have cider.

**G.P.** This is hard cider.

**C.S.** Larry, we have spoken about your childhood and we should introduce Gloria at this point. Now Gloria, where were you originally from?

**G.P.** My dad was an engineer, and he did highly secret work during WWII for the radiation lab of MIT. Actually I'm very proud of him, a book came out recently and apparently the secret he never told me until I saw the book was that they put radar into bombers going into Europe during WWII and were credited with really starting to turn the war because these planes could go in and find their way back, without being shot down.

**L.P.** They could see any enemy fighters approaching.

**G.P.** So I was born in California. He had gone out there after high school; he stowed away on the railway in the 30's, during the depression. He got out there, and he started going to school at Berkeley, living with his aunt. He met my mother and transferred to her community college to do her chemistry homework for her. When they graduated he received a scholarship to come east to MIT. I was already born so they brought me East to live in a Boston tenement, and Dad worked with the Radiation Lab at MIT. After the war, I was educated in public schools in Pleasantville, NY. I went to high school in Northbrook, IL and I went to Bennington College and met Larry in '57, then in '59 we started dating and eventually married.

**C.S.** What was your mother's name?

**G.P.** Joyce Ricabaugh.

**C.S.** ...and your dad?

**G.P.** Frank Burton Dibble. I went back to using his last name because I discovered in my state government work, it was far more memorable to be Gloria Dibble Pond. Everybody: governors, secretaries, legislators remembered me with the three names.

**C.S.** After you were married, you (Larry) were drafted?

**L.P.** Yes, they started this sport parachuting set up in Orange, MA. My brother moved up there and that became his full time job.

**G.P.** Are you skipping your trip West with Dana?

**C.S.** You told me but we don't have it on tape.

**G.P.** That was your senior year; you graduated college and left immediately with Dana.

**L.P.** I'd spent the previous summer working at the Orange parachuting center. So I thought since my brother was involved in that, maybe I should do something like that. One of the things I didn't pay much attention to was that everyone had to serve a military commitment. The Navy came up senior year, and when I eventually talked to them, they said all their classes were filled up and I'd have to wait to the beginning of 1960 before anymore classes in Newport accepted enrollees. Gloria and I really started getting serious that summer; we got to know each other pretty well. Dana Smith and I decided we'd do a parachuting tour of the United States, and we just took off. We'd get to a big city, drive out to an airport and ask if they were doing any air shows; we'd do jumps for them. All the way across the country. We got two actual contracts out of that. Then we got into Las Vegas, and one of the casinos there thought it'd be an interesting thing to have people jumping down; good advertisement.

**C.S.** Very theatrical!

**L.P.** They did some research on me and when I went in to talk to them, they said "you haven't done any military service yet. So we're not going sign any contracts with you because you're going to get drafted or something is going happen." They wanted a minimum of two years of daily jumps to let word of mouth start drawing new people to our show. Eventually not making any money parachuting, we wandered back here and started working at the parachuting center again. Gloria and I went on seeing each other. I had no idea what I was going to do with myself. I think it was October when I got a call from Dad down here on the farm and he said "you got a letter from Selective Service, you better come down here and take a look at it." I said "what are you talking about?" So I drove down here; the letter said "Greetings, you are report to -----." So the next day I

drove over to the draft board in Watertown and put this thing down on this guy's desk and said "you guys are mistaken; I'm going to join the Navy." The guy looked up and said "you are mistaken, you are in the Army." Then life was getting out of control, so Gloria and I decided to get married. We got married by a justice of the peace up in Bennington, Vermont; it was on Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>. Now it's easy for me to remember our anniversary date. Three days later I had to report to basic training down in New Haven, and they shipped me down to Fort Dix.

**C.S.** Now Gloria, had you graduated college?

**G.P.** I was in my last year.

**C.S.** So you'd be graduating in June. You stayed in Bennington to finish school and Larry went off to Fort Dix, which was memorable?

**L.P.** "Fort Dix boogie, it's a weary song; dress it right and cover down, 40" all around." And if you give me an M1 rifle, I can pull it apart. The Army really just taught you how to do things. It's really funny, out of all the learning things I went through, they're still there. One example of that, we were using the M1 rifles with bayonets on them. So our bayonet training started. The first thing they wanted you to do was put the bayonet on and take the bayonet off. I remember standing around this big platform and the Sergeant's up there, and he says, "In about six minutes, four of you are going to be on the way to base hospital because you are not paying attention to what I'm saying. Here's what we do":

-Larry stands up and demonstrates.

With your left arm you grab the muzzle of your M1 rifle and put your right foot out and put the butt of the rifle against your right foot and the left arm had to be straight out to

hold the muzzle away from you. Then you reach over here and it goes up like this. (Left elbow bending brings rifle muzzle under your chin.)

**G.P.** Right up through the soft part of the mouth, and off to the hospital.

**L.P.** Another reminiscence of that time is you do whatever you're told, and you do it the way we say you do it. Another thing was, Fort Dix had these big parade fields; it was in the Fall I was there, so they'd say today instead of training we're going to go out and get the leaves off the parade field. We'd march out, we'd get there and somebody says, "Sarge where are the rakes?" "You don't need any rakes." So we picked the leaves up by hand, I think it took two or three days, and you just didn't question anything. That training stayed with me. To go back a little, when I was working at the parachute center, just before getting drafted, we put some West Point cadets through the training and they said "Boy, we could really use something like this at the Academy" and I remember one of the cadets gave me the telephone number of an officer at West Point and said give this guy a call. Eventually at Fort Dix, I called and I ended up stationed at West Point with another skydiver, Brad Strauss. This was after the Korean War and before the Vietnam War, which was the ideal time to be in the Army. We went up there and we started this training program for the cadets, doing sky diving during the fall and spring. In the army, you never want to not have a specific job. Eventually I ended up as a clerk typist for the company at the station there. I remember the guy called me up and said, "Can you type?" I said, "Yes Sergeant" and said "Now's the time for all good men to come to the party." Then I had to type morning reports, and I couldn't make a mistake. Eventually they discovered I couldn't type that well, and I got reassigned to be the battalion driver for the battalion commander there. This was Colonel Murray, and it turned out he had also

graduated from Williams. One day I was driving him some place, and we began to bond a little.

Eventually our sky diving group made the first free fall parachute landing on the West Point parade ground. This was before the army had a skydiving team called the Golden Knights. We were jumping regularly up at Stewart Air Force Base, which is basically a big triangle of cement. They had a little drop zone up at the Northwest side. One interesting episode: there was General Westmoreland of Vietnam fame; he was the youngest general since the Civil War, and he came to us as the superintendent of West Point; the guy was in charge of everything there. After we did the parade field jumps, he said I'd like to take one of those jumps; he'd been with the Airborne in World War II. I was the lowest ranking individual at West Point. Westmoreland was the youngest general since the Civil War and here I am "his" instructor. Sport jumping is a very different technique than military jumping; though I also went through military jump school. We're up at Stewart with Westmoreland, and I can tell by the expression on his face that I am not going to be able to tell him anything. So we go up, and we are jumping from a relatively small army airplane; pilot and copilot flying. I said to Westmoreland, "Okay go", and he gets half way out and instead of doing the free fall which stabilizes the chute (he had a static line off his back) he begins to tuck and tumble army style, and the chute opens between his legs and his helmet goes spinning off. Watching hi opening I remember thinking, I'm glad I'm the lowest ranking individual here. The chutes went about 10 miles an hour and that meant if you were facing into a 10 mph wind your ground speed was 0, if you were going downwind it was 20. Well, he landed downwind

on the big cement hunk of Stewart Air Force Base; he had serious scrapes and bruises and had to be carted off in an army ambulance.

**C.S.** Now by this time you were at West Point; was Gloria with you?

**L.P.** Yes, but I was such a low rank we couldn't get housing, so we lived in a trailer park. Gloria got a job as a newspaper reporter. Things calmed down and were going along pretty well.

**G.P.** The newspaper job meant that I wrote a lot of reviews and even though we were living on \$76.00 a month we got to go to a lot of restaurants, and I'd do a story the next morning on it. Also the USO had an arrangement where they got leftover theatre tickets for the Broadway shows, and if you went down at 5:00 they'd have free tickets for the shows that weren't sold out. A soldier had to pick up authorization at USO, then get tickets on 43<sup>rd</sup> Street, in uniform, from the theatre lobby. Then he'd have to go back to the USO to change into a civilian suit because the theatres didn't want it to look like they were papering the house. So we saw everything on Broadway those 2 ½ years in the front row. Not the greatest seat but it was free. I had press plates so we could park our little Volkswagon sedan right next to the policeman on his horse in front of the theatre and not get a ticket. We lived really well.

**L.P.** It was an interesting time. The thing about living at West Point, everybody had a military commitment. You were either drafted, as I was, or you joined one of the services. In the late '50s the first integration of services was taking place in this country, blacks, Hispanics, and whites, especially in the Army. The military services were supposed to be fully integrated in the Truman administration, but in the '50s they really started to implement the process. In basic training there were white guys from Georgia

living with black guys from someplace else. Then they would say, “These black guys are actually people if you get to know them.” I think this was a key step in getting integration going. I thought the draft had two effects. First it mixed the country very well, and second it made us all responsible if there was going to be any type of military action. At West Point most of the personnel were professional army. When we got discharged, a Sergeant friend of ours was in Laos and I remember a letter of his saying “It’s not much of a war, but it’s better than no war at all.” Second, it had a good effect on military outlook. Now as I look at the country many sections of the country are not involved with other sections, and we have a professional military which consider wars a way to solve problems.

**C.S.** So you were in the Army for two whole years?

**L.P.** Yes, I had the two year commitment for the draft. Then three days before I was supposed to get active duty discharge, I remember walking down and one of the cooks says “Hey Short Timer, hear the news? Everybody has been extended.” What was he talking about? In 1961, the Russians built the Berlin Wall and President Kennedy declared a national emergency, so everybody was frozen in whatever military service they were in. West Point was such a luxury tour that in my day your next tour of duty was Korea. Korea was not fighting anymore, but it was still brutal. But I escaped because it turns out that in times of national emergency all personnel are frozen at West Point. The extension turned out to be only four months.

While at West Point we used to play cards with people that lived in the trailer next to us; one of their other guests was a teacher from Storm King School which is a boarding school on the hills two miles above West Point. His mother in Ohio got very

sick, and he had to go there to care for her, so he begged me to take his job once I got out of the Army: teaching physics.

When I got out, my dad, who never knew Gloria well, offered to come down and fly the three of us on a tour in his plane. We went all the way down to Mexico, across to Acapulco, out to Yucatan, and on our way back spent a couple days in New Orleans and took off to the Bahamas.

In Spring, 1962, we packed our stuff in our Volkswagon and dumped some stuff in a Storm King School student dorm. We then came back over here to the Farm, we were going to earn a living by mowing/mashing the fields down. We were both scheduled to start our Masters program that summer at Wesleyan University. One morning before we started going to Wesleyan, I tried to wake Gloria up, but she was unconscious. She was also at a very early stage of pregnancy with our son. I called the only doctor I knew in town, Craig Sheely, and he asked can you get her down here so I can take a look at her? So I carried her out into our Volkswagon, completely unconscious, and drove her down. Craig said “She’s having some sort of brain episode; you’ve got to get her over to Waterbury Hospital.” We took her over to Waterbury Hospital and put her in this sort of emergency room. They made me dress in protective clothing in case she had meningitis and began monitoring her. In those days they didn’t really know what was going on.

**G.P.** There was this wonderful, famous surgeon, Dr. O’Brian, who’s gone now, but we were very lucky. Craig and he worked together.

**L.P.** They performed three angiograms but didn't do any real procedure; she was in the hospital for six or seven weeks and gradually recovered. Nobody was quite sure what was going on.

**G.P.** All they could do was inject a dye into my circulatory system and observe. But they couldn't do any of today's miracles at all.

**L.P.** They were picking up blood in the spinal fluid, so they knew some hemorrhage had happened.

**G.P.** I gave Larry my scholarship.

**L.P.** She had received a scholarship, but I didn't because I was kind of a playboy in college. The nurses let me stay in Gloria's room, on a cot. I lived at the hospital that summer and drove over to Middletown to Wesleyan during the day.

**G.P.** He used to do his homework in my room.

**L.P.** I would eat all my meals at the hospital. I'd go up to the cafeteria trying to look like a young doctor. Someone would ask "What department are you in?" and I'd say I'm down on the third floor. Eventually Gloria recovered, and we moved over to Storm King. She then had our son that January in Cornwall Hospital. When I was going to Wesleyan I ran into some of the teachers I knew when I was a student at Choate. It turned out they had an opening at Choate in the science/physics area. After I spent one year at Storm King, we moved over to Wallingford and spent five years there teaching at Choate.

**C.S.** At the same time you were going to school at Wesleyan?

**G.P.** Yes, we both went.

**L.P.** Yes, my first masters was in Physics, I had taken a fair amount of physics at Williams, but I majored in geology at Williams. In those days I wasn't paying attention

much in college. They had some really good science courses at Wesleyan that deepened my preparation. Some of my undergraduate professors even worked there in the summer.

**C.S.** Gloria, what were you studying?

**G.P.** Literature, and I did my thesis in American Literature. We each did two graduate degrees; however in those days to do a PhD you had to be proficient in a language, and Wesleyan did not give a PhD in our field. So we did a Masters degree and then a Certificate of Advanced Study, which is a sixth year and gets paid like a PhD.

**C.S.** Larry, you continued on at Wesleyan while you were at Choate. What is your second degree is in?

**L.P.** My second degree was what I would call Geophysics, I really liked the Physics. It took us twelve years to get our degrees. There was a Geology teacher at Wesleyan who was world famous, Jelle de Bohr. He had developed a technique for dating lava flows. I always told my students, if there was one place I would choose to teach, it would be right here in CT. Everything we read about in a text book, I can take you out in the field and show you what we are talking about. We had rift valleys in which parts were pulled apart and the middle dropped down. Then lava layered in. We have a major rift valley here in CT, on the other side of Waterbury driving east on I-84, and Meriden Mountain is a big lava flow atop sedimentary material.

Here in Woodbury we have the Pomperaug basin, a miniature rift valley. Starting down in South Britain and going up beyond Nonnewaug High School, it extends 4 – 5 miles. Our Orenaug Hills are all lava flows. The lava contains a mineral called magnetite, an iron type of mineral that acts like a compass needle. When that lava hardens, those compass needles point in the direction of the earth's magnetic field. Now

realize the earth's magnetic field is changing all the time and has changed throughout geologic time. Where a compass needle would once point north, it might now point south. We were able to use the magnetic properties to date these flows. My second thesis was dating the Pomperaug flows and trying to correlate them to the central flows. It turned out I had taken some samples, from an area where lightning had hit. Lightning destroys the magnetism, but I was able to do another paper showing the effect of the lightning strike.

**G.P.** Do you want to tell about the man in Heritage Village, Southbury? I remember you telling me he came out and said "What are you doing?" You said "I'm trying to date these lava flows" and the man who just bought his condo at Heritage Village shouted "LAVA FLOWS!"

**L.P.** Anyway, Gloria and I we were both very fortunate. We loved the topics we were teaching. While we were still living over at Choate in 1968, they began to form the community college system. Gloria found out they were going to open a community college in Waterbury, and she arranged for us both to have interviews. Charlie Kinne was the first President; the interview was in City Hall in Waterbury, in an old building. It turns out they were really interested in my Science background. I got a firm offer of a job. It turned out there was hundreds ahead of Gloria for her English job.

We decided to move back here. My sister was living in the Main House with her five kids; it was kind of a cluster. We decided to build a house here. At our first faculty meeting in the town hall in Waterbury, Joe Cistulli, head of the Arts and Humanities Division, asked me "Is Gloria still interested in that job?" Yesterday we found out the person we hired is not going to take the job. I walked downtown at lunch hour to the

State Employment Service office where she was working, and she got the job. It is very rare to find a husband and wife both on the same faculty.

**C.S.** The year was 1968.

**L.P.** Yes, our classes were at Kennedy High School but we could only start them after the high school people finished their day, so our classes were all late afternoon and evening. **G.P.** Larry came and got me the day the college opened. I had worked a day job that day and had to go in that night with no faculty meeting, no background or preparation, no book, no materials, and no syllabus.

**C.S.** So you were there for the infant steps.

**G.P.** Yes, we were there for the second year. It was very interesting because people from all of the high schools realized how exciting it was to be at the beginning of a college. To be at a college where so many students were the first person in their family to have the privilege of college. Everybody wanted to be there; ages 18 to 80. It was thrilling and highly competitive.

**C.S.** You stayed there until you retired.

**L.P.** Yes. Also, Post College was a junior college then and they were looking for someone to teach some Physics. They contacted me, I started teaching there. They built a pretty good science hall facility. I arranged an agreement between the community college and Post. We got to use the facilities at no rent, and I taught their students and managed their equipment grants from the National Science Foundation.

**C.S.** How many years were you at Kennedy High School as a college?

**L.P.** Six years though we eventually used Waterbury State Technical College's empty rooms. The state put in some temporary buildings on our eventual site, and we moved in. In the 70's began the major construction which is still going on there.

**C.S.** You were still living in the big house with your sister's family?

**L.P.** We began building our own house in the fall of '68. A friend of mine, Chia Ming Sze, was an architect, and he designed the house for us. My friend, Russ Wheeler, dug the foundations and Louis Laneville, a carpenter from Watertown, built the house. We finally got in here; March '69.

**G.P.** We did all our own painting, staining, and interior finishing. When the house was designed, we had very unrealistic dreams for this house. All the bids came back higher than we would ever be able to mortgage. We sent them out again and the bids were still too high. Then for a third time. We had lost a whole wing that was going to be the green house and a shower for the pool, so I wouldn't have people traipsing in. We also lost a private ground floor entrance and ground floor room for our son; we hoped it would keep him with us longer. Then we ran into Mr. Laneville who wanted a house to close in for the winter and build with his brother. Those two Lanevilles and a third carpenter built this house. The doors are still plumb; they did a wonderful job.

**L.P.** The only surprise was they got the pitch of the North roof wrong, and it came up too high. I remember thinking the room was much bigger than I had expected. The plans had long windows in there and the ceiling gradually sloped up. Our enthusiastic builders tipped the ceiling up an extra four or five feet. But I got a study and Scott got a half deck which combined only cost us \$500.

**G.P.** Another time Mr. Laneville came on the site when the house was about half done. He had had all the lumber delivered, and we were paying for it biweekly as we got paid at work. He came out and said “it was a good thing I had it delivered; this morning all of your materials rose in price 75%.” Our mortgage was \$29,000. We started with Woodbury Savings because they gave a quarter percent off for residents. We only paid 7%. They sold out several times, so by the time we paid off the mortgage, we were still going to the same building but it was owned by some bank in New Haven. We made the last payment, and I said I need a record to file with the town clerk. They said “oh well, that’s not in this office” and I got a string of telephone numbers. It took me months, and finally I got a woman in New Haven who said “I’ll be sending that to you in about six months.” Six months later it came, and I filed it with Woodbury’s Town Clerk.

**L.P.** I have reflected on my first fifty years here. I spent all my summers working on the farm, and the alcohol played a major role in society that I grew up with. My parents came out of Prohibition, the Depression, and WWII. My impression was that the way people dealt with those problems was through alcohol. Alcohol played a major part in my family; both my mother and father were alcoholics and drinking was directly responsible for my mother’s death and affected my father’s last years, too. My sister, my brother, and myself grew up in a drinking culture, and it played various roles in our lives. A lot of farmers around here drank a lot every day. I have joined AA and have not had an alcoholic drink since 1985. It really changed my life for the good, too. (pause)

**L.P.** We stayed at Mattatuck, which became Naugatuck Valley Community College, until we retired in 1997. Here I was coming from Choate school, where President John Kennedy was educated, and I became a teacher at a community college. I grew to admire

the whole concept of the community college; I met some of the best students that I ever had at community college. People are at community college because they want to be; it's not like someone is forcing them to go somewhere that parents may want. My best students were young mothers whose children had just started school, and they decided they would come back and take a look at what career opportunities there were. They made the best students; I got up in the morning looking forward to going to work.

**G.P.** I think you should add, for the first two or three weeks of a course, those young mothers were paralyzed with stage fright. But when they were finishing the class, they had come into their own and discovered their ability, and they set the pace for the other students and the teacher. So they lifted everybody in the room.

**C.S.** Gloria, you taught Literature?

**G.P.** I did and Composition.

**C.S.** Did you have a similar experience?

**G.P.** Absolutely. It was wonderful, and my division directors were very open to innovation and modification of ideas, so that thirty-one years went by fast.

**C.S.** So you always took summers off?

**L.P.** When we first got back here, we each had a Master's degree, which was a basic requirement to teach in college. We each went on another five years to get a sixth year. We worked nights those summers.

**G.P.** For the first five years we were starting our mortgage. First, we were paying construction costs. Every payday we came home and wrote a check to Mr. Laneville to get the house started. Well, Larry did a lot of the site preparation and driveway.

Together we worked inside to cut a lot of the cost. We taught summer school to keep up

with our payments. When we got those under control, we started doing “research summers.” That is, sailing to Maine where Larry would look at rocks.

**L.P.** Also, we were both very fortunate in our marriage; we bought our first sail boat in 1964 when we were teaching at Choate. We kept it down in Essex; we even sailed to the 1964 Worlds Fair down in Flushing, New York. The Lawrence family had a history in sailing and whaling. We would spend our summers on our sail boat, cruising up to Maine. We finally sold our boat last year.

**G.P.** We gave it away, to the University of Rhode Island, and when they advertised on the internet, it sold to our former neighbor, Roger Barnes, in August 2008 to support maritime education in Naragansett Bay.

**L.P.** We watched couples buying boats; often one would like the boat, and one wouldn't. A yard man told us if Gloria liked the boat life, I would. She did! We were very fortunate because we believed you couldn't spend better time than on a sail boat. We just loved the anchoring up the coast, having these long six to eight week cruises because we had the summers off. It was a very relaxing part of our lives. We read, wrote, studied, and walked.

**C.S.** What a way to prepare for the next semester!

**G.P.** We were able to read and catch up with journals. I wrote two books for my students to use. He honestly did look at some geological sites of special interest.

**L.P.** One of the other courses I taught was Astronomy, and we got Southern New England Telephone company to build the observatory over at the college. It was up on the roof, and we had a pretty good telescope; what we call an 18” reflector. I formed a

Mattatuck Astronomical Society and that is still going. When Haley's Comet came in the 80's (it comes once every 76 years), we ran a public observing program.

**G.P.** It was '88.

**L.P.** I wrote an article for the Waterbury paper, and the headline was "Haley's Comet, Once in a Lifetime". We ended up getting a bunch of phone calls saying "I saw Haley's Comet in 1910 or 12 and I expect to see it again". We ran a special session when Haley's was here for people who were seeing it for the second time. We had everybody standing around talking about where they were and what they did the first time. Waterbury is a fairly interesting city. They were talking about their experiences with Haley's comet and people would say it just roared across the sky. They must have been tiny little kids because it doesn't make any noise. This one fellow, who had seen it in 1910, looks through the telescope and he looks at me and says "that's not Haley's".

**G.P.** There was another pair of people who had both seen it as little, tiny children in a small town in Italy. All these years later, they have both lived in Waterbury and all these years of mutually living in Waterbury, they never met each other until that night on the College roof.

**L.P.** For the people for whom this was their second time, we had them gather around and told them tell us about your experiences.

**C.S.** Tell us about your service to the town.

**L.P.** That was a major factor that changed my whole life; I grew up in a Republican family here in Woodbury. There was a Wally Barnes running for Governor of Connecticut and I thought he was a pretty good guy. He flew into the farm in his Baron, and we introduced him to the community college. He got knocked down in the

Republican Primary and they chose Tom Meskill. That somehow so enraged me that I decided not to remain a Republican but register as a Democrat.

**G.P.** Vera Elsenboss told John Fleming that you were available and to look you up.

**L.P.** Shortly after this, John Fleming, who was the Democratic Town Chairman, gives me a call and says we are having a meeting at my house for everyone that is interested in running for First Selectman. "Why don't you just come up and talk about it?" Well ok, I'm teaching full time at college but there were some issues that concerned me.

Woodbury because of its geology has two things: trap rock (lava flows) and a lot a glacial gravel sands. We were having major excavation of sand, uncontrolled. I drove down to John Fleming's house, on Flanders Rd; I was the only one that drove in. We get to talking and he says now you've got an opportunity to raise these issues; but Woodbury has never had a Democratic First Selectman so you won't win; just talk about the issues.

So I said ok and we got a campaign going. One of the things I did was make a parachute jump into the Hollow. From the 60's to the '70s environmental concerns got people's attention. On Tuesday night of the election, I was running against Del Cronk, and he was retiring from Scoville's. Then election was Tuesday night and you took office Wednesday morning; there was no break. So I wanted to go down and congratulate Del and start my life back to normal again. They were tallying the votes up and I won by seven votes. It was funny because I demanded a recount. It just stunned me, the idea of being first selectman. I had been told there was no way a Democrat would win in this town, and I had done no planning what so ever. I was literally just stunned. The interesting thing; I ruined my life so to speak, and I ruined Del's life so to speak. But on the Town's work, Del and I became very good friends. One of the

characteristics of Woodbury is that after elections the people work together, regardless of their party affiliation. Look around at neighboring towns, and that is not always the case. Woodbury is very fortunate in that once an election is over the people really work together for the good of the town.

**C.S.** Now the other selectmen were?

**L.P.** At the time it was Del Cronk and Roy Jacobs, and he'd been a Selectman before. I was just stunned and did not know what the First Selectman did. So Frank Shepard who was the outgoing First Selectman, came up to me and said come on down tomorrow morning about nine o'clock, and I'll give you the keys to the town office. We were in the Shove building, but it was only a small office on the first floor; very informal. I might have said this, but I was stunned; I didn't sleep at all that night. About six o'clock in the morning the phone rang and it's this lady. "I live out on, (I don't remember what road she says), and I have a little problem". I'm not calling too early am I? I said "no what's going on?" She says "we have a catch basin out in front of our house, and there's a dead turtle in it and it really smells, and I was wondering if you can come out and do something about that?" So my first job as First Selectman was I took a coat hanger and got this smelly turtle out of the catch basin and threw it away. I always look at that as one of the first tasks I fully accomplished, and one of the few that I ever fully accomplished.

**G.P.** Are you going to tell her about Frank's orientation?

**L.P.** Yes, he gives me a little tour of the office building. The First Selectman, the book keeper, and the selectman's secretary were all in one small room. He's showing me around, and he opens a big closet and all the shelves were stacked with toilet paper. He

says, “you’re going to need a lot of that.” It turned out that Del Cronk and I became good friends, and with Roy Jacobson, we worked together as a group addressing problems. One of Del’s hobbies was painting. He actually made a print of a Good Hill sunset, which he gave us.

One of the major issues we had at the time, was gravel operations. Zoning had just started, instituted in the late ‘60s. The other thing that happened was the regional school district had just formed. It turned out as usual; there were still arguments. Anyhow, one of the major things was the gravel operations and how to regulate those because of the aquifer. Because of the lava flows, which is trap rock, we had O&G, and we took photographs from the air of the gravel pits and really got people’s attention. In those days when O&G was blasting, it would go off with such a charge, it was damaging houses on Main Street; it was like an earthquake. One of my memories was one of my early days in office; we had a couple people in the office: town bookkeeper Helen Dunlap and Lorraine Travor, the First Selectman’s secretary. When someone would start talking to me about something that I was not quite sure of, I’d look over to Helen, and she’d shake her head negatively and I’d say no, I don’t think we are interested.

Very shortly after I was in office, George O’Neglia of O&G came walking in, and he’s handing out these big yard sticks. He says “Hey Mr. Pond, I’m handing these out as a gratitude. He says “you can measure desks, coffins...” (laughing) Turns out that I got into negotiations with George O’Neglia. Once they made a commitment, they stood by it. They put boundaries on the quarries, and they developed a new way of blasting.

**G.P.** They covered their trucks so it wasn’t driving neighbors crazy to have this dust go down their street.

**L.P.** They made it clear that they are in business. We get mad at these companies but it is stuff that we use in our daily lives. We just want it done some place else, not in our back yard. We eventually were able to work with the Zoning Commission and put in regulations for the gravel mining. Eventually, when I got involved in the job, I began to find a lot of satisfaction. Then in 1973, because the partial leave of absence the college gave me wasn't in the personnel regulations, I felt like I had to go back and teach. Then we got talking to Marin Shealy, and decided she would run as first selectman, and I said I'll be on your board. Marin was the first woman to ever be First Selectman and first woman Democrat. Then Dave Newell was on the board with us. In 1975 we ran again and we won but the Republican on the board was Dick Crane. It turned out Dick and I became very good friends. Marin and I didn't always agree on everything. Dick and I tended to agree on more things. Half way through her second term, she got appointed to be State Insurance Commissioner.

**C.S.** Did she leave being first Selectman mid term?

**L.P.** Yes.

**C.S.** And who took her place?

**L.P.** I did, and by this time the community college had leave of absence procedures so I could take a leave of absence and not lose my benefits.

**C.S.** At the end of that term you didn't run again?

**L.P.** Yes I did.

**G.P.** Even though we had a boy at Taft and needed stable income.

**L.P.** When Marin resigned, and I took over as First Selectman, Joan Maloney came on as a Democratic Selectman. One of our crises that developed during that time was Harmon

Boyd, who had given many years to the town treasurer. It turned out that he developed Alzheimer's and nobody realized it. All these checks would come in, and we'd hand them to him to deposit as town accounts. One stunning moment, I got a call from Colonial Bank, "Mr. Pond, you don't have any money in your town account." I said "how can that be?" We were stunned. Joan Maloney started investigating, going through all the books. It turned out there were thousands of dollars missing. When Joan started searching, she looked in an office where Harmon would do his work. Joan found there was a bookcase with all these checks in a book. We were able to recover almost 100% of those funds. We gently got Harmon to move out; he was a nice man.

**C.S.** Was Zoning still an issue? I moved here in 1970; I was flabbergasted because I grew up in a much more urban area, and I just took it for granted. Marnie Nunemacher told me that her mother was very active in getting zoning started and that her father was very against it and they decided that it wasn't going to be discussed at home.

**L.P.** Some thought in towns like Woodbury, having some town agency telling you what you could do with your property was outrageous.

**C.S.** Did you know Elmer Keesling. He had a farm on Old Sherman Hill. He's been dead now for quite a while, but he was one of the original opponents, and they put him on the board. Then he realized his land was going to be more valuable with zoning.

**L.P.** Issues like that keep cropping up all the time. People that serve on zoning commissions really deserve a lot of credit. They spend a lot of time.

**C.S.** Do you have any knowledge why we don't have any chain stores in Woodbury? I think it was a stroke of genius.

**L.P.** I don't know. There used to be a First National.

**C.S.** The concept of not having major chains in this town. Every time I go to Southbury, it strikes me.

**L.P.** I think towns have a unique character. Woodbury is different than Roxbury and is different than Southbury. Even though the populations change, the characters tend to stay the same. Woodbury has always been conservative about commercial development and Southbury has always been promoting it. It is nice to be able to drive to Southbury and get what I need. Back in history, the Woodbury Plantation included all of those towns, and as soon as they developed their own churches they split off.

**C.S.** Do you think it would be a good time for Gloria to talk about her state responsibilities?

**L.P.** Let me just finish. I came back as First Selectman when Marin left in 1976. My last term Joan Maloney ran for Selectman and Len Saccio was running for First Selectman. We maintained a democratic majority. When Len came to town, he'd been Nixon's Ambassador to Colombia. When he first moved into Town (by this time First Selectman had his own office), he came in and requested an appointment to see me, and he came in formally dressed and presented his credentials. He was retired as Ambassador and when he ran in '77, he and I became pretty good friends. When I went out of office, he ran for First Selectman and was elected in '79.

**C.S.** So this is the end of your Selectmanship?

**L.P.** Yes, a satisfying end. One of the things we did was purchase the Boyd building and renovate it into the town clerk's office and Selectman's office and meeting rooms. We did the Library project by appointing a committee. At the time the building was just a little wooden house. My hunch was they would find another location for the library. I

was stunned when they said they were going to build right here and incorporate the Boyd house so the Town could keep it. That committee did a good job. Another project was the old fire house, what is now the police station now. We then built the new fire house out in the North end of town. We got the Hollow. We started the Senior Center, which was a controversial issue. When we brought it to Town, people said to seniors “your family is supposed to take care of you; stay home”. I always thought after we finished with renovations of the town office buildings and got the fire house, the next thing would be the elderly center. That took a lot longer than I expected. One of the lingering questions was about the old fire house/police station; it’s not a good location because of traffic. The idea was the old fire house/police station would eventually be torn down, but it’s still there. As I look at it there is a nice aura to that section of Main Street while Southbury has these huge, overwhelming buildings.

**L.P.** I think the present location of the elderly center is really nice. Gloria and I signed up for a computer course up there.

**L.P.** Working in town government was never a goal of mine. During my first campaign I was going to raise the issues and then let somebody else deal with them. Serving really gave me a whole new perspective on life. One of the unique aspects of Woodbury is once the campaign is over, the political aspects are gone. People look at a problem and try to deal with it in the most effective way. Woodbury is very fortunate because that still seems to be the way. When I got out of office as First Selectman, I was on the planning commission through the ‘80s and then got onto the conservation commission. Our conservation commission has no regulatory authority. I think that’s a good idea because we’ve got zoning and planning and they are doing a very capable job. The only other

thing I like to spend some time on is the Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition. In the late '90s we formed it with Dr. Marc Taylor in Southbury. I think that's another example of how the towns are working together.

**G.P.** My own political activities started much smaller. I was on the Democratic Town Committee and John Fleming used to take me to state meetings. I met a few people and developed the interest that started with my League of Woman Voters work, which I considered a terrific education. I had been President in Wallingford and they drafted me to be President in Waterbury because there were so few women who had the time to do it in Waterbury. I joined Woodbury, of course. I had that help and education. I was going to these meetings, and that is where I met Ella Grasso and she was really quite exciting to know; to see a woman work so hard and have such high principles and emerge as a leader. In 1973, she was running for office and I supported her. In '74 when I went to the convention, she put me on the Public Utility Control Authority Reauthorization Task Force which was really a committee of big names. The legislature had decided we were going to regulate utilities a new way, but they didn't have the time to do the detail work. So for a year we ran hearings calling people from every regulated entity in the state and learning about their work, plans, and attitudes. At the end we published a booklet of recommendations. Following that the governor asked me serve on the Power Facilities Siting Council. Then Maryanne Guitar who was chairman ran for First Selectman of Redding. When she won, the governor made me chairman. It was very daunting because I've always lived a very quiet life. I had a full time job and a son and a home and a husband. I don't speak easily in public. Larry was very supportive. I started running this thing right around Christmas of 1976/77. Over the years our jurisdiction expanded. I

recommended renaming us the Connecticut Siting Council because Legislature added transmission towers for cell phones and then they added hazardous waste disposal siting which was extremely controversial. Eventually, we were not just the public utilities. We were generally State Siting Council and lightning rod and still worked the same way. Anybody could come speak to us. We drew up a legal record. I had three attorneys guiding legal matters. By the time we ended I had two environmentalists and an economist, and I had three administrative staff. Woodbury's Chris Wood was our executive director.

**C.S.** Can I ask for the clarification of a word? What is siting?

**G.P.** It means if they want to build a new generating plant it has to be sited. It's like a baby step towards state zoning. The public did not want just a free hand from the utility companies to put their installations anywhere. The public wanted a voice and this provided hearings and legal records with time requirements to get a voice for everybody: towns, state officials, neighbors and companies. Many of our decisions took many months.

**C.S.** In the mean time you were working full time?

**G.P.** I was still working full time. Staff researched, wrote reports, did inspections, and consulted with me. The travel was hard. Eventually Ella Grasso had the idea of spreading out some of the state facilities. She moved us to New Britain and that was a little easier to get to, and parking was easier. They did move us away from the legislature and that wouldn't have been my choice; a lot of my time was spent meeting with legislators or their staff or lobbying for positions that would benefit the state. I served with them under Mrs. Grasso and then under Billy O'Neill and then Weiker in '89 kept

me on but he didn't appoint me chairman; he appointed Mort Gelston chairman. His successor was John Rowland and John kept me on, so I served nineteen years but was chairman twelve and a half.

**L.P.** This is a non paying job.

**G.P.** They paid a per diem to cover my expenses but it wasn't a salaried job and it still isn't, as far as I know. I finally went off in '96 because Larry's family was approached by a tower company that wanted to give cellular telephone service in this area. The minute that happened I felt I'd spent nineteen years building a time without any conflict of interest, and I didn't want any questions asked to shadow that record, so I immediately resigned. It was a good time to go; I had served a long time and had given what I could give. They did build the tower here which was very important to keep the farm taxes and insurance paid.

**L.P.** One of our problems is with the farm here; we wondered how to cover expenses because the farmer wasn't making much money. The tower allowed us to put talented farmers in, like John Sears, and not charge an outrageous rent. I used to tell people that tower is a special silo; it stores genetically modified corn that grows so tall. Now I don't notice the tower much.

**L.P.** Gloria was always very well connected with state government which I wasn't necessarily. One of the things we began doing: when Ella Grasso was running for her second term, she got criticized for using a National Guard helicopter. We offered to Ella Grasso the use of our airplane. When the weather was good, we'd pick her up and it was always fun. She would sit in the back and read a novel. Once her driver commented on our old Cessna, and she said, "They just don't recognize excellence."

**G.P.** The same old airplane model is hung in the Smithsonian.

**L.P.** One of our other efforts was Toby Moffett, who was running for congressman; we had one of his rallies here. Paul Newman came here and campaigned for him.

**G.P.** The hostess was mentioned in the paper so I got a lot of calls from people who wanted to come, including a number of Republican wives who said you can't tell my husband but I'd like to come. So the Paul Newman glamour added to the support of the party.

**L.P.** And I want you to know that I am taller than Paul Newman. He's very short; you don't see that in the movies.

**L.P.** Dustin Hoffman used to run on our field up here. I always thought that our little ridge up here with Dustin Hoffman, Richard Widmark, and Arthur Miller was an amazing little corridor.

**G.P.** I like that one day in the '70s I was paging through Esquire magazine and there was an interview with Arthur Miller, who lived just North of us on the ridge, and I was really conscious of him. One time he told the Esquire reporter that it had been his privilege to visit beautiful parts of the world and that he'd never seen one as lovely as Good Hill. I also wanted to mention the original name of the Sighting Council was Power Facility Evaluation Council, and law professor John Lowenthal of Bridgewater wrote the Act, but as they acquired the hazardous waste siting responsibility and cellular phone tower responsibility that was no longer a large enough title. I asked the Legislature to change us to the Connecticut Siting Council and include all of the facilities that we were the lightning rod for. I used to say to reporters that we balance the public need for electrical, telecommunications, and hazardous waste facilities with their effects on the environment

including public health and safety. I believe there have been some modifications since my days on the Council.

**C.S.** Now Larry, let's get back to your aviation with your airplane. I understand you have flown with some pretty powerful guys.

**L.P.** Yes, we've had an airfield up here since the 1930's. I grew up with airplanes as part of the family. When my dad passed away in the mid 60's, my brother and I inherited his Cessna 170 airplane. We still have it. This year I decided to give up piloting myself; there are a bunch of requirements about keeping current. I hadn't been doing all the required things. One of the adventures we had, due to Gloria's connection with the State, in the 70's and early 80's we made our plane available for various democratic politicians who were running for a series of offices. It was a really interesting way to get to meet these people. When Ella Grasso was running for her second term, we spent that fall election campaign picking her up in Hartford and flying her to various meetings around the State.

**G.P.** She brought her son one time, and he flew his mother for the first time; he was taking flying lessons and Larry let him take the controls.

**L.P.** Once we picked her up on a Sunday and flew her down to Danbury airport. Airports like Danbury are tower controlled. Weekends were always very busy. I called the tower for landing instructions, but we had to circle a long time. When we landed one of her assistants said "Why are you so late?" I said "We were here right on time but there was a lot of traffic." Later that day we flew her down to Groton, and I called into the tower. We heard the tower say, "Attention all aircraft, we have high priority traffic coming in, and we want all traffic now to evacuate the area." Our plane is a fairly old

airplane, and small. The tower guy is looking at us through binoculars, and they asked, “Do you really have the Governor on board?”

**G.P.** I have three Ella stories. One time she came to Woodbury to campaign for Larry on the local ticket, and she was wearing a real old fashioned Peck & Peck suit. We were waiting around at a gas station, and along came John and Marlice Fleming. Marlice was wearing a Peck & Peck suit in the same tweed but with trousers. Ella said, “All I can say is, some people really hold on to their old clothes.” Another story, I was reading Burr by Gore Vidal; it is a big, fat, historical novel, and Ella was a big history buff. Of course, Larry liked reading when he was on the ground. While we flew, she would read. When we landed I would read it, and Larry would read it when no one else was holding it. All summer long we had three book marks marching through that one volume. The third story is of a time we were going to fly her, and she arrived with a plain folder under her arm. I thought that poor woman is going to have to study her notes and prepare her speech for when she lands. It’s such a pretty day; I wish she could relax. I turned around and looked at her and she had a Vogue magazine and was paging through it instead of studying for a speech.

**L.P.** Just a little more airplane history. In addition to Ella, we picked up George McGovern, who ran for President in ’72. He was coming down here to campaign for Joe Duffy for Senate in Connecticut. It was a rainy day; I picked up George and explained to him the weather was a little rainy and we could turn and fly out toward Albany to avoid the rain. He was a B24 pilot during WWII, which was a very dangerous occupation. He said, “Go the shortest way as long as no one is shooting at us.” Then we flew Sargeant Shriver; he ran for Vice President. Another interesting person was Archibald Cox; he

was campaigning for someone in the '78 election in Greenwich. Then Toby Moffett, who was our Congressman. When he was actively campaigning, we flew him around the District a lot, and then he ran for Senate and we saw all of Connecticut. Art House was another campaigning passenger.

**G.P.** A McGovern post script: when he had his own Presidential campaign, there was hubbub on the radio and television. Some reporter had stowed away on his campaign jet, and he had been caught and asked to step off. Larry wrote a little note to George and said, "You should have stuck with 88 Charlie; if that had happened we never would have been able to take off."

**L.P.** It was a very interesting way to meet people. To go on to the next part of our life here, I got out of office as Selectman in '79. Then I got talked into running for the Planning Commission through the 80's.

**G.P.** He was asked to run at the same time as Bernie Rosenberg, and we were very regretful about that because Bernie had served a long time. It was really putting two Democrats to run against each other. Larry didn't run that first time, but after Bernie's accidental death, he picked up where Bernie left off.

**C.S.** I always thought the Planning Commission was the most powerful commission in town?

**L.P.** In a lot of towns they are combined with zoning commissions, but in Woodbury it's separate. The commissions are all important. The people who serve on those boards really deserve a lot of credit; there is a lot of time involved.

**C.S.** Can we talk about the open space in town?

**L.P.** For someone who is interested in geology, Woodbury is one of the best places to live. After the glaciers melted away, they left a lot of sand and gravel along the center of town. One of the resources we are very fortunate to have is what is called the Pomperaug Aquifer in the Woodbury and Southbury basin, an amazing ground water system. Our Pomperaug Aquifer is an impressive geological phenomenon. When you put a well field in the aquifer, the water comes out and requires no treatment. One of the things we began to be concerned with is that we had a lot of water utilities. Generally speaking, with a home well system, you pump the water out of the well, you use the water in your house, and it goes through your septic system and back through the ground. When you have a home system like that you are only temporarily using the water. Since the 80's and 90's, water has become a more valuable resource. We had some utilities with major well fields and lines connected to serve other areas. For example, Heritage Village has lines running over to Middlebury and Oxford. There are several waste treatment facilities that take the water and treat it, and the water is put back into the river. You have to have significant flow in the river to keep everything moving, and if the feed is slow and you are putting treated water in there, you are likely to have some major water quality problems. With the aquifer, when we haven't had any rain for a long time, the water is still coming up from the ground. With the Pomperaug Watershed, except when you have an extreme drought, the flow remains adequate. When the DEP came in the 70's, one of the issues they began to deal with was large water utilities using a large amount of water. They are regulated by the State, not the towns. When the DEP first took over these responsibilities, they became overwhelmed and didn't have the staff to deal with all the issues. The DEP was going to go through a stage where they would regulate how much

water could be pumped out of well fields or reservoirs. Because they didn't have real data about how much water was available, they let these utilities put in diversions, pie in the sky figures about how much water they can pump.

**G.P.** Larry is very kind in his expression here. I think this was to hold the votes in Legislature for the DEP. The utilities are powerful lobbies, and they certainly were the 70's, 80's and 90's. So the DEP had to let these major firms claim what they wanted and there was no discussion.

**C.S.** So the utilities set the bench mark?

**L.P.** And unfortunately those diversions are set in stone.

**G.P.** It was a DEP regulation that had to be approved by the Legislature. It was a difficult moment in Connecticut government history. But it kept our DEP; we could have lost our DEP for years.

**L.P.** Because of my background in geology, I have always been interested and have a basic understanding of hydrological systems and ground water. The U.S. Geological Survey has, since the 1930's, had a series of what they call river gauges. One of the earliest in the country was put here on the Pomperaug down near Heritage Village. So we have data going back all that time. It measures how much water goes by in the river; in cubic feet per second. It turns out the Pomperaug Aquifer has been a subject of several U.S. G.S. studies. It's a relatively small area, and the geology is relatively simple. Later, they put in gauges on the Nonnewaug and on the Weekepeemee. All the water that passes through the Pomperaug eventually goes into the Housatonic, including the Nonnewaug and the Weekepeemee. There have been several studies of how the water moves through the system. I was still on the Planning Commission, and we formed a

Water Resource Management Committee to look at these issues and see how serious they were. The system is not fully understood. It needed to be studied and modeled and these studies can be quite expensive. At the time we did have the funds. I got off the Planning Commission in the early 90's and got on the Conservation Committee and have been on that commission ever since then. Our Conservation Commission in Woodbury is non-regulatory; we just make recommendations. Our original water report was put up on a shelf. Then, an issue came up in Southbury and someone put me in contact with Dr. Marc Taylor.

I'm glad I met Marc; I graduated from Williams in 1959 and Mark graduated from Amherst in 1959, so we joke some. I admire him; he is retired now from full-time practice, but he works in senior facilities. I really honor him for his bedside manor. He can talk anybody into anything. From the beginning we talked about how much the rivers were stressed and what would happen in a drought. Eventually we formed Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition. We are officially recognized as Bethlehem, Woodbury, and Southbury. We now have several full time staff. If water is an issue for local decision-makers, they can explore it with the various studies we have been doing. We have been talking with the U.S. Geological Survey for years. Now we are developing computer models to predict how water moves through the aquifer. One of the key questions is, if you have a major production well next to the river and you start pumping water out of it and it goes someplace else, how and when does that affect river flows? It's a very complex question; it's like trying to predict the weather. So the USGS has tried to develop computer models to make predictions. We don't have any major crisis yet, but if the water utilities eventually pump at their state approved rates, there may be

some future river flow problems. We were able to talk the USGS into looking at these studies, and we raised significant funds for our local share of these studies. When Lou Deluca was still Senator, we talked to him about this and he was able to get us state funding. We founded the Watershed Coalition in '97/'98. Since then the USGS has been working here on developing these models. As an analogy, meteorologists are using computer models to predict the weather. We know how inaccurate some of the weather forecasts are. Computer models are very tricky things to develop. One of the advantages we have here is the long term flow data from the gauges. What you do when you develop these models is go back and run a past year. Then you see how well that predicts what actually happened that year. They have two models to deal with surface flow and ground water flow, and they are trying to merge them: take two computer models and merge them together. It is taking longer than we thought, but we want to get a model that is worth the investment. Half way through this project, one of the major USGS researchers, Dave Bjerkle, decided to move up here, and he has become a member of the Coalition. I'm fairly encouraged that we may come up with something useful; water is going to become a major issue. The sooner we develop a plan to deal with that, the better.

**G.P.** A number of Woodbury volunteers (including young people in high school and college) have been reading these meters in the wells and reporting.

**L.P.** What I think is the good news for Woodbury and Southbury, is the towns are very supportive for planning and wetlands issues; this is going to be very useful.

**C.S.** Can you give me a practical scenario on what could happen? I mean could you use all that data to prevent more excessive development? To stop a shopping center or industry?

**L.P.** Possibly. In Woodbury, our gas stations have their major storage tanks in the ground. We have had three major leaks; each of the major stations in Woodbury has had a major leak. The USGS is very interested in plugging this data in because when that material leaks out of a tank, it goes somewhere. There have been studies by the DEP, and as we develop these models we'll be able to identify these issues. If you have a sampling well, and we pick up something here, we'll know it is coming from over there. One of the major water utilities we have in Woodbury and Southbury area, has diversions the model shows exceed the amount of water that can be pumped out of the aquifer. When we got into this study, we approached the companies and said we didn't want to become confrontational, but we want to look at the best way to deal with water resources. Now the three water utilities in town are also contributing financially to these studies. We hope to develop a model that we can take up to the state DEP. My problem is I grew up before computers, and I sit in a room with these hydrologists talking about computer models, but I don't know how to judge the model. Yet, I am still feeling optimistic that we are going to develop a project that we can use statewide and countryside on how to manage water. It's interesting work and I think important work.

**C.S.** Now Larry, would you care to comment on the importance of town planner in a small community?

**L.P.** Yes, this really came up as an issue in the 1970's when I was First Selectman. It was somewhat controversial at the time, but we were able to gradually get everybody involved and eventually get funds for town planner into the town budget.

**C.S.** Was it controversial because they didn't want to have another town employee or was the commission jealous of the power they would have?

**L.P.** Part of it is another town employee because Woodbury is a very conservative town. A lot of people said they just didn't see a need for a town planner. I think as the pressures of development really began to become greater through the 70's and 80's that we did need a professional, full time staff position. Ever since we've had a planner, that person has had a very busy life.

**C.S.** When the first planner came in, were there already systems he could deal with? Were there plenty of requirements that land users had to do or did he have to make it up as he went along?

**L.P.** Both. When they established zoning and planning commissions, state statutes gave the authority, and they recommended what each commission could do. Many towns have a combined planning and zoning commission. I think it has always been wise that Woodbury had separate commissions. Yet, with separate commissions, sometimes communication doesn't work out too well. By and large, however, I think it's a better option. Town planning is never a finished project because it's constantly evolving and changing. It takes somebody, full time staff, to keep track of all the issues and make presentations to the commission.

**C.S.** As it's evolving and being planned, is it also constantly being challenged by people who want to have their own set of standards?

**L.P.** Yes, I think the problems that face these commissions are by and large the same. There is a feeling that when people own a piece of property, it is their right to do whatever they want with it. Planning and zoning always have issues like that, that make their life more complex.

**G.P.** It's very hard in the United States for people to see that what they do affects their neighbors, their state, their country, their world, and their planet.

**L.P.** I think it's intriguing how towns develop a town character. Even adjacent towns like Woodbury and Southbury have different town characters. Southbury by and large has always been in favor of more commercial development. Woodbury by and large has been much more conservative. One of the things I kind of learned during my years as First Selectman is that every time a single family house is built in Woodbury, everybody's taxes go up. A house normally has two or three bedrooms, so that family has kids that they put into the school system. If kids cost more in a school system than the taxes the home pays, the majority of our taxes go to education. Once a couple's children have gone to school and gone away, they say "what are we doing with this big house?" and they sell it to someone else with kids. That single family dwelling keeps generating an overall deficit. That's kind of changed with history, too. In the old days families had a house, they were born there, they went to school there, they lived there, they died there, and the family kept going on. Now our society is mobile. So this is a problem, and to find fair ways to deal with it is not a simple issue.

**C.S.** Now Gloria, do you have something to contribute to this?

**G.P.** Just that our present town planner worked for the Connecticut Siting Council when he first came out of graduate school. It was when Governor Grasso agreed to have a technically, qualified professional to be our executive director, and she stopped the old tradition of having pure patronage place fillers. We were very lucky: we got Chris Wood and he was with us quite a few years and then was recruited by the PUC, and he ran their staff for a while. Then he's gone on; he ran Sunny Valley Farm, worked for Nature

Conservancy, and now he's Woodbury's Town Planner. He's a man who I think brings out the best in volunteers because he's always ready by the deadline or earlier. He gives really good support, he's a very good writer, and he has technical experience that most of us don't bring to work in local government. So I think having him is quite an advantage.

**C.S.** Could you each tell us about the property you have given to the Roxbury land trust?

**L.P.** It wasn't just me and we didn't really give it. (laughs) I went off to college, then got drafted into the army and we ended up teaching over in New York state for a while. Then I came back and taught at Choate school for five years. I always wanted to find some way to get back onto the Farm and earn a living. My dad originally started with a beef farm. In the late 1930's he changed it over to a dairy operation and the dairy operation went through to the late 1950's. My brother went to Cornell and majored in agriculture and was going to come back. Then my dad saw the economics of trying to run a farm and sold the herd off in the early '50's. In the early 60's my father died and my mother had died. My brother, my sister, and I inherited all the land. As a family, we all got along really well with each other.

**G.P.** That was really important because the inheritance tax was unbelievable. It was 65%.

**L.P.** My father bought the land for \$29,000. When he died and they did an assessment on it, it looked like we were going to have to sell the farm just to pay the estate taxes. We finally negotiated an agreement with the IRS about trying to make it more reasonable.

**G.P.** The question was, was it developable real estate or a dairy farm with low income potential.

**C.S.** So developable real estate is more valuable?

**G.P.** Well, on the market. Not to us.

**L.P.** When the IRS assessed this, that's what they were looking at. A lot of the land is suitable for development.

**G.P.** In fact, Larry's father went to one of Roxbury's meetings about tax assessment. They were trying to raise the taxes on him to developable land and he pointed out, if we develop it, it's good for 200 houses and imagine all those schools you'll have to build if we build 200 houses on the Roxbury side. Roxbury's tax people weighed the alternatives and kept it as a dairy farm.

**C.S.** Did they take you as an individual farm or was it something they did for everyone in town?

**L.P.** I don't know. If you're an active farmer, there are Connecticut statutes. We were very fortunate that we hung on to the farm. Then what we began doing was looking for farmers that were interested in the barn, and we went through a lot. Some of them were pretty capable and others were disastrous.

**G.P.** Meanwhile he was trying to teach full time at the college and half time at Post College.

**L.P.** Eventually in '95 or '96 some of Nancy's children that weren't living here looked at the land as a pot of gold. We went through a very controversial time of what to do. Then Dave Beglan, who was chairman of the Roxbury Land Trust, was also our electrician. He was doing some work here one time, and I got mumbling about the farm and he said the Roxbury Land Trust might be interested. We started dealing with the Land Trust and trying to work a deal. At the time since we had a joint ownership; if you are going to do

something major with your joint property, you needed 100% vote. It was my brother, myself, and four of my sister's heirs, and it turns out that the heirs didn't get along with each other very well. So finally we formed this LLC and that was a major project. That way instead of having a 100% vote we only needed 80%.

**C.S.** This requires legal papers and court rulings, so this is a major step?

**G.P.** This is part of complying with Connecticut's general statutes.

**L.P.** Again, we began dealing with the Roxbury Land Trust. Half the Farm is in Woodbury and half in Roxbury. My first concern was whether the Land Trust would only want the Roxbury land. Fortunately, they were interested in both the Roxbury and Woodbury portions. Eventually, we were able to reach a consensus with them, and they took over ownership and we, the LLC, maintained about half the airfield and some land down here around the pool.

**C.S.** Now the farm and the house up the hill?

**G.P.** They all belong to the land trust.

**C.S.** John Sears is an employee of the land trust?

**L.P.** No, he has a lease as an independent farmer. The little house at the top of our driveway that used to be the farm manager's house was bought by my niece, and a nephew bought a piece of land to the north to build a house.

**G.P.** The big house John Sears lives in with his family. That was the family house but now John is there and the Land Trust owns it.

**C.S.** Did you hire John Sears?

**L.P.** We leased with him. He is one of the best farmers that I've ever come across. If there's anything in your genes to make you a farmer, he's really got it. His wife works

there, too. They are up in the morning at 5:00 am, and they're still in the barn at quarter to ten at night doing chores. One day I said, "John you know what. Every time I think I'm having a bad day, I think about you and I feel better." He said "you know what. I really like what I'm doing."

**G.P.** He hires kids from the agriculture school.

**C.S.** Total Estate care is there?

**L.P.** Yes, they came when were living in the attic of the Pond house and building our own. As you go up from the main barn up to the main house, there's a little shed called the bunk house because it used to have four bunks. When the hay season came, Dad hired people who just slept there for the summer. Total Estate came in and started using it to store their lawn mower.

**G.P.** Jay Alzemara and Bob Bouclier mowed lawns, and they had a power mower they wanted to store out of the rain. They asked Larry, "If we reinforce the bunk house, could we store our lawn mower in there?" He agreed to no rent, but repair. They used to come back from a day's sweaty work of mowing and lounge out in front of the house and watch the sun go down. In the winter, they always hung a string of Christmas lights across their little house. They were such nice boys. Now they are men, and they have grown that business to employ thirty-five people at the peak lawn maintenance season. They used to have the big garden shop but they have pulled in their horns on that. They are the American dream story come true.

**L.P.** John Sears and Total Estate gave us a way to hold the farm land and cover taxes and insurance expenses. Because John was farming the land, we were able to get the tax

assessment for farm land. If you have a field and you lease it out to a farmer who hays it, you can have it assessed as farm land.

**C.S.** As it stands right now, who maintains all those wonderful fields up there?

**L.P.** John Sears has his corn and gets his hay.

**C.S.** It's not easy to maintain a meadow as beautiful as yours?

**L.P.** He grows hay. He cuts it and stores it for the winter.

**C.S.** If you put his hay in a garden, does it sprout weeds?

**G.P.** We have his cow manure in our garden.

**L.P.** I don't know.

**C.S.** In total, the land trust received how many acres of land?

**G.P.** 480, Larry's father had 556 acres. Glen sliced some off, Connie sliced some off, and the LLC was too sentimental to let the airfield or pool go. In 1968, we sliced three acres off to have a lot to build our house.

**L.P.** I have gotten rusty on those figures. I feel fortunate that I get to live here and I don't have to deal with any of the daily problems.

**C.S.** When was the last time you saw meadow lark up here?

**G.P.** Ed Hagen told me that of the twelve nests that succeeded in Connecticut, one was here. That was two years ago. We don't see them often. I understand it's not a big enough field for the grassland sparrows. There is a problem; land that is cultivated can kill birds on the nest if they mow it before babies are out of the nest. In 1962, Larry used to walk me, pregnant, to the hill top each evening, and we'd here lots of them.

**C.S.** If a person decides to give a piece of land to Roxbury land trust or to Flanders, it is tied up forever?

**G.P.** We were advised that it might be well to give land to two organizations, so that neither board could make the decision to part with it without the other. We didn't do that with this. We've thought about giving the house to Audubon. There's still, right in the heart of it, the airfield and the pool.

**L.P.** If we decide to get rid of the airfield, the Roxbury land trust has first option.

**G.P.** I heard of one woman's disappointment over her land in Colorado. She deeded it over and the Nature Conservancy decided the land was not as valuable as something else they could acquire. So they sold hers and acquired the preferable land. Nothing is changeless. It's as permanent as human thinking can make it.

**C.S.** You have given me a wonderful gift, it really is. I have to tell you, it has been my absolute pleasure to come here and interview you. Thank you.

Transcribed by:  
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