

BUSINESSES OF HARTFORD, VERMONT

Hartford Business Oral History Project



Submitted September 30, 2014

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The Hartford Business Oral History Project is funded by the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, for the Certified Local Government Program of Vermont's annual program under the provisions under the National Historic Preservation Act (P.L. 89- 665), as amended.

Hartford Business Oral History Project 2014

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PART ONE

I. Project Background

In 2003, the Hartford Oral History Program was launched. With assistance from a CLG grant, it focused on training to set up a volunteer oral history program. It also resulted in the first ten interviews. In 2005, a second oral history grant resulted in completing transcriptions of most of the interviews. In 2012, a third oral history grant project was undertaken which focused on the agricultural oral history. To date, approximately 90 people have been interviewed for the Program.

Hartford is located in the heart of the Upper Valley region and consists of five villages (White River Junction, Hartford, Wilder, Quechee, and West Hartford) and several smaller hamlets. With a population of 10,000 residents, Hartford is the ninth largest community in Vermont. First chartered in 1761, Hartford has three major rivers (Connecticut, White, and Ottaquechee) along with a rich mill history. The first railroad train in Vermont left White River Junction on June 26, 1848 and for the next century White River Junction had the distinction of being one of the busiest railroad towns in new England.

In the past 50 years, Hartford and the Upper Valley region have undergone many changes. The Interstate Highway system provided access to the region at the same time passenger and freight rail declined. White River Junction, which had served as the retail service center of the region was replaced by development in adjoining West Lebanon and then last of the Town's textile mills closed. Many farms ceased operations and farmland was converted to residential and commercial use to accommodate population growth. Hartford has a rich business history that evolved with the changes. This project seeks to document the experiences of Hartford residents who owned or worked for a Hartford business.

Although there are many avenues to historical documentation, oral history is one of the best suited for the goals of this project – understanding the story of businesses – as daily life and human interactions and memories are involved. The seemingly mundane and routine elements of everyday life, most often are those not recorded by standard historical texts. The rise and fall of business trends and their net worth or how long they were in businesses can be found in town directories and tax records and other census data. But conversations, stories, memories unique to a particular place and time may be left undocumented, for reasons that include someone not seeing value in their own story, not having a place or time to record it, and often the commonplace nature of a task making as though everyone will always know the details. Often we cannot see these bits and pieces of daily life as valuable until they are too far in the past to recollect. Oral history hopes to catch those snippets before they pass.

Oral history is subjective by nature, a collaboration between interviewee and interviewer, offering a unique perspective on the topic of study, one that cannot be quantified. Memory may have its flaws, but the merits of oral history outweigh its shortcomings. Oral history serves to document life, which is filled with opinions, perspectives and particular memories about place, which may differ in experience for each person.

II. Project Methods & Process

The bulk of this project occurred in the spring and summer of 2014, from May – August. Twenty interviews with 21 people were conducted, totaling approximately 25 hours of interview time. All interviews were transcribed in full, and content from the interviews and transcripts used to develop this report.

Interviewees for the project were selected with the assistance of Hartford Historic Preservation Commission (HHPC). Prior to the consultant beginning this project, the Town sent letters about the project to business owners, in order to gauge interest levels. That list and responses were provided to the consultant along with a list of other possible interviewees, with the longest running businesses identified as priorities. The consultant followed up with phone calls.

Since this project continues previous segments, the HHPC had an idea of who should be interviewed and who was willing, and would be a good representation of business life in Hartford. The consultant was given this list of possible interviewees, chosen in order to establish a good cross section of the businesses in the town. An initial letter and phone call from the Town began the contact phase of the interview process, which was then followed through by the consultant.

The initial phone call by the consultant served to introduce the consultant, explain the project and set up an interviewee date and time if the contact was willing. Some contacts declined to participate, and many on the initial list did not return phone calls from the consultant, perhaps due to lack of interest or a hectic time of year. Interviews occurred in May, June, July, and August, at the convenience of the interviewees, whether at their homes, their businesses, the Hartford town offices, or the Quechee Library.

The interviews followed a fairly typical sequence. Following introductions and answering project questions, the interviews began with a basic question asking the interviewees a bit about their background, which inevitably brought the story up to their connections to business. Many people often say that they do not have much to share or contribute to a project, and the beginning of an interview (or even pre-recording conversation) serves to establish that level of comfort between interviewer and interviewee. As a result, the interview may begin at a slower pace, or questions may be revisited later in the interview to clarify. Depending on the depth of knowledge about

family members and the involvement in a business, the interviews took a few different paths, sometimes focusing on opening the business, the business history, family ties, typical days in the business, other businesses in Hartford, or changes in Hartford.

While the project did include standard business related questions, none were asked in a strict question and answer session. Rather, the interviewer allowed the questions to develop organically, or serve as a prompt if the interviewee was unsure of how much to say. Some interviewees preferred long periods of time to share their recollections, whereas others seemed more comfortable with more questions and shorter answers. Both succeed in obtaining valuable information.

Questions that the project hoped to answer included the following; though, this is not an all-inclusive list:

- Tell me your connections to business in Hartford
- What was the name of the business?
- What type of business?
- What were the years of operation?
- What did you sell, or what services did you provide?
- Who started the business?
- Where was it located?
- Who were the customers?
- Who were other businesses that you dealt with?
- Is the business still in operation?
- What was a typical day?
- What was the hardest part of owning a business?
- What was your favorite part of owning a business?
- Who was your competition?
- What are some other businesses in town?
- How has Hartford changed?
- Was the interstate a good development?
- Did the Vermont tax affect your business?

Following the interview, interviewees were asked to sign a release form, gifting the recording, transcription and related products to the following archives: Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, Vermont Folklife Center, and the Town of Hartford Historical Society. Additionally, at this time, interviewees were asked to complete the file cover sheet, providing brief biographical information. When filling out these forms, interviewees were informed that they would be provided with copies of the transcript and draft report for their comments and concerns, if any, prior to donation to the archives.

The chosen method of transcription was to transcribe in full, as close to verbatim as possible. This was selected based on meeting the goals of this project, for the end result

of providing a useful transcription. Transcribing verbatim has the end result of including the false starts and half sentences that people use in general stream of consciousness speak. While these can be difficult to read, because the subject matter switches quickly, they provide valuable information that would be lost if only complete sentences were transcribed. The following decisions for transcription were made by the consultant:

- (1) Leaving out the “um, uh, like, you know” and other crutch words.
- (2) If two people are debating back and forth, in quick snippets, as they attempt to decide on a fact – that is edited in order to not confuse the reader of the transcription.
- (3) If the interviewer added short one-word comments that do not add value to the transcript, they are often left out of transcription in order to maintain readability and flow.
- (4) Background noises are noted in brackets as well, such as a phone ringing. A reader or researcher should consider the transcriptions an accurate representation of the audio recordings, a representation that has been edited slightly, as discussed above, in order to be readable. Spoken dialogue and the written words offer very different results.

Transcriptions are formatted to include timestamps. Following the interviews and transcriptions, the next segment of the project was this summary report. Part One provides background information and project methods. Part Two offers interviewee and business profiles and a summary of relevant information to the researcher, including a map and a timeline of the businesses. Part Three provides a discussion of the common themes relating to owning and/or working for a business in Hartford between the 1940s and present. This thematic discussion states themes and conclusions drawn from the project, followed by supporting excerpts from the interview transcripts. This method was chosen in order to maintain the integrity and value of oral history research. Allowing the interviewees to speak through this report aims to create a connection between the reader and the interviewees. Suggestions for further research are included at the end.

III. How to Use the Collected Data

Each of the twenty interview files includes the following: (1) a project release form, (2) a file cover sheet for each interviewee, (3) the time stamped transcription (4) the audio recording file in .wav format, and (5) any related photographs or documents provided. Digital copies as well as hard copies are provided to the archival institutions. The files are coded in this format: HBOH_FamilyName_FirstName_FileType. In other words, HBOH_Ticehurst_Barbara_Release is the code for the release form, and

HBOH_Ticehurst_Interview is the audio recording for Ticehurst interview. A complete list with all file names and codes is included as an appendix in this report.

File cover sheets serve as the administrative records for project participants and interview statistics. The data collected can be used in a variety of ways. The transcriptions with timestamps allow for researchers to pair transcripts and recorders when searching for a particular segment of the recording.

This report culls the information from the interviews, applying them to each other, using excerpts from the transcripts in order to illustrate the findings. Its purpose is to create an understanding of past and present business community in the Town of Hartford, VT. It does not serve as a conclusive history of businesses in Hartford. Other interviews, past and future, can be added to this set of 20 in order to build greater depth and understanding.

PART TWO

IV. Interviewee & Business Profiles

(1) Judy Barwood / Barwood Insurance

Type of business: Insurance (various family members in the business)

Years of operation: 1885 – present (depending on the family member) 1960 – 1989
(Wendell's businesses)

Location: 37 Gate Street, White River (Barwood Insurance)

Judy Barwood is the widow of Wendell Barwood. Judy's family has been in White River since the early 1800s. Family names include Watson, Cameron, Wallace, Safford, and Latham. Judy worked at the Ottaquechee Health Center in Woodstock as an X-ray technician after attending Colby Jr. College in New London, NH. She then traveled in Europe and returned to work for Thermo Dynamics Corporation in Lebanon, NH. Judy's late husband, Wendell Barwood, grew up in Norwich, attended the University of Vermont and then came to White River to work with Drown & LeBorveau Insurance Company. Judy and Wendell married in 1961.

Her family was also in the insurance business. Her uncle Alfred Watson

started Watson & West Insurance Agency in 1885 in Hartford. Judy's parents bought Watson & West in 1938/9, which was then run by Judy's mom while her father worked at Lovejoy Tool Company in Springfield, VT. The insurance office was located in the Gates Building. In 1962, John Abbott and Bob McDonald bought Watson & West and moved the business to Tafts Flats. In 1965/1966, Wendell Barwood bought Watson & West and merged it with Drown & LeBorveau, later changing the name to Barwood Insurance Agencies (1967). In 1989, Wendell retired and sold the business to Kinney Pike Hartford.



Figure 1: Judy Barwood, 2014.

Today Judy & Wendell's son owns the business with six or seven business partners, with offices located statewide. Wendell passed away in 2011.

(2) Mike Blood / Blood's Catering & Party Rentals

Type of Business: Fish Market / Catering / Party Rentals / Restaurant (formerly)

Years of Operation: 1940s – present. His own fish market October 7, 1984

Location of business: downtown White River (Blood's Market); Chandler Road (off Route 5; 1147 Taft Avenue, White River Junction (present)

Mike Blood is the son of Gladys and Denmom Blood who opened a grocery store in White River in the 1940s called Blood's Market. Denny Blood was a butcher by trade, who started selling fish to customers because they asked and there was a void to fill in the market. When the Bloods no longer wanted to pay rent, they started operating out of their garage on Chandler Road and built a lobster pool. From April to November, they were selling seafood out of the truck and their garage. They'd go to Maine and



Figure 2: Mike Blood in the showroom.

Portsmouth, NH to buy seafood and sell it around Vermont. In the winter the Bloods lived and worked in Florida.

Mike Blood got into the business when his father passed away. He was working for his father-in-law at Hartford Oil at the time, who convinced him to try his hand at the seafood business – clambakes. Mike Blood was catering at about 20 years old. Mike opened his first fish market on the property of Ned Pattengail's gas station. Mike and his wife bought the property when Ned's widow was selling it, relocated the house that was on the property and constructed the current building for the fish market and restaurant. The restaurant closed in 1992 in order to focus on the market and catering side of the business.

Today the business is catering and party rentals, one stop shopping for all events, with an excellent reputation in the Upper Valley.

(3) Chuck Bohi / Railroad History

Type of business: Railroad

Years of Operation: n/a

Location of business: White River Junction

Chuck is a retired history teacher at Hanover High School and 40 year resident of Hartford. He is an avid railroad historian, published author and photographer. Chuck and his wife Lynn have been in the Vermont legislature and involved in Hartford.

Chuck's interview provides excellent historic context and knowledge about the railroad in White River Junction, a critical piece of the business history.



Figure 3: Chuck Bohi, 2014.

(4) Dennis Brown / Charlie Brown's

Type of business: Retail / small engine repair

Years of Operation: 1958 - 2005

Location of business: 3803 Woodstock Road (Route 4), White River Junction

Dennis Brown is the son of Charlie Brown, who began Charlie Brown's in 1958 selling lawn mowers, snow blowers, small engines, go karts, outboard motors, and tractors. Charlie Brown was a World War II veteran who began working in a small engine business following the war, before deciding to start his own business. Charlie Brown was a man who liked working for himself and was an excellent businessman. His brother ran the business with him. In 2005, a



Figure 4: Dennis Brown, 2014.

second cousin bought the business and continued running it, only slightly changing the name from Charlie Brown's, Inc. to Charlie Brown's. It continues to operate in the same location. The business offered repairs and other services: carrying propane, delivering propane.

Dennis worked in the shop as a kid, helping his dad, with his brothers, and then joined the Army Reserve Program for 15 years. His time included a year of deployment in Desert Storm. He left the family business in 1988 and then began working for Gateway Motors as a service advisor before going to Desert Storm, and then 11 years after returning (a total of 14 years). Dennis has also hosted his own radio show, "The All Around Town with Dennis Brown Show."

(5) Matt Bucy / Tip Top Media

Type of Business: Business space, Redevelopment

Years of Operation: 2000 - present

Location of Business: 85 North Main Street, White River Junction

Matt Bucy attended Middlebury College studying art and architecture, and found his way to White River Junction via New England Digital because he knew how to operate a Synclavier. After working for New England Digital for a few years, he attended Yale University for graduate school and came back to write software for New England Digital until the company went out of business in 1992. Matt Bucy came to White River and ended up buying the Tip Top building on North Main Street and planning its renovation.



Figure 5: Photo courtesy of Matt Bucy.

The historic Tip Top was home to the Smith Baking Company then the Vermont Baking Company and finally Ward Baking Company, operating from 1885 to 1974. Beginning in 1974, the building passed through the hands of many owners and uses. When Matt Bucy acquired the building, tenants were occupying the building already. More tenants became interested in space in 2001 when Tip Top Café held an open house. Tip Top attracted much attention from the arts community and renovations continued. Today it holds 33 offices and studios for artists, businesses, photographers, designers, publishers etc. Matt also renovated the Dreamland building on North Main Street. His next project is the renovation of the American Legion building on South Main Street.



Figure 6: The Tip Top Building on North Main Street, 2014.

(6) Paul Buff / Quechee Lakes Corporation

Type of business: Development & Real Estate

Years of employment: 1972-1992

Location: Quechee, VT

Paul Buff began working for the Quechee Lakes Corporation in 1972 as an architect and to supervise construction. Paul earned a graduate degree in landscape architecture and earned his MBA from Plymouth State College in the late 1970s, getting into development management.

He became President of Quechee Lakes Corporation in 1981 and held that position until 1992, thus he was the manager of the development project. He and his wife and son lived in Windsor until the 1980s when they moved to Quechee Lakes. In 1992, Paul and his wife moved to North Carolina, but returned for their love of

Vermont, and settled in Quechee Lakes. Today Paul is retired.



Figure 7: Paul Buff, 2014.

(7) John Clerkin / The Clerkin Agency / Clerkin & Young (among others)

Type of business: Assistant Town Manager / Real Estate & Insurance

Years of Operation: 1971 –present

Location: Various locations in Hartford

John Clerkin's resume of businesses in town is quite long. John's father was an optometrist in White River, Dr. Clerkin. John attended Hartford High School, attended the University of Vermont, and then worked as Assistant Town Manager under Ralph Lehman beginning in 1971. He worked in the insurance business for a few weeks before deciding it wasn't for him. He worked as town manager in Hartland. Then he worked as Executive Director of a health center in Plainfield, VT. Following that he was town manager of Castleton, VT, before returning to Hartford to work as Public Works Director. After that he worked in real estate with Mr. Young. He has worked with his brother. John has also been an airport commissioner at the Lebanon Regional Airport and a State Legislator.

(8) Jim Flanagan / Hartford Motors

Type of business: Car dealer

Years of Operation: 1955-2007

Location: 7 Pine St, White River Junction

Jim Flanagan was born in Burlington, VT, and grew up in Hartford with his father, mother and six siblings. Jim's father, Peter Flanagan, and business partner, Andy Rushlowe, bought the White River Garage and renamed Hartford Motors in 1955. Peter and Andy ran the business until 1989 when Jim and his business partner, Patrick Kerrigan, bought it from them and continued to run it until 2007 when they sold the franchise to

Miller Auto Group. Hartford Motors ended as a Chrysler dealer, but started with International Harvester. Jim started as a paper boy in White River, attended St. Michael's College in Colchester, VT, and moved out to Chicago, IL until moving back to Vermont to work for Hartford Motors. Today Jim works at Gateway Motors, another long standing business in White River.



Figure 9: Jim Flanagan, 2014



Figure 8: Hartford Motors, 1967. Courtesy of UVM Landscape Change, LS56314_000.jpg.

(9) Dale Howe / Frederick Johnson Pianos

Type of business: Piano sales & service

Years of operation: 1930 - present

Location: 344 North Hartland Road, White River Junction

Dale began working for Frederick Johnson Pianos in 1965 as a piano tuner after attending piano tuning school in Boston. The business was located in Norwich, VT until about 1972, also when it was purchased by Dale Howe and Frederick Johnson's son, Richard Johnson. Frederick Johnson Pianos offers piano sales, sheet music, lessons, and piano rentals.



Figure 10: Dale Howe playing the piano in his store, 2014.



Figure 11: The interior of Frederick Johnson Pianos, 2014.

(10) Toby Jasmin / Jasmin Auto Body

Type of business: auto repair

Years of operation: 1969 – present

Location: 60 Jasmin Road (off North Hartland Rd), White River Junction

Toby Jasmin's father owned Adams, Nickel & Moline in White River Junction from 1961-1972, approximately, which cut headstones. The business turned from a tombstone and granite business to a precast concrete business making septic tanks, dry wells, steps, etc. After Toby's father passed away, his mother ran the business. During that time, Toby and his older brother started Jasmin Auto: Sales & Auto Body. Toby and his sons own and operate the business today.



Figure 12: Jasmin Auto, 2014.

(11) Jeff Knight / Knight Funeral Home

Type of business: Funeral Home

Years of Operation: 1963 – present

Location: 903 Hartford Avenue, White River Junction

Jeff Knight was born and raised in Hartford, VT. His father, Ralph Mortimer Knight III, bought the Powers Funeral Home in 1963, and before that his grandfather, Ralph M. Knight, II, owned and operated a funeral home in Windsor since 1941. Jeff studied mortuary science at the University of Minnesota and returned to Vermont in 1995 to run the family business. The business began downtown White River on Gates Street in an old Victorian building, typical of funeral homes at the time. They moved to Route 5 up the hill in White River when the property was up for sale. Jeff's father built a new building on the same footprint of the garage that was there before, and the family lived in the Jericho district. His father, Ralph Mortimer Knight, bought the funeral home in Windsor after he had gone to embalming school and heard the owner was looking to sell. Around 1980, Ralph III added a crematory to the business.



Figure 13: Jeff Knight, 2014.



(12) Joan Laro & Phil Laro

Name of business: Laro's Country Store / Laro's Vermont Maple Products / Laro's Farm Stand / Laro's New England Specialty

Type of business: Country Store / Retail / Farm stand

Years of Operation: 1974 – 1976 / 1976 – 1980 / 1980 – 1991

Location of Business: Route 4, Quechee / New Hampshire / Route 4, Quechee (next to Scotland by the Yard)

The Laros have quite a prolific collection of businesses that they owned in Quechee, VT. Joan & Phil Laro purchased the Fogg Family Farmstand on Route 4 in Quechee, VT in 1974. They operated it for two years, very successfully due to the development of Quechee Lakes. They lived in Norwich at the time and worked 14 hour days with two small children. Due to the time commitment they sold their business and moved and operated a wholesale business out of their home – Phil delivering maple products via truck. Then they bought a farmstand on Route 4, ran it successfully for a few years before deciding to try something new. At this point, the Laros purchased the freight buildings from Dewey's Mills to run a retail store selling Vermont products. The Laros still own the buildings, but have since liquidated the business.



Figure 14: Joan & Phil Laro, 2014.

(13) Clair Lovell / Various businesses in Quechee

Researcher's note: This interview contains convoluted information, most likely due to a bad day for Mr. Lovell's failing health.

Name of business: n/a

Type of business: Gift shop,

Years of Operation: n/a

Location of business: Route 4, Quechee

Clair Lovell has been involved with Quechee businesses his whole life, beginning by peddling meat in Quechee. He had started working for his father in the meat business. His mother worked in the White River Junction ticket agent office. Clair sold maple syrup and Vermont products among other gifts in his shop. He owns the Waterman building in Quechee, where All Decked Out and a few others businesses are located. Clair served a number of years on the selectboard and chamber of commerce.

(14) Kip Miller / Quechee Gorge Gifts & Sportswear (25,000 Gifts)

Type of Business: Gift Retail / Specialty

Years of Operation: 1938 - present

Location of business: 6053 Woodstock Road, White River Junction (Quechee Gorge)

The Miller family traces its Hartford roots to the late 1800s where Kip's grandfather ran the Excelsior Carriage Company in downtown White River. Garfield Miller, Kip's uncle, started Miller Automobile Company and became the only Cadillac distributor in New England. Herbert Richard Miller, Kip's father, started the Green Mountain Card Company and developed the college pennant. The business became Green Mountain Studio in 1938 when his father decided he wanted to go into the retail end of giftware. Green Mountain Studio sold woodenware with hand painted designs. 25,000 Gifts was started in 1938 by Kip's father, and was one of the first manufacturing outlets in



Figure 15: Kip Miller, 2014.

the country, selling seconds and damaged goods from the manufacturing process on site. In 1950-1954, Kip's father ran a freshwater aquarium for an attraction. From 1954-1979/80, he sold bolt cloth from the Hartford Woolen Mill. Kip and his wife joined the business in 1970 and bought the business in 1979. In 1980 the business moved from the intersection of US Route 5 and Route 4, to where it is today, where the former Dewey's Mills was located. The building had been a restaurant from about 1946-1954, and then was a showroom for the mill through the 1970s. Kip continues to run the business with his son and daughter-in-law. A snack bar has been attached to Quechee Gorge Gifts since 1965, run by Gayle Ottman and currently Patty Buttman.



Figure 16: Quechee Gorge Gifts, 2014.

(15) Gayle Ottman

Name of Business: Quechee Lakes Corporation / Johnson & Ottman Real Estate / Snack bar at Quechee Gorge

Type of Business: Land Development / Real estate / childcare / food

Years of Operation: Quechee Lakes: 1975 – 1981 / Real estate 1981- 1992 / Daycare: 1980s / Snack Bar 1979-2010

Location of Business: Quechee Village, Quechee Gorge

Gayle Ottman grew up in Lunenburg, VT, attended Boston University for journalism and then business college in Manchester, NH. She and her first husband lived in Littleton, NH. In 1975, Gayle moved to Quechee, VT to work for Quechee Lakes Corporation as the Assistant to the Executive V.P. of Marketing & Sales. Gayle worked with the salesmen, editing and producing the *Quechee Times*, writing stories, photography, conducting interviews. Around 1981, Gayle considers this the beginning of business life: owning and developing businesses. Gayle left QLC to work with her second husband in the real estate office. Gayle worked with the rental program, before they began buying property to operate as rentals. They owned a 14 unit building on Cross Street in Quechee as well as others in Littleton, NH.

Gayle and her daughter operated a daycare center, but due to costs of operation and other businesses, operated for only 7 years.

Gayle and her husband operated a snack bar at Quechee Gorge Gifts from 1979-2010. The snack bar operated from May (Mother's Day) to October, 7 days a week.

Gayle served on the Hartford Select Board and was Director of the Quechee Chamber of Commerce for 18 years.



Figure 17: The Snack bar at Quechee Gorge Gifts, 2014.

(16) Don Ransom / Scotland by the Yard

Type of business: Specialty retail

Years of operation: 1974 (in Vermont) – present

Location of business: Quechee Main Street until 1978, then 8828 Woodstock Road (US Route 4) in Quechee

Don joined Scotland by the Yard in 1975, but the business had been in operation in Vermont in 1974, and prior to that in Georgetown, Washington, D.C. since 1953 by Leslie Arthur. Her daughter, Deborah Loughlin moved the business to Quechee around the time of the Quechee Lakes Development, having been invited to a part of a



Figure 18: Don and Susan inside the store, 2014.

specialty retail village in Quechee Village. A

number of businesses came, and only Scotland by the Yard survived, due to Scottish festivals in the summer/fall months to supplement the income. Quechee Main Street did not have enough traffic to sustain a healthy business all year long with some kind of supplement. In 1978, the business relocated to its current location on Route 4. Today Don and his wife Susan run the business, and live behind the business but are looking to sell to someone who would like to continue the business.

The store sells gifts related to Scotland and Ireland: clothing, housewares, jewelry, décor, knitware, kids' gifts. Scotland by the Yard has weathered the ups and downs of the economy, the tourism industry, adapting their products based on customers' wants.

Don has been a member of the Quechee Chamber of Commerce and helped to start the Quechee Hot Air Balloon Festival, and is a critical part of the Quechee Scottish Festival.



Figure 19: Exterior, 2014.



Figure 20: Interior, 2014.

(17) Tom Rice / Brookside Nursing Home

Type of business: Nursing Home

Years of operation: 1963 – present

Location: 1200 Christian Street, White River Junction

Tom Rice can trace his family roots in Hartford to 1807. His father worked on the railroad for over 30 years, and his mother studied nursing at Hanover. After the family farmland was sold for interstate construction, Tom's parents wanted to start a nursing home. In 1963 they began with four beds and have expanded to 67 residents in the present day. In the early days of operation they grew all of the produce on the property, up until 45 residents.



Figure 21: Tom Rice in his office, 2014.



Figure 22: Street view (Google) of the Brookside Nursing Home.

(18) Pete Schaal / Schaal Electric

Type of business: Electrical

Years of operation: 1972 - present

Location: 73 Depot Street, Wilder

Pete Schaal started Schaal Electric in 1972 after working for Fellows Electric Service in White River for five years, which had been in business since the 1930s.

In his interview, Pete Schaal discusses the history of his business in depth and the nuances and mechanics of running a business. He touches on good business practices, supplies, adapting to the changing business climate, customer relations. Pete works with his son Todd, who will take over the business in a few years. ‘



Figure 23: Pete Schaal outside his business, 2014.

Figure 24: Schaal Electric, 2014.



(19) Jonathan Schechtman / Meeting House Furniture Restoration

Type of business: Furniture restoration

Years of operation: 1982 – present

Location: 87 Waterman Hill Road, Quechee, VT

Jonathan Schechtman was born in New Britain, CT and attended the University of Vermont as well as Penn State University. After teaching art for a year at the Pine Ridge School in Williston, VT, he attended the High Wickham College of Technology and Art in England, where he studied furniture design, construction and antique restoration. He then started a business in Richmond,



Figure 25: Jonathan Schechtman inside the shop, 2014.

VT known as Workers in Wood. Jonathan studied Historic Preservation the University of Vermont and then worked as the Assistant Education Director of the Hartford (CT) Architecture Conservancy. Following that he and his wife at the time, Deborah Doyle Schechtman, bought the current building in Quechee, VT, which was constructed as a church and then became an elementary school and then a community center, most recently serving as a special education school in the 1960s and 1970s. He spent 18 months restoring the building into a workshop and residence. The business restores furniture and objects, antique and otherwise.



Figure 26: Meeting House Restoration, 2014.

(20) Barbara Ticehurst / First National Bank

Type of Business: Banking, employee

Years of Employment: 1960-1984

Location of business: downtown White River

Barbara Ticehurst was born in Newport, VT and lived in Newport, Montpelier and St. Johnsbury. While living in St. Johnsbury, Barbara began working at banks. Barbara did not want the typical teacher or nurse tract that many women chose then. She married Amos Ticehurst. Amos worked for a phone company that transferred him to White River Junction. Barbara worked for the First National Bank in downtown White River Junction from 1960-1984. She began working as a fill-in, in the proof department or the bookkeeping department. Barbara's interview includes discussion about working in downtown White River, a bank robber, eating at the Polka Dot Diner, and her work in the bank. She taught a class called the Foundations of Banking. First National Bank became the First Interstate Bank and then First Twin State Bank, then Proctor Bank and finally bought by Mascoma Bank (the latter after Barbara retired).

Barbara worked at a time when it was unusual to be a woman in banking, particularly one rising as high as Vice President. Barbara saw the change of the banking industry from paper to machines to computers.



Figure 27: Barbara Ticehurst, 2014

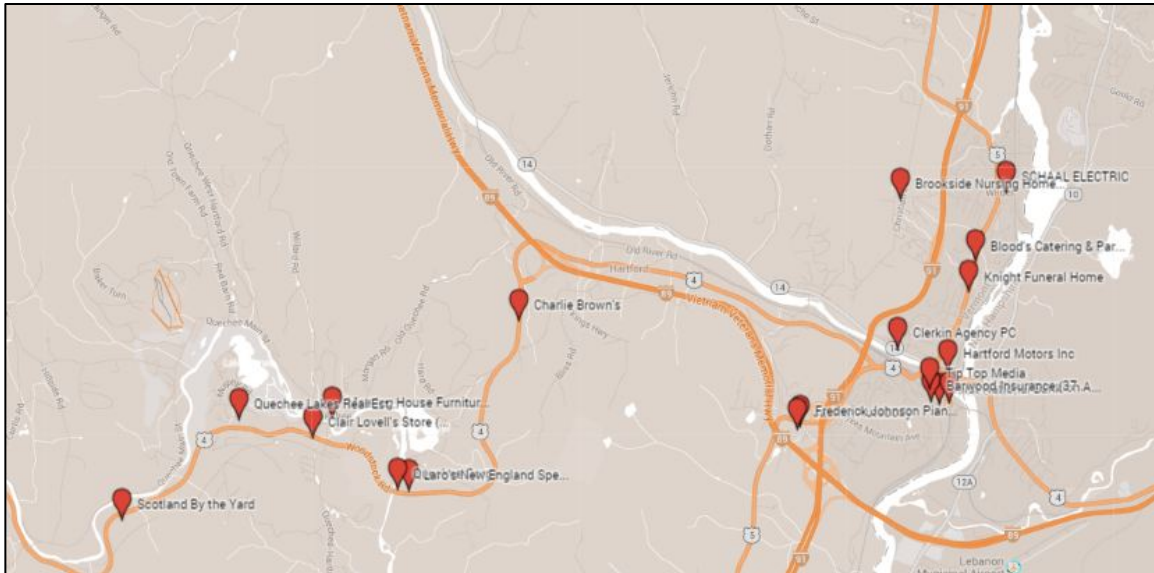


Figure 28: First National Bank, 1967. Courtesy of UVM Landscape Change, LS56295_000.jpg.

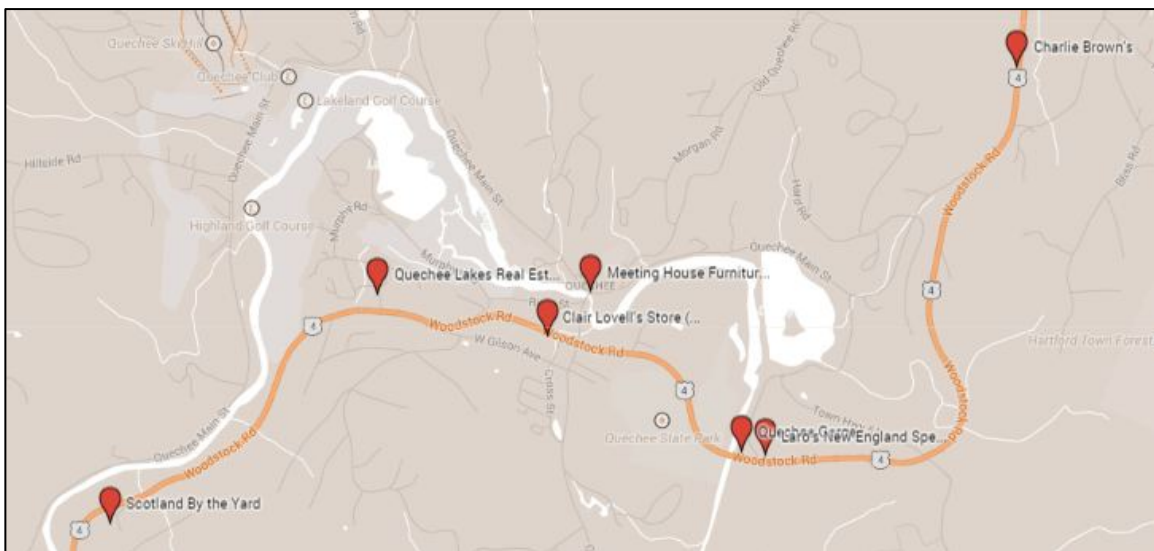
V. Location Maps

An online version of the map below can be accessed here:

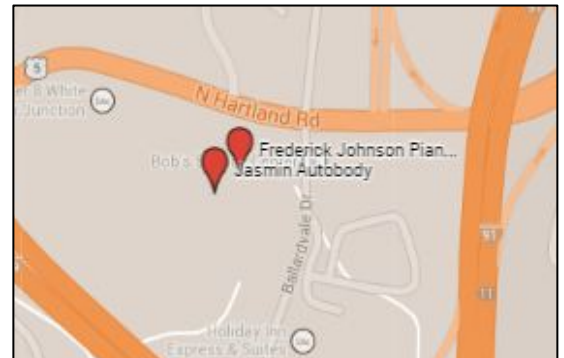
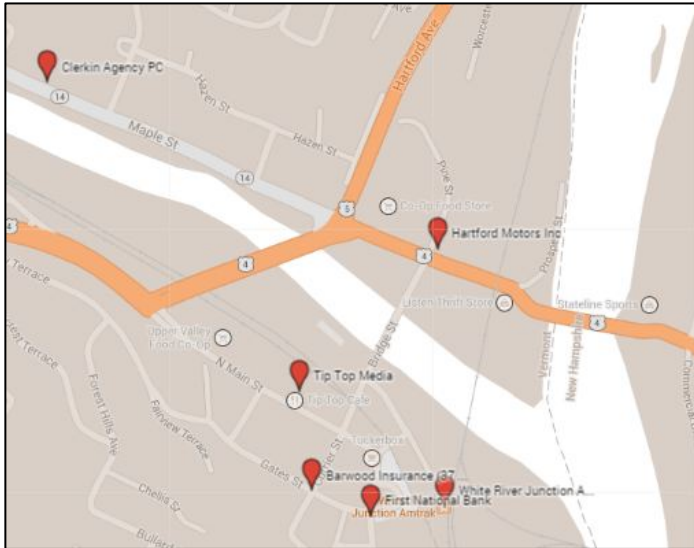
https://mapsengine.google.com/map/edit?mid=zroGziI_Ic4w.kPgjua21VO5s. The businesses have been mapped in order to see the distribution. As evident by the map below, the majority of businesses included in this study are focused in Quechee or White River Junction. This geographic distribution was not planned; rather, it is how the interviews fell. While these 20 interviews are only a sampling of all the businesses in Hartford, they are indicative of the current business locations.



The following maps offer a closer view of the one shown above.

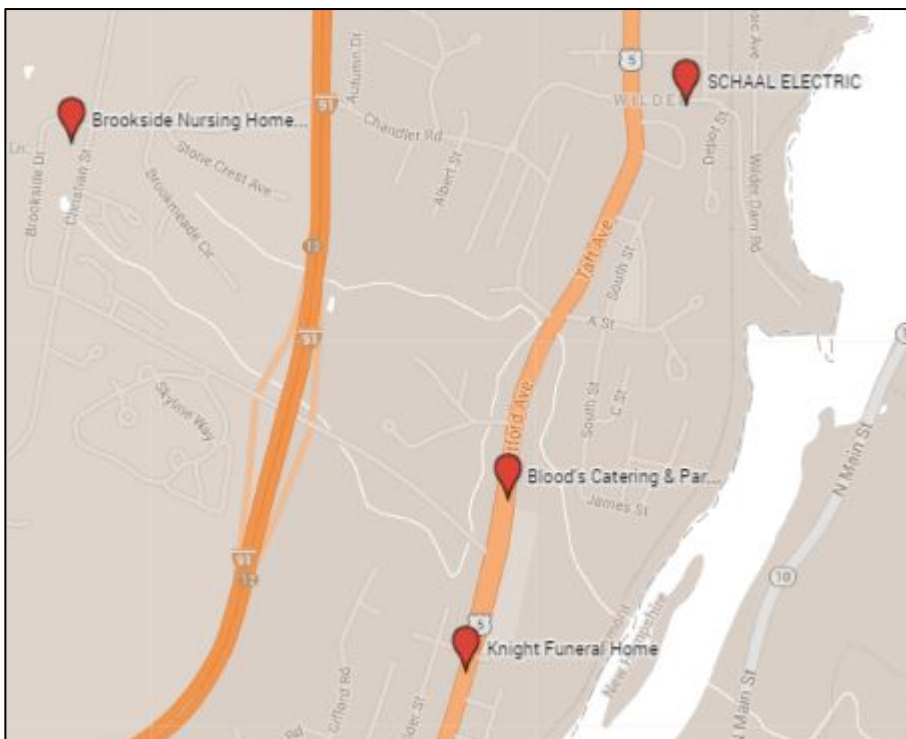


From left to right, this map of the Quechee area shows: Scotland by the Yard, Quechee Lakes Real Estate, Clair Lovell's store, Meeting House Furniture Restoration, Quechee Gorge Gifts & Sportswear, Laro's New England Specialties, and Charlie Browns'.



Above left shows White River Junction. Left, top: Clerkin Agency. Right, top: Hartford Motors. Downtown: Tip Top, Barwood Insurance, First National Bank (former location), White River Junction Amtrak Station.

Above right shows Jasmin Auto Body and Frederick Johnson Pianos on North Hartland Road (Route 5), outside of the village of White River.



The businesses above are located north of downtown White River, and Schaal Electric is located in Wilder.

PART THREE

VI. COMMON THEMES & SUMMARY POINTS

The business history of Hartford is complex and various, particularly that of the last century. Shaped by the convergence of the Connecticut River and the White River, and later by the railroad and the interstate, much of Hartford's business history lies intertwined with its contemporary mode of transportation. Rail lines, woolen mills, and agriculture were closely linked, falling out of favor as highway travel and automobiles filtered through society. The construction of the interstate highway system and the introduction of the Vermont sales tax brought Hartford to yet another new business chapter.

The larger industries of Hartford are no longer in operation or play a much smaller role (railroads, woolen mills, agriculture), yet the business community remains alive and adapting. Business persists due to Hartford's important location at the junction of two interstates. Today the businesses cater more to tourism and the local economy. Yet, no matter the major backers of the economy, people continue to need food, banking, insurance, homes, auto repairs, etc. and people continue to desire villages filled with shopping and eateries. That is a major reason for the continued operation of businesses in Hartford: businesses support and encourage the existence of other businesses. The businesses that remained in operation for decades (or continue to operate) learned to adapt their products and services to the changing needs of the public and the Town of Hartford.

The businesses included in this 2014 study represent a thorough range of the business professions in Hartford: auto mechanics, car dealers, food services (catering & restaurants, specialty retail, real estate, development, insurance, funeral home director, nursing home director. The collective memory of these interviews spans from the 1930s to the present.

Some important businesses in town were not included in this particular oral history project as the businesses have been studied in previous projects. These include the Briggs family of the Briggs Opera House and the Hotel Coolidge and the Lyfords of White River Paper and the Halls of Gateway Motors. Other businesses such as Twin State Fruit and Colodny's Department Store do not have anyone in town that can speak of them. And still, others were not available to participate in this project for personal reasons. This project aimed to capture what has not already been recorded.

Each interviewee discussed his/her experience with business in Hartford, usually a business owner or one who worked in a particular industry for decades (insurance, banking, for example). The interviews touched upon the questions outlined earlier in this

report. Of course, even with the same general purpose of an interview, information gathered varied.

While the interviews and businesses vary, there are commonalities through every interview, in terms of the topics discussed. The strongest themes to show through every interview include: (1) Good business requires hard work, lots of time and attention, good relationships and customers, weathering the rough economic times and adapting to changing clientele wants and needs, (2) Hartford is a good place to live for its opportunities, people and location, (3) White River Junction is making a comeback, reinventing itself, and (4) The big businesses of Hartford have changed – no longer mills and farming and railroad.

These themes are explored in Part Three of this report, summarized and supported by selected excerpts from the interview transcripts.

VII. BUSINESS LIFE IN HARTFORD: COMMON THEMES

A. STARTING A BUSINESS

Whether it dates to 1850, 1950 or 2000, every business has a beginning. Many interviewees took over the business from their parents, such as Jeff Knight, Jim Flanagan Tom Rice, Kip Miller, and Mike Blood, choosing to carry on the family business and make changes as they saw fit. Others fell into the business more unexpectedly, acquiring the businesses from partners and bosses like Dale Howe and Don Ransom. And still others took a leap of faith and went into business for themselves, starting a new business, like Phil & Joan Laro, Gayle Ottman, Toby Jasmin, and Matt Bucy. The interviewees discuss the sacrifices, dedication and time that it required to start a business. Pete Schaal describes the beginning of his business Schaal Electric in Wilder and the challenges that come with it. Jonathan Schechtman talks about the beginnings of Meeting House Restoration in Quechee.

Joan Laro: We started out first business in Hartford and then we moved out and back. Our first business in Hartford was a country store on Route 4. Ironically Phil has a background in produce, but we purchased a place that was originally a farm stand that was created by the Fogg family from Hartford. They had gardens and they needed a place to sell their produce, so they purchased a little piece of land on Route 4 and sold their produce there. They had a small, little, modest farm stand; but, they had a gigantic sign in the shape of a farmer. It was eye-catching. I remember going through there as a young person, probably a teenager, and seeing that sign. It was very impressive. It probably stood 20 feet tall. Phil ran into one of the owners and she said she wanted to sell that piece of land. Phil said, "Okay, do you want to write something up?" So she wrote a commitment on a little yellow piece of paper and Phil gave her \$50, and that was the binder to purchase this piece of land and this little farm stand. That was in 1974. We made the purchase and then went about building around the farm stand, around and over, and started our business immediately. And we were there for two years.

...We started just as sole proprietors. So we did it all. We just did everything ourselves. We needed to start. We didn't want to jump into the middle of something that we weren't familiar with, and we built it as we went. So we were familiar and you could see what people needed. We weren't guessing about that area. It wasn't our perspective as to what people needed. We learned what they needed as we ... built up and that was a forward with the country store because there was so much going on there at that time. There were the construction workers coming in and saying, "Just build the sandwiches bigger and bigger and bigger."

Pete Schaal: Once you start full time, and I say full as 8-9 hours on the job, and you get home at night; you've got a family; you've got to get your paperwork done and get your

jobs planned out. It takes an awful lot of time. The hours that were put into it. And then the issue of not having any money to really work with. So you had to be really careful. So it doesn't take long and it didn't take long back then to spend \$100 or \$200 or \$1,000 on buying parts and pieces. So not having anything for assets to work with, it makes it really difficult. I had a good relationship with our local wholesaler, which at the time was Twin State Electric down on South Main Street...

So that's how we got started. And all I can say is, the amount of hours that go into starting a small business are horrendous. You certainly cannot do your paperwork or your job estimations – estimating work and that type of workload cannot be done during the working day when you really should be in the field. That's just an overhead you can't afford. That took a lot of time. It's very stressful on the family because your kids are young and you're trying to do things with them. You've got a wife that's working hard to raise the family. And you get home and you have supper and you try to spend some time with the family. Then you work on your billing, getting your job materials together and your plans and your estimating. And that would go into the wee hours of the morning. It was not uncommon to be in your office or at a desk somewhere working from 8:00 to 11:00 or midnight. Sometimes it depends on other workloads. Sometimes it would even be longer than that. And you can only do that for so long and then you'd crash. Your weekends, you tried to keep Sundays open to do things with the family. The first five years was a real battle. But we stuck it out. And to do that, you can give yourself as much credit as you might think you deserve, but when you've got a young family, the credit of success is as much in the other half of your family as it is yours because they have to have a good understanding of what's going on and appreciate what's going on at some point in time, if it all works. It can be pretty discouraging along the way when somebody is out there working around the clock and there's nothing to show for it because you might have to buy a new piece of equipment or some tools to keep on expanding. And by all means we certainly didn't have any new vehicles. They were always used vehicles to work out of. That was probably the biggest support in enhancement of starting businesses: your wife and family being behind it.

Jonathan Schechtman: Well, I would say it was a few different aspects. I did quite a bit of outreach to give lectures and slide presentations at various historical societies in the area. Because I had had an established business in the Burlington area and because of my affiliation with the University of Vermont and the preservation program, I had contacts and credentials that allowed me to build from where I was previously, my previous business. Advertising didn't seem to work that well. Although there were instances where someone said, "Well we cut your ad out of the paper three years ago and now we need you." I think that my location is one of the best assets. We're across the bridge from Simon Pearce who gets over 50,000 visitors a year. I can't say that we get that many of their customers but we do have the exposure as people drive by. And we often have people who will come in say, "I've driven by this place for years and I've never come in,

but my 240 lb son-in-law broke this Windsor chair.” There’s that. And we were also dealing with some of the real estate rental agencies because a number of properties here are seasonally rented. And sometimes there are damages affiliated with people coming into a stranger’s home and abusing furniture. So we’ve been helping with that and that’s sort of spread our word. I was a board member of the Hartford Historical Society, the Quechee Chamber of Commerce, the Woodstock Historical Society, the Preservation Institute for Building Crafts at Historic Windsor. So I’ve tried to do some volunteer work and some of that’s come back. Just expanding the business.

Mike Blood: Yea. So then we kept, and then we were also growing with the catering and the party rental business. I had decided to get into that more and build that side, too. My wife and kids kind of ran the seafood market. I got the brainstorm and actually we were in the party rental business then. People would call up and book us for catering and then they’d also ask, gee, do you rent tents? So one thing led to another and I said, well, might as well try tents and table and chairs. Sure enough, I bought a couple of tents and some tables and chairs and all of a sudden we were in the rental business. And it’s one stop shopping. And that worked well and just continued to build the business. The kids were getting a little older and I had some good friends that were helping me. I paid pretty good in the summer. The business just kept building and building and building. And we’ve outgrown this building for years.

John Clerkin: I was looking for a job. Ralph Lehman had a job. He was the Town Manager at that time, had been the Town Manager since 1959. And he was interviewing for Assistant Town Manager. He had pretty much settled on a guy that was a retired colonel. My father told me, he said, “Look, every day you go down there and you sit on the bench outside the municipal building and say hi to Mr. Lehman when he comes in in the morning.” So for two weeks I went there and I sat there and said hi to Mr. Lehman every morning. So finally one day he said, “You really want this job?” I said, “Yea, I do. It’s what I like.” He said, “Well, come on in and we’ll talk about it.” So I went in and lo-and-behold, he told the other fellow that he found somebody he was going to hire. And he hired me in 1971.

B. SUCCESS

Long running businesses, those operating for decades, have entrepreneurs who know the tricks of the trade. Whether it is customer relations, the ability to weather the economic storms, or just a general philosophy about businesses, owners can identify what has made them successful and how they define success.

Toby Jasmin: Oh sure. A lot of businesses have come and gone. I think that maybe some of those businesses would have been better if they stayed. Maybe some of those businesses weren't thinking too hard, didn't have the amount of people around like you do now. They have started too early. Business is hard. It's expensive. People sometimes, depending on how the business was put together: businesses are put together more today by brainwork and well thought. Whereas 20 years ago you took a shot at it. And it wasn't thought out as much. What happened was same old thing.

Tom Rice: It has. When you look at a business – if a business is sedimentary, it dies. If business moves forward in some way, shape or manner, it will grow. And sometimes it will grow in spite of themselves. I'd like to say that I have a great team to work with. As of Monday morning, I walk in here and we're doing marketing and community image: what do we have to do? What's the community saying? We're well advertised and well recognized. I used to do a radio show.

Pete Schaal: So that's said, the way the industry has changed, it's going to take a lot to keep up with it. And so, I think the biggest hurdle is for somebody to start a business is being able to make the commitment for time. That's the biggest hurdle because it's so easy to get discouraged with the amount of hours you're putting in sometimes for what you get out on the jobs.

Toby Jasmin: We're one of the largest repair shops in the State of Vermont. I don't know. We're always bumping heads with one or two others. And in New England, I would say one of the top 4 or 5. And this area consists of a pretty wide range. Our pull is a 50-mile pull. We're good at what we do. We've got an exceptionally good name. My men fix cars for me and my two sons that own and run the place with me. And then we deliver them to the customers. So my boys really do a good job. They're doing it for me. Then I hand it to you. It makes a lot of difference.

Don Ransom: The primary reason for its success – it's a complex thing about why any business is successful. But our focus has really been on high quality textiles, knitwear, outerwear, accessories. And as the years have gone, there's this source for quality textiles has kind of disappeared and people are happy to run into good quality textiles at good prices. So that's really been the backbone of this business. And then the other piece of it is the ethnic part of it – the Scottish thing, clan, tartans, emeraldry. And then in the last 6-8 years, we've expanded more into a general Celtic kind of inventory, broadening our market base a little bit and including a lot of Irish.

And a business is a similar thing. It's a little more complex. But it's completely dependent on its primary people. But it's still separate from them. Something like this business is this wonderful little entity that I've joined and then I helped shape it and direct it for almost 40 years. But it still exists kind of on its own. I would love to see someone ideally come in and be able to carry it forward with the same kind of intention.

That's kind of a unique intention for a retail business. We're very unaggressive when it comes to sales. We do everything in the customer's interest kind of thing. We're honest. Going to trade shows and meeting all these other retailers. Retailers, they are a tough group of people as a group. And they're not people that I really like a lot. That's a harsh judgment I know, and I don't mean it that harshly. I just don't think of myself as a conventional retailer. And fortunately I'm in an unconventional retail business, so maybe that's what lets me get away with it.

Dennis Brown: We drew them to our establishment. We had a very good record of service first. Fair prices. We weren't ever cheap, but I think we were fair. We sold some really good products, much different than you find in the stores today. Most everything you find today is much cheaper built and doesn't last nearly as long. Better for manufacturers. Our stuff was quality and long lasting and durable and usually easy to fix. It's just a much different business than it used to be.

[Customer service,] to me it's everything. It's something that's not thought of a lot today, but it's something I definitely do...I use that theory wherever I go, and I've traded with this and that. I've done a little work on the side occasionally and that's how I run my own personal business.

Dale Howe: What contributes to its success? I think Frederick Johnson had good foresight. Before the business was anywhere near as big as it is now, he had a sound business. He set up speakers and microphones and amplifiers and his first job was doing organs. When I started, he was still tuning pipe organs. That was his first business. Then he got involved with pianos and sound systems... We were successful, I think because we always, we did good service. We did good tuning. We were prompt. We followed up our customers. I made the statement, when I started there was 3 tuners and now there are probably 30 tuners in Vermont. There are only two here in the Upper Valley when I started. There's now probably a dozen. But anyway, we thought and rightfully so, if we did business and we did servicing for schools, that would bring us in sales.

Kip Miller: [A business philosophy?] Sure. Don't take myself too seriously. Ask anybody in town. That's why the hat says, "tough old bird." That was my dad. He was a very honest, serious businessman, but he always could laugh at himself. And I've tried to carry that on.

...The longevity of location is probably number one. This is a meeting place in Vermont and New Hampshire. A lot of people who are traveling will meet family and

friends, right here because it's known. "We'll meet you over at Quechee Gorge." So that's probably number one. Number two is our Vermont Attractions membership. They put out a million and-a-half brochures. We do our own brochure to back that up. And then we do vacation magazines. Interstate 89/91 is one that is out there at this point in time. And there's been others. And vacation maps as well. And although we don't sell much on the internet, we do have an internet presence because a lot of people now who are planning a vacation will Google the location. So you have to have something to give yourself a presence on the internet.

... I was always very lucky that I found some returning people who worked for years for me and I'm thankful for that. It's also very difficult to find people who can think on their feet and answer questions above and beyond what you do here.

And so you have to be able to wait on customers and then answer those customers' questions. You have to deal with people who don't know the English language. So you have to have a lot of patience. And above and beyond, have fun with your customers.

Mike Blood: Where my folks really got the word out that we were in the seafood business: we were parking in West Rutland right near the GE plant that's there right now. The neighbors up on the hill complained to the alderman (that's what they called them then) that they didn't like the smell from the truck. All it was was just good, clean ice dripping on the pavement. Well to make a long story short, they very nicely asked us to leave town. So the *Rutland Herald* got a hold of the story: White River Junction lobsterman, Denny Blood, forced out of town! This went all over the state of Vermont. Really, that's how he got his name out there: Denny Blood. Of course, it was kind of an unusual name. But anyways, that happened for quite a while. We still had other towns and did very well.

Jim Flanagan: My father was a great guy. He put us all through school. That's one thing about Hartford Motors. People measure their success in different ways. I counted them up one year. I think that between my brothers and sisters, my partners' kids, my father's partner's kids, and my kids, that there's something like 74 years of higher education that came out of Hartford Motors... That's how I measure the success. We're not extravagant. My father was never an extravagant person. He was excited about everything. He loved having us around. Didn't matter where he'd go, he'd want three or four of his kids with him at all times.

...Oh you learn along the way. You pick things up. You pick up traits and things. But the principles are the same. Just treat people the way you want to be treated and do what you say you're going to do.

Kip Miller: Oh the hardest part. Well it depends. When we were working with a larger staff, it was finding the right fit for people to work with the traveling public. It was always a challenger.

Clair Lovell: Hard work. Never go to bed with something to do.

John Clerkin: Now, I'm not perfect. I don't even pretend to be perfect. I get jealous and things happen. But people who are successful in business are the ones who can best get over a slight, a jealousy, an anger, frustration, thinking they can be screwed by so-and-so, and get on with the next provision of service so that you can keep moving. When they sit there and stew over it for two days and tell everybody about how they got taken advantage of, it doesn't work. You're not out there rolling around, keeping it going. That's really, when you talk about business, that's the foundation. As you start looking at businesses and analyzing them and you study them, you'll probably see that starting to form. You'll see that pattern. Before I went to business, my father told me, you should take out five business people and have lunch with them and ask them what makes them what made them successful. I don't know if you've ever heard of Frank Gilman, but he owned the old airport and he owns everything up on Sykes Avenue. Or did. He passed away. He was an old timer, pretty tight but a multi-millionaire. He owned post office buildings up and down the eastern seacoast and he owned everything up there.

So I get up there and I'm out to lunch with Mr. Gilman. I said, "Frank, what is it that makes a fellow successful in business?" He said, "I'll tell you. It's three things. First, it ain't how much money you make, it's how much you keep. Number two: you make your money when you buy, not when you sell. And number three: in essence, the sooner you get off thinking about what the other guy did to you, the better off you're going to be." And it was pretty much to that extent. And it turned out pretty true. But it was really cool. I went out with Al Abbott, Charlie the electrician – Charlie Fellows, Frank, and two or three other business people. And I asked what it is that makes it work for them. My father always told me that in business or in your life, you can afford to take a calculated risk, but you can never afford to gamble. A calculated risk is where you do your due diligence and you can at least identify a 51% or better chance of making it work and taking action. But if you just throw it out because God me do it or the weather was right, whatever, you'll never win. Gambling, you'll never come out on top. People, as you see them, when they have businesses that are successful, they're people that do their due diligence and they study it. It's like what my father told me: go out and do some due diligence, find out what makes this thing work. I think the most important thing as you look at these companies: they made quite a bit of money, but they're also people who have kept it.

Another element of success was developing strong relationships in the community, with other business owners, and creating a pleasant environment with quality service and products that encouraged returning customers.

Don Ransom: [People return] because people who love Vermont and the special ambiance of Vermont and then find us. And then we become attached to their whole Vermont experience. Let's go to Vermont and go to Scotland-by-the-Yard. Let's go have lunch there and let's be sure to go there. We just become part of that. So people look

forward to it. We have a website, which is really half-assed because I don't really care about it. But people are constantly contacting us looking for birthday things and Mother's Day things and whatever is coming up because their mom really loves our shop. There was a guy in here this morning. He went upstairs by himself and he came down. He's been here a lot of times. We was buying this t-shirt, this rampart lion t-shirt that says "Scotland, Home of the Barbarians." He said, I've got to tell you; I'm buying this for my mom who is in a nursing home.

Dennis Brown: I didn't realize this till later times I guess, but we had a great thing going on back then because when Powden's Jewelry needed their tractors fixed or lawn mowers or whatever, we fixed them. And when you needed jewelry, we went to see them. And they took care of us. And we kind of relied on each other. That's not something you get at Wal-Mart.

Our doctor was down there as well. Our doctor, Dr. Whitney, took care of us – our family doctor. When he called, this would be like similar to a 911 call. My father said, "Whatever he wants, whenever he wants, it's drop everything and do it now. Because, again, he took care of us, and we took care of him to the best of our ability. And that's how that went. Powers Furniture that used to be down there, we used to go down there and trade. Some trading of services and so forth, too. We either bought and sold or whatever. But we relied on each other that way. You don't have that today.

Gayle Ottman: When we had our snack bar up there we always got together and had a [Quechee] Gorge family picnic every year, which was really great. The kids would come and they'd bring their friends and if they got married, children, they'd bring their children and everything... It was really a little community. I think we've become – we've gotten away from that unfortunately. Of course our lives have become so full, I guess. Or we think they're full now. But there are just so many external interests that are out there that interfere with family life and I think that's made a difference too. It's really hard for a family business if their three children are going to play soccer and drama and they're playing basketball and traveling all the time and somebody is in hockey. Somebody's in the play. It's just constant. The pressure is really, really hard. We had a really great group of people up there at the gorge. I'm sure there are now as well. We had a lot of encouragement. We would get together a couple times in the wintertime. We would get together, all the couples that owned businesses. We would have roundtable discussions, very open, very honest about how difficult it was for families and for couples particularly to continue to stay in business.

C. LOCATION, LOCATION

Location is critical for business, though the best locations in Hartford depend on the type of business. The prime locations changed following interstate construction, when the intersection of Route 4 and 5 became secondary to the junction of Interstates 89 and 91. Route 4 continues to serve tourists traveling across the state.

Don Ransom: I really can't [imagine another location]. We've had two people interested in buying the business, but because of their circumstances they want to relocate it. I'm happy to do that but it's like starting an entire new business when you relocate. You're starting a new business. Something like this. If you're an oil supply dealer, that's different, I think. People need your service and they'll look you up because they need your service. It doesn't matter where you are. Something like this, I think it really does matter.

Route 4 is the major east-west highway in Vermont, in central Vermont. And there's Route 9 down south in Brattleboro. But Route 4 and Route 9 are the two main east-west routes. So there is a lot of heavy commercial traffic. It's weird. For 40 years, they have been talking about creating a bypass through here. Figuring out somehow how to do a four-lane commercial route across central Vermont.

Jonathan Schechtman: Of my business? Well I would like to be able to have it carry on. I'd like to be able to carry on. I'd like to be able to sell it to employees. It seems to be that this location has benefited the business. So whether the business buys the building or whether someone buys the building and rents it to the business, but it seems as though we're limited in space (the workshop this week, you can hardly walk around in), there are some limitations associated with that. It seems to me that this is the highest and best use for the business to be in this location. And I purposefully did not associate my name with the business for longevity purposes. So it could easily moved to some other place. And Meeting House is sort of generic.

Joan Laro: Our store was an immediate success. It was at the very inception of Quechee Lakes starting. We met all these wonderful families that were trying to escape Boston and New York City and they were stopping. Plus, the workers that were helping to build Quechee. So we had all that. We couldn't have failed if we tried because we just kept supplying sandwiches and gas and everything for the traffic that was flying back and forth, and buying Quechee property...

Phil Laro: One thing about being in Quechee, the last one, we didn't ever advertise at all.

Joan Laro: Well it's a real mix in Quechee, as you probably know. It's a mix of local towns and east-west traffic, from upstate New York to Maine. All those things are part of what helped us. After we sold the country store – was it after we sold the country store or the farm? After we sold the country store, wasn't it that we were looking, or the farm, which one was it? I guess it was after we sold the farm stand, we were looking outside of

Vermont to find another location to maybe start another business or to do business, and decided that this is what we know and we know what to expect. After the other two businesses, we thought, this is silly, let's run back to Quechee.

D. BUSINESS AND THE FAMILY

Independent businesses are often family run and operated. For some, the business was a way of family life. Spouses and children worked together. For others, home and work was separate. In that case, the whole family was involved indirectly, offering understanding and support. Some business owners chose to live adjacent to their business, which came with advantages and disadvantages. No matter how you look at it, a small business was a family business.

Kip Miller: Well they didn't expect me to [run the family business]. It was never something that was put on me, you will do this. No. It was always my choice. And I've done that with my son. It's always been his choice. I said I will support you in whatever road you go down, as my folks did.

Pete Schaal: The fellow I was working with, Gordon Barabou, he kept saying to me, "You've got to go in business for yourself and don't just stay here in a small company like I have." He said, "I think you can do better out there working for yourself." Well, that's easy enough to say and then the next thing is to put that into motion. He instigated me into moonlighting because as a young family, I was the only one really working. My wife and I had decided to raise our family: she would be the homemaker and be around the kids while they were growing up. I think that was a wise choice. So to get the extra money as your family grew and to keep on going, I moonlighted and always tried to do work that did not encroach in any manner on Mr. Fellows' clientele.

Gayle Ottman: I think what I've particularly enjoyed is having my own businesses. For us it wasn't hard to run a family business through the years. It just wasn't. My husband and I started the snack bar and then brought in the oldest and youngest daughters. A couple of nieces came and lived with us in the summertime. The only one of the three, I have one grandson, did work for us. The other two kids did work for us much. On occasion but not much. The youngest daughter and the oldest daughter did. The middle daughter did not. She lived in Maine. She wasn't here for scooping ice cream. But the whole family dynamics is really, really interesting. I think in this state (I'm only familiar very much with Vermont, though I lived in New Hampshire for a long time) small businesses, mom and pop businesses, are the backbone of our states, particularly I think of Vermont.

I don't hear as much about families as being the business today as it used to be. I think of some of it is that many of our young people are going to colleges and universities and there isn't the type of whatever their career is, they just don't have the jobs here or

they can't get them here, so they have to move onto jobs outside the area. I have fortunately enough, my sister's family (she still lives up in the northeast kingdom and she has five children) many of them have children. Their children are involved in the family businesses. Maybe it's something to do with the North Country, I don't know. I think the family operated businesses; I think there is a lot of pressure. There is a lot of expectation, but if you're right up front in the very beginning like we were and said, "You're going to be treated like any other employee here. There's no particular perks that you're going to get. You're on a schedule and you arrive and you do your job and you leave when you're supposed to." Both my husband really tried hard to observe that. We didn't ask them to stay another hour just because they happened to be related. *What's the matter? It's a family business. You need to be here.* We just didn't do that much. Occasionally, but not as a rule. I think that has a lot to do with keeping young people involved. You've got to respect them. They should be treated like any other employee. When you go beyond that, then it creates issues and they just say, "I don't need this. I'll go somewhere else to work."

Joan Laro: And it's fun because a family business, you know, you have a lot take advantage of. Everybody has their talents. He had that wonderful produce background and management history, so it all is second nature. And his dad, my father-in-law, was a chef and a cook for summer camps. His mom was amazing and did wonderful pastries and whatever. When we were at the country store and we started that, he said, what about the Canadian pork pies, do you think you could sell a few? Phil was telling a story that was interesting that I'd forgotten about the pork pies.

So the pork pies, the French Canadian people in Lebanon call them (totkays?). I don't know, I've looked and can't make the connection to that name, but totier is the official pork pie, French Canadian name for the pork pie. So things like that. And his father made doughnuts. It just takes an earthy-ness. And people love family businesses. They say, look at this, they're making this happen, this family. They can relate to families because they are bringing their children to the area

Joan Laro: And when you think of the family history that went into that. My innocent little mother said, if the berries get too ripe, bring it to me and I'll make jam. I hadn't thought about anything beyond the produce at that time. So she would take them, take home cases. He said, oh, I'll just get cases for you. Or if the pears got ripe. And she would use every jar she could get her hands on. Baby food jars. Little jam cars that she might have passed through her hands. And she'd bring down all of these pear jams and jellies and all the fruits. Whatever she could turn into a jam. And then she said – she made a wonderful apple pie. I didn't really realize how wonderful it was. She bought down this tin thing to display the pies in it. It was a holder from my dad's workshop and it held sandpaper. So she slipped a pie into every one of those. It probably held a dozen pies. She thought, oh I'll just make pies. And was she swamped.

Jim Flanagan: My mother was a stay-at-home mom, seven kids. A pact was made early on in my father and his partner's partnership that the women have no place in the business. It wasn't because they needed to raise their kids. I'm sure that had a lot to do with it. But you got your home life, and you got your work life. They definitely drew the line. That was separated.

Dennis Brown: My oldest brother went to college and got an engineering job. But Donald and I stayed at the business well after school. I stayed for 10 years after I was out of high school. And Donald, I think, worked there until maybe 10 years ago.

I was always down at our shop and there was always stuff to do from sweeping floors at a younger age. Learning mechanics and what made things tick. I got into trouble one time. My father sent me on a job to sort out the parts that came in. He explained it all out to me, I know he did. But I was very little. He told me about rearranging them by the number. But I got the idea that it would be much easier if we just sorted them by box size. So I put the parts in where I thought they should go. Of course that didn't work out very well. I got yelled at for that, but for good reason.

My main thing that I would do: everything that we got – mowers and snow blowers in particular – came in a box and had to be assembled. So that was my main job. They did more of the fixing at that time, and selling. I was just doing this when I got home from school. There would usually be a line of boxes waiting for me to put stuff together. And that was what I did most of. That evolved into mechanical work. When I got my license, I was delivering a lot, picking stuff up, going to see customers, placing bids on stuff. My main job when I was in later times was more sales than anything.

Dennis Brown: Yup. Similar to this place, it was business here, driveway and house up behind... That can be an advantage, but can be a disadvantage... When you close up at whenever you can get out of there and people are still banging on the door saying, "are you open?" – well, my father would always go down and help them. It's a pretty dumb question when the lights are off, the closed signs are up. It's kind of silly to ask that. But he would always help them out. In fact, I remember a Christmas morning when I was real little. Christmas morning, I think I was the only one up and a guy banged on the door. I asked him what he wanted and he wanted to buy a spark plug. Even at that age, I thought that was a stretch, but I went and woke my father up, because they were still in bed. But he got up and went down and sold it to him on Christmas morning.

E. OPEN ALL THE TIME

One recurring theme relating to owning a small business was the amount of hours it required, whether being available to customers as much as possible or the amount of behind the scenes work necessary (finances, marketing, ordering, cleaning, preparing, training, and more). In Hartford, many businesses are seasonal and/or rely on tourism, which means that during certain seasons of the year, there are no holidays or vacations for the business owners. Businesses require total commitment. This aspect of businesses cannot go unrecognized.

Don Ransom: Even this little place, it's 7 days a week. We're closed Christmas Day. We have all these condominium owners. We're in Vermont. It's a second home state. People come on weekends and holidays and they're thrilled to find someone like this open on New Years Day, Easter Sunday. I used to be open Thanksgiving, but we finally have stopped that. Sometimes I'd have great days on Thanksgiving, the first part of the day when people were on their way to Thanksgiving dinner. They'd want to stop and buy gifts. They had an hour to kill or a half hour to kill.

But when you rely on a business like this, then you become like a farmer. You're completely weather dependent. If the weather is good for tourism, then business is great. If the weather is not good for tourism, especially these days with the internet – if someone wants to come for a weekend, they wait until Thursday or Friday and go online, look at the weather, look at prices and decide last minute. "Oh the weather's bad, let's not go." Whereas it used to be – back I remember when – people, especially in the winter, people would book cross-country ski weekends months in advance because the inns were filled up. They'd come to the Quechee Inn or the Woodstock Inn or a lovely little B&B. And then it would be freezing rain or there would be no snow or not enough snow, just really bad conditions. So then they would just go out to lunch and go shopping and make the best of it. We would love that when weather was really crappy because we had a captured audience. But now people wait till Thursday and say, "Oh the weather's going to be terrible or the conditions are bad, we don't go." It's harder.

Dennis Brown: No, 8 [days per week]. When you're in business for yourself, it never stops. We never went hungry, but there was always the threat that if we didn't produce and do, then we could be going hungry and close the doors and go out of business, that sort of thing. We weathered some rough times. There was some economic downfalls. We had some snowless winters that were really terrible. In the early, mid 70s, we sold out of snow blowers for like three years in a row. And my father said, "This isn't going to happen again!" So we ordered a whole bunch that year, more than normal, and then we had three snowless winters after that. It pretty near killed my father. That wasn't pleasant. We always did well in the summertime, because grass always grows. But in the wintertime, it wasn't that way. And we really did have some tough times that way.

Kip Miller: Seven days a week. Once we open, which this year was April 24, the same as last year. The only time we close is for Thanksgiving. And then we close for the season, the first of December. We do so because two primary reasons. One is the safety of the public. The bridge is not maintained for foot traffic during the winter. There are sidewalks out there but the State doesn't clear them. And just like we don't go out and plow the highway, although we'd like to sometimes: we're not allowed to. That's state property. They frown on people going out and doing their own thing on there. So there's that, and also the state park closes down right after Columbus Day. And once the trail has snow and ice on it, it really isn't safe to walk down to the bottom of the gorge. It's very slippery. They do maintain part of the trail for cross-country ski out of Marshland Farms. They have a ski trail that goes across the causeway and comes over here for cross-country skiers. That's Marak that does that. But even then, he only lets the experience cross-country skier travel the gorge end of the trip.

When the off-season did arrive or when business was slow, responsibilities remained and options for supplemental income explored.

Kip Miller: There you go. But we do have to get back here by the first of March. By that time, we have trade shows to go to. We work with our maple sugar. My maple sugar maker... he's been making maple syrup for us for over 30 years. An awfully nice guy. He's a craftsman when it comes to making maple syrup. He and his wife have done it and they've won many awards from the state for their product. So we keep in contact during the sugaring season and we know some years are good, some years not so good. Maple syrup is a tough business. You never know until it's over.

[In March and April] Well, we of course go to trade shows throughout New England, Maine to Boston and points south to try to find items that customers are looking for. Do a lot of looking at small industries as well. Of course, this is an old building so any maintenance that has to be done is done during that time as well.

Dennis Brown: Look for other things [when times were tough]. At about that same time, we also started carrying propane. We had gas tanks that we'd take to people's houses. That's different than it's done today. Most of it is done in bulk trucks. We didn't do it that way. We had 100 lb. cylinders that were 5 feet tall. They actually weighed 175 lbs, 100 lbs of gas, 75 lbs of tank. We'd drag those through the snow to get to people's houses or a dolly in the summertime to reach them. Then we'd trade tanks. Every week or two, we'd go to our place up in Fairlee where they filled them for us and then bring them back. So that made us a little more diverse. My father said many times that helped us especially through the bad snowless winter.

F. MOVING ON

Eventually everyone wants to retire, or move on to another chapter in his/her working life. For small business owners, that often means wanting to sell the business. If family members are not interested in taking over the business, it can be a long wait before an eager, qualified buyer comes along. Interviewees discussed the decisions they face when selling a business.

Gayle Ottman: So something had to give. That was the decision to let those two go. That was very difficult, but I just couldn't do it. We had put an awful lot of – particularly the snack bar. The apartment house wasn't as difficult, but there was a lot of personal time and energy put into the snack bar. A lot, because the family was very much involved in that. But I had to move on, so I let them both go.

Don Ransom: Well now I'm really down. I'm in the process of selling this. So in that regard, I've let natural attrition as people retire – I had a woman retire in March of this year who had been here for 25 years. And another woman a couple years ago had been here for 26 years. And now we're down – and I started working back in here full time again. And now Susan started helping out. And then we have two other part time people who are working 2 and 3 days per week. And that will probably do until we're not here anymore.

We're both almost 70 and it's time to not being doing this. I'm really ready. I've enjoyed doing it. It's interesting – even in these last, especially the last two or three years, I've been in here full time again. I've really enjoyed that, that reconnecting process, and doing all the nuts and bolts. This morning I was inventorying. This is the time of year when we inventory all the odds and ends.

Jim Flanagan: Well the car industry is very dynamic. It's constantly changing. Our dealership was Chrysler. Originally it was International Harvester, Chrysler, Plymouth. International Harvester – my father and Andy dropped International Harvester. Plymouth went away. So we became a stand-alone Chrysler dealer. Small dealership, small town. It's tough to do a lot of business to build capital. But what really happened was the – Chrysler – I understand this term: "If there wasn't a crisis, Chrysler wasn't operating right." They've had multiple owners over the years, the last being Mercedes or Damier that bought Chrysler. They didn't do a very good job of it. I could see the handwriting on the wall that something was going to happen. So we sold the franchise to the Miller Auto Group. That, as far as I'm concerned, was probably the best car deal I ever made in my life. If we hadn't sold it when we did, we'd probably – the ax – all the bankruptcies with Chrysler and GM – the ax would have fallen right in our laps and we'd have nothing. Everybody thinks I'm a financial genius, but I was just lucky.

Dale Howe: Let's see. Seven years ago, eight years ago, I guess it was eight years ago when I turned 65. I just turned 73. I decided I wanted to retire, and started looking into

what it was going to take to sell the business and get out of the business and retire. And I had an expert professional come in and give me advice. And he thought – his own opinion was – this was about 10 years ago. No it wouldn't have been 10 years. Let's say eight years ago. His advice was business should be doing a little better for us to sell it and get a reasonable profit on it. He felt strongly it wasn't the right time. Well, I've been doing less business every year. Been going downhill ever since. So I can't retire because I can't sell the business. I can't sell the business because it's not making good enough profit, if any. So that's where I sit. But I do enjoy the business. I enjoy tuning more than anything else I do. You'd think pounding on a piano all day, you'd think that would get boring pretty easily. But it doesn't. And here again, I always strive to do better than I did last time. As long as I do that, I can keep getting better at it. Now I tune better than I ever thought was possible. And I don't know of anyone that tunes better.

Joan Laro: And it turned out to be difficult on our kids, although they never complained. They just participated in whatever was happening. But our attention was not on our family. It had shifted more and more. So we decided to resolve that problem. We put the store up for sale and expected it take a couple of years to sell, two or three years actually, and when the realtor brought the first prospective buyer two weeks later, they made the purchase. So then we packed all of our gear and our home and took the kids on the little end of summer fling and reserved places and went on vacation for two weeks.

G. THE EFFECTS OF THE INTERSTATE

Construction of the 381 miles of interstate highway spanned 1957 to 1982 in Vermont, during which time the built environment changed dramatically. Most of Vermont became a day trip from nearby major cities. While the interstate brought money, residents, tourists and accessibility to the State of Vermont, it strained resources and affected Vermont's industries. The impacts of the interstate were heightened by concurrent changing technology such as agricultural production and shipping methods (bulks tanks over milk cans). The introduction of the Vermont sales tax coincided with the opening of the interstate, as well, changing the business economy and opportunities. Just like the effect that the railroad had one century prior, the country would never be the same after the opening of the interstate, which brought positive and negative effects. The business owners of Hartford recognized a change, of course, but often found it to be just a change, not necessarily devastating as it was in other parts of the country.

Toby Jasmin: Of course the interstate changed it, but that was in the '60s. I think that there's a bigger volume of people coming in. I think the town manager here has done a good job. He's brought in the Aqua Center and stuff like that. He's pro-business, pro-get White River going. He does a good job. I like Hunter. A lot of people bust his chops, but he's a tough chop. Half the people don't like him and the other half do. That's how it

works when you're in the middle like that. Biggest change in White River? Just more people. It's being utilized more and more. More and more people have figured out it's a nice place to live after living in Connecticut for 40 years. They come up to the Upper Valley. I think services are a lot better and stuff like that. You take – actual looking at it – not that many things have changed. Any of the towns: Lebanon, Hanover, here. The biggest change in Lebanon is 12A. You go to Lebanon, if you were there 25 years ago, it looks the same. Hanover looks the same.

Kip Miller: Then I came back in 1970, in November of 1970 and then my wife and I came into the business and I've been in the business ever since. I bought Quechee Gorge, which at that time was known as Dewey, Dewey's Mills. And 1979, 1980 was the first summer that I operated both 25,000 Gifts and this store, and did so up until 2005 when the economy started to really go down at that point. And over in White River we had seen the decline because of the interstates. The lack of signage on the interstates. People would come off the interstates but people were hesitant to travel the ½ mile or so to go down the hill. They would just turn around, get their gas and back on the road. Hand light writing was on the wall so we closed that business and sold it to Listen, as I said, the 1970s. 2005, 2006 that occurred. I continued to run this in Quechee till today. And my son as also come into the business as well as his wife. We've been a family business since 1901, and I don't think there's anybody in Hartford that can top that.

...That was 25,000 Gifts, which was right next to the wholesale manufacturing of Green Mountain Studios. They were right there at the junction of 4 and 5. Before the interstate, the junction of 4 and 5 was probably the busiest intersection of the state. If you were going north to south, east to west, New York to Maine or St. Johnsbury to Connecticut, you went by his front door... Well, by the time we moved out here [to Quechee], he had retired from the business. He retired in 1975. Really when he retired, he really left the business. He was taking care of my mother who unfortunately had Alzheimer's and it was a full time caregiver job. And he did a fantastic job with her for many years. And I was here to take on the business. That's why I came out here, was mainly because of the business slowly down over in White River. There wasn't really a future for what we did. Maybe there was for something else, but we knew there was no longer a business for that at that location.

Once the interstates were built, someone who was traveling east or west on Route 5 used Exit 1 rather than the White River exit to get on Route 4, so that bypassed all of that. And then it was the fact that people just didn't get off the interstate at White River anymore. If they did they were at the motels at the top of the hill as they call it. And they usually stayed up there. There was places to eat and things to do, and they really didn't travel away from the intersections of the interstates.

Jim Flanagan: I would assume [the interstate changed Hartford] ... for the better. It just made people more mobile. Before, probably the business was in a 20 mile radius and

after it was a 50 mile radius. We've lost this bridge a couple times of the years. When they decided to put that bridge up, they redid Route 5, Barnes Avenue, that whole thing. And that's where the original Hartford Motors sat. They took a big share of the property to do that. So in 1972, they built this place over here and moved in. That had an effect. That short period of time have a pretty big effect on it. But you know what, everything has an effect on a small business. If the owner stubs his toe on the way to work, you've lost money.

Judy Barwood: Right, right. The businesses shipped things by train. There was a train directly to Boston and south. My grandparents lived down in New York State. We took the train everywhere when I was little. If we went to Boston, we went by train. If we went to New York State, we took the train to Greenfield, Mass. And then had to pick up another train to go west. Burlington. I mean we went everywhere by train way back. This was before interstates. I remember the interstates being built.

That's another huge difference. I mean my dad was working in Springfield and it took him (this was after the war when he could afford to drive back) and it would take him an hour from here to there. And the year he died: he died in May and that fall the interstate was finished.

And it was like, oh dear. It would have cut his travel in half. And where we live, the interstate wasn't far from where I live. There was just a lot of construction and a lot going on. It was pretty exciting when the interstate was finished because we could drive to Boston, drive to Burlington, drive to Montreal.

... I don't think it [the interstate] bothered the insurance business, really. I think the interstates coming in certainly had a big effect on the small retail businesses in town. White River was a pretty booming town. We had Newbury's and Colodny's. We had all kinds of businesses and it's very different now. It's more artsy with all the little cafes and things like that. Well we had three drug stores. One on the corner of Gates where the Tucker Box is. One on the corner where the frame shop is. And then one across the street, Howard Drug, was where the old bank was, kind of near Vermont Salvage. And they had soda fountains and people could go there for lunch and get ice cream. They were busy. There were no little shopping plazas or anything like that. We pretty much did all our shopping here in White River, unless we went to Boston.

H. VERMONT SALES TAX

In addition to the construction of the interstate, Vermont was affected by the implementation of the sales tax. Established in 1969, Vermont was the last state to adopt the sales tax. However, New Hampshire did not adopt a sales tax. As Hartford sits on the Vermont/New Hampshire border, the option to avoid sales tax by traveling just a few miles away was often too tempting to resist, whether a business owner or a consumer. Some businesses immediately moved, others tried to wait for the tide to turn. Big box chain stores set up in New Hampshire on Route 12A, which is notorious for shopping and traffic. While it draws business out of Vermont, over time it has encouraged smaller businesses to settle in the Hartford villages. Chain stores were unlikely to set up shop in the villages, yet the village centers eventually blossomed once more because that is where people find community.

Jim Flanagan: What happened with White River was the 3% sales tax. The merchants just said we can't deal with that. People are going to go over there for three cents on the dollar. I always felt that they kind of gave up. That was kind of the downfall of White River. And one store closes. Vacant storefronts are not good. Or rotating business and storefronts. Stability is the thing. There's a lot of businesses that hung in there. Briggs weathered the sales tax thing, fought it out. A lot of businesses thought we can't compete with wherever because we have to charge a sales tax.

Dennis Brown: The thing that hurt us the most was in the late '60s. We called it DDT: Dean Davis Tax. That was the beginning of sales tax... We did [consider moving to New Hampshire]. We had enough trouble trying to keep our business going. This was maybe my downfall. My father was interested in opening up a place in New Hampshire and he asked me to investigate it several times. I finally put the hammer down on that if you will. I said until we're running this place to peak efficiency, I don't think we should try that. I'm a firm believer that bigger is not always better.

... As businesses left to go to New Hampshire, it [downtown White River] was pretty much vacant for some time. One by one, places went out or moved to New Hampshire. In recent times, there have been some developers with the arts stuff in mind. Zoning laws have changed. With the sales tax thing, I'm not totally convinced that sales tax is more expensive here than in New Hampshire. I don't know a whole lot about New Hampshire, but I hear how they have a business profits tax. They don't pay it necessarily when you go to buy something, so you don't see it. But they have it, I believe. But nobody likes to be taxed, included me. That's how we got started in this country.

Mike Blood: But then along came the box stores, the retail ones. We were selling a lot of lobsters here, a considerable amount. The box stores coming in would use lobster and seafood as a "loss leader." That's what they call a loss leader. And my sales of lobster, that was always my forte, started dropping and one thing led to another. And of course

the catering and rental just kept right on building. We could see right then it was going to be a seasonal business and it was going to be nonstop, and more than you could really handle. But I was getting older, and so the last three or four years we ran the retail (and we've been out of that three or four years this coming October), we could see that it wasn't going to be as profitable as it used to be. The stress was getting to me. I made a decision to get out of the retail. I hated to do it. It was one of the biggest. My concern was (and I've always been a sensitive person and always, as you found out) we had an excellent reputation is: hey, Mike has closed the restaurant, now he's closing the retail? And that bothered. And I had no intention that we were going to go out of the business as far as catering and rental. Every year that got busier. But I made the decision – or we made the decision, Donna and I, to hang up the retail because it was taking up a lot of time, my time.

Tom Rice: But if you look at the Town of Hartford as this cohesive group, in the day because of the proximity of getting from Quechee to White River or West Hartford to White River (or should I be saying Hartford?), they had their own little communities. There's more left of the Quechee Village than other areas. The trains made White River Junction. Then when the highways came, of course it was transportation and transportation. I was President of the Chamber of Commerce. We enjoyed one of the highest occupancy rates of motels of Vermont.

So we come to the interstates as I speak of. In the '60s, it was a land grab by the feds and state, or at least that's what it was perceived to be. Now in retrospect, we look at the highways as what has been a blessing for all of us. But we were displaced from the farm: typical one horse, side hill farm that everybody was comfortable at. We had no TV, no electricity. Running water came from a lead pipe off a spring in the hill and we modernized as we went on. With the actual transition to what is now our office building that I'm in was an apartment house with some barns equipped for our cattle and horses that we wanted to keep. And this was just an interim location for us to springboard into another farm that would have been more desirable.

Kip Miller: There is a lot going on. It's great. It's kept us alive. Hartford almost died out when the interstate came in and all of the retail for the most part went over to New Hampshire. Primarily because of the sales tax at that time. And it still is a deterrent for a business coming in, if you have a 6% [sales tax or no] sales tax. It's a no brainer. They're not coming in. All of the politicians say New Hampshire will eventually get a sales tax. Well we've been waiting now for 40 years. I don't see that in the horizon right away. One of the things that's nice here is Vermont has done away with sales tax on clothing entirely. And also food tax if you're not buying prepared food like in a restaurant, there's no tax on it. So $\frac{3}{4}$ of the things I sell in the store here are not taxed. And the other items most are \$20 or at least under \$50 apiece. So the tax – we're not trying to selling refrigerators or large ticket items. So sales tax is small.

I. THE CHANGING BUSINESS SECTOR

While the types of business have changed in Hartford, it is important to discuss that business has changed across the board, due to the introduction of technology and transportation, for instance. People plan, shop, and do business different today than they did 10, 20 or 50 years ago.

Don Ransom: I used to go [to Europe] all the time [to meet suppliers]. Now I don't. Because of the internet, I really don't need to. And all these guys, just to survive, have to keep coming out with new ranges. So they send samples. I just go online, look at stuff. And there are 1 or 2 big shows in New York I'll go to. And then all of our major guys come see us with all of their samples. I really don't have to go anymore.

Gayle Ottman: That's another thing with the business climate today. People are just working so much longer. Even if they're taking retirement, they don't stop working. I think there's a whole workforce out there of these experienced older people that maybe have retired, but they want to go back to work. So they're doing something entirely different than what they did as a career. I think there is a whole workforce out there that gets overlooked because people hiring say, we could have someone right out of college. And I don't want to take anything from young people trying to find jobs either. I understand that. But the value, even if you could use a senior maybe work 20 hours a week or fill in because their work ethic is a lot different ... than the work ethic I grew up with.

Barbara Ticehurst: Yes, and then the computers started coming in. Boy, I had to hang on by my teeth when the computers. All the younger folks came along and it was so easy for them... I did [learn computers]. I mean, it was sort of a gradual – you know, things would happen and you just go with whatever is going on. They sent me to banking school at Williams College and I also went to Washington D.C. to a school. You got your education as you went. And I just loved every minute of it...Oh gosh, yes. Bank conventions at the Hotel Washington and down in South Carolina and Florida.'

Pete Schaal: The overall plan, probably would be: I was expecting another five years that Todd will be running the business and keeping the family owned business going for another long term. I'm sure that's his intentions and he has a good background. He has a good head on his shoulders as far as running the business and taking it to different levels, and with technology changing as it is, very adaptive to the computer world as far as what is involved in our business. That's changed the way we do business greatly. Of course, we never had the computers to do business when started. It was all paper generated work and plans and so on, and long hand typing and invoices and that sort of thing. It's pretty tough to do that today. Sometimes I wonder if you factor in all the downtime of the computer and its issues that go you through, whether that's really the case. The amount of

time you have to put in to resource your information. I don't know; some days I think it's just as easy to do business the old way. It's not something you're going to go back to.

Kip Miller: Well, we have tried to change with the market. The market has changed somewhat. One of the biggest changes that I have seen. When I grew up, in the '50s, people would take two weeks off in the summer. They would load up the Ford Esquire station wagon and they would put the kids in the back and the dog in the way back and they would go for a two-week trip. Okay? Maybe you had the advantage of doing that... Okay, but with the economy and women working and husbands working, it has become more and more difficult for the family to find that special two weeks to travel together. School seasons have shortened up. They go later in June. They start in September. Many start in August now. So what we've seen is our customer no longer is taking trips say from – we used to get customers from what would be called the blue collared belt of the automobile industry, Detroit, in that area. A lot of people would come in and travel the east from there. That has pretty much disappeared, as well as the automobile manufacturing centers have pretty much gone away.

So now it has become a weekend a destination. We've seen the businesses Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday. And midweek is very slow, as you can see right here. Of course, once school does let out, it will pick up some. But it's still the busiest one the weekends, where it used to be pretty busy all week long in the summer of the 50s. It would start right in the first of June and go right through Labor Day and it would stay busy all the time. Not the case.

We get a lot fly-drive vacationers that come into Manchester or Boston and will rent a car and come up to New England. We get a lot of European bus tours through here. And in recent years, we've been seeing a lot of Russian and Chinese people come through on buses because they have more disposable income now. It used to be those countries didn't travel, but now travel has been eased and they can leave their own countries and travel more. So we see these people more and more.

Kip Miller: Some things stay the same. Of course, Vermont is known for maple syrup and maple products. That doesn't change, okay. People are always looking for products made in New England or Vermont. They are very hard to come by. We're a very small state. And what is made is primarily in the food side of the business like Green Mountain Coffee and Ben & Jerry's. There's a long list of people who have gone into cottage specialty food products. In the gift line, not so much. You do see some. They'll usually go to craft fairs, and that's very heavy in the jewelry line, you know. Everybody is making a pair of earrings or a necklace, you know. Other than that, the wooden industry has all but gone away completely. There's now just one bowl manufacturer in the state and that's Granville. They're one of the oldest ones. All the rest have gone, whereas Vermont used to sell a lot of woodenware. But not so much anymore.

Toby Jasmin: Oh, considerably. Considerably. The change is phenomenal. Now everything is remove and replace. You have the welding procedures, the panel bonds. The stuff it takes to work on a car has changed. The paint department is a complete change. We paint with a water-based paint for purposes of - it used to be enamels. It used to be lacquers then enamels then acrylic enamels. We were always controlled for pollution purposes. And it's water-based paint now. It's really slick... And we changed over to water, water-borne paint about three or four years ago, which cuts down on hazardous waste. It just makes it a lot cleaner operation. We don't have any trouble. They used us as a poster most of the time. We've got those things all set up. It turned me from a generator to a non-generator with just the water. It's a good thing.

Mike Blood: But anyways, to make a long story short, we had overruns and I got into about a quarter of a million dollars. I was some nervous. We had the seafood market that was in here. We had an inland lobster system that was state-of-the-art, and it was until the day we closed it, four years ago. And it was just - everything was really, really good. I mean that sincerely, and anybody will tell you that. So we opened up and we had a hard time making ends meet because I had a lot of labor and I really didn't know how much food to buy, and how much help to have on. So to make a long story short, we hung in there, for, oh gosh, it must have been 12/14 years with the restaurant. I'm trying to remember what year. It was the first time that the Upper Valley had had a real shortage of employees... The workforce was down to about three percent, and to make a long story short, we couldn't get any good help. The family was working 40 hours here and then we'd have to work over there. So we closed that end of it. Hated to. It was '92 I guess.

Dale Howe: We used to spend \$2,000 a month on Yellow Pages. We're in all the Yellow Pages in Vermont and New Hampshire. I've reduced that. I've got that down below \$1500. But that's a really good source. Of course the world wide net. We have a site and we do a certain amount of advertising. But according to my contracts with the franchises that I have, I can only advertise locally here.

J. HARTFORD EVOLVES WITH BUSINESS

Interstates, taxes, technology, the way people spend their time and money have combined to change all of Hartford's village centers. White River Junction, as the current retail hub of Hartford, demonstrates how the businesses have moved out and returned, but in new forms. From everyday services such as drug stores and hardware stores and now to art galleries and restaurants, the town has responded to a changing economy and way of life. Interviewees recall what was, what has changed, and what is in Hartford.

Dennis Brown: See, in my younger days, White River Junction was a thriving business community. We had Newbury's Department Store. We had Colodny's Department Store down there. We had a bus station, two drug stores, a movie theater, a thriving bank. The major post office was down there. A jewelry store, a large furniture store, hardware store. Actually, two hardware stores, three barbershops, and I'm sure I'm forgetting things. But it was a very busy, detailed based, thriving business community. And Miller Auto used to be there – a big Chevy, Cadillac, Pontiac dealer. But then sales tax came in and things suddenly started to gravitate towards New Hampshire to avoid sales tax. So that changed the whole picture and that made our job very hard. We fought for every sale we had. We didn't have people walk through the door and say, "I'll take one of these and one of these and one of these." It was pretty much that you had to talk to people and find out what their needs were and help them out as best you could and hope they buy from you.

Dale Howe: My knowledge about the history of music stores in White River is that back in the '60s, there was a music store in White River called Marshall's Music. And they actually sold pianos. I believe Mr. Johnson had said he had tuned pianos for them. There was another store that I seem to recall. I can't think of the name. That was either before or after Marshall's. We're talking probably '40s to '60s, between 1940 and 1960. One of the interesting things to me, is that I found out, and this to my music collection, I actually found Marshall's Music in sheet music. They were the music would put stickers on the music. You became aware of them.

Judy Barwood: I don't know her but the Mayfair Restaurant was a landmark here. That's where the branch post office is, just beyond where the bingo is. That was a hopping place. Jo Elliot was one of the waitresses. She was just a landmark; she was always there. I think they were open all day. I think they had breakfast, lunch, and dinner. And of course with the railroad station across the street they were really busy. I can't remember when the Mayfair went out. My aunt and uncle had a card shop in there at one point. So probably the Mayfair was gone by end of the 50s, I would say. But it was here a long time. And then we had, oh what was the place down here? We had a soda fountain grill. Teddy's Grill. What was next door to it? I can't even remember the name, where all the high school kids hung out. I think it's too bad that there's no place downtown where the kids can go after school or after a ball game. We always hung out after.

The other thing I remember is when the Terrio building burned down, which is the one right across the railroad from here, next to Polka Dot. That was like a three-story building with a hotel upstairs and Teddy's Grill and there was something else along there. That burned and then they built a long, kind of flat building, a more modern building that had a shoe store. Teddy's Grill was there for a while. What else was in there? The soda fountain place I mentioned. Norman's. Norman's Grill. We all went to Norman's. It would be absolutely packed after like a basketball game or a football game. All the kids would come down, get our sodas or whatever. Of course that was all burned, too.

Tom Rice: And then downtown had its speakeasies. Had its barbershops. One of the two town cops stood on the corner of Bridge, Currier & Main Street (South Main Street) stood there and just watched stuff go around. There was respect for the respect. There was no tolerance. Not that they didn't have fights and stuff. As the chief of police was Connie Johnson. From Teddy's bar a guy jumped him from behind as my father was coming with the truck. Connie was getting beat pretty bad. My father shut the truck off in the middle of the street and went out and helped Connie get this guy handcuffed or whatever he did. My father got his clothes all torn off, ripped and torn, whatever. He, of course, got a thanks. The town selectman bought him a new set of clothes. But everybody worked together.

I was so proud of the people of the town, what they could do. I'll say just salt of the earth people. There's no flash dance. We've had some brilliant people come out of the township. But there's more hardworking people that want quality, have gone to work at some of the machine shops and brought their skills and talents to those specific industries. We've got the educational center at Dartmouth next door. We've got Lebanon right across the river. I'm going back to the railroads: Central Vermont and Canadian National was in White River, go across the little bridge to West Lebanon. That was B&M, Boston & Maine. Trains going back and forth all the time. Trains running south. It was a day when the people who lived on South Main Street had to pick and choose their days to put their laundry out because the soot would be so thick, it would be dark. And it would land on their clothes that they put out and washed. Streetlights would come on.

Chuck Bohi: It's interesting how wherever we go, we find this "localvore" as it's called. Going to Miracle Mile just isn't your thing, whereas in the 50s that was the thing, all this shopping. Your generation is more like mine was in that we didn't have the money for it. You don't find spending a lot of money on clothes and things like that that pleasant an experience, I don't think.

One major change to White River Junction (and all of Hartford) was the decrease in rail service, passenger and freight. Freight trucking surpassed rail freight, and downtown White River became less of a railroad town, though it remains a prominent feature on the landscape.

Kip Miller: Absolutely. When I grew up it was the end of the railroad era. I can remember watching the old great steam engines come through when I was 5-10 years old back in the 50s. Like most little boys, I was absolutely enthralled by that. Of course, every time it snowed in White River, it was white for about 10 minutes and then it turned gray because of all the coal smoke. White River was a heavy industry town at that time. And then I saw it. We had the railroads and then it changed. And even though we still have railroad activity, it was nothing like it was back in those days. The interstate has changed the town and of course as we mentioned, the retail going to New Hampshire.

Judy Barwood: And of course the railroad depot. I mean with my folks' insurance agency right up the stairs, we were watching trains in and out and crowds of people all the time. Every time a train came in, there were just all kinds of people in town. It was really busy all the time.

Tom Rice: My dad was a [railroad] machinist. During the time when steam locomotives were the state-of-the-art, he learned how to make them work and how to time the strokes of the arms, the piston arms. It was quite a mathematical exercise to get those so they both went [imitates sound of clicking movement] at the same time. So he did that. In later years he was a hostler, which means that he'd be the engineer in the yard shucking cars from train to train. I can't even remember when he retired. Everything is diesel-ized.

Although as a kid I can remember going to the yard and seeing the engineer. My uncle was an engineer. Some friends of ours were trainmen. We'd watch them shovel coal. The engines. And of course all automatic feed, but they'd shovel it to get it going. Steam, oh my god, the power. But there was a huge amount of maintenance. Believe it or not, we went to what we would envision, a high-tech machine called the locomotive, a diesel locomotive. A diesel locomotive is nothing but a big generator. The diesel engine runs a generator. The generator in turn drives traction motors on the wheels. Can I say craftsmen didn't need to be masters to operate it, whereas the steam, you had to know what you're doing.

Chuck Bohi: [The height of the railroad in White River], I would say: passenger service, I would say probably the 1920s. World War II saw a huge upsurge of passenger service because there was gasoline rationing. People could get – my father was a minister so he could 5 gallons a week, which was more than most people could get. There were no tires to be had. No new cars were manufactured during World War II. So rail was the only way. Nationally it went from about 8% of the intercity passengers going by rail to over 30%. And White River Junction, being a place where the deck shuffled, was a key place where that happened. Probably the golden era for the – you have a lot of people talk about the glory days of the railroad.

...As you drive along Route 4 you look down and see where the roundhouse is...You go and turn towards Woodstock. As you go along that road, you'll come to a turn off that

leads down toward the railroad crossing and if you turn down that road you can see the roundhouse... There used to be many people. I would say probably hundreds of people who worked servicing the steam engine. The steam engine was very labor intensive. It's one reason they went to the diesel so much. There used to be many people working at that freight transfer place to sort freight. There were just a lot of people who worked here. And that's never coming back.

[It changed] fairly suddenly. By the end of the '50s, the steam engines were gone. The trucks took the package freight and I would say by 1970, a lot of that stuff was gone.

...When that station was opened in 1937, they had a Dartmouth football player kick a ball with the key into the Connecticut River because it was going to be open 24/7. And that was a really key point. There used to be a restaurant in there.

Matt Bucy: And I think White River is a great place. Because of the railroad, it's never going to develop much of anything beyond a railroad town. A railroad is this big, noisy smelly thing that goes through the middle of town... It's not going away and it's what helps keep White River real.

In recent decades, White River Junction has emerged as an arts community. The big boxes on Route 12A in New Hampshire could fill many needs of residents, but not the creative, community side. The establishment of the Tip Top arts building and the Center for Cartoon Studies stand as anchors for the arts community, spurring unique retail businesses, restaurants, cafes and local events that draw people to downtown White River. Matt Bucy, developer and owner of the Tip Top building, is a major player in the arts community.

Kip Miller: The town has been through a tough time. It's coming back in the arts and I think that's just great... You get a lot of creative people in town and it's bringing other people into town. It's a whole different venue. Now we're the Greenwich Village of Vermont practically.

Matt Bucy: So my focus has been bringing creative businesses to White River Junction. When I first set foot in White River Junction, it seemed like a creative place to me. It had all the right elements to it. It wasn't pretentious. Very real. Inexpensive space and a lot of characters. So it felt like a real place to me. It reminded me of a little Chicago or something, had that sort of gritty feel to it. And I had lived in Vermont in the woods so I was kind of – hadn't had an urban experience in a long time, so I was kind of craving it. I had gone to school in New York for a little while. White River sort of fit the bill... When I was 29, I was like, "Well, I've got to New York or stay here and do something. Make a mini-New York or something." So I decided to do the latter. That's been sort of my vision: to work with the fabric here in White River Junction and create a creative environment. So I've been really surprised by how much has happened. The cartoon school came and that was probably the biggest thing.

... It's been a great building for me. It confirmed a lot of my ideas about what was possible in White River Junction. Because people embraced it so quickly, financially it helped me stabilize the building quickly. It didn't expect it to happen nearly so quickly.

Jim Flanagan: There are some really cool things going on in this town: the Tip Top building is a great – have you been over there? Take a walk to it. When I was growing up, when they were cooking bread, you could smell it all over town. Now there's artist studios and a restaurant in there. The guy Matt Bucy, he's just great. He saved the building and it's vibrant. It's moving. The opera house, the Northern Stage, what they're doing. That's a really cool thing. They're changing the landscape. What they're going to do in the legion is going to be a good thing. You still have your issues in town, scoffs and a little haphazard, and I just think what is happening in White River is just great. I really do.

There have been times when you could stroll around White River and see storefronts that are just open. Now, not so much. What they're doing down at the freight house with the Tupelo, hopefully that will keep going. And there's a restaurant down there. There's people that have some really good ideas and fortunately they've got some money, too.

Matt Bucy: We came up with the First Friday thing – it's not an original idea, but – because the artists in the building were a little frustrated that nobody was coming around to check out what was going on. I pointed out that if you show up here on an average day, most of the doors are closed. So why would you come back? You need to give people a time when they can come here when they're more likely to bump into an artist. And so that's why First Fridays got going. And were like, let's just tell everyone in town to do it. Dave Clark, who would be worth interviewing, is a local musician. He's tour-de-force about organizing the musicians in town. There's like 20 acts on First Fridays.

...Playing all over town. Last Friday, First Friday, there was a band on the green just playing. It was amazing. You walk outside, there's music. You go in every building, there's music. In this building there's like four or five different groups playing, which is like a cacophony that's coming from here. Musicians want to come here and play. They get heard and there's a lot of people. It's very lively. I'm so thankful that everyone's latched onto this certain framework thing. And that's the way stuff sort of tends to get done around White River, the stuff that works. My mantra is "Don't plan anything. Just iterate. Come up with a tiny idea and see if it works and move on from there. Forget about big plans, because by the time the big plan happens, it's usually the wrong idea. It's better to take things in little chunks and find out what works and find out by making small mistakes, rather than making really big expensive mistakes.

Gayle Ottman: I was involved with the charettes and everything that we did. It was very interesting. And it just blows me away. I was there for First Friday, this past Friday. They

have a First Friday get together every month. And in the summertime, all the musicians move out onto the streets.

You get into town up by the senior center. You're driving into the village and the first music you see is at Tip Top. Of course all the stores are open and you can go in and have wine and cheese. Revolution had introducing some new wine or something that they had found Kim was doing. It's just amazing. I ended up at Big Fatty's, way down at the other end of town, did the whole crawl. But as I said, it's just – it's extremely rewarding when you've watched something like this. *Is it every going to happen?* But early on the consensus was that White River could not compete with 12A. We could not compete with the retail businesses so we had to find a niche. You had to find a hook. You had to find a reason to bring people in. And it was cultural and art and education. So here we are today with the Cartoon School, Northern Stage, the galleries, the unique businesses like Lampscales and Revolution and Oodles and some of those other places that are different, that have created a niche that's not on 12A or Hanover or even Woodstock.

Matt Bucy: You'd be hard pressed to find someone who doesn't travel to all the places on a regular basis. You just can't get all your services in one place. The big box stores are all over in Lebanon, so that's where you go for cheap stuff. White River sort of has its own brand, I guess, which would be – well we've been sort of calling it like the "Green Point" of Vermont, for better or for worse. It's like, yea, you can find hipsters here.

Of course, White River Junction is not the only village in Hartford that has changed. Quechee, a prominent mill town until the mid-1900s, benefited greatly from the evolving business trends and the interstate. When Hartford became easily accessible, the idea for the Quechee Lakes development began to take shape and bring life back into the former mill town, and bring more residents (albeit many second home owners) to Hartford.

Judy Barwood: And of course that whole – I mean I've been here – that's all happened in my lifetime, Quechee Lakes coming in and revitalizing Quechee. Quechee, as I remember it, was really run down, nothing when I remember. Prior it had been quite a bustling town. I don't remember it being anything. We used to ride our horses from Christian Street to Woodstock and we would just ride right along the main street in Quechee, right along the river road to Quechee. There was nothing there. It was very run down.

Paul Buff: It was an abandoned mill town basically. If you look at the history of this area geographically: all of Vermont was like Scotland back in the late 1800s. Because you had the waterpower with all the woolen mills you had sheep grazing on the tops of hills around here. So you had very little vegetation, landscaping, trees, except for your highest mountains like Killington. That's why you have stonewalls running all through the woods around here. It was all fenced off by farmers for sheep grazing. That sort of changed with the advent of electricity because you basically – it was probably like the woolen mills

down here, Dewey's Mills at the entrance to the Gorge basically shut down after World War II. They made military uniforms, wool, during the war. That kept them alive.

... The agricultural economy changed completely in the '60s and '70s. Fortunately for Quechee and I'd say Hartford, this development was successful in getting completed.

... They certainly, a lot of the Quechee people gave a lot of the Hartford kids employments. A lot of the kids I've seen grow up in Quechee became very successful doing maintenance work, all kinds work, carpentry, construction. I know the economy goes up and down, and sometimes they're employed and sometimes they're not. I look at a lot of the families that now have big construction industries like Nott Excavation, Sheperd Construction. A lot of the businesses over the years have done very, very well. They were local fellas that grew up in the area and have done quite well with Quechee Lakes.

Paul Buff: ...A lot of the local talent, so to speak, were a lot of the local talent for folks who went to school locally and grew up here and did everything from drilling wells, electrical, plumbing, carpentry, construction, foundations. They're all local talent that got hired through the '70s and '80s. I think it was a big boom to the local economy. Guys are still doing work up here. I mentioned Nott Excavating in Hartford. Dunkle Construction. A lot of guys do site work and stuff, not just for the houses and condominiums but also for the golf course. A lot of maintenance work. To support a project of this size, it's a tremendous amount of maintenance service. Most people up here can afford to pay someone to mow the lawn, rake the leaves, and do that kind of work, plow snow. Just like Killington or Stowe or anyplace else, people have to fill that need. It's great for the economy. Then you've got to have your taxes done. There's a lot of retirees up here that get their services done locally, both in Hartford and over in Hanover and Lebanon, Woodstock. It's hard to put a number on something like that, a calculation of what kind of money filters through it: retirement, social security or just their own savings. They spend that money in the local economy

K. HARTFORD: A GOOD PLACE TO LIVE & WORK

Through all of the interviews, one thing became very clear: Hartford is a good place to live, and the people here are dedicated to their community, business, and sharing the benefits of Hartford. From location to small town feel to its recent developments, everyone pondered and discussed their sense of place in Hartford and how he/she is able to play a role in shaping Hartford.

Gayle Ottman: You can sense it. I try to explain this to people, and they look at me and say, “What do you mean there’s something different?” Well if you’ve lived in both states enough and just crossing the river – it feels different. When we used to go down to Connecticut to visit my husband’s family down there and we’d come back and he grew up in West Hartford and Westchester, NY and found Vermont after we got married. We’d be going to visit Connecticut and we’d cross from Mass. down near Brattleboro into Vermont and just take a deep breath... I don’t know what it is. Like I said, there is definitely a difference between the two states. There definitely is. And there’s just a sense of it and maybe it’s something to do with the vibes from the earth. I don’t know. I’m not the only one. I know other people who say the same thing.

Matt Bucy: So I started putting my mind to that. Thinking about what to do with it. It’s turned into a new kind of project for me because it has residential in it. I’ve never done residential. But I think White River Junction needs residential, especially on South Main Street. There isn’t a high quality stock that appeals to young people. And there’s a lot of younger people in town now. So just trying to help White River round itself out. When I first moved here, there was no one my age. I was like, “oh, god, where am I?” I mean it seemed like at 18 everyone left. Everyone just split. Now that’s not so much the case. I think that economic hardship has forced a lot of people to stick around. Just anecdotally, I see a lot more people hanging around and not going out. I think they should leave once in a while... Yea, just get some perspective. It’s such an amazing place here and you don’t see that until you go away. I go away all the time for work doing filming. And I’m always like, “Wow, Vermont is just an amazing place to be.”

Gayle Ottman: Good question. I don’t know [what draws people to Hartford]. Some cases, I think it’s a family connection, years ago. At the hotel, the two hotels, I have – what I’ve found, we’ve many families moving in. The husband or the wife is relocating here because they’re relocating here because they are working at one of the tech companies in New Hampshire. Our proximity, certainly, to the hospital and to Tom-Tom and CRREL [Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory] and to all of the concepts and so forth. Those high tech companies; they’re bringing people in from all over the country. They relocate. Usually the husband will come and get settled in and then many cases, he has to wait until the kids are out of school or such times they sell their house. So they’re relocating here. I see that quite a bit. I think that’s part of it. And I’m sure those tech companies pay very well. I think they’re between the Veterans

Hospital and DHMC, which is huge. That is a whole market there that we tend to forget that bring people in who have never been here. They use medical staffing organizations, companies a lot. I think what happens is people come in here and they work here for 3-6 months, and they like where it is so when they are making a change to retire or come back here for a permanent job, they'll come back here to work. The proximity to the two interstates make it easy to come and go. If you live here, you can be in Burlington in a little over an hour. You can be to Montreal in three hours. Boston two hours and a half. Amtrak, you can go down to Washington D.C. You can go to New York. You can take the transportation Dartmouth Coach to go down to Boston for the day. There's a lot of that ease of movement here because of its central location. I think that has something to do with it. The comments that I hear the most from people I talk to that are here visiting or making moves here is the climate. They're not looking forward to the winter. Usually they're coming from California or the South or somewhere. On the other hand, particularly if they have young families, they want the quality of life.

Paul Buff: I enjoyed the ride. It was a roller coaster ride. You've got highs of very up periods like in the mid '80s and then you have lows of lows in the mid '70s. I guess more recently they've had some difficult times. But as a developer, I've got to say that I've really enjoyed working in the area. It's a beautiful area to work in. I feel very fortunate. I think I probably have one of the oldest developers, 20 years with one company. Most guys don't last anywhere that long. So I felt very fortunate. Raised a family while I was living up here. Got my son through college. So it was a good experience. I enjoyed it a lot.

John Clerkin: Well there maybe is a shift from family line business to business business. Not necessarily from growth through families. You've got the Gateway folks and the Pippins and the Bloods. All those people, the families, they just kept on going with stuff. I think it became more diversified. The town, I think it's still great. I think it's a very, very good town. A nice town to live in. It's diversified a lot more than it used to be. We had so much going on downtown. We've got Quechee Lakes. We've got all kinds of stuff going on. There's a lot – not big box over here, but a lot of franchising. We, in this area, we depend a lot on business. It used to be the big phone company, the VA, the post office. We've got a lot of institutional stuff in town. We always have. Believe it or not, some around the transportation thing is starting to revive for the railroad stuff. We've always been a transportation center because that's where things cross. We serve a much larger population than the 11,000 population would lead you to believe. There's probably a 30 or 40,000 population that you serve with services: cops, emergency services, all that sort of thing. Roads are used a lot more. The town government has grown like crazy.

L. STORIES FROM HARTFORD

Every interview meanders down a different path, depending on the business and a person's memory. Inevitably interviewees tell unique stories about their own businesses or life in Hartford. These cannot be categorized by overall themes, but are worth highlighting.

Gayle Ottman: [My favorite business was the] snack bar, even though it was a tremendous amount of work. I think it's because family worked with us. And what we built there, somebody built ourselves. Somebody had built it before us and meeting the people just over the years. You're in a business for 30 years, you're going to see an awful lot of people come through. There'd be people to come back every summer and they'd stop there to get their coffee ice cream or whatever else it was. We carried orange pineapple. We had people from Enfield that would come – an older couple would make a trip a couple times a month to get their orange pineapple ice cream. That's the kind of – the other businesses were great. I met an awful lot of people and were successful, but I think the most enjoyable at the end of the day was the snack bar.

Tom Rice: I can say that whenever there was an emergency – we had a hurricane one time, this would have been in the early '50s, that took down every tree on the highways (state highways, national highways weren't there). We were without power for days. These big maple trees that used to line the highways were all criss-crossed into the roads. The farmers who had equipment would go down and make sure you could open up the roads and get into your driveway. The people that had office jobs: without their helping that were needy getting their places back together, and it was all communities. I would guess a week with no electricity. Water being trucked in with farmer's wagons with their tanks on the back. The power company coming out and putting power down through. All that was down and it was all antiquated stuff, so they just built it new. Huge, huge changes. But it was the people working together, making Vermont what it is. Raising barns and stuff like that, it was and still is. You call a lot of your buddies, get it together and put it up. I remember the first house I built. I called my friends and we exchanged work. I'd help them. I had my whole house up before I was 20 years old. And it was paid for. We had this little thing called the interstates coming in where any of us farm boys who were operating equipment were recruited to run this bulldozer. Well, the thing in, you're young and cocky and say, "I've been driving a bulldozer since I was a little kid. I can drive anything if it's got tracks on it." And you'd look up at this thing and it's got a 20-foot blade on it and you've got to get a ladder to climb up in it. And it was all of us that did it. They brought in some people from wherever, but a lot of what you see was done by local guys. You took a sabbatical from farming and went to work on the highways.

Dennis Brown: Another thing I could add to that was I ended up taking over the advertising. And my father said we need to get on the map. We need to get some

advertising that is going to work. And I played around with advertising a bunch. We tried some different things. I ended up getting a cape and I turned into the Equalizer. This was a person that would equalize prices and was against mass merchants and that sort of thing. So the Equalizer became quite a thing.

I also had my miniature dachshund at the time that turned into being the Super Dog. She was actually way more famous than I ever was. Go to McDonalds and they'd give her free food and I'd have to pay for mine.

Judy Barwood: Well that was the auditorium for the high school. So when my dad was in high school they played games and things up there. It was the auditorium, right? And J.J. Newbury's had a big store where they have bingo games now. And they decided to expand, so then they went up there. They had an upstairs. You had J.J. Newbury's downstairs and they had these stairs and you went upstairs. That didn't last very long. I think they shouldn't have expanded. And then shortly after that is when the Briggs decided to go back to an opera house. But my grandmother – I think it must have been originally an opera house, auditorium, because she was 9 years old and she was upstairs. There was some kind of a performance. She sat on the windowsill and didn't realize that the window was open and leaned back and fell two stories down just missing a metal stairway and fortunately – I guess there must not have been any cement there. And she was in a coma for months.

And she was my great-grandparents' only child. So it was written up in the newspaper. And she was 9 years old. But she survived to get married and have 9 children. So she was okay. But they were having some kind of a play there then. This would have been probably – I think she was born somewhere in 1880, so it would have been 1880s. That room has seen a lot of different uses. I know the high school played all their basketball games up there at one point.

Barbara Ticehurst: It's really kind of strange, because – it was in November during hunting season. And the guy who came in the bank with the gun had been over at the diner and when he left, he said to the gal, "Give me a paper bag. I'm going over to rob the bank." And he did! ... So he came in with his gun and laid it down on the counter in front of Alice the teller. And put down the bag and filled it up. I didn't even know it was going on, I was out in the bookkeeping room. Poor Alice. But anyway, he left. And of course we were all having a fit. And one of the tellers, her name was Barbara – not me. We had three or four Barbaras and I always said, if another Barbara comes in for a job, she's not getting it. Anyway, this Barbara – her husband Francis worked over at Gateway Motors – she called him up to tell him (you know, in case he heard the news that we'd been robbed and so forth) and the robber was in the garage, where her husband worked, trying to buy a car... So they caught him. So that's our famous story about our robbery. That was quite a coincidence.

Joan Laro: Our boys were going to school in Hartford, of course, and I was due to go pick them up. He [Phil] was shooting this idea at me. He said, "I'm going to start roasting corn." I said – I wasn't trying to resist – I said, "I can't imagine people coming off the highway, dressed in whatever it is clothing that they have and eating hot buttered corn and letting it drip down their elbows. I said it's not going to work. I said, it's just my take on it. So I left. He was ready. When he has an idea, it just happened. So I left to go pick up our sons and when I came back he had a fire going, he had the corn on, and guess what. There were several people standing there around the grill, eating the hot buttered corn. So I said, okay, came around the bend, you were right.

Barbara Ticehurst: [As Vice President...] I did a little bit of everything. Oversee the tellers and the bookkeeping department and make sure everything went along okay. [I loved] everything. I enjoyed making things go the way they're supposed to. I remember one of the tellers said, "Barbara is always so good about when she gives me hell."

...And you just sort of oversee how everything goes. I tried to figure out ways to make things easier and go along smoothly. We had examiners come. They would appear out on the corner as we were closing and counting our money and so forth. And these men would be coming. I'd say, oh here they come. So then we had to stay there and help them when they started looking at everything. They would go over all your records. I always enjoyed having them come.

Because, you know, then they could see that we were doing things correctly. We had a couple of times when I was able to see that somebody was doing something they shouldn't. Like cashing out Canadian exchange and taking the money. We had a couple of situations like that. But that was essentially my job, to oversee that everything went along smoothly. At times I tried to – like when the tellers would cash up at night - I invented a legal size envelope and had them printed at the printers that put down how their cash adds up. And then in the envelope they could put their tapes and things from the machine and file them away. It was great.

Pete Schaal: And we were living here in Wilder, renting an apartment. And I needed a washing machine. And I went down to Fellows Electric Services. They sold appliances. So I went in and looked at some washing machines. I forget; there was one in there for \$50 or \$60, \$75, a used one. So I was looking at it and I left. It had been three or four days. Mr. Fellows called me because he wanted to talk to me. I said to my wife, "We really can't afford that washing machine right now. That's probably what he wants to do. He wants to sell me that washing machine." So I didn't go down, and then he called again. So I went down. I went in. It was his office. He wanted me to come in his office. He said, "I want to offer you a job. You see where you'd work. Would you be interested in working for us? We could use your experience in the plumbing part of it, and then you could work your way through the electrical program." I said, "Okay." Well, we talked about wages. He said, "I'll give you \$125 a week." I said, really? That's pretty good.

Working in Woodstock, I was making – I think I brought home \$68 or 69/week. In the plumbing apprenticeship program, in those days, they gave you 10-cent raises for every hundred hours of apprenticeship – no every thousand hours – no, you had to do 8,000 hours of apprenticeship time. So every thousand hours you got a 10% raise. That's how the program worked. You set up the apprenticeship program. You indenture the apprentice. They went to school; they went to apprenticeship school at night. You train them on the job. They work with a licensed person and then every 1,000 – they'd already set their increments up with the apprenticeship program. That was what they did. That meant I didn't have to drive from Woodstock from White River. That saves gas. Had an old Volkswagen at the time, a Volkswagen Beetle. And then he says, "Just think about it. If you do decide to come to work for me, you can have that washing machine." That's pretty good.

Paul Buff: In the village itself, the corporation, when it had Main Street and River Street torn up, even on Route 4, to redo all the water and sewer lines, even underground electric, everything. We had everything going. And the roads were just a total dust bucket and it was a mud hole for like two years. This was like '73, '74. So in the summer of '74, Al Molton again in his marketing wisdom, we had what we called a big painting bee where all village residents and corporation employees (I can't remember the exact numbers now, it's probably recorded in the *Quechee Times* at that time.) We painted about 28 homes, most of them all white. The corporation supplied the paint. We worked together. We assigned teams to each other and we painted all the houses. They were covered with dirt and mud from construction all those two years. I mean it was just like one of those community things that you don't see very often, but up here in Vermont you probably see it more often. It was just a fascinating – that's what I mean by the comradery and the spirit of the village. It's great. Almost like an Amish country, everybody gets together and builds a barn. Same kind of thing. People were going up and down in golf carts and handing out hotdogs and hamburgers. It was fantastic. That was just part of the life you enjoyed up here.

John Clerkin: It gets repeated probably 3,000 times in my life. When I went into business for myself. I don't think I'd want to give identity here. Let's say I had 900 bucks in my business checking account. Let's just say that. That's not exactly what it was. And I'm in business by myself, and I told you I had that little desk in the office. Well a couple days into it, I had sold a house to a young man three or four weeks before that. He had a nice family, but it took all of his money to getting the house. He comes in and he said, "John, the pump in my well just blew." I said, the people who lived there, they're going to tell you to take a hike. It worked when they were there. He's got three girls and so on. I said, "You get that pump fixed. You got your kids, you got to take care of it." I had my own family at the time, but I said, "Bring the bill down to me and we'll get it taken care of." He said, "I didn't expect you to." I said, "Look, I treat people the way I want to be treated. If I was a young fellow and had three little kids and didn't have any water, I'd

want somebody to help me out. Please do it.” So he did. He brought the bill in and it was a little more than 900 bucks. So I took it in stride. Not really in stride, because after he left, I was sitting there with the sweat pouring off, thinking, geez, how am I going to handle this? I don’t believe it was more than an hour later that there’s a knock on the door. A fellow named Chaz Baker came in. Old real estate guy, he used to be the geometry teacher. He used to wear bib overalls and he’d come in. He’s kind of an old scuffer. “Hi Chaz, how you doing?” “Pretty good.” “What are you doing down here today?” He said, “I got something for you.” So he pulls his bib down and reaches down his bib and pulls out a plain envelope. It’s got my name on it: John. He said, “That’s for you.” I said, “That’s pretty nice.” He said, “Remember about three years ago you sent a fellow up to see me to buy a piece of land. I showed him a lot of stuff, but you know I finally sold him a piece of land and that’s your referral commission.” “Geez Chaz, thanks a lot.” I didn’t even recognize the guy’s name really. So he left and sweat’s still pouring off me. So I take it and put my finger in and open it up. One thousand dollars.

Judy Barwood: Well I guess some of things that I think about often. I went to the one-room schoolhouse on Christian Street when I started school. That kind of dates me. It’s right where Christian Street meets Route 5, next to Dothan Brook School. That little white house was the one-room schoolhouse and we had six grades in there. I was there for two years and then they closed the school and took us all to Wilder to the school there. So we went there and then to the high school. I’ve been to the – our class was the first class in the new middle school when it was built in 1952. We went to grade 9 there and then we went back down to the old high school, which is now the elementary school. That’s where I went to high school. And Christian Street was a dirt road for, golly, a lot of years. I don’t know when they paved it. I mean from the corner there, what you think of as Christian Street now. I remember sliding on the hill there by Woodhaven. You know where the Woodhaven apartments are? And I don’t even remember looking for cars. But that was a great hill to slide on because the snow was packed or it was plowed and it was great sliding on sleds. So those things I really remember.

VII: SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This segment of Hartford's ongoing oral history projects focused on a variety of businesses in town, as opposed to one type of business such as the 2012 agriculture project. The 20 businesses stretch from the 1930s to the present, from banking to snack bars to specialty retail stores, auto mechanics, insurance agents to microdevelopers. Despite the varying businesses, time periods, and experiences, common themes emerged, which are explored in this report. Beyond the commonalities discussed in this report, there are many opportunities for expansion and further study.

The most obvious avenue for further research is to integrate this report with other studies of businesses previously conducted by the historical society and researchers, such as the Briggs Family, Colody's, Newbury's, White River Paper. These were/are important businesses in town, and most interviewees mentioned at least one. This study will be more valuable when linked to other research conducted in Hartford.

Additionally, one business or type of business might allow a researcher to narrowly define a research topic. For example, a topic could be studying the banks of Hartford or the specialty retail stores that have come and gone.

Another avenue for research is to dig deeper into trends touched upon in this report, but not explored completely (due to the nature of the project). Two suggestions include (1) Using business directories to determine businesses that closed or began at the time of the interstate opening and/or at the introduction of the sales tax; and (2) Comparing the trends of Hartford's businesses with the rest of Vermont's business economy.

Due to the wide array of business types and themes found throughout this project, it has the ability to relate to anyone connected to Hartford, whether a business owner, a resident, regular customer, or even a tourist. This universal appeal can be invaluable for garnering interest in future phases of the ongoing oral history efforts of the Town of Hartford.

APPENDIX A

The following appendix organizes all of the files and file codes with their associated interview, for the purpose of aiding archival efforts and researchers. Typically, each interview includes a transcript, an audio recording, a file cover sheet, a release form, and a photograph. These documents are located on CDs.

The interviews are listed in alphabetical order. An example file code is: HBOH_Ticehurst_Transcript. HBOH stands for Hartford Business Oral History. Ticehurst is the last name of the interview. Transcript stands for the particular file, in this case a transcript. Other file ends include “Recording” for the audio recording; “FileCvr” for the File Cover Sheet; “Release” for the signed release form; “Photo” for a photo that was included with the interview. A number following the file name means there was more than one interviewee participating. A description follows in the third column, when necessary.

FILE CODE	INTERVIEWEE	DESCRIPTION
HBOH_Barwood_Transcript	Judy Barwood	
HBOH_Barwood_Recording		Interview July 29, 2014
HBOH_Barwood_FileCvr		
HBOH_Barwood_Release		
HBOH_Barwood_photo		Judy Barwood, July 2014
HBOH_Blood_Transcript	Mike Blood	
HBOH_Blood_Recording		Interview July 22, 2014
HBOH_Blood_FileCvr		
HBOH_Blood_Release		
HBOH_Blood_photo1		Mike Blood, July 2014
HBOH_Blood_photo2		Inside the showroom, July 2014
HBOH_Bohi_Transcript	Chuck Bohi	
HBOH_Bohi_Recording		Interview June 5, 2014
HBOH_Bohi_FileCvr		
HBOH_Bohi_Release		
HBOH_Bohi_photo		Chuck Bohi, June 2014
HBOH_Brown_Transcript	Dennis Brown	Interview May 22, 2014
HBOH_Brown_Recording		
HBOH_Brown_FileCvr		
HBOH_Brown_Release		
HBOH_Brown_photo		David Brown, May 2014
HBOH_Bucy_Transcript	Matt Bucy	
HBOH_Bucy_Recording		Interview June 9, 2014
HBOH_Bucy_FileCvr		
HBOH_Bucy_Release		
HBOH_Bucy_photo		Matt Bucy, photo submitted by interviewee
HBOH_Bucy_photo		Tip Top building, July 2014
HBOH_Buff_Transcript	Paul Buff	
HBOH_Buff_Recording		Interview August 26, 2014
HBOH_Buff_FileCvr		
HBOH_Buff_Release		
HBOH_Buff_photo		Paul Buff, 2014
HBOH_Clerkin_Transcript	John Clerkin	
HBOH_Clerkin_Recording		Interview July 29, 2014
HBOH_Clerkin_FileCvr		
HBOH_Clerkin_Release		
HBOH_Clerkin_photo		photo n/a
HBOH_Flanagan_Transcript	Jim Flanagan	
HBOH_Flanagan_Recording		Interview June 5, 2014
HBOH_Flanagan_FileCvr		
HBOH_Flanagan_Release		

HBOH_Flanagan_photo		Jim Flanagan, 2014
HBOH_Howe_Transcript	Dale Howe	
HBOH_Howe_Recording		Interview May 22, 2014
HBOH_Howe_FileCvr		
HBOH_Howe_Release		
HBOH_Howe_photo1		Dale Howe at the piano, May 2014
HBOH_Howe_photo2		Inside Frederick Johnson Pianos, May 2014
HBOH_Jasmin_Transcript	Toby Jasmin	
HBOH_Jasmin_Recording		Interview August 8, 2014
HBOH_Jasmin_FileCvr		
HBOH_Jasmin_Release		
HBOH_Jasmin_photo		photo n/a
HBOH_Knight_Transcript	Jeff Knight	
HBOH_Knight_Recording		Interview August 13, 2014
HBOH_Knight_FileCvr		
HBOH_Knight_Release		
HBOH_Knight_photo		Jeff Knight, August 2014
HBOH_Laro_Transcript	Joan & Phil Laro	
HBOH_Laro_Recording		Interview June 5, 2014
HBOH_Laro_FileCvr		
HBOH_Laro_Release1		
HBOH_Laro_Release2		
HBOH_Laro_photo		Joan & Phil Laro, 2014
HBOH_Lovell_Transcript	Clair Lovell	
HBOH_Lovell_Recording		Interview August 8, 2014
HBOH_Lovell_FileCvr		
HBOH_Lovell_Release		
HBOH_Lovell_photo		photo n/a
HBOH_Miller_Transcript	Kip Miller	
HBOH_Miller_Recording		Interview May 29, 2014
HBOH_Miller_FileCvr		
HBOH_Miller_Release		
HBOH_Miller_photo1		Kip Miller outside Quechee Gorge Gifts, May 2014
HBOH_Miller_photo2		Quechee Gorge Gifts, May 2014
HBOH_Ottman_Transcript	Gayle Ottman	
HBOH_Ottman_Recording		Interview June 9, 2014
HBOH_Ottman_FileCvr		
HBOH_Ottman_Release		
HBOH_Ottman_photo		photo n/a
HBOH_Ransom_Transcript	Don Ransom	

HBOH_Ransom_Recording		Interview May 19, 2014
HBOH_Ransom_FileCvr		
HBOH_Ransom_Release		
HBOH_Ransom_photo1		Don & Susan inside the store, May 2014
HBOH_Ransom_photo2		Interior of the store, May 2014
HBOH_Ransom_photo3		Interior of the store, May 2014
HBOH_Ransom_photo4		Exterior of the store, May 2014
HBOH_Rice_Transcript	Tom Rice	
HBOH_Rice_Recording		Interview August 12, 2014
HBOH_Rice_FileCvr		
HBOH_Rice_Release		
HBOH_Rice_photo		Tom Rice at his desk, August 2014
HBOH_Schaal_Transcript	Peter Schaal	
HBOH_Schaal_Recording		Interview July 29, 2014
HBOH_Schaal_FileCvr		
HBOH_Schaal_Release		
HBOH_Schaal_photo1		Pete Schaal outside the stop, July 2014
HBOH_Schaal_photo2		Outside the shop, July 2014
HBOH_Schechtman_Transcript	Jonathan Schechtman	
HBOH_Schechtman_Recording		Interview August 28, 2014
HBOH_Schechtman_FileCvr		
HBOH_Schechtman_Release		
HBOH_Schechtman_photo1		Jonathan Schechtman inside the shop, August 2014
HBOH_Schechtman_photo2		Jonathan Schechtman inside the stop, August 2014
HBOH_Schechtman_photo3		Interior of the shop, August 2014
HBOH_Schechtman_photo4		Exterior of the building, August 2014
HBOH_Ticehurst_Transcript	Barbara Ticehurst	
HBOH_Ticehurst_Recording		Interview May 19, 2014
HBOH_Ticehurst_FileCvr		
HBOH_Ticehurst_Release		
HBOH_Ticehurst_photo1		Barbara Ticehurst, May 2014