

Q: Just encapsulate for me the earliest history of this farm and the origins of it. How it came into being, when that time was, and something about the families that owned the property.

A: What came to be known as Gravenstein farm was before the incorporation of the town of Lincoln called Brooks Tavern.

Q: Tell me about the origins of Gravenstein Farm.

A: Before it was Gravenstein farm, which is before the founding of the town of Lincoln, and before the founding of the country, it was Brooks Tavern. And Brooks Tavern was a farm but was also, as most of these old farm houses were, a stopping point where coaches would go, going from here to the next center of civilization, that's from Boston to Concord. Would stop, rest the horses. And in fact, you can see in the layout of the farm that there's a driveway that goes in. And you turn around past the barn and come out the other side because that's where the horses and the carriages would go in and out. And of course while the horses were resting the people were dancing, singing, drinking. And the upstairs of Hartwell farm is the ballroom where the dancing went on.

And so all these families at this time, there was a certain amount of intermarriage so that you have the Hartwell farm, you have the Brooks farm, you have the Brooks Tavern and all of these places, there's some connection between some of them. During the revolution it was definitely a way stopping place. Lincoln was a town by then and it became part of Lincoln.

Q: I would like to talk a little bit about Samuel Hartwell who is the one that we have on this poster. So we're going to jump now from the time of the revolution, unless you had something else you felt was really important to talk about, and jump into the 1800s. And maybe you could describe in your own words a little bit about what the farm consisted of in those days. And then I'll ask you to read something from this. Because we're going to show this on tape and while we're looking at it we'll hear your voice as a voiceover reading some of this. But before we get to that why don't you just tell us on camera a little bit about what the farm was like then and who owned it.

A: 300 years ago?

Q: In the 1800s.

A: This farm, what is Gravenstein farm, and it was named Gravenstein farm because it raised so many Gravenstein apples, was a real working farm. And it was primarily an apple farm and I think that's

JN  
04/21

WHAT WAS  
RAISED??



OUT  
04:44:17

because of the quality of the land. We really didn't have a lot of good bottom land where you could plow it easily. I mean apples are the easy way to go when you have rocky ground and this is what we had. So gradually they cleared the land enough and planted enough trees. And it takes 20 years for a tree to really be producing well. It did in those days. Were all planted in various fruit trees except for this little truck farm area part. And that was the major part of the farm life and that was the cash crop.



OUT 5:11

They always had cold storage and cold storage was always a place where you could keep the apples over the winter and gradually send them into Fanueil Hall. And that was done with teams of horses on a regular basis so that all the apples didn't have to go in at the same time in the fall. And that cold storage house I still remember. But it's the same still. It's now the Alcott gym or something. Do you know the one I'm talking about? It's on the road to west Concord. Thoreau gym? It's a big stone building.

IN  
05:59

APPLES  
COLD  
STORAGE

So the apples that were not sent into Fanueil Hall were taken to cold storage. And cold storage was basically, we're talking before electricity, bales of hay are put together, old hay in bales, and that's insulation. Ice is cut from the pond and stacked among with straw as insulation. The apples are put



OUT  
06:52:06



in there and they will last all the way to summer. They will last all the way through the winter. So that's how a farm became economical. I mean this farm was self sufficient. They grew everything. There were always cows, there were always pigs, always livestock. The horses were there. And it went on from generation really to generation.



Q: Let me just ask you if you wouldn't mind just saying for the record that during the 1800s Samuel Hartwell owned this farm.

A: I don't know exactly when he was the owner.

Q: Just during the 1800s, I guess. He farmed for 40 years, let's just figure it out. He farmed for 40 years and then he sold the farm in 1910 to his sister?

A: So something like 1870. Samuel Hartwell owned Hartwell farm and farmed it, worked it as a farm with as many hands as he needed and a lot of family members starting in the 1700s. And he did that until he died which was in 1910. And at the time that he died the farm was put up for sale due to lack of heirs. But his sister bought it. And she died the following year. And when she died she left it to my grandfather who was Edward Hartwell Rogers. And my grandfather had six sons, five surviving. And he was not a farmer. He was a lawyer and lived in Cambridge. And he used this farm, he continued this

07:47  
END

HARTWELL  
(Hartwell)

farm as a source of profitable farming. He ran it as a business. And also for all of his sons as part of the hired hands that were needed to work. So they were supplemental labor. Actually the head foreman was related.

And Cuzzy (?) Hartwell who was the last of her generation lived out the end of her days there on the farm. So that my father and all of his brothers every single summer were put to work on the farm. They came out for all school vacations and they developed a real love for farming. So that when I was a young girl we were living on the farm. And then we lived in the night driver's cottage when my cousin's family got more children than we and so got into the farm house. And we moved to the night driver's cottage.

And the night driver was the man who drove the horses into Fanueil Hall with the apples at night. He would leave at 1:00 in the morning and he would get there around 4:00 for the opening of the market.

And then the horses would rest and they'd unload and then he would rest a little. And then he would drive the horses out again. That happened three times a week. So that he had to sleep during the day. So he had to have his own house so that he could rest and had to be away and be quiet. So that my father, I know, loved farming and spent-- I don't remember when we were young ever having a

vacation that didn't have to do with planting or harvesting. And every weekend he would get into his farmer's overalls and we had tractors and horses and cows. And we continued. We didn't keep doing the apples' for profit.

TN 10.54.26

CIDER

But I remember going up to that same cold storage with a big old model A truck all piled to the top with apples and putting them in cold storage. And then as Thanksgiving came we'd bring some out and have them all pressed at Fritz' (?) cider mill which used to be standing out on what is now park land. And we'd have fresh cider. Fritz' cider mill made hard cider as well. I remember.

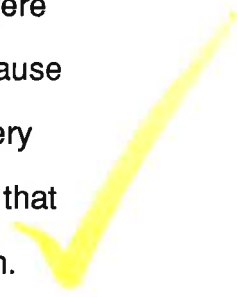


OUT. 11.25

TN 11.29

DEAD HORSE STORY

As a little girl when I was there we had four cows, we had the draft horses that were semi retired, except for rides. And they died, each one, and were buried. It was very interesting to us children because how do you bury a horse? With a big mound. Very scary. One of the things about being on the farm that you notice is that you're not separated from death. Death is part of life. And some of the things that I remember I don't think children have seen really. I mean I remember a calf being born. We watched the calf being born when I was eight, nine years old. I saw kittens born. Some of our cats died. And they died because they lived in the barn and the foxes



came and ate the kittens. Or maybe it was weasels.  
We don't know.

When it was time to have a chicken for dinner Uncle Charles, who was the foreman, would take the chicken and put him on the chopping block and chop his head off. And the chicken would run around, fly around, spurting blood until he stopped. And then the feathers were all plucked off. I also remember the drowning of the rats. There were live traps and the rats would be caught. Because we had grain. And the rat trap would be filled with rats. And Uncle Charles would take this live trap sort of thing and dunk it into a rain barrel full of water and the rats would scream. And it happened a long time ago but that's-- we are the head of the food chain and if it's us or the rats, the rats are going to go. Very interesting, those kind of life.

I had a horse. And we rode around the fields, my cousin and I, trying to keep the horses from going too close to the apple. The horses would get smart and they'd go under the apple trees where the limbs would go sort of low. And if you didn't watch out you could be thrown right off. I don't know. All of us used to help when it came time for harvest. As soon as I was big enough to ride on the hay rake-- the biggest child got to ride on the hay rake-- they'd put a block on the pedal for this child to help them and you'd ride

12:41

Chicken  
with  
No Weasels

==

RATS!

==

13:39 Out.

1 horse

IN 00:13:43:08

IN 14:03

HELPING  
WITH HARVEST



along with the rake down in the back. And it's going along and all of a sudden you get to the right spot and whoever it is, your father or your uncle, yells at you, "Up" and you pump on the pump and the rake goes up and it leaves, supposedly, a nice long row of hay. And then you have to do this all again the other way because the hay has to be turned a couple of times. Otherwise when it goes in the barn it's moldy. And when it's moldy it can catch on fire.

OUT 14:51

TN 14:57

GATHERING  
HAY

So the barn was filled. And the very, very, very end was the prickly job which is gathering the hay on the back of the truck. And all the children are on the back of the truck pumping the hay down. So we're walking around in the hay getting the hay down and it's so prickly. At the end of a prickly it's really hot, it's really prickly. And at the end you ride the truck back to the barn where this big fork comes down and [sound] takes a big bunch of hay and brings it up to the top and over and drops it into the hay loft. Where you're never allowed to go because there are holes in the floor to put the hay down to the cows. And you can fall down the K (?) shoot and break your leg. And one of us did do that.

Q: He had no children, I guess, right?

A: He had no children. The population was so small in colonial days that there was an awful lot of intermarriage. And it was originally known as

TN  
16:00



16:39. 2nd

SAMUEL  
HARTWELL

Brooks Tavern Hartwell farm because of the Brooks'. But there were also the Hartwells and the Flints and the Rogers who all have intermarried a long time ago. And one of my ancestors who was very instrumental in keeping this farm going was Samuel Hartwell. And he lived here on the farm and farmed it as a working farm for about 40 years. Until he died without issue. And just before he died he was going to sell the farm. And he printed up a big poster. And we got this poster. Everyone in our family has a copy. And it shows the farm in 1870 really exactly as I remember it. Which is a farm that's full of orchards. The only thing that I see that's different is that the elm trees have died during the elm disease.

But they describe this farm as a farm that has, is supposed to be the most beautiful home within 20 miles. It had 100 acres of land and mostly fruits, vegetables and hay. The products are sold largely in Boston and that's by going into the Fanueil Hall at night. And they did at one time produce 3,000 bushels full of Gravenstein apples. Which is how it happened to get its name, Gravenstein farm. They name all the fruits and vegetables that are grown here. And they say in the end, "It is a rare chance to secure one of the best farms and beautiful homes in the county of Middlesex and is suitable for a practical

farmer or businessman of the city or a man of leisure."

And they talk about the railroad stations and how close it is to the home of Emerson and Thoreau. And they say that no town is better equipped with fine public buildings than is Lincoln. And they find the tax rate to be very reasonable. And it's from 6.25 to 10.50 on \$1,000. They even have a public lecture fund, which is the Bemis (?) Hall lecture fund, of \$30,000, the income of which provides a splendid annual course of entertainment free to all. At any

rate Samuel Hartwell died and his sister, before he died his sister bought this because she couldn't bear to see it go. And she died a year later leaving this property to my grandfather.

My grandfather was Edward Hartwell Rogers. He was a lawyer and he lived in Cambridge and took the farm as a business. He had a foreman who was also related. His name was Charles Preble (?). And Charles Preble had a cousin who was Cuzzy Hartwell. And she lived on the farm until she died. I remember her very well. So he raised this as a truck farm. I mean what we would call a truck farm. And a place to keep his children.) And I believe I've said this, haven't I?

READING  
FROM  
POSTER

OUT  
19:06

OUT  
19:55

Q: Yeah, that's fine. Just what the land looked like when you were quite young, as long back as you would remember.

A: We always lived here in north Lincoln. So it was a long ways to go. It was a long ways to go to find a friend. And in fact I had more friends when I got a horse because I could ride to my friends' houses. And I had some friends that were over the line in Concord. The Andersons had a farm and they had a girl who was just my age who had a horse. And she used to ride to my house and the two of us would ride over to Walden Pond, at maybe 6:00 or 7:00 in the morning before the rangers were there. And we would ride across rout 2 and around the pond. It was very easy to do this on the old carriage trials. And we would swim our horses in Thoreau's cove and be in and out before the rangers came, which was 10:00 in the morning. It was a lot of fun.

We'd take the saddles off and the bridles and you just swim across the cove with your halter and holding onto the horse's mane. I think back, I say, you know, that was probably pretty dangerous.

Nobody seemed to mind. I used to ride to the center of town. Dad's friends were friends that were other farmers, especially Henry Flint and he used to have a lot of talks together. I'm sorry, I don't mean Henry, I mean Warren.

IN 00:20:42:10

OUT 00:21:19:08

OUT 00:21:30:15

Q: Would you like to just say that again?

A: Dad and Warren Flint used to have a lot of talks about the state of farming. And the grange was an organization that met regularly and had a lot more importance than it does now. The grange used to have a lot of meetings, dinners and very much the guys. I mean the grange auxiliary was for the women. But the men met and did the most important business. We used to ride. We had a surrey which is a carriage. A surrey with a fringe on top. We always kept a surrey. And we used to take the horse and for the 4th of July parades we would go across Lincoln Hill, which was a very big deal for the horse. But at any rate we would all get dressed up in our costumes, hitch the horse to the surrey, get as far as the foot of the hill, on the other side of Tracy's Light, get out, walk up the hill behind the horse, get over the hill.

And then we had to walk down the other side, also to save the horse. So the horse would not be sweating when the horse was in the parade. There's another way to get to the center of Lincoln too which is through the carriage trails. And you come up by DeCordova. And sometimes we would take that road back. That road is still probably wide enough for a carriage today. But that was the main way of going in

FN 21:57

DAD +  
WARREN  
FLINT

GRANGE  
(NOT TOO SUBSTANTIAL)

OUT 22:25

the old days and much easier than going over the hill.

Q: I'm going to just ask you a little bit about the circumstances surrounding this farm finally going out of your family. I mean it had been, and I'd love to have you give me the drama of the fact that this farm was really in your family in one way or another from 16 whatever it was. I can't even remember. 1636 was William Hartwell. And what were the circumstances of your selling the farm and how that came about and maybe how you felt about the farm finally leaving the family.

A: After my grandfather died, which was when I was 13, it was not really worked as a working, an income producing farm. But my Uncle Alfred who was married to Louise and his five children lived in the big farm house, which is Gravenstein farm, and we lived in the renovated night driver's cottage. And my father and my Uncle Alfred milked the cows every day. The time came for the poison to be sprayed on the apples from the arsenic barrel. And they would get on their rubber suits. And there's an arsenic, the arsenic wagon actually really existed. That keeps bugs from eating apples. That's what they did in those days. They sprayed the apples with arsenic. And we were not allowed to be around so of course it was extremely attractive.

TN 25:43

ARSENIC

still  
photo

OUT 26:05

But little by little I mean life became hard.

Alfred had a full time job, my father had a full time job and they spent every spare hour with all the children available. If it wasn't spraying apples it was harvesting apples.

In the winter it was putting the stone drag, which is a big, it looks like a door, it looks like a huge door. It's made of oak planks about this thick strapped together. And you basically during the winter when the stones come out of ground, because the ground freezes and it forces the stones up, you pry them out of the ground, you put them on the stone drag and you drag them away and that's how you make stone walls.

In the spring it's plowing. In the winter, late in the winter, it's always pruning the apple trees, pruning the suckers off the trees. But little by little it became less and less. There's only two of them and it's only part time. And there were still the same 100 acres. So the meadow gradually was not hayed any more. That's on the Concord side. And on the Concord side of route 2 where there's now an entrance to the park all those apples kind of just grew up without any further ado. And then, I don't remember how many years ago, the land that's now Smith Hill was sold. But that still left a big parcel of land intact.

JN  
26:28

STONE  
DRAG

26:56  
OUT

little by little  
it became less  
& less

IN  
27:32

SELLING  
LAND TO  
NATIONAL  
PARK

OUT  
28:24

And when I was 16, 17, 18 the park, the national park developed this plan for making this all a historical monument between Lexington and Concord. And my father had had a heart attack during that time. And my mother was very concerned that he keep doing all this farm work, which is very physically taxing and it was exhausting. And so we moved. We sold our land to the national park. And many years later Louise, who was then a widow, because Alfred had died, also sold her land to the park after negotiating for a long time about access. Because for a long time the park didn't want to buy land that wasn't within the sight (site?) lines but they didn't want to allow access so that you could sell it to somebody else. So after an awful lot of negotiation I guess, I can't remember exactly how it was settled. I think they had to buy it all.

IN  
28:37

29:16  
OUT.

I don't think we ever would have sold it for housing development. It was too much the farm. And if the park hadn't come along I really don't know what would have happened. I think for a long time the family was what you would call land poor in that there was all this land but what was being done with it? It really wasn't being done productively. Lincoln always had a very low rate of taxation for what was known as fallow farm land. And I'm sure that enabled farmers, ex-farmers, retired farmers, to keep

that land and to keep that land open. Because that was possible and because it did lay fallow for many, many years.

[end of tape 1]

OVERFLOW  
TAPE  
↓

Q: -- how it came about that you had to sell the farm. And maybe if you can refer back to the fact that after however many, let's see it would have been 1630 to whenever it was, what, 1940s, 50s, whenever it was that it was sold finally?

A: I don't know when my aunt sold. It was after her husband died. And there was many years of negotiation. I mean more than ten. So it's hard to figure out.

Q: It was well over 200 years that this had been basically in your family. But if you could just try to summarize that whole scenario of having sold the farm, having come to the decision to sell the farm. And then maybe tell us a little how you felt.

A: When my grandfather died he put basically all of the land, all of the land was in trust to be used together and farmed together. But yet that wasn't going to be a permanent solution because the taxes had to be paid, certain things had to be repaired.

And when my father started having heart attacks which was he was 45 when he had his first major

IN 00:02:01:24  
SUMMARY  
OF SELLING  
FARM

00:02:20:21



No one  
to do the  
farm chores.  
Animals gone

heart attack. And he died at 54. He couldn't work the land any more. And my uncle was also getting older, Uncle Alfred. And was left pretty much alone. Most of us had left. We were gone to college. First we go to high school, then we go to college. Do we come back? No. Not every day to milk the cows. The cows went. That was a big loss. No cows on the farm.



OUT 00:03:07:21

Kept the horses for longer. The chickens went. So we're really talking about cats and dogs.)

And then there was a pig. I think she had a pig. I think Aunt Louise had a pig for a while.)

But anyway we really come to the point of land lying fallow. And keeping the hay cut and keeping the fields from growing up full of bushes which is what happens if you don't hay enough. So the apple trees are getting old and they crack and they fall. And nobody comes to dig out the stumps and put in the new shoots.



Luckily, it was really incredibly fortunate that they decided to make this a national park. And all the land between Lexington and Concord as far as the eye can see was to be bought by the national parks. For this farm that was a lot. That was most of the land. That there was a way to keep this forever.)



And my father sold his section to the park right away because it was between heart attacks. And my mother found another house which had also been in

IN 00:03:14:20

Fields growing in

National Park

OUT 00:04:10:25

the family right on the other side of the hill which is across the sight line on Brooks Road up the corner. And so we took advantage of the park money to move across the hill.

And my Aunt Louise and Uncle Alfred stayed longer but little. But basically the land did go. Mostly to the national park. And now it's full of park rangers. Gravenstein farm is full of park rangers. I've never been in the house since it's been sold because somehow or other I have all of these memories of what it was like for Thanksgiving and when it was full of, when the farm kitchen had a huge wood burning stove in the middle and it was all full of pies. And when there were 12 or 14 grandchildren running around and playing around in the barn where they're not supposed to be. I don't know. Park rangers, I'm glad they've got it and I'm glad that it's not all house lots, but it doesn't belong to us any more.



IN 00:04:46:26

VERY GOOD

OUT 00:05:21:15

IN 00:05:30:20

OUT 00:05:45:17

Nice

OUT 00:06:14:26

It seems very nice actually to see them rebuilding stone walls, even though they don't know what they're doing. But at least they're trying and they're learning. And it's very nice to see some of these old houses restored. It's nice but it's not us. I guess it's been passed on to other people who love it.

Q: You personally weren't a farmer, you weren't an adult in charge of the farm, but you

certainly spent a lot of your childhood on a farm and observed it, had the experience of living on it. As you say, watching the animals be born and die. Is there anything you'd like to say about farming as a way of life and what it meant to you?

A: Compared to how children are raised nowadays it was extremely real. That's all I can say. We have nowadays television, video, all those things that kids do inside. I mean my life was very, everything was very concrete. You woke up in the morning, there were chores to be done. What were these chores? You had to feed however many cats, you had to help your mother do this, you had to go out and collect the eggs in the hen house. Life was real. I mean everything was, there was no simulation. You touched everything. Terrible things happened and it seems now as if they were cruel things that happened. But it was a fact of life that that little baby calf that you saw born was going to be fattened and in about a year was going to be butchered and end up in the freezer and that was your hamburger.

And that is very, it's very difficult to get that but yet that was what life was about. I mean we were each allowed one kitten inside. We each had our cat. We were each allowed one cat. But there must have been 35 cats in the barn. And a lot of those

IN 00:07:26:06

Farming as a  
way of life

GOOD

OUT 00:08:07:05

cats died. And they got killed by animals. They couldn't defend themselves. That was life. We were not going to have 35 cats in the house. They were not people. It was hard for me to see, to understand people treating pets as almost babies. I didn't really get that for a long time. I mean animals are to be used. Not very sympathetic but it's really the truth.

Q: The other question that we've been asking everybody is it's quite obvious that it's nearly impossible for a farmer to make a living off the land in this town in 1998. Do you see any future for farming in Lincoln? Or any future for agriculture happening in Lincoln? And if so, in what form?

A: Unless somebody can find something really exotic to farm. If there were something that were-- if for instance somebody could figure out how to grow truffles and you could do this in Lincoln. I don't see, because the price of the land has gone to the point where you can't do that. Keeping the farm land basically as museum pieces, which I think that Codman is, I see it as a museum for farm animals. Which is wonderful but requires a real subsidy. But this is the way it is. I don't see any other way. It's wonderful that they have the food project. I mean that's a wonderful idea. But it has to be subsidized.

Now, Lincoln seems to be the kind of town that is willing to subsidize that sort of project. In fact, it's

IN 00:09:42:09

IN 00:10:28:13

Subsidized  
farming  
The Food Project

something very unique about Lincoln and if they continue to do it I think is truly a wonderful thing to do. I mean different towns have different things that they actually really identify with. And if Lincoln identifies itself with farming they have more open land than almost any town this close to Boston. And they have figured out how to hang onto it and how to land trust it and how to conserve it. There's a lot more that could be, there's a lot more small projects that produce some little income but a lot of interest.

OUT

About Lincoln being known for farm preservation.

This could be like the town's project. The way some churches are known for their music this town could be known for its farming and its farm preservation.

IN

OUT 00:11:34:26

Q: The only other thing I realize I didn't ask you, if you do remember anything about the Denormandy fire or any disastrous weather phenomenon that might have happened during the years you lived on the farm or that you may have heard tales from your father or grandfather.

A: The only thing I remember is the hurricane of '58.

Q: Was that significant as far as the farm?

A: Not really.

Q: Is there anything else you want to talk about that perhaps we haven't touched on?

A: I can't think of anything.

Q: Any last thoughts?

IN 00:12:39:04

Emotional

OUT 00:13:00:15

(About her selling farm)

IN 00:13:25:02

Good

OUT 00:13:42:16

A: No. I think I pretty well have said it. I mean I am very saddened by it all. But you know, it isn't the same as if it were all for nothing. I mean in a way it's the sadness of handing over and leaving control onto other generations. But really actually I feel that's what I'm doing. And I don't feel that it's fallen into bad hands at all. In fact I mean it's marvelous the way people in Lincoln who move in attach themselves to this and say this is wonderful and start working on projects. I think it's extremely gratifying. It's wonderful. It couldn't be better. If it was just left to me what would I do with two children in computers? This is left to people who love it. I guess that's the best of all possible worlds.

Q: I think this is a wrap.

[end of interview]