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M: Okay Tom tell me something about yourself, your carpentry and the deer and camping in the Adirondacks and, you know, how you like livin' up here.

Tom: Well started out to be a carpenter and then I wanted to-- I was lookin' for something different to do and learning something different so I worked on building a deer farm for Butler _____ Game Farms. And I'm out here in the Adirondacks just kind of relaxing and taking it easy. It's a very easy going place. You can sit back and enjoy nature and get away from the pressures of life at home. And kind of enjoy it.

M: You camp out in the park quite regularly? How long you been doin' that?

Tom: Oh, since I was probably 12 years old. When I was growing up my family use to come up and we'd always camped out on and off up here. This is basically the only place we'd go. There's so many places to go that you don't have to stay in the same place any given time. You can move on to different campsites and even in the same campsite-- campground there's different sites have different sights, more or less, you know.

M: Yeah. How do the kids like it?

Tom: Well it gives them a place to run around. There's areas where they can play 'cause they've made areas for them and you don't mind lettin' 'em take a walk. At

least you know that, you know, that they'll be safe, you know, they stay on the trails and most of the time we go with 'em but you send 'em off to get water or something at least you know that it's a safe place ta have the kids around. You don't have to worry about somebody molestin' 'em or trying to walk off with them.

M: Tell me about this game farm. This is sort of a new thing for the Adirondacks. What kind of animals do you have up there?

Tom: Well we have basically fallow deer and now we done seka, which are Japanese and Formosa deer, seka are originally came--they've been in the United States and we brought 'em here. The fallow are deer that are come European deer and there's quite a few United States now. And we brought 'em here and we didn't import anything. We have elk, wapdi, Rocky Mountain variety and we have some seka and red--or some axis and red deer, just a very few. And we have llama and alpaca. And we have different variety, you know, they're different groups and--

M: Sounds like a deer farm. The purpose of that to sell venison to restaurants?

Tom: Yes, and breeding stock. And the alpaca are for resale. They're kind of a higher version of a llama, they're the next step up and they're--

M: The person who buys them, what's he gonna do with

them? I mean--do you crop and sheer them and--

Tom: Yeah, they sheer 'em or they can comb 'em and they use the wool. They sell the wool for, you know, it's very expensive. You've heard of alpaca sweaters and the hair on 'em are hollow hair and that's why it's very warm, you know, when you make a sweater out of it it's very, very warm. And there's a lot of people that, like home spinners that take and spin this, they'll buy this wool and spin it themselves and then make sweaters and blankets and things like this out of that. It's a new type of industry, the whole thing. And it's, I think it's in a way that the United States is going. Trying, you know, have something different than what their neighbor has. And you have--deer farming is very new in the United States but it's in Europe, in Europe they've had venison on the menu for all the time and it's nothin' to see wild game on the menu where in the United States everybody is been more geared to beef and poultry and pork. And we've had studies done on the venison, has very low in cholesterol and that's people are looking at now.

M: Also have range fed. They not all ___ with chemicals.

Tom: Yeah, right. And yeah that's another thing. At least when you buy venison it's real meat, you know that it's not full of chemicals and full of god knows what.

M: Tell me more about what you do in the park for amusement, I mean you have your camper and you find a campsite for that, do you do--

Tom: Well there's hiking, fishing, boating, canoeing--

M: These all stuff you do?

Tom: Well we hike and we done fishing, and there's bicycling. We're going to take some--this time we brought some bicycles with us and we have a tandem bicycle with a seat on the back for my younger son and my older son is got his own bicycle and we gonna kinda bicycle around the park and instead of getting in the car and takin' a ride around we gonna take it just bicycle around and go swimming, go down to the beach and go swimmin' and get a little exercise that way. A lot of different campsites have places geared for children, like swings and like that and a lot of 'em have big hiking systems where you can hike, you know, either a short hikes or you can go for eight ten miles if you want to. You know, it's what's nice about it. Most of 'em have their own swimming area and, you know, it's basically if you just look at--state publishes a magazine on different campsites and what they offer so different campsites offer different things and you just go for what you want.

M: Here in Booneville since in you lifetime have things changed a lot or is it sort of the same old town?

Tom: Well it hasn't changed an awful lot. Of course

when you live in a town you don't notice the changes like you do if you go away. But even people that have gone away and come back, it hasn't changed like most of the place in the United States. I mean, you live in any kind of a--even rural areas change quite a lot. With Booneville seems to stay pretty much the same.

M: Is that because there's really no more business here and--

Tom: It's very low. Very low growth and very little opportunity for people that are growing up here. Most of the people I went to school have moved righted away. They don't have--they're not around here.

M: --like sort of a dying town, I mean, I see elegant hotels and big houses _____

Tom: At one point when the canal was operating, that was when the highest population was here. And that's when most of the houses were built. Most of these houses were built in middle 1800s. My home here was built in 1864 and most houses around that when the big building boom and everything was lookin' up with the canal comin' through Booneville. And you know, before the automobile and before a lot of that that was--and a train. The canal was the only way, only thing and this was probably the high point of the canal system and that's where everybody--that's what everybody seemed to come to Booneville. And settle.

M: What was going on here then?

Tom: Well you basically lumbering industry and they use to haul most of their stuff down to the stool factory was going, Sergeant's Stool Factory and but most of it had to do with lumbering. And also you had some gravel pits and like that. Booneville Sand is probably the best sand in the world as far as being for construction purposes. It's very--called hungry sand, very course and it, as far as masonry work, is probably some of the best. And they use to haul this out of here when they were doin' all the lock and all the--even the railroad tresses and stuff like that--they use to haul stuff out of here. Especially the Adirondacks too, granite in the Adirondacks they hauled a lot of granite blocks out to build these tresses and build bridges and all kinds of stuff that instead of using concrete they use to lay it up on the stone. It's very--it's a lot more expensive but you go around you can see in just south of the Adirondacks where a lot of 'em are built, that they're still standing, you don't have to go back every year and rebuilt. You know, every 10, 15 years and rebuild a bridge or somethin' else. They've held up for a good many years. So--

M: Are you still pretty enthused about living in the area?

Tom: Oh I like it here. I wouldn't live anyplace else

unless things got real bad here. It's just I kind of--I work with my father and learned the carpentry trade and I've done very well, but a lot of people have gone to college fer different things, there's not much call fer, you know, computer experts and all this kind of stuff in Booneville, so they move away. Like I say most of the people I went to school with don't live in Booneville anymore any--all the people that haven't graduated from the school around here I would say maybe 10% stay in Booneville, the rest of 'em move on. They may come back here and eventually live back here again, which that's what Booneville's going to end up to be here's a town where people where people retire at or have a summer home, it's more of a recreational area than a industrial area. I think upstate New York is that way and I think any northern state is because--

M: How about snowmobiling here?

Tom: There's snowmobiling, yes. It's the best snow east of the Rockies is the part of the Adirondacks and foothills of the Adirondacks. This is where you get your big snowfalls. It seems to come across the _____ Plateau and then dumped right in in the foothills of the Adirondacks and up into Old Forge. And in there there's always snow. And which is an industry in itself right there, you know, there's people that make a livin' off snowmobilin' and skiing in the area, you know. And this recreational income.

M: Knowledge on deer farming that's available now?

Tom: But is but mostly it's in German. So, I mean, there is some stuff comin' out of New Zealand that's good, but it's basically on red deer.

M: I mean how fallow deer would you have to get to start off?

Tom: Oh you could start out with 25 to 50. I would start out with 50 if I was--if I was going to start myself right--I'd try to be able to buy 50 animals on start out like that.

M: What would that cost for capital, just for the animals?

Tom: Well you have to pay most 350 apiece, $350 apiece so you're talking, let's see, 18,000 maybe.

M: Then you have to build a barn.

Tom: Well you can--if you had a small--if you had a farm already, let's say, or if you had a little-- If you had 20 acres of land and fenced it the fence is going cost you about $5,000 and the animals are going cost you about 18,000 and then a little pole barn, all it has to be is just a three corner building in the woods they can get in out of the weather and that going to cost you--that's gonna cost maybe $1,500 if that. And then if you had to buy the land you could probably buy twenty acres of land fer, oh, let's see maybe about 6 to $8,000 let's say.

M: It doesn't take an enormous amount.

Tom: Doesn't take an enormous amount, but you got to be able to tie that capital up. It's gonna take you five years to get that capital back up.

M: That's not a--that's pretty fast.

Tom: That isn't bad, but not for Gil Butler that makes a, you now, that can double his money every year. That's very, very poor economics for him. That's his problem. He started--

M: How soon could you be selling animals?

Tom: You could be selling--if you started in the fall, you bought some animals and they were breed they'd have to go two years 'fore you'd be ready to sell those animals that were born. And then every year you--let's say if you had fifty animals, you'd end up with 40 fawns and let's say 20 females and 20 males you should end up with about that every year you could sell, so I mean after a while, and then if you build, if you took those 20 females you have, put 'em back in and build up to a hundred and after five years you had a hundred female and just enough males to take care of 'em then was a hundred of 'em you would have let's say 40 males 40 females then each year to sell. And the males, if you sell 'em they'd be butcher you're lucky if you get $150 apiece for 'em. But the females, if you could sell herds, like you take your hundred that you have and the 40

yearlings you're gonna get and if you take 20 of those yearlings and 20 of your initial herd to make a small herd of 40 and then put a few males with 'em, for even 50 then you started sellin' 50 of them every year I'd say fer I'd say an average of $350 apiece.

M: You'd be selling a little herd every--

Tom: Every year you'd be selling a little herd and, yeah that's--and then help set up somebody in the business and you know you could make a decent livin' off it. I mean you're not gonna get rich but you could live in a place like this where you don't have all the pressures that you'd have in a big city or anything, you know, you just sit back and live a decent life up here, you know, you'd have to do other things but it doesn't take anything to raise deer, doesn't take any time.

M: An hour a day--

Tom: Well you could use a couple of hours a day and, you know, especially with a small herd you could even do less. But I'd say it's nice to go out and check 'em more, and it's gets to be like a family thing, you know. The deer are more like a family out there and you can go out and just check them over, look 'em over and enjoy 'em. 'Cause not like you're--it's not really like work you know. I could spend as much time with these animal Gil has got me runnin' in 15 different directions but if I had my own I'd come home

at night and after dinner I would go out and spend some time lookin' over and seein' how they were and take out a few apples or a few crackers or somethin' and-- Elliott Clark's got a place down in Mill Brook and these animals are like pets. He's got probably 70 or 80 animals down there, and he goes out and they come up and eat out of his hand and I mean it's a such a ritual.

M: _____ come through here.

Tom: Well you get people comin' through and they'll to the front door and they'll knock on the door and come durin' the day when just like if the wife is home, and they'll get her in the front door talkin' and while they send a bunch of other people around the back door and they'll come in and they'll loot your house. And see we're not use to crime up here because we don't have such a thing too much around this area. And you get all kinds of con artists comin' in and sayin', Geez you need a new roof up there, if you--I'll tell you I'll be back Monday but I need some money for material, and they'll say well give me a couple of hundred dollars and I'll be back. I guess I have to go down and pick up the material. And that's the last time you ever see 'em.

M: Would they do that to a bunch of people in town and then split?

Tom: Well until they get caught, until the word gets around and you know, they like to work on older people, you

know, the elderly people in town or the senior citizens that, you know, where the or a widow or somethin' that's really-- The husband's always taken care of this and then they, you know, they kind of scout out these places and then of course the people around here, you know, they think they're stupid, but I think they can figure it out for themselves and then they call the police and they ask 'em about 'em and sometimes they catch 'em, sometimes don't. Sometimes they do a couple of deals like that and they move on. But as they move on the authorities have radios and they call ahead and they tell the other people and they finally catch 'em somewhere. Most times they catch 'em but it's, it's a con artist. Lot of con artists around here. Every once in a while--

M: They're outsiders?

Tom: Outsiders, yeah. But in a small town where you know everybody it's hard to get away with much. You might get-- You might have a few incidents like this, but then people startin' up, unless they know who you are they'll check on you make sure you're not in there ripping somebody off or doin' something you're not supposed to be doing.