



Vergennes Livestock Commission Sales
Crosby Dairy



The story of Addison County Vermont is rich with connections between the people and land. The goal of this ever growing collection is to preserve and share for generations to come, the unique history of not only of the Crosby Commission Sales in the Little City, but other towns in the county. Avid historians, Bub & Meg Crosby have spent 50 years collecting the history this collection shares.

One of those stories intersects in Vergennes, Vermont with a special barn, the Crosby family, and a time when cows were king. Encased in the Bub & Meg Crosby digital collection housed online at the Bixby Memorial Library are images, timelines, stories that share the depth of this connection of hands on the land and across generations. In the summer of 2022, Bub Crosby and local historian Cookie Steponaitis met and created this snapshot of farm life in Vergennes for old and young alike to enjoy.



Bub & Meg Crosby Collection
2022



Timeline of Events



- 1931- Fire burned original barn
- 1932- New barn built and open
- 1949- Commission Sales starts under Crosby ownership
- 1949- Crosby Dairy begins
- 1964-1968 Build the free stall barn (Now A& D Automotive)
- 1960's- Shipping cattle to Italy and Europe
- 1986- Discontinued dairy division
- 1986-1989- Barn converted to furniture store
- 1989-2014 - Operated Bub's Barn
- 2014- The barn was sold



These were the original barns that occupied the agricultural land located off Green Street and New Haven Road in Vergennes. Owned by Walter Bristol and his family, this circa 1900 image shows the Bristol farm, which housed and milked 100 cows twice a day. Tragically, the barns and all the cows perished in a fire in 1931.

Located at the junction of Green Street & New Haven Road, the barn was a part of the daily life in Vergennes. Local people often came to the barn to get spring water.

This sketch shows buildings and locations circa 1890's including New Haven Road.

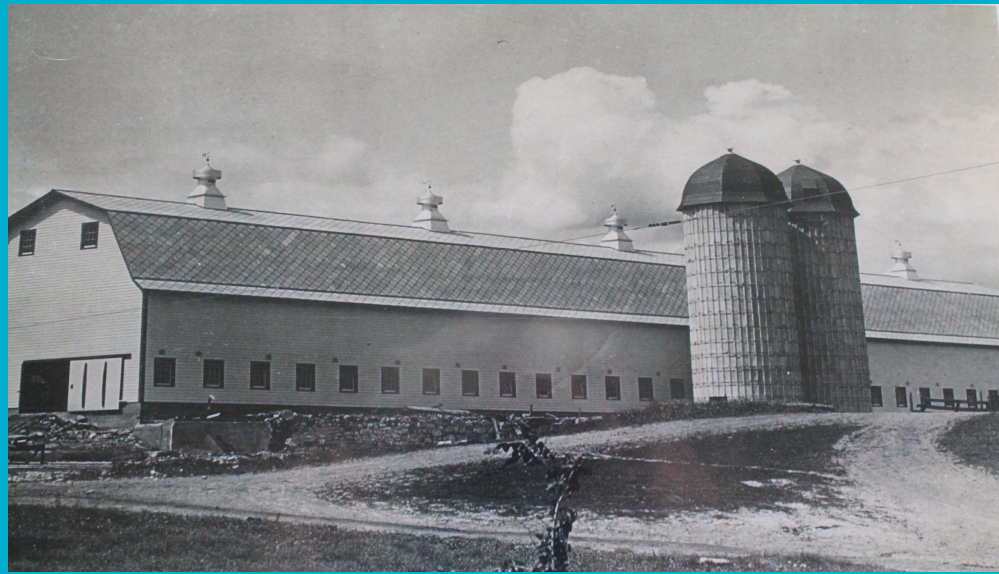


Taken from what is now Crosby Heights, this view shows New Haven Road and surroundings in 1900.



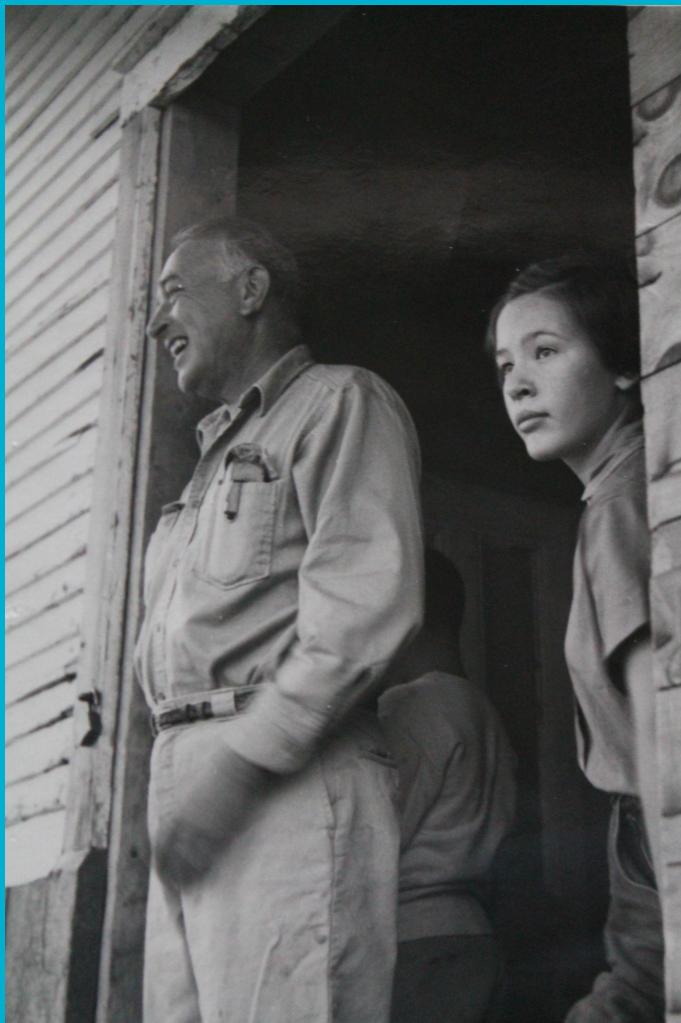
The New Barn

The new barn, built and opened in 1932, had one of the largest Gambrel roofs in Vermont at that time. 235 feet long X 36 feet wide, the new barn was built to be not only a functioning farm barn, but reflected the deep pride of the owner- Walter Bristol. Built and functioning in less than six months after the original was lost to fire, this barn would serve not only the Bristol family, but three additional families before its purchase by the Crosby family in 1949. The barn was constructed using timber from what is today known as Crosby Heights and cost \$ 16,000.00 to build. The Jamesway Company had it function not only as a dairy barn, but as an experimental model with a new ventilation system and stanchions.

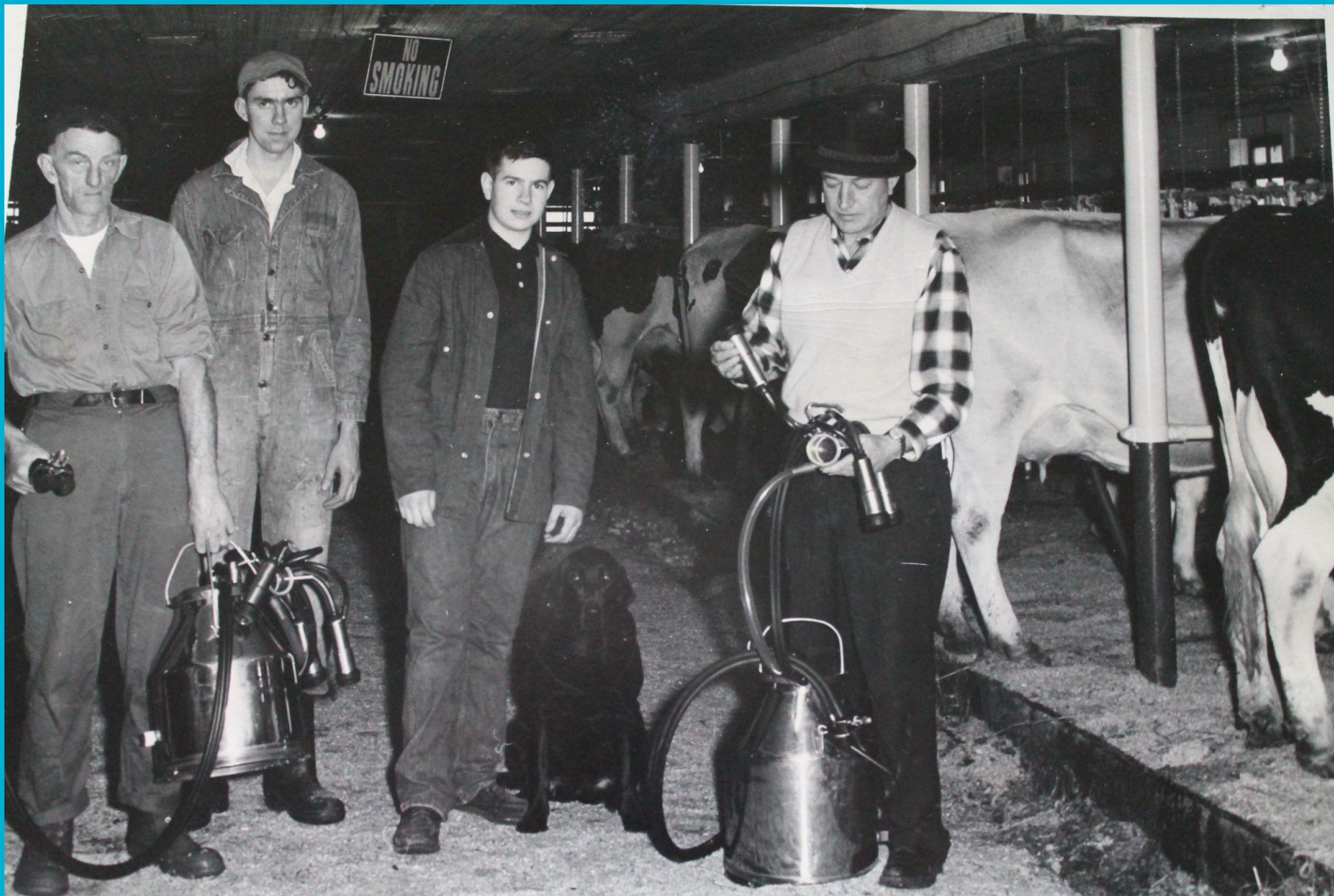


The two silos held corn and are set at half way down the barn. The silos were in the Burlington Water Front for coal storage and were moved to the barn as part of the new building. The ventilation system was new at the time were all insulated with burlap and ran from the top down to the stable. It did not work out, because it could not handle amount air needed for the barn and were replaced with electric fans almost immediately.

Pictured here in 1932 is the newly constructed barn.



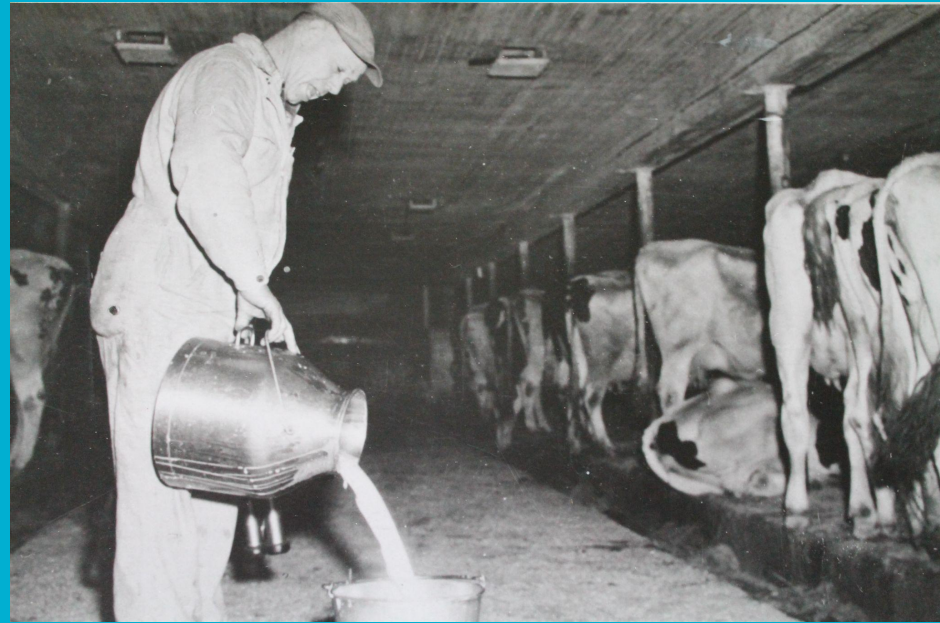
Ruthie Richardson peers out the barn door next to Edgar Crosby, Sr. Her mother Sarah also worked at the auctions, and were one of several families with generations involved in the farm or Commission Sales



In the early 60's, the new milking machines arrived. Show casing the new technology is Edgar Crosby, Bub Crosby, Arnie Atkins and Arthur Rose. Art worked on the property for 53 years, as well as his father before him and other family members.



There was always work to do, and new skills to learn. The cows got very well cared for and this is of the era when cows were named and each had their own stanchion. If one cow went into someone else's stall, there would be a fight. Arnie Atkins, Art Rose and a young Bub Crosby were always at work and learning new things.



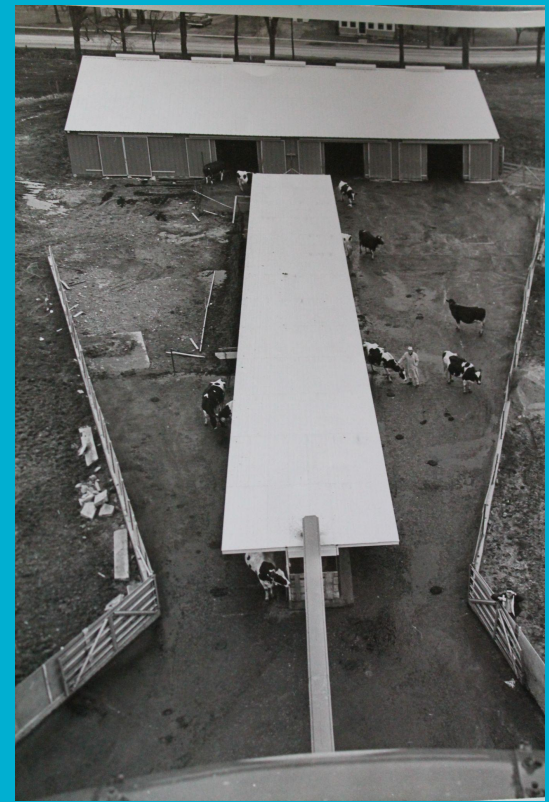
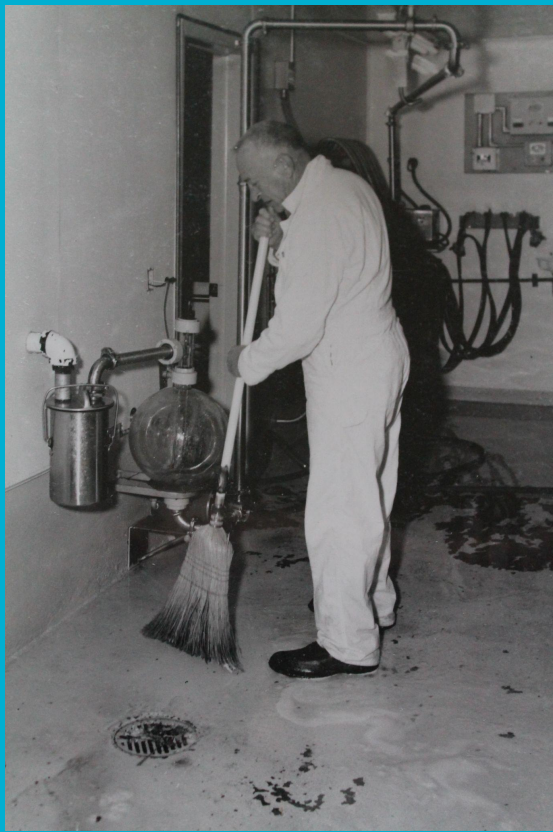
The barn shown was a granary and was the oldest remaining barn on the property, predating the 1931 barn. Balanced against his knee, the milk pail was tipped to pour the milk into another bucket, and then they were hand carried to Kennedy Brothers for processing. The bulk tank was put in 1953 and was one of the first in the county. The dumping station was added and then the pipeline was introduced later.



Bub and Edgar discussing farm business or after hour plans. The farm day began at 5 am and ended after the afternoon milking. No farm milked three times a day in this era. Taken in the 1960's, these photos show the new dairy facility and free stall barn which today is A & D Automotive.



The Crosby farm used Holstein cows for milk production.



The new free stall barn was built in 1964 and represented a new phase of farming. Changes included the cows roaming and not being hitched, a new milking parlor and three Harvestore Silos. The size of the herd doubled to approximately 140. Steve Garrow was the herdsman and supervised the care and management of the herd health. Ed Crosby, Sr. oversaw all phases of the dairy and constantly brought new innovations to the farm.

This image was taken from the top of the silo and looks down on the free stall barn and feed lot.



Art Rose is working with the Harvester unloading one of the haylage units. The two silos were 20X60 and stored haylage. A smaller unit was used for high moisture corn. The elevator ran in front of all three silos and allowed the mixture of silage and corn at the same time. This facility was designed to handle up to 600 head of cattle. It gave the family the ability to expand, but the farm location within the city limits made that not practical. In the photo to the right, Bub Crosby the milk tank driver pause to celebrate a milestone in milk production on the farm in the 1960's.



The Harvestore Silos provided ample storage for alfalfa haylage and high moisture corn.



“There is an interesting evolution of this property. We farmed it for years. We expanded it and then it transitioned in the early 1970’s back to a smaller operation in the original barn, coming full circle. Each change of the business represented shifts in the agricultural business in the county.” Bub Crosby (July 2022)

Commission Sales Links Vergennes to World Wide Market

On Monday and Thursday night, Edgar Crosby and son Bub Crosby would welcome dealers from New York and New England. There were two phases of the business. One was the auction of animals mostly for slaughter and the second was dairy replacement heifers and cows. The business also did on site farm sales and liquidations.

Once the sale was completed, phase two of the Crosby Cattle business would swing into motion. Some cattle would be shipped to slaughter for Boston Markets and all over New England.

Founded in Whiting in 1910, the B. Crosby and Sons were the the largest shipping operations into the Boston Market east of the Mississippi. One shipping method was railroad and went from Ogdensburg, New York through northern New York and Vermont. Once a week, several hundred head of cattle made the trip. Some calves left Vergennes and were airlifted to Europe. During the 1960's when Italy had a cattle shortage, Crosby cattle were flown to Italy from Burlington, sending over several hundred head.

Photos that tell a story



(R)-This advertisement is for the milking machine Edgar Crosby used in the barn. The farm was often featured in national advertising for both the milking machines and the Silos. (L)- On auction day, weighing cows.



which show a continued improvement in production since converting to Bou-Matic.

Read MR. CROSBY'S Letter—

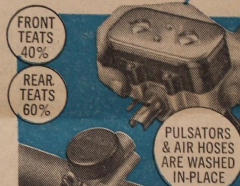
"After having used Bou-Matic Milkers, first in a conventional bucket set-up, and for the past 2½ years in a side-opening parlor, I can say only one thing . . . and that is GOOD.

Our milk production and butterfat has improved substantially . . . and mastitis is almost a forgotten word. Dari-Kool Bou-Matic's educational program has also contributed much to our improved operation!"

Edgar Crosby

TWIN-PULSATION MILKS FASTER — REDUCES UDDER IRRITATION

A normal cow produces about 40% of her milk in the front quarters—60% in the back quarters. With twin-pulsation, vacuum is applied a bit longer to the heavier producing back quarters. This helps prevent over-milking the front teats. Reduces irritation. Milks faster.



Whether you are milking 15 cows or 1500, it will pay you to investigate what Bou-Matic can do for you and your herd. A Bou-Matic Milking System along with good herd management has proved a winning combination for thousands of dairymen.

HERRINGBONE STALLS • SIDE-OPENING STALLS
• AROUND THE BARN & BUCKET SYSTEMS



The Scientific Approach
to Milking—
With a Program of
MASTITIS CONTROL

DAIRY EQUIPMENT COMPANY
Dept. 34, Madison, Wisconsin 53701

- ☐ Please send Free Cow Preparation Folder
☐ Please send Dari-Kool Bou-Matic Literature

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

TOWN..... STATE..... ZIP.....

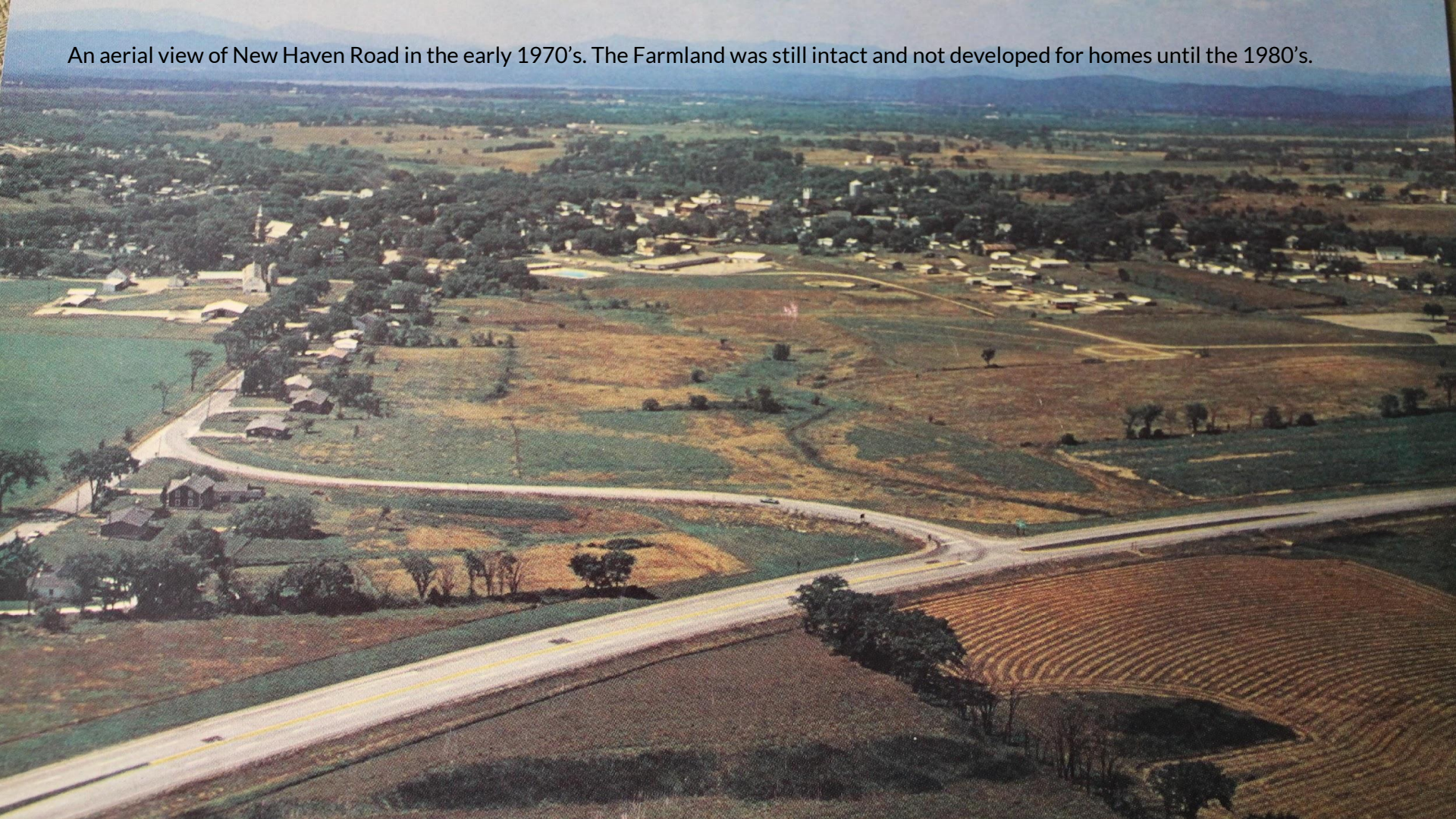
☐ I am a student

When Horsepower met something different



When horsepower gave way to early windrower, mowing the grass into a windrow.

An aerial view of New Haven Road in the early 1970's. The Farmland was still intact and not developed for homes until the 1980's.



Collecting stories and images

The goal of this collection is to continue to compile images of local places, events and stories to go with them. They are presented as collected recollections by the people who lived them. Each one is to document an event or era in our past and are designed to encourage all ages and generations to get talking about what makes this part of Vermont so special and our home. We hope you enjoy each topic and consider creating your own to capture the essence of life in Addison County.

Bub & Meg Crosby (2022)

