

March 26, 2014

In the early 1970s the State, in its mandate *Vermont Design for Education*, called for individual towns to move education forward from the 1950's era, using a new set of ideas for openness, flexibility, and individualized learning. As it was, the two Middlesex schools were in dire straits, both in terms of their physical plants and daily work-day states, and in great need of overhaul, regardless of any state mandate.

Many towns moved slowly, but Middlesex not only jumped into the fray of the new design, but volunteered to be one of the State's "demonstration schools". As such, the school received a wealth of state aid, in money, effort, and materials, which helped the newly-consolidated-into-one town school move quickly into the new era.

On October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2013, Middlesex residents Barbara Buckley and Tim Hayward were interviewed by Leah Erlbaum, assisted by Middlesex resident Harold O.W. Domanski, regarding their first-hand memories of a critical juncture in the history of Rumney School. In 1971 they, and former Middlesex resident Peter Smith, served on a town committee to address goals prescribed by the *Vermont State Design for Education*.

They were a hard-working, idealistic, and mission-oriented group, and the impact of their efforts is still being felt today. Rumney is now considered an excellent school, by its reputation drawing families with young children to the town at a time when school populations of other towns are shrinking.

Thank you, Barbara and Tim, for sharing your thoughts and your time, and graciously accepting my request to do this wonderful historical look-back at the Rumney School of 40 years ago. And I am happily impressed with the interview talent of Leah Erlbaum, as she helped us uncover so many of the growing pains and joys of early Rumney. Thank you, Leah! Leah's personal warmth and infectious, light-hearted, spirit certainly contributed to history shared, as a vivid and personal story that we all enjoyed taking part in.

Respectfully submitted,

Harold O.W. Domanski

Memories of A Historical Period of the Rumney Memorial School, Middlesex, Vermont

Barbara Buckley and Tim Hayward

Interviewed by Leah Erlbaum, with Harold O.W. Domanski, on October 5, 2013

Leah: Well, if you want to start, just tell me what brought us all together.

Barbara: Well, we were talking about the history of a certain time in Rumney School, and when it went through great changes. And the State was going through changes trying to bring education forward. And it all started with the Commissioner, Harvey Scribner, who set up a *State Goals of Education*, and asked each town to do that for themselves. And then we formed a committee. Every time we met, I would put a notice in the paper, but nobody ever came, but three of us, and that was Tim Hayward, and Peter Smith, and myself.

Leah: And what were the proposed changes? What were those?

Barbara: So the goals – I'm trying to remember the goals. We sort of took the State goals and made them our goals, pretty much. It was to give more flexibility in the education of the kids, so that kids weren't just sitting at a desk and learning all day, and that kids would be teaching – smart kids would be helping other kids, and there would be different grade levels in classrooms – kind of an open classroom idea.

Leah: Can you tell me a little bit of what Rumney was like before? In your memory? When did you get involved?

Barbara: Okay. Well, you know, my son was four or five. There was no kindergarten at Rumney, and I held him home until the second grade because I felt the school was not good. My neighbors up in the corner, the Barbours, their little boy went up the year before, when they had this sort of orientation, and got beaten up by big kids. Rumney had two schools: one down in the village, and one up here. Well, it wasn't Rumney. *Middlesex* had two schools, and they didn't have enough money to support two schools. They didn't have a library or a lot of books or anything like that. The idea was that half of the town would go to one, and half to the other, but it didn't work that way. They had first and second grade up here at Rumney, and seventh and eighth grade. And down in the village, they had third, fourth and fifth and sixth. So kids were being bused all over town anyway. And so, part of the plan – well, this is moving ahead, but part of the plan was to sell the school in the village, which we did to the State Police, and add on to Rumney. Is that about it?

Tim: Well, that is. I'll just expand on that a little bit. There was, as Barbara was talking about – it was called the *Vermont Design for Education*, and each community was charged to design their own, in our case Middlesex, a design for education, and that was the committee that we served on. And it really was a very progressive move at the time, recognizing all the kids as individuals, and what was best way for them to learn individually rather than all marching in lock-step. And we were a pretty idealistic group. It was a very interesting time in this county and town because Union 32 was just coming into existence, and at that time, just before that, all the high school kids in Middlesex went

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into Montpelier High School. And, so, our schools were one through eight, as Barbara was pointing out. When we were getting involved with a design for education, U32 was coming in, so there was going to be a big change as that is seventh and eighth and high school. Our kids were no longer going to go off to Montpelier but to U32, and so two of our grades were disappearing from our Middlesex schools, anyway. And, so, we really had a surplus capacity, and so we took advantage of that all at the same time – to sell to the State Police the school over on Route 2, and put an addition on the Rumney School – which was a four room school at that time. We put that addition on, and put it on in a way, we thought anyway, that would best fit with our philosophy of trying to give more flexibility for the students, more open classroom type things. All this was happening at the same time. There was a lot of change going on both physically and in kind of a philosophy that we were trying to put forth.

Barbara: Right. I mean, we talked about the atmosphere in the school. Several of the teachers did not speak to each other, and they would ask a student to “go tell Mrs. So-and-so this”. And, I mean, it was a very backward kind of situation. But what happened was, we presented the goals to the town at town meeting, and everybody voted for it not even thinking about it or what it meant. And then, there was set up in the Legislature the opportunity for a town to apply to be a demonstration school. And, most towns didn't apply; we applied and became a demonstration school. But in the meantime, the Commissioner of Education changed. And he came in to set up this demonstration school with no idea that no background had happened. Nobody in the town knew what was happening, and it was utter chaos. But they put a lot of money in the school. They built a library for the school. They did a lot of teacher training, but it was very noisy, very chaotic. Parents would come in and feel very upset because their kids weren't sitting at desks, and they were making noise, and running around. And so, it became a very divisive situation in the town.

Leah: Tell me what year was this?

Tim: I was trying to remember that driving over. I think it was '71, '72 – right in that time frame. And Barbara is absolutely right. I mean, we were very idealistic in all the things we did, and with all the best of intentions, but the ground work really hadn't been done properly. It just hadn't been, and for that, it just wasn't done. It was too bad because it did create some real chaos. And the community became very much divided, and the State did come in through the contract which we had with the Department of Education. The Commissioner has changed to Bob Withy, who became the Commissioner, and so the school board was no longer -- and I was on the school board at the time -- the school board was no longer governing the school. There was the school board, but then there was the Steering Committee, which had about 13 people on it, I think, including the Commissioner, representatives, I think, of Budget and Management with the State and a whole bunch of other different people – representatives of the *Design for Education Committee* was

Memories of A Historical Period of the Rumney Memorial School, Middlesex, Vermont

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represented, which I was also on, and it was very, very difficult. When the school opened up, and this was all happening in months, it was not ready, and that was, you know, the poor teachers, the poor kids, the poor parents – all they wanted was a good education for their kids. It was very difficult and traumatic.

And as Barbara and I were discussing before you got here, I actually had a one year term on the school board, and so I was up that following March, and all of this bubbled over. It didn't bubble over – it boiled over. The school board – I was crushed for re-election. Probably, appropriately so. I learned a lot about politics, but also about not getting too far ahead of folks, you know, and doing the homework and so forth. And it was very difficult. I think our contract with the State was to run for three years. It was either for two or three years, to run it. And one of the good things that was done, anyway, was that Allen Weiss, who was the Deputy Commissioner of Education, who is still with us – he lives in Montpelier and is very active. He was put in charge, more or less, as the day-to-day liaison, and he was absolutely a no-nonsense guy who could get the job done and work with people, you know, and didn't let too much noise bother him. And he saved our bacon. That's my view, anyway. He came in and took an absolutely chaotic situation and put some oil on the water. It was still roiling. It was a very difficult three or four year period for the town, and, I'm sure if you mentioned it to friends who were here and went through that, I'm sure it was difficult. And our current speaker of the House, Shap Smith -- actually, I think, his mother taught at the school -- he also went here. And I said, "Shap, you turned out all right".

Barbara: And so did my children.

Tim: And my kids did also. And now, my grandkids go there – but anyway, it was a fascinating time. We had school board meetings, and in this day and age, you wouldn't picture it, but I was chairing this combined group. After I'd lost my re-election, I was still on the *Design for Education Committee*, so I was on the Steering Committee still, and I was chair of that. I was sitting there and suddenly an ashtray flew by my head. If they couldn't find ashtrays to throw, I don't know what they would have thrown. And, I mean, this is sort of the passion that what was going on. It was a difficult period of time and, I think when the snake swallowed the pig, eventually, things worked out fine, but it did take awhile. And, hopefully, no kids were permanently scarred from it. It's the adults mainly. Kids are pretty resilient.

Barbara: When I look at Rumney now, I feel it was worth it. I think we have a very good school now. But it was really tough – it was. And U32 went through a hard time too. The whole idea of an open classroom, it had to be worked out because it was so noisy, the kids couldn't learn and couldn't study a lot of the time. And they had to make big changes. It was an experimental thing, and we had to just work through it. But parents, whose kids were in the middle of that, didn't like it at all.

Memories of A Historical Period of the Rumney Memorial School, Middlesex, Vermont

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Leah: Can you tell me a little bit more about what the divisions of the community were about? The specifics of the educational philosophy, or emotions that were...

Barbara: One thing that was very simple is they had a breakfast program and a lunch program. And there were people who felt that was outrageous, that they were feeding the kids and all that. Now, that's pretty much accepted, but back then, it wasn't.

Tim: Part of it is also, it really is perhaps like a programmed text kind of thing that kids go through. They memorize this and they memorize that, and they sit in their chairs and they don't bother anyone else and (raises hand) all this, or do you have a little more flexibility, and recognizing well this kid's perhaps he's not reading this book here, but we know that he's interested in sports cars. Let's give him a little book on sports cars, and maybe he'll learn his reading that way. And some folks just like it the way *they* had it. Some of us thought it worked perhaps some of the time, and not always, and a lot of kids were getting left behind – no child left behind, but, I mean, it all didn't work. And so we were trying to find ways to be more flexible in recognizing individualism.

Barbara: That's right. They would, like in math, work at their own level, wherever it was. And then, they did use a lot of the older, or kids who were more advanced, helping the kids who were less advanced. Which I think was great. And they worked very hard at getting rid of the bullying, and getting kids to support each other, and to a positive-kind of attitude about things.

O.W.: It seems like there were two issues that seem pretty large – the open classroom and also the issue of should we go back to the basics, and raising your hand to speak, or should we be more flexible. Are those the two main ones or are there others or are those the two basic items that were controversial?

Tim: Yeah. I -- one would cause the problem with the other. I think the fact that the building that we had designed was so open – as Barbara says, too open – that it wasn't going to work no matter whether people accepted it or not. And so, since it was really failing so badly, those folks who may have given it more of a chance saw that, look, they can't even hear what's going on, you know, because of so much noise, so that undercut the other efforts. I think one really interfered with the other. If we had done perhaps a better job eventually – just a mechanical job on the addition of the school and so forth, it might have worked better. But still, it needed more homework. In fact, we needed to have more homework really.

Barbara: It's easy to see in retrospect, but at the time, you know, you're just working through these ideas. Some of the ideas sounded great, but you had to find a way to make them work. And, of course, the teachers got a lot of training, and that was great.

Memories of A Historical Period of the Rumney Memorial School, Middlesex, Vermont

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O.W.: So, it seems that the open classroom was maybe a false path?

Barbara: Well. I think the concept was okay. It's just it had to be modified, because you just couldn't have all the kids running around chaotically all day making noise. I mean, a lot of kids couldn't study and learn that way. It's quite different now. Now, it isn't an open classroom any more, really. It's individual classes.

Leah: I'm curious if either of you got a chance to be at the school during these changes, and if you did, if you could talk a little about what a normal day for a child would be like in 1970. Somewhere in that time period,

Barbara: You mean when it was changing?

Leah: When it was changing, yes.

Barbara: I wasn't there mostly during the day. I was working, but, you know, my kids were there. And they did very well out of it in spite of all that.

Leah: Can you talk about some of their reflections or some of the stories they brought home?

Barbara: No, I don't remember them ever talking about it. It's like what did you do today? Nothing.

Tim: But they actually did do something.

Barbara: Of course they did something.

O.W.: I went to school, grade school, in the '50s, and at that time the kids were in rows, and you raised your hand if you wanted to talk to the teacher. Is that the way Rumney was right before these changes were introduced?

Tim: I'd say so, yes.

Barbara: I would say so. You know, you probably had to ask permission to go to the bathroom. You probably still do, actually, you know, because teachers have to know where you are. But, yeah, I think it was like that.

O.W.: So, in other words, at the time these changes were introduced, Rumney was pretty much like schools were for a long time.

Memories of A Historical Period of the Rumney Memorial School, Middlesex, Vermont

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Barbara: Yes. It was. Yes.

O.W.: So this was breaking really new ground.

Barbara: Yes. I don't think teachers had the kind of training that they get now. You know, they were stuck in these classrooms, and a lot of them – some of the kids were quite troublesome or hard to cope with, and they didn't have the advantages of knowing about learning deficiencies and how to cope with that. And I think all of that made a big difference in the teaching.

Leah: Two questions, but I'll start with one. Can you talk a little bit about – it sounds like there was a beforehand – the way the school was run -- and then there were big changes and somehow it settled down. Can you talk about that process of how it became more normal, and how things developed in the community and in the school?

Barbara: I wasn't that involved from then on, except that my kids were there. And they did well with the system when it was open. I think certain kids who were raised certain ways adapted much more easily to this kind of teaching. And they seemed to do alright.

O.W.: You mean with the new system, after some changes had been made?

Barbara: Yeah. Well, they didn't go, I mean, my son didn't go until the second grade when it all started to change. And the other son, that I have, didn't come to me until he was in the fifth grade. So he was almost *out* of Rumney by that time.

Tim: To answer your question, also time. It took time for the community and the school to re-adjust, and I'm not going to say back-track, but certainly you look at some of the things that they had been doing which were working and to compromise in many ways. Don't forget, this wasn't just a Middlesex thing. Open education was happening statewide. And that was what the design for education was. The *Vermont Design for Education* was trying to get more schools to open up, if you will. And perhaps things had been just too rigid and, you know, and too inflexible, and shouldn't we be doing things in a more open fashion. And that was what the Commissioner of Education was pushing. And that's what, you know, we thought would make sense. That's what we worked on. Too fast. Too soon.

Barbara: And days when I would go in the school, they had art work up, which they never used to do before that. And if something was misspelled, some of the parents would rip it off the wall when they came in, because this was teaching the kids something bad.

Tim: And there were real divisions in the town, also. There were folks who I'm sure were out – well, I was a relatively newcomer to Middlesex, and Barbara was also. And it was like “well, some of these new-folk, they think they know, perhaps, more”, and it made for a

Memories of A Historical Period of the Rumney Memorial School, Middlesex, Vermont

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natural division, which we didn't bridge but, of course, over time, (some) did bridge, but it did take time.

Leah: I would also like to hear what else was going on in Middlesex at the time. It sounds like there were a lot of new people coming in. What was the context?

Barbara: Well, that was true all over Vermont, I think, because the Interstate had been fairly recently completed. People were moving up to Vermont. When I – when we bought this house, in 1968, there were maybe two or three houses on the road. Now, it's *all* houses. And roads that weren't considered plowable back then are now regular roads. I mean, the whole town has changed enormously. Vermont has changed enormously.

Leah: Anything to add?

Tim: No. I'm just smiling because after the school board issues of the early 70's, I ran for the Legislature in this district here, which is actually Middlesex, Worcester, Duxbury and Waterbury, as a Republican and won, and now there is no way a Republican could think of getting elected because it has just changed so much. It just has. It's changed.

Leah: Did you want to add something?

Barbara: No. I was just saying that the population just exploded in Vermont. But the interesting thing is you go back in the woods and you'll find old foundations. There were a lot more people here in Vermont, you know, maybe a hundred years before I came, and then they all left.

Tim: The sheep left, and the people went with them. So many people went off to serve in the Civil War, and didn't come back for another century.

Leah: And looking at Rumney and Middlesex today, how do you see reflected in the town and in the school, from the changes that happened in the 70's?

Barbara: Well, for one thing, I know that real estate is pretty valued in Middlesex because people like the school. And other schools have been going down in population, for instance, Worcester, which hardly can keep open, and Rumney is bulging with people, because people feel it's a good education. I forgot my other thought, but I'll get it.

O.W.: It seems that there were changes back in the 70's from, let's say from, the type of education that I was involved in – more, the straight ways, kids in rows. We weren't even allowed to talk together back then. But these changes that came about – was most of the town behind them, or did the State require these changes, because the changes were, in fact, put in place even though there were people in town that objected to them vigorously.

Memories of A Historical Period of the Rumney Memorial School, Middlesex, Vermont

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Barbara: Well, because I said earlier, that we presented our goals for education to the town at town meeting, and people just passed them not knowing what they were passing, you know. They said, oh, let's get this item out of the way and they moved on. So then, I mean, the goals were in place but nobody really understood them except the people who were working on them. And the preparation wasn't done in the town so, you know, to move forward. It still would have been traumatic, I think, because people feel comfortable with the way they were raised and the way they were taught. And when it changes, they feel like the children are not getting the benefit of the education that *they* got.

O.W.: So were the changes put in place? And people really didn't understand what the changes were until they were in place?

Barbara: That' right.

Tim: Well, the practical effect of those changes and how they were actually in operation – how they would work – I mean, I don't think we understood as well as we should have, how they would work.

Barbara: That's right. I mean I don't think you could see ahead what this was going to lead to. And I was shocked at how divisive the town became. It really was like a war zone. It was terrible.

Leah: Tell me more about that.

Barbara: Well. I mean, you'd go to town meeting and it was so – people were so angry, This really lovely person, Jean Eisley, she ran for school board. She was running for school board, and someone called her a card-carrying communist at the town meeting. And her husband said, “get out of this right now”. So, you know, we lost a really good candidate for the school board that way. I mean, you know, that's just indicative of how the feelings were. That's a very closed-minded person who would say that anyway.

Tim: She was actually teacher of the year for Vermont.

Barbara: We'd have been lucky to have her.

Leah: Did she leave the community after that?

Barbara: No. But she was teaching in Fayston. She didn't teach at Rumney.

Leah: Wow!

Memories of A Historical Period of the Rumney Memorial School, Middlesex, Vermont

Barbara Buckley and Tim Hayward

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Barbara: Yes, wow.

Leah: Is there anything like that now?

Barbara: No, I don't think so. And, I mean it's interesting because a number of years ago, people started to say let's just not have town meeting. Let's just vote by Australian ballot, and it was mainly the new people in town that said "no, we want town meeting". And so they formed a committee to make it more accessible to people, to make it a good feeling, and they've done a terrific job. My feeling about this community now is that it's a great community. People help each other. You know, we have Front Porch Forum. Someone will say I lost my cat, everyone will look for the cat, and it's really become a very nice community.

Leah: Do you have anything to add?

O.W.: I was gone for a little bit. Did you talk about how the three of you, Tim, Barbara and Peter Smith, got together and made things happen and how you developed it? Was it the idea of the three of you? I mean how did you come up with the changes to make?

Barbara: Well, I did talk a little about that. It was – the Commissioner of Education asked towns to form a committee and bring forward their own goals for their school. And I'm not sure how we came together.

Tim: I don't know either how we came together. I remember actually after we'd had several meetings, sitting in my house – my original house – typing up our little design for education for Middlesex, but that was supposedly happening in every town in the state. I'm sure a lot of towns didn't do it, but that was the mandate is for towns to develop, using as a guide, if you will, the *State Design for Education* – those philosophies.

Barbara: I think maybe it originated with Peter Smith, who was very involved. He's the one who started the Community College, and he lived here in town. His wife had broken her back, and I was one of the people who took care of her at home, and so, I mean, maybe that's how I got involved. I don't know.

But as I said, once we started meeting, I put notice in the paper every week that we met, and nobody else ever came.

O.W.: So it was the three of you that put together a plan?

Barbara: Basically it was.

Tim: I'm trying to remember who else was involved, but I really don't remember. Dick

Memories of A Historical Period of the Rumney Memorial School, Middlesex, Vermont

Barbara Buckley and Tim Hayward

Interviewed by Leah Erlbaum, with Harold O.W. Domanski, on October 5, 2013

Green was on the school board but I don't think – no, that was afterwards.

Barbara: Bob Fisher was the one who wanted to apply to be a demonstration school. He's the one who really got that going. But I mean, there were a lot of people who were running for the school board on the basis of saving money, only.

O.W.: So were you members of the school board?

Barbara: Tim was. I was not. No. After that divisive town meeting, I didn't want anything to do with it anymore.

Tim: It was, you know – actually my career has been based in and around government, so it was a heck of a foundation for understanding local democracy. Well, you learn a lot from those things, you really do – inclusiveness and, you know, listening better. We should have a listening tour. It was a real learning experience, and, as I think we said before, the town got through it, and, hopefully, it's a better place – and it's 40 some odd years since then. And so, a lot of kids have gone to that school and graduated and gone on to do their things.

O.W.: So the three of you came up with a plan and presented it at a town meeting, and it got passed by the town? Is that what happened.

Barbara: Yes, it was at town meeting, and I don't think there was any discussion about it at all.

O.W.: 1972?

Tim: Probably 1 or 2. Probably 1, I'm guessing. Ed Free was on the school board I think then at that time – he was our state rep. at the time – and he died right after being re-elected in 1972 in November. So it must have been in '71-- '71 or '72 – one or the other.

Barbara: It would have been '71. It was when my son started school. He would have been in the second grade.

O.W.: Once the town passed it, was it quickly implemented in the next school year?

Barbara: Yes. We applied to be a demonstration school with the Legislature and they came in. I had explained that, and it was a new commissioner, and he didn't realize that no ground work had been laid for this. They just came in, and we sold one school. I mean, the whole thing happened then.

O.W.: And this was the school year that started in September, '72?

Memories of A Historical Period of the Rumney Memorial School, Middlesex, Vermont

Barbara Buckley and Tim Hayward

Interviewed by Leah Erlbaum, with Harold O.W. Domanski, on October 5, 2013

Barbara: Um hum. Probably '72.

Tim: '71 or '72.

O.W.: Well, maybe because it was such a quick implementation, it led to more of a backlash.

Tim: No question, but this was also part of a much greater whole. U32 was just opening up, and they were very much open in philosophy, and building as well. So this was – Harvey Scribner, as the commissioner before, who came up with the Design for Education – you know, this was really a grand view, if you will, for education in the state. We, and the U32 school district, were trying to mesh in with that.

Leah: When I went to U32, it was said that it used to be called “the zoo”, that was its nickname, back in the ‘70s, when it started.

Barbara: And there were supportive parents or parents who thought it was awful.

Tim: U32 had the very same fight. Their school board, you know, from the various towns, would elect people who were either friendly to the more progressive, or opposed to it. And they had their battles right on those school boards, and their budget battles and everything else.

Barbara: That’s right. And U32 went through great changes also. They had the problem of noise and not enough closures in areas and stuff. And it wasn't a very old school, and they had to redo the whole thing.

O.W.: Redo it to close it more, again, after that?

Barbara: Well, yeah. How long ago – it wasn't that long ago that they did a major renovation up there. It's really nice there now.

Leah: When I was in seventh grade, we still had open classrooms, and we had four – one, two, three – - three classes going on at the same time in the same room, with just some small barriers up. And the renovation started in 2001, I believe, because I was there.

Barbara: How did you feel about that – having three classes in one room? Was it distracting?

Leah: At some points. Sometimes I would listen. If I was bored, I could listen in on the class next door, and that was kind of fun. But it certainly was distracting, and hard to get

Memories of A Historical Period of the Rumney Memorial School, Middlesex, Vermont

Barbara Buckley and Tim Hayward

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any kind of quiet.

Barbara: But there was really not much point in having three in one room unless they were coordinating somehow – doing something together. It was just a matter of space.

O.W.: Was it that open throughout your stay at U32 or did it change while you were there?

Leah: They were closed in 1981, and they renovated the entire school.

Tim: That was almost thirty years later though.

Barbara: I know, and for all the money that you put in the school, I mean, I feel that way about Rumney when I – have you been up to Rumney lately? The needs – the physical needs of that school are alarming. And they just turned down a bond vote because people are hurting, tax-wise, but that school really needs major renovation. We have an amazing woman cook, who cooks all the meals for the school in a room a half or a quarter the size of this, with one fan that vents into the gym. And she can't order bulk because she has no place to put anything. She gets orders, and she leaves them on the floor because there is no other place. Of course, there are other major problems. The roof had a problem. There was a problem with the sewage. Well, anyway, these are typical.

Leah: Yeah.

Barbara: But it makes so much sense to do it right the first time. But you're always trying to save money.

Tim: That's right, and money it takes.

Leah: Is there anything else you want to add to the story of the '70s?

Tim: You know, I guess it was really a reflection of the time also with this whole country and everything it was going through. There were changes everywhere. There was Vietnam. There were all those things that were happening.

Barbara: A divisive time. As if it weren't now...when the government shut down.

Tim: Things can still change.

Barbara: I'm concerned about education in the whole country. I think, I mean, we're lucky here, but I read about urban schools that are just awful, and I just admire teachers who are in there fighting to try to teach the kids something.

Memories of A Historical Period of the Rumney Memorial School, Middlesex, Vermont

Barbara Buckley and Tim Hayward

Interviewed by Leah Erlbaum, with Harold O.W. Domanski, on October 5, 2013

Leah: Why do you think that Rumney's so special now?

Barbara: Why is it so special?

Leah: Yeah, now?

Barbara: We've got some really great teachers. One is married to O.W. We've got some terrific teachers up there. And they've spent a long time adjusting too, you know. I think their aims and goals are to help kids as much as they can, to learn – for the kids to learn as much as they can.

Tim: The only thing I'd add to that is, over time, if you have a school that's located where it is, with the views it has, it's going to absorb the beauty around it, and it's just an incredible place.

Barbara: Yeah.

O.W.: So, do you think that the Rumney of today is pretty much following the footsteps that you put together? I'm sorry, the open classroom?

Barbara: I think that was a beginning from which it has evolved. I think there were great ideas, as I think there are often great ideas that don't really work until you mold them and adjust them, to make them work better. I think that's a continuing process. I hope it never stops. The needs of kids change, too. I would hope, I mean elementary school; it should be a basic education to go forward with you where you go.

Tim: Well said.

O.W.: My opinion is that you did make a good move, to help move it to where it is today. I think it's a great place today. I too think Maribeth is a great teacher. There are many others, too. And I think that the way the system is set up helps her to do her best. Kids helping other kids. They have – right now, they have the classrooms, the first and second grades together. The second graders help the first graders. They get a boost to their self esteem, and they get to re-learn something in a stronger way. You know, little kids look up to the big kids. It's taken hold and it still exists.

Tim: I must say, two of our grandchildren live next door, and they're dropped off at our house waiting for the bus, and I put them on the bus. My wife and I do every morning. And to see them as eager as they are to get on that bus, it just feels pretty good.

Barbara: That was something – my kids would never stay home. If they were complaining, I'd say stay home – no way! They always wanted to go to school.

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Leah: As long as we have you here, is there anything else? Are there any other stories that you would like to tell us? It doesn't have to be about the school.

Barbara: Okay. I just finished the book called "In Schools" by what's his name? I can't remember, but anyway, he goes through a school year with a teacher in Holyoke, Massachusetts. And she's teaching mostly Puerto Rican, and some black, and some white kids, and it's amazing what she copes with. He followed her, because she is an amazing teacher. It gives you enormous respect for what teachers try to do in their classrooms.

Tim: Talking about books, I just finished Scott Brown's biography, who was the senator from Massachusetts for three years, and it's a very well-written book. But his upbringing was very, very difficult. There were all kinds of issues of abuse and otherwise in the schools he went to. But there were one or two magical people who saw in him, something, which absolutely saved him from who knows what. It's very inspiring, but how a person survives those things as a kid. But there was one or two very special, Maribeth or others, who are able to come in and save someone. That's so huge.

Barbara: If we're lucky,...(they'd all have someone)...like that.

Tim: Well, not all kids do, but it sure is nice to see it happen.

Barbara: It's inspiring.

Tim: Yes.

Barbara: Thank you, Leah.

O.W.: Tim and Barbara, thanks so much, for bringing those memories back. I think it was an important time of change.

Leah: Thank you. What a joy. What a story.