

# Oral Histories of Tompkins County

## *Archival Finding Aid*

*The History Center in Tompkins County*  
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### **2018-2019 - Howe-Nobles Family Project**

'Howe-Nobles Family Project' contains four interviews (as of 2022) conducted by Rod Howe between 2018-2019. These interviews were coordinated by Rod Howe, then Director of The History Center in Tompkins County, with family members from the Howe and Nobles family lines whose roots in Tompkins County go back generations. The Howe-Nobles family interviews were structured to provide short clips and stories to be included in the 'Howe-Nobles Story Vault' permanent exhibit in The History Center Exhibit Hall which opened to the public in the Spring of 2019.

The project was coordinated by Rod Howe in collaboration with Julia Taylor (Youth Education Director at The History Center in Tompkins County) to honor the late grandparents of the two families: Leo & Lula Nobles and Marcy & Percy Howe.

**Trigger warning(s):** discussion of traumatic interaction between white colonists and Indigenous peoples (ca. 1750's)

#### *Interviews with:*

##### **Fred Howe (23 minutes)**

Fred Howe discusses the Howe Nobles family tree. Howe recounts the first arrival of the Howe's to Tompkins County in the early 1800s and the later arrival of the Nobles in 1900, and how the families continued to live in the county. Howe also discusses occupations of ancestors, the first encounter of the Howe and Nobles, and the story of Jemima Howe. Interview was structured as short clips to be included in the Howe-Nobles Story Vault exhibit at The History Center in Tompkins County. Please note the recording includes some repetition and re-recording of specific stories.

*Trigger warning(s): discussion of traumatic interaction between white colonists and Indigenous peoples (ca. 1750's).*

- *Recorded: 10/15/2019*
- *Name of Interviewer: Rob Howe*
- *Audio File: OHTC\_2019-10-15\_Howe-Fred*
  - *Digital Format: MP3*
- *Transcript File: OHTC\_2019-10-15\_Howe-Fred\_Transcript*
- *Recorded as part of the "Howe-Nobles Family Project"*

### **Fred & Pat Howe**

Pat Howe joins Fred Howe to discuss the history of how farming has changed within Tompkins county over the last several generations, and where that has left their family, and the land they have owned for the last couple hundred years. They talk about the transitions in technologies to the specific traits of the quintessential small farm, and how more specifically the small farm has disappeared from this area. Discussion also goes into depth about what the future of farming is going to look like in this area, and more specifically the Howe family's farm.

- *Recorded: October 2018*
- *Name of Interviewer: Jeremy Huelin*
- *Audio File: OHTC\_2018-10-Howe-Fred-Pat*
  - *Digital File: MP3, MPG, WAV*
- *Transcript File: In process (12/1/2022)*
- *Recorded as part of the "Howe-Nobles Family Project"*

### **Robert "Bob" Nobles & Marion Howe (51 minutes)**

Siblings Robert Nobles and Marion Howe, née Nobles, discuss growing up in Ithaca during the Great Depression and mid-1900s, including living in their grandma's house on Esty Street, their father's work with Standard Oil and Morse Chain Company, and their favorite childhood spots in Tompkins County.

*Trigger warnings: child abuse*

- *Recorded: 10/15/2019*
- *Name of Interviewer: Rob Howe*
- *Audio File: OHTC\_2018\_Howe-Marion\_Nobles-Robert*
  - *Digital File: MP3, WAV*
- *Transcript File: OHTC\_2018\_Howe-Marion\_Nobles-Robert\_Transcript*
- *Recorded as part of the "Howe-Nobles Family Project"*

### **Rod Howe (56 minutes)**

Rod Howe, Executive Director of The History Center in Tompkins County (2014-2019), discusses personal connections to Tompkins County, from growing up in a close extended family to building new relationships in Ithaca with husband, Mark Pedersen, and two children. Howe recounts meeting Pedersen and their adoption process; as well as their experience of being a gay, biracial, and bilingual family in Tompkins County, local school systems, the First Unitarian Society in Ithaca, and living a full life in spite of Pedersen's HIV positive diagnosis.

*Trigger warnings: AIDS, death, child sexual abuse*

- *Recorded: 11/6/2019*
- *Name of Interviewer: Julia Taylor*
- *Audio File: OHTC\_2019-Howe-Rod*

- *Digital File: MP3*
- *Transcript File: OHTC\_2019-11-6\_Howe-Rod\_Transcript*
- *Recorded as part of the “Howe-Nobles Family Project”*

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