

# Deer Stories



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## **Program 1 : Hunting With My Dad**

### **Gregory L. Sharrow**

Deer Stories is a documentary series from Vermont Folklife Center Media. The series explores hunting from an insider's point of view and is drawn from interviews with hunters from around Vermont. In this program hunters talk about their fathers and grandfathers and the role these men played in their development as hunters.

### **Reginald Kribstock**

My grandfather gave me a 250 Savage, Model 99, and I treasured that rifle and I still have it right in the gun cabinet right now. It's taken a lot of deer, a lot of 'em.

### **Ron Boucher**

My dad used to hunt and he would come home all the time, empty-handed, and I was always disappointed. He never even got a rabbit.

### **Mark Scott**

Every deer I shoot today the first thing I think about is my dad.

### **Mary VanVeghten**

When he used to leave for camp, I mean, I'd run downstairs and, four and five years old, I'd get into like a pair of his boots and his hunting coat. It was like I couldn't wait until I could go with him, you know?

### **Reginald Kribstock**

I got my first deer when I was fifteen years old and the next year I shot a buck the first day and I shot a bear the second day, which was a very big mistake in my life, but everybody thinks they have to be macho and go shoot a bear, right? Well, I shot him all right, I got him on the ground, then I couldn't move him. I

stayed with him all day. [BIRD SONG IN BACKGROUND.] And I hiked about two miles back to camp that night. I got back to camp and pretty excited that I'd shot a bear and Dad says, "Oh, really?" And I said, "Yuh." And, "Okay," he says, "we'll go in tomorrow and get him, right?" "Yuh." [BIRD SONG.] So we did. Dad, and I think there were four fellas in camp, and myself. We got up about quarter past four in the morning, had a big old breakfast, and we headed up on the mountain towards Philadelphia Mountain. I'd shot him way on top. I never seen men work so hard in my life to get that bear out. We got him out late in the afternoon. Got him back to camp and got him hung up. All that time nothing was ever said except everybody having a good time. And Dad took me aside, put his hand on my shoulder, and he says, "Now," he says, "son, you've got a bear." And he says, "We've helped you get it out." And he says, "The next time you want to shoot a bear," he says, "you're on your own." [LAUGHS.]

### **Mark Scott**

One of my most memorable hunts with my dad is one that he missed a big buck because of me. You know, I remember him tracking it down through the hardwoods. It was a sunny day, the last day in the season. Snow was melting. You could see the tracks very clearly and there was no doubt it was a big deer. And I remember the deer jumping out of its bed, I remember my dad pulling up to shoot, and I can remember this deer looking at me right eyeball to eyeball and I didn't see any antlers on it and I hollered, "No, no! Don't shoot, Dad, it's a doe. It's a doe." And the minute the deer turned and wheeled and started to bound you could just see a tremendous rack. I mean, it was a beauty. And it bounded out and a long story short... my dad shot twice as it was bounding away, but cleanly missed. And he kind of turned around and looked at me, but never really said a word.

### **Phil Brown**

The very first year he passed away, I carried my radio that him and I hunted with. We had hand-held radios. And he weren't on the other end. But I hunted with his rifle and that radio and did just pretty much the same thing, but by myself. I had other radios of the ones we use now and different frequencies and I didn't take 'em. I don't why. I just, I guess it was a security blanket or to bring Dad along or something. I don't know what it was, but I ended up getting a deer that year with his rifle and that meant quite a little bit. You know, he taught me everything he knew about hunting. He's always with me. He's been with me on quite a few hunts, so.

### **Gregory L. Sharrow**

You've been listening to Vermonters Reg Kribstock of Braintree, Ron Boucher of Wallingford, Mark Scott of Barre Town, Mary VanVeghten of East Calais, and Phil Brown of Glover. Deer Stories was produced by Erica Heilman and Gregory Sharrow for the Vermont Folklife Center of Middlebury, Vermont. I'm Gregory

Sharrow.

## **Program 2 : Changing Culture**

### **Gregory L. Sharrow**

Deer Stories is a documentary series from Vermont Folklife Center Media. The series explores hunting from an insider's point of view and is drawn from interviews with hunters from around Vermont. In this program hunters talk about the culture of hunting and how they see that culture changing.

### **Prentiss Dwinell**

It was something that everybody did come November. Everything shut down. You couldn't even get your carburetor fixed, for crying out loud, on the first opening day of deer hunting. There was no garages open. They were hunting.

### **Doug Lawrence**

That was our entertainment, you know. We were allowed to watch TV for maybe two hours on a Saturday morning and then we were out, whether or not you liked it. And we only had a few kids in the neighborhood, not enough to play baseball. You know, we shot some basketball hoops and played three flies and four grounders, those types of things you can do with two or three people, but generally speaking we were interested in being outdoors and we fished and worked our way towards becoming deer hunters, so.

### **Prentiss Dwinell**

See, my brother was a big hunter. My brother shot a lot of deer. God, he shot a lot of deer. And I was always being questioned: Did your brother get his deer yet? Did your brother get his deer yet? What'd he get? How many points were there? How much did it weigh? Where'd he get it? Did he get it in such and such a place? Did he go to his usual place? You know? It was a regular dialogue. It went on every year by the kids. And, shit, I didn't give a damn whether I got one or not. I used to get a deer, of course. Every once in a while I'd get a deer. But my dad always got a deer, my brother always got a deer. Sometimes my mother would get a deer. We always had plenty of deer meat, you know? What the hell, if I got a deer, well, it was just one more deer we gotta eat. [LAUGHING.]

### **Joanne Ward**

Almost, basically, you're bred into it or you're not. I mean, with Heidi's kids, you know, I keep trying to get 'em to go to the NRA course and take that, see 'em go hunting with me and stuff, you know, like that. And like: Oh, do you want to go out and shoot my rifle with me? Nooo. So I have a hard time with it. You know, I'm trying to raise my kids, you know, to give 'em the choice. You know. But it's just like, Jesus, you know, there's six kids in this house: Isn't one of 'em gonna

be a hunter, for Christ's sakes? [LAUGHS.] Who am I gonna give my rifles to! [LAUGHS.]

### **Prentiss Dwinell**

The biggest percentage of the population that lives here in Vermont today are probably not deer hunters and deer hunting is not something that you can learn by listening to a tape or reading a book, it's something that you learn by hunting with a hunter that really knows what he's doing and you learn by starting out this high as a kid and you learn by watching and observing. I mean, we used to go in the summertime and set beside the road with field glasses, my dad and I and my brother and my mother, and we'd watch deer, late in the afternoon and in the early evening we'd watch deer. My dad would say, "There's something over there in the woods behind them deer." And I said to my dad, "How do you know?" And he said, "Watch his ears. He keeps flicking his ears and he keeps looking back." So you learn by watching. And I think it's sad that kids don't know how to hunt from their parents.

### **Stan Redlon**

And there seems to be a new frame of mind or people that are coming up and buying land here. It's not so much just to be up here, to be in the wilds of Vermont, it's more to escape and also a lot of people when they come up, the first thing they do is they post their land and they don't even bother to get to know their neighbors. It's just a matter of fact: I have this land, it's mine, I don't want anybody else to use it. And, you know, I've lost a few pieces of land that way that I've hunted on, you know, and these people, they don't consider the fact that, you know, I, myself, and a lot of other people, you hunt on a piece of land for twenty, thirty years. So you don't own it. You feel a bond to it and it's really, it's a big loss when somebody tells you not to hunt on that piece of property.

### **Shane Benoit**

As time goes on, thirty years, forty years from now, will there even be any hunting here. You know, look at the way the state's growing up: houses going here and there and poster signs coming up. I don't like seeing that, but.

### **Gregory L. Sharrow**

You've been listening to Vermonters Prentiss Dwinell of Plainfield, Doug Lawrence of Braintree, Joanne Ward of Braintree, Stan Redlon of Strafford, and Shane Benoit of Middlesex. Deer Stories was produced by Erica Heilman and Gregory Sharrow for the Vermont Folklife Center of Middlebury, Vermont. I'm Gregory Sharrow.

### **Program 3 : Championship Buck**

#### **Gregory L. Sharrow**

Deer Stories is a documentary series from Vermont Folklife Center Media. The series explores hunting from an insider's point of view and is drawn from interviews with hunters from around Vermont. In this show Roy Hines tells a story about tracking a 278-pound buck up Middlebury Mountain.

#### **Roy Hines**

Gee, I was here on the farm and my wife took me that morning up to the foot of Middlebury Mountain. You know, Middlebury College? And the foot of the mountain and let me out there about 7 o'clock. And that old deer was in a herd. There was about six or seven does with him, so I says: My gosh, that's an awful big deer track. I'm gonna follow it. And I did. I started right in following and I had to, of course, watch out not to spook 'em 'cause they'd go like that, you know. [LAUGHS.] So I followed 'em up the mountain and I got way up on what they call Brown Mountain and I still was after 'em. I hadn't scared 'em. They were still feeding along. So I just wandered around. I says, I've got to be like an Indian, I've gotta have that buck. [LAUGHS.] So I wandered around and come up over a ridge. Still, of course, you know, and looked down over careful. Why, that was an old big buck. My gosh! He was laying down right there, right in plain sight, and he hadn't even knew I was there. The other five or six doe, they was just standing around. They hadn't been scared. So, by gosh, I says, now is the only chance I'll have 'cause they'll go any minute, so I used just a .40 and I fired one shot. And, by gosh, he jumped right up onto his feet and I thought, well, I guess he's going, but he didn't. He dropped right back down dead. I had hit him right through the heart. The rest of 'em, boy, they were gone just like a flash, so I had to go down and take a look. There's the horns right there, hanging on the, just right there, them lower horns, the horns of that deer. Yeah. 'Cause I didn't get it mounted. I should have got it mounted. Well, I put it there just below my little grandson's picture. [LAUGHS.] But that, it's a 10-pointer and he weighed 278 pounds. [LAUGHS.] Boy! I dragged him all alone, but, of course, I was up on this Brown Mountain, I had it all downhill to get back onto the highway. And I turned him around, you know, and started dragging him down the mountain and a fella come along by me and he was from Connecticut. And, boy, he says, "Ah!" he says, "that was quite a deer," he says. "I wish I could get one like that." Well, I thought to myself: Well, I wish you could. But he didn't offer to help me! [LAUGHS.] I dragged that deer clear down to, almost to the road. And the Game Warden and two other fellas come along in a truck and, by gosh, they helped me load him into the truck and got him down the mountain and here home. Boy, never forget it. Well, everybody don't have such an experience as that, but I was just a lucky one. Yeah, there's some awful deer stories, you know. I could talk all day and all night. [LAUGHS.]

### **Gregory L. Sharrow**

You've been listening to the late Roy Hines of Hinesburg, Vermont. Deer Stories was produced by Erica Heilman and Gregory Sharrow for the Vermont Folklife Center of Middlebury, Vermont. I'm Gregory Sharrow.

### **Program 4 : "Hunt Like an Indian"**

### **Gregory L. Sharrow**

Deer Stories is a documentary series from Vermont Folklife Center Media. It explores hunting from an insider's point of view and is drawn from interviews with hunters from around Vermont. In this show hunters talk about the techniques for tracking deer.

### **Reginald Kribstock**

You pick a track. After years in the woods, you know, you'll know it's a 200-pound animal. And you soon, very soon learn if he's the dominant buck in the area by his scrapes, the way other deer treat him, the way he hooked, marked his area, where they pee, leave their scent. By staying with an animal for two or three days you knew what degree of rut they were in and after enough years of experience you knew what type of mistakes he might make. You learn where the pockets of doe were, so if he went over the top of a mountain here and he headed across the valley over there, you knew where he was headed to check out that bunch of doe up there. It's not just going out and trying to harvest an animal, to kill an animal. You *learn* about these animals and you learn to respect them.

### **Shane Benoit**

You've gotta visualize your footage ahead of you, say, three steps. You glance, you glance down and you gotta remember your steps. You know, you gotta walk softly. If you come down with your heel first you're gonna snap branches, so you gotta use your toes. And all the time you're eyes are sweeping and you've got your first peripheral vision and you're avoiding the brush and you're avoiding the limbs. You're stepping on stones sometimes or moss or whatever. It's quiet. 'Cause I'm trying to sneak up on them guys right there: One little snap and they're gone.

### **Mark Scott**

A deer will tell you everything it's doing with the tracks. A doe and a buck are built entirely different and does like to walk dainty. If you ever watch a doe in the woods, they walk on their toes, with one foot in front of the other and they have a short step, where, if you watch a buck walking through the woods, they walk—what I say, I just kind of feel like bow-legged. And they tend to slam their feet down. And so once you put that together and once you start following tracks you very quickly can tell the buck from the doe.

**Shane Benoit**

Part of tracking is common sense, a lot of it is, it's what the weather's done, you know? If it's snowing out and you see a track there and there's no snow in it, I think it's smoking-hot fresh. Because a lot of people have a problem when it's warm weather and the snow's melting and they look at the track and it looks like it's five-days old, but actually all it is, maybe just a couple hours old. It's, you know, tracking is a lot of common sense.

**Mark Scott**

You've gotta be in tune with the woods. You can't think about anything, but put yourself into the mode to being a predator. You're stalking and you want to see it, so you can't be thinking of friends back home, you can't be thinking that your feet are cold or that you're wet. And there comes a very moment where you really gotta be on your toes, where they will tell you from their tracks that they're close. To me, that's the excitement: to be able to have that experience I would do anything in the world for.

**Stan Redlon**

I don't know, I think I'm always hunting. I always keep an eye out on the ground where I can, wherever there's bare ground, I'll always look to see what's going on and I always pay attention to trails and it's part of me, it's part of my blood. I have to hunt. I have to fish. In the fall of the year or late summer, the first cold nights, it's like a switch: it's time to get into the woods, it's time to harvest. I found out about, oh, it was probably about eight years ago that I'm part Abenaki and I didn't know that and I might only have a little bit of Abenaki in me, but it's pretty strong. [LAUGHS.] And it's a neat thing. I am a true Vermonter, through and through. [LAUGHS.] A real Vermonter through and through.

**Gregory L. Sharrow**

You've been listening to Vermonters Shane Benoit of Middlesex, Mark Scott of Barre Town, and Stan Redlon of Strafford. Deer Stories was produced by Erica Heilman and Gregory Sharrow for the Vermont Folklife Center of Middlebury, Vermont. I'm Gregory Sharrow.

**Program 5 : Careful What You Shoot**

Deer Stories is a documentary series from Vermont Folklife Center Media. The series explores hunting from an insider's point of view and is drawn from interviews with hunters from around Vermont. In this program two men tell stories about gun accidents and they talk about the responsibility that comes with handling firearms.

**Doug Bent**

Yeah, you always gotta be careful. Once you shoot you can't take it back. And I had a experience where in the middle of the night—well, about 4 or 5 o'clock in the morning I woke up and the coyotes were right outside the house and howling and carrying on and yipping and yapping. So I got up to see what's going on. It was pretty moonlit that night. You know, it wasn't a full moon, but it was, you know, it was pretty full. So I could see that there was some cows and the coyotes were chasing the cows, the heifers, you know, young stock. My neighbor's. You know, there was probably four or five coyotes and, you know, probably half a dozen heifers. And I have a big spotlight, but I didn't use it. I thought, well, you know, I could see 'em fairly well and so I got my gun and they were about 250-yards away, so I started shooting at the coyotes and the third shot I heard a definite whack. And I says, there, I got one of 'em. So I got my four-wheeler and I went out and instead of a coyote laying there, there was a cow laying there. And, I don't know, I almost threw up. I was really, you know, I just—you know, you shot something that you didn't intend to shoot and, of course, I dragged the cow back to the house and I called my neighbor up and, well, I met him down at the barn in the morning. About 6 o'clock he does his chores, so I went down and I met him and I told him what happened and he says, "Well, no problem," he says. "We'll dress it off and put it in the freezer." So, you know, I paid him for the cow and he asked me if I wanted the meat and I says, "No, I really can't, you know?" [LAUGHING.] I felt bad enough about it as it was. It bothered me for a long time, you know?

**Phil Brown**

My grandfather one morning, loading his rifle out behind the house and went to set his safety and had his gloves on and the hammer slipped and the rifle went off. And he come in, put it in the cupboard and never hunted again. Just decided that if I can't control my firearm then I don't deserve to be in the woods.

**Doug Bent**

You gotta be absolutely positive, I mean, there's no questions, about what it is and what's behind it. I mean, is the deer standing on a knoll and there's a farmhouse in the distance? I mean, you know, that's not a good situation. So you have to be aware what's behind the deer, you have to be aware that it actually is a deer. You have to have a hundred percent sure in your mind that that is what you're shooting, that you want to shoot. And there's no, you know, there's no ifs, ands, or buts about it, you know? It has to be a positive thing. It's a real bad feeling if you shoot something that you don't intend to shoot.

**Gregory L. Sharrow**

You've been listening to Vermonters Doug Bent of Braintree and Phil Brown of Glover. Deer Stories was produced by Erica Heilman and Gregory Sharrow for the Vermont Folklife Center of Middlebury, Vermont. I'm Gregory Sharrow.

## **Program 6 : Being in the Woods**

### **Gregory L. Sharrow**

Deer Stories is a documentary series from Vermont Folklife Center Media that explores hunting from an insider's point of view and is drawn from interviews with hunters from around Vermont. For many hunters the opportunity to spend time in the woods is as important as getting a deer. In this show hunters describe some of the encounters they have with wildlife while hunting.

### **Stan Redlon**

I was up on the ridge top at one of my favorite apple orchards. That day I decided I wasn't going to climb a tree, that I was just going to stay on the ground and I put my back up against this big boulder and I was there probably for about an hour, an hour and a half, and I heard the coyotes. There was a whole pack of 'em. And I thought: Oh, great, this year, you know, I'm gonna get to see a whole pack here, 'cause it sounded like they were running right towards me. And it's a good runaway. And all of a sudden I heard, you know, thrashing and crashing and I thought: Here they come. And out comes two of the biggest bucks I've ever seen in my life and they come right out and they stop in this orchard like twenty yards from me and they start sparring. And the whole time the coyotes are howling. I pull up with my bow, I draw it back, and just as I'm drawing it back the buck focuses right on me. And so here I am at twenty yards with this incredible buck that's looking me eye to eye, and all ready to shoot, and the coyotes are howling in the background. And I released and the arrow hit a branch that was hanging down and deflected. But just the experience itself was probably tops of anything that I've experienced in the woods, just the whole scenario. It was like I was set back in time. It brought me home. [LAUGHS.] It was pretty neat.

### **Barry Forbes**

It's hard to explain what kind of feeling you get if you're putting up a flock of geese or having a flock of geese fly in or having an otter swim up by you at daylight or catching, well, half a dozen deer in the back field or something, before they've gone into the day. Stuff that I enjoy seeing that might not do a thing for the next guy. You know, we've grown up with that and have learned to appreciate seeing some of that stuff. And, like I say, a lot of people could give a damn less, you know? But that's okay, you know. Heck, if I'm the only one out there that's looking at it and I'm going to see it, and they're not going to be there spooking on me.

### **Phil Brown**

I mean, you get out there around 4:30, twenty of 5:00, right now, and listen into the different birds start talking in the morning and the bears hooting, the owls hooting, coyotes yipping. The morning sounds are incredible. We're pretty close to God up here. This is God's country.

**Barry Forbes**

Always something there to kind of pique your interest, whether you're on bow stand and you've got a fox that trots by and doesn't know you're there, a bobcat or a coyote or you may have a doe and a couple of fawns and a couple of yearling doe, a small buck walk by you and just never pick up the bow to shoot. You know? Nothing that you're really interested in killing, just enjoy watching 'em go. And learn from 'em. They'll all do something a little bit different. And anytime you can learn something, I figure you've got a heck of a day.

**Stan Redlon**

I had this one stand site. I saw a bear one year. He kind of skirted around me. And then the following year I was sitting in the same tree stand and he came right underneath me. I was twenty feet from him. And he was feeding all around underneath me. Finally, he started moseying off and crossed my scent trail and he stood up and he put his nose straight in the air and sniffed and turned right around and looked at me and then just kind of walked off. He didn't know what I was, for sure, but it's just stuff like that. That's why I hunt. It's not necessarily to bag an animal, it's just to have those experiences. You know, those experiences are worth pounds and pounds of meat.

**Gregory L. Sharrow**

You've been listening to Vermonters Stan Redlon of Strafford, Barry Forbes of Middlebury, and Phil Brown of Glover. Deer Stories was produced by Erica Heilman and Gregory Sharrow for the Vermont Folklife Center of Middlebury, Vermont. I'm Gregory Sharrow.

**Program 7 : The Rut****Gregory L. Sharrow**

Deer Stories is a documentary series from Vermont Folklife Center Media. The series explores hunting from an insider's point of view and is drawn from interviews with hunters from around Vermont. {Rupe} and Joe LaRock are father and son and avid hunting partners. Here they talk about the annual breeding cycle of deer.

**Joe LaRock**

I think pretty much you can bank anywhere from November 10<sup>th</sup> through the end of November they're rutting and they're rutting hard.

**Rupe LaRock**

You can just smell the heat and smell the rut right in the air. You can just [SNIFFS]. Geez, we're kind of coming into it. The bucks, yeah, you can smell the bucks, too.

**Joe LaRock**

I think more so the bucks because, you know, at this point in time, even November 1<sup>st</sup>, they're preparing themselves and they're taking their back legs and they're rubbing them together and they're urining on their legs. And that stinks. And that, you know, and what happens is is their hocks, they're trying to get on their glands, and that's all premature stuff and just getting ready. You know, he's feeling it a little bit. It all comes down to, again, deer movement.

**Rupe LaRock**

Deer movement, yeah.

**Joe LaRock**

They don't move around as much in the daytime. The bucks that time of year will because they're trying to find where the in-heat does are and they're just all going crazy, where, the does, let's face it, they got their pattern and they're not gonna change because they're in heat. They don't change. They don't start cruising around looking for other does. I mean, they stay in their pattern. So a good opportunity for that buck to, you know, to have his fun is when she's out in her movement from her feeding to her bedding.

**Rupe LaRock**

His harem—he has no harem.

**Joe LaRock**

That happens at night.

**Rupe LaRock**

Now, that buck there, he bred a doe two or three times in the time that I was tracking him before I killed him. He had a doe with him, he wasn't going to leave her, and actually she cost him his life. He was breeding this doe right in the middle of the day. And that was unusual for us. She was—maybe he was with her for a day or two and she wasn't in heat and then all of a sudden she came into heat and he wasn't gonna leave her. And that's just pretty much what it amounted to: he wasn't gonna leave her until he'd bred her.

**Joe LaRock**

I think that's what it was, \_\_\_\_\_, and his—

**Rupe LaRock**

'Cause they, they know. I mean, they'll go up to a doe and if she ain't ready yet, well, I'm gonna go get another one and then I'm gonna come back and check this one 'cause this one might be ready tomorrow. And that's their job. That's their job right now is to breed does.

**Joe LaRock**

The end of the second week in the main [Maine?] season they are really starting to move.

**Rupe LaRock**

You just can't stand it—  
And that's the time of year when you cannot be in camp.

**Joe LaRock**

You can't be.

**Rupe LaRock**

Yeah, you just can't be.

**Joe LaRock**

No, you gotta be in the woods.

**Rupe LaRock**

I told him there's no difference. Five after one? No, excuse me. Ten after one, five after one. You're just five after one?

**Joe LaRock**

Noon.

**Rupe LaRock**

Exactly noon. Five after one. Three o'clock. At 3 o'clock, 10 o'clock. All these times are when bucks are—

**Joe LaRock**

You know, most people are gone home.

**Rupe LaRock**

Yeah, they go in the woods for three or four hours and then go home, you know, and stuff like that. They don't realize that big buck, the minute he gets done his breeding all night, he wants to rest and then about 11 o'clock he wants to get up and get something to eat. He's hungry, you know? It's just like—

**Joe LaRock**

And he eats a little bit and then mostly, you know, after he eats he'll lay down again, but he'll be up before you know it and start cruising around. That deer there, he was looking for a doe. He had his nose right on the ground: five after one.

**Rupe LaRock**

Just cruising around. Yeah.

**Gregory L. Sharrow**

You've been listening to Vermonters Rupe LaRock of Sudbury and Joe LaRock of Whiting. Deer Stories was produced by Erica Heilman and Gregory Sharrow for the Vermont Folklife Center of Middlebury, Vermont. I'm Gregory Sharrow.

**Program 8 : Taking a Life****Gregory L. Sharrow**

Deer Stories is a documentary series from Vermont Folklife Center Media. The series explores hunting from an insider's point of view and is drawn from interviews with hunters from around Vermont. In this program hunters talk about the experience of taking an animal's life.

**Doug Bent**

It's not a sad thing. I mean, if it was a sad thing then you wouldn't do it. [LAUGHS.] To say you're happy to get a deer, why, yeah, yeah. But, on the one hand, and on the other hand, you know, it's sad to take a beautiful creature's life like that, too, but that's part of it, I guess. You know, the Indians always give thanks after they take a deer and I do that myself. I, you know, think for a minute, too, that what a beautiful animal it was and, yeah.

**Gayle Streeter**

I distinctly remember my first kill, which was a rabbit, and I was quite surprised of the mix of excitement, elation, because it was a success, but, yet, this underlying current of grief that was also there, fully realizing what had taken place. And I don't think that people realize that that's in the mix, that that happens. You don't go out there—it's not a callous thing. I mean, every—people are all different in how they deal with things, but people that are really conscious of what they're doing and what is taking place experience that. And I found that very interesting and very surprise—that surprised me, that feeling. You know, the mix of those two opposite things colliding and coming together, experiencing them at the same time.

**Barry Forbes**

Say I've got a buck that I have seen in hunting for two years now. [DOG BARKING.] Watched him go from kind of a basic small 8-pointer up to one of these real nice buck. I mean, something that everybody'd be proud about, to have taken. [DOG BARKING.] Come fall, maybe I've hunted him hard, maybe he comes easy, whatever the case, it doesn't make any difference. So when I harvest that particular animal, and most people will tell you that: Man, I killed—that's a monster there and, boy, you know, nobody's gonna beat this one. This was just a fantastic animal and, boy, I'm great. Whereas, yes, I'm tickled that I finally caught up with the animal, what I have laid out for the plan finally worked

and I outsmarted him, but before I ever lay a knife on him and clean him out and take care of the animal there is that time there that it's a real sense of loss. It's almost like: Geez, I put so much time into this one particular animal and finally beat him. Now what am I gonna do? He's not there for me to do it, to chase or to track or to set up in a particular spot and wait for him. He's gone. You got to know that animal inside out. It's almost like having a dog for ten years and you lose him, you know? There's a void there that is tough to describe.

**Gregory L. Sharrow**

You've been listening to Vermonters Doug Bent of Braintree, Gail Streeter of Morristown, and Barry Forbes of Middlebury. Deer Stories was produced by Erica Heilman and Gregory Sharrow for the Vermont Folklife Center of Middlebury, Vermont. I'm Gregory Sharrow.

**Program 9 : Hunting Companions****Gregory L. Sharrow**

Deer Stories is a documentary series from Vermont Folklife Center Media. The series explores hunting from an insider's point of view and is drawn from interviews with hunters from around Vermont. Some hunters will only hunt alone, while others choose their companions very carefully. Here they talk about why.

**Rupe LaRock**

Sometimes people would almost think that we don't enjoy deer hunting because we're kind of like, until we get a deer, it might not be fun around camp.

**Joe LaRock**

Real hard, so hard.

**Rupe LaRock**

We work real hard and the camp rules are 8:00 to 4:00. We're in bed at 8:00.

**Joe LaRock**

We don't drink beers.

**Rupe LaRock**

No drinking.

**Joe LaRock**

You know, it's different.

**Rupe LaRock**

There's nothing. You go to bed at 8:00, you get up at 4:00, we get our brown bag lunches and get our coffee and stuff and let's get out and get our deer. We

can drink any other time of year, we can party any other time of year, but we've only got one month for whitetail deer.

**Joe LaRock**

I think, for Dad and I, I mean, I know the happiest times in my life are when him and I, together, are standing over a beautiful buck. I mean, him and I grab each other, literally grab each other and hug each other. [LAUGHTER.]

**Rupe LaRock**

You'd think that we were something crazy. Oh, boy. These boys are crazy.

**Frank Kurant**

Always hunted alone. I'd love to hunt alone. If you have a partner, unless he's a real good hunter, right? You say to him: Now, I got at daybreak. I'm on the mountain before day breaks. I'm five miles on the mountain. That's the way we used to hunt. Walk up there in the dark. And say I'll meet you at a certain place that we are both familiar with at 9:00 or 10:00. You go there and he's not there and that messes up your day. You don't know whether to wait for him, you don't know whether he got hurt. He should have been there, but he isn't. So, you hunt alone, you can do as you please, you can go where you want, you can sit as long as you want. You know, you're completely free. And that's the way to hunt.

**Nellie Staves**

Well, I like to hunt alone or with one other person. Mostly, I like to hunt alone because other people, they walk so fast, they're so noisy walking in the woods, and I walk very, very slow, take my time, walk a little, listen a little, stand a little, sit a little, whatever. And then walk on a little bit more.

**Ray Keyser**

It's a lot easier to go with the people you've gone with for years, you know. You know, you can say, well, you know that rock up there on the King Lot, I think that you ought to be up there, and you don't have to go with a vehicle and get him up there and then go back, kind of a thing. [LAUGHING.] You choose your hunting companions almost as closely as you choose your wife. [LAUGHS.]

**James Ehlers**

There wasn't too much time left in the day and I had to find my way out of the woods to get back to the rest of the fellows I was with and find a ride. They had an idea of where I had gone off and by the time I was done I'd probably finished five or six miles from where we started, but when I came out of the woods on this road one of the fellas in the party was coming down the road in the truck to pick me up. And seeing a familiar face come down the road after you've been plugging through the woods in the snow and you're dead tired, exhausted, and seeing that familiar face come down the road in the truck to pick you up when

you have no prearranged plan to get picked up and you're not anywhere near you started is a really cool feeling. [LAUGHING.]

### **Gregory L. Sharrow**

You've been listening to Vermonters Rupe LaRock of Sudbury, Joe LaRock of Whiting, Frank Current of Pittsford, Nellie Staves of Tupper Lake, New York, Ray Keiser of Proctor, and James {Ellers} of Colchester. Deer Stories was produced by Erica Heilman and Gregory Sharrow for the Vermont Folklife Center of Middlebury, Vermont. I'm Gregory Sharrow.

## **Program 10 : Mother and Daughter**

### **Gregory L. Sharrow**

Deer Stories is a documentary series from Vermont Folklife Center Media. The series explores hunting from an insider's point of view and is drawn from interviews with hunters from around Vermont. In this program Gail Streeter and her daughter Hannah tell a story about the first day of hunting season, 2005.

### **Gayle Streeter**

Last year Hannah and I decided we were gonna go out together and so about a week before hunting season we went out, scouted around, and, you know, found actual places where we wanted to sit. You want to kind of get in there and make sure you can see around. You don't want to be doing a lot of, making a lot of noise that opening morning. And, of course, opening morning: crunchy, crunchy! You know, leaves. No coating of snow. I think there was a light dusting of snow, but it was very noisy and so Hannah and I, we got out there and we got up to the top of the ridge. We were gonna go get into our spots and so we got situated and, you know, I kept thinking I was hearing things in kind of a couple different directions. The next thing I know I hear this—it sounded like a couple of horses coming down a trail through the woods and it was a predominant trail, something that was used a lot by wildlife in the area. And they come down, a doe runs out into the field right in front of me and the buck comes flying out, runs past her, stops. And so I get off a shot. I see that it's a legal deer because it had to be more than a spikehorn. This ended up in a 5-point buck. So I got a nice shot at it. It was one shot, killing shot, and very clean. It didn't run off very far. Went up and located where the deer was. Went up and got Hannah out of her stand and she could hear all this, but she stayed put, which was safe for her to do. And so I'm waiting for the other guys in the area. I knew my husband was off hunting, actually, quite a ways away, off on the other side of the logging road, but I figured he probably would have heard. And I shot. And waiting for these fellas to come, you know, give us a hand, us girls a hand. No one shows up. Well, guess we've gotta take care of this on our own. So we dragged it out of the woods, up to the house, got it in the back of the pickup, and brought it to camp and, you know, was cleaning it out before anybody that was showing up. [LAUGHING.] And so

they were all quite surprised that—we were lounging at camp when—with our deer all done for the season. And most people, when—with my experience, in my experience, the men, they're: Okay, you shot the deer. We'll give you that, but, you know, Joe, your husband or boyfriend or whoever probably was with ya. It had something to do with the fact that they were with you. That's the general feeling that I get from people. They don't tend to take you seriously. So this was a real triumph for Hannah and I because there were no men in the area to help with anything. [LAUGHS.] So they had a lot of work ahead of them. They were scrambling the rest of the season. [LAUGHTER.]

### **Gregory L. Sharrow**

You've been listening to Gail and Hannah Streeter of Morrystown, Vermont. Deer Stories was produced by Erica Heilman and Gregory Sharrow for the Vermont Folklife Center of Middlebury, Vermont. I'm Gregory Sharrow.

### **Program 11 : Dogs and Deer**

### **Gregory L. Sharrow**

Deer Stories is a documentary series from Vermont Folklife Center Media that explores hunting from an insider's point of view and is drawn from interviews with hunters from around Vermont. In this program retired Game Warden Stan Holmquist reflects on dogs as predators of deer.

### **Stanley Holmquist**

People that have dogs, I've talked to a lot of 'em that really hated me because I ended up shooting their dogs. There's a thrill in the chase. You know, they were chasing for miles and a deer is a sprinter, where a dog covers a lot of land at a nice steady pace, but the deer will run as hard as he can for a short period, probably a quarter-mile and, you know, that's in good, on good ground. If there's snow involved he'll get exhausted much faster. And a deer, being a wild animal, they'll run until the blood vessels in their lung will just explode and you'll find the deer with white—pink foam coming out of their mouth and you can't save it. I had a lady, she had two of the most beautiful Golden Retrievers you ever saw and I told her: Don't let 'em loose because, you know, they're gonna chase deer. And I caught her dogs with a deer in a brook. Brought the dogs home and I gave her a dog letter. Within three days, I think it was, they were out chasing again, so I gave her a citation to appear in court, but the dogs started running free again, so I says that's it. And I shot two of the nicest Golden Retrievers you ever saw. And I took the dogs back home and I said, you know, I told her, "You're responsible for this. Don't blame me. You are responsible. You had all, had the warning." And I tried to get her to go up and go look at the—you know, where the dog had killed the deer 'cause, you know, they had it in a small {pork} and there were pieces of deer hair and everything all over, blood everywhere. She wouldn't go. She wouldn't go. She didn't want to see it. She had no idea there were even any

deer around and she was living right in amongst them, you know. A lot of people, like city folks, they come up out of New York City or Newark, New Jersey, or places like that and they buy a second home here and, you know, they love to see the deer and they love to see the trees and all that stuff, but they just don't—it's more like Born Free, you know. But the deer, you know, they don't have anybody to fend for 'em, other than us, the Game Wardens. I went from being a hunter of deer to a protector. You know, I wouldn't go out and shoot a deer for no money in the world. No, I wouldn't even go out and shoot an injured one. I call the Game Warden, you know, and let him do it. I've had enough of that. So. I still respect, you know, that that deer is suffering and I can feel for it. And I feel for all of 'em. On the cold days, you know, 10-below or stuff like that, I know just what they're going through, you know? How they get down in the snow in the winter to keep warm. Oh, boy. That's from being in the deer yards, finding their beds. And going from just being a hunter to a lover of deer, I guess is what you'd call it. It's quite a switch. But I guess I fulfill my hunting ambition by hunting hunters. [LAUGHS.] And now, now I can look back on it all: I wouldn't change a thing. I loved it all. So not many people can say that.

**Gregory L. Sharrow**

You've been listening to Stanley Holmquist of Rochester, Vermont. Deer Stories was produced by Erica Heilman and Gregory Sharrow for the Vermont Folklife Center of Middlebury, Vermont. I'm Gregory Sharrow.

**Program 12 : Cleo Johnson and Lady****Gregory L. Sharrow**

Deer Stories is a documentary series from Vermont Folklife Center Media that explores hunting from an insider's point of view and is drawn from interviews with hunters from around Vermont. This is Deputy Game Warden and lifelong hunter Cleo Johnson.

**Cleo Johnson**

I've got a unique story to tell you about deer sometime when you want it.

**Gregory L. Sharrow**

How about now?

**Cleo Johnson**

Well, okay. I was telling you, I was living over here and I was the Game Warden, the Deputy Game Warden. Well, somebody called and reported a deer being born up on West Hill and it had fallen into the—the deer that was born fell into a stream. Well, I went up after her and she was practically dead. I mean, she couldn't, she was in the water and she couldn't even lift her head up. She was just practically dead! I got some milk, put a little whiskey into it, and gave it to

her. And I brought her to. Well, I was marked as her mother by being brought to and I was the first thing she saw. I raised her, give her milk and cut brush for her and gave her a little grain, and I kept her for five years. Had a, built a pen out there for her and I used to let her out of the pen and run for the porch over here and she'd beat me to the porch. Jump up on the porch and come into the house. And she'd go into the kitchen where my wife was gonna give her a cookie or something. Wherever I went, I don't care where it was, anywhere I went she was right with me. I'd go upstreet with her, go into the store, she'd follow me right into the store, the post office, hardware, anywhere I went she was there! You know, people would see you come into the store with a deer following you, they'd think what gives? You know. I'd go upstreet on a Sunday, kids come down, running down from the church, screaming and hollering. I'd let 'em play with her for maybe ten, fifteen minutes. I'd just say, "Come on, Lady!" I'd head for home and she was right with me. Then after five years people had been trying to raise a cub bear or something and got mauled by it, so the Fish and Game Department, they passed a law making it illegal to keep any wild animal. Well, being a Game Warden, I couldn't pinch somebody for raising a 'coon while I had a wild animal myself! So I had to get rid of her. I took her way up in {Bingle} to a orchard up there where there was a lot of good feed and with the help of my dad I finally got away from her. Of course, I never knew what happened to her, but she was in good feed and whether she made it through the winter or not, of course, I didn't know because I—well, I didn't want to know what happened to her because she was my pal. Yeah.

**Gregory L. Sharrow**

You've been listening to the late Cleo Johnson of Rochester, Vermont. Deer Stories was produced by Eric Heilman and Gregory Sharrow for the Vermont Folklife Center of Middlebury, Vermont. I'm Gregory Sharrow.