# BERT AIKMAN MEMOIR

Volume I

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# PREFACE

This manuscript is the product of tape-recorded interviews conducted by Horace Waggoner for the Oral History Office during June and July, 1975. Horace Waggoner transcribed the tapes and edited the transcripts. Because of Mr. Aikman's poor eyesight, the review of the transcripts was completed by the interviewer reading them to him. These tape-recorded review sessions resulted in additional material, most in explanation or expansion of the material being reviewed, but some on new subjects. The additional material was selectively transferred to "Addenda" tapes and transcribed. Some addenda material appears as footnotes; the addenda transcripts appear in whole in the addenda sections at the end of each volume of the memoir and is referenced for the reader by footnotes in the text.

Mr. Aikman was born in Hornsby, Illinois, on January 22, 1878. During his childhood, the family moved several times in search of a "home farm," finally settling in the edge of the timber north of Honey Bend, Illinois, in 1889. His reminiscences, understandably sketchy for the early years, become more detailed as he recalls his father's farm operations and the family life during his school years.

Shortly after the move to the "home farm," his school years came to an end as, at the age of thirteen, he joined his father in supporting the family. In this endeavor, he worked until the age of twenty-two in the timber and as a farmhand. His recounting of the experiences of these years attests to the importance of timber in providing the equipment of the farmer, to the typical farmer's work ethic, and to the closeness of rural family and community life.

In search of an occupation, he spent the years 1900 to 1910 as a Wabash Railroad telegraph operator and agent. But the lure of the farm was too strong and he returned to the land. After a brief look toward homesteading in Oklahoma or New Mexico, he and his wife settled on their farm in Pitman Township, Illinois. A major part of his story is of their life on this farm and of involvement in the nearby farm service community of Waggoner.

Readers of this oral history memoir should bear in mind that it is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, narrator and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. Sangamon State University is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for views expressed therein; these are for the reader to judge.

Bert Aikman, June and July, 1975, Waggoner, Illinois.
Horace Waggoner, Interviewer.

Q. You gave me a real good outline yesterday to think about and what I'd like to do this afternoon is—about the first seven years you moved around quite a bit and then you settled in Raymond and then came out to the Ed Gerlach place, I believe it was.

A. No, to Bob Trout's, was the name of the place, which was directly across the road from the Lily schoolhouse. That Lily schoolhouse disappeared, as you know, when they consolidated schools here, and it's a dwelling house now.

Q. Oh, it's still there?

A. The building is. That is, it's been worked over, of course, into a nice house.[1] That was where I started school. I guess I was just six years old when I started there. They didn't have kindergarten and such things in those days, you know. And they didn't limit attendance, either. I don't think I ever attended a school under fifty in a room. I don't think I ever did.

I went to that school, the Lily School, and then the folks moved from there to the Ed Gerlach place and we were in the Vignos District then. Do you know where the Raymond road used to take off to go to Raymond when it was just a dirt road?

Q. No, I don't think I remember . . . No, sir.

A. Well, the Vignos School stood right in there[2] and old man Vignos, who was the stock of the Vignos, lived a quarter of a mile south of it. So, it was named after him, you see. We came over there and we had a full house again, just jammed full.

They would start in—just to enlighten you—the first thing, when they rang the bell and you took your seat, of course, they called the roll. Then they called the primer class. That primer class recited the first thing after every time the bell rang. They recited four times a day. Primer class. Some of the teachers would tell you, they'd say, "Why, the only time they learn anything is while reciting. They don't know how to study but while they're reciting, they begin to get it."[3]

Q. What's the primer class?

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[1]See addenda item 1.

[2]See addenda item 2.

[3]See addenda item 3.

A. The primer class was the very beginning of words, letters, learn the ABC's, learn the numbers. Then develop on up until they could finally read sentences like, "The dog is white," and "The cat's black," such things as that.[4]

Q. Would this be the first and second grades or just the first grade?

A. No, that was primer. Then when they got through with their primer book, which they were able to read pretty good when they got through with it, and could spell some fairly good, then they went into the first reader. And there was eight readers in the school in those days. The eighth grade had a reader that you stood up and read just the same as the little kids did.

And the spelling we had . . . we spelled orally . . . stood up in a row along the side of the house and spelled orally and somebody would get a headmark. If they could stick at the head of that line for two days, they got a headmark and they were credited with it by the teacher.

Q. What's a headmark?

A. Headmark? He was the head of that line, don't you see, the head of the whole school.

Q. So, does that mean he got a mark on his record, or . . .

A. Yes, they made a record on there that he had made the headmark on certain dates and then at the end of the month, why they'd give him a little card or something, you know, to encourage them on that. I could never stay at the head. (chuckles)

Q. Did you ever reach the head?

A. Well, I'd reach it but I never could stay there. I never got a thing. (laughter) My brother next to me could just stay as long as he wanted to, pretty near.

We had spelling schools. One school would come in and spell against another, you know, like Vignos would have Burnet here come down there and we'd have a spelling school. And they was both sides of the house lined with scholars and the teacher gave out [words] until he [a scholar] gave out, then he'd call on somebody [else]. They used a spelling book that every word had a definition to it and we had to learn the definition as well as to spell the word. In the spelling bee like that they wouldn't ask for the definition, just the word, when you was spelling. But if you got stuck a little, well, they'd say, "Give us a definition." Well, sometimes that would help you, you know, to give the definition. You'd get your letters straightened out again.

So, I'm just apicturing to you how they handled all of those classes.

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[4]See addenda item 4.

The first reader followed the primer class and the second reader followed them; the third reader followed them and the fourth reader followed them. All of them would recite now in the first half day.

Q. Was the second reader used in the second grade, or did you double up?

A. Well, that's right, they were graded and used the first grade, second grade, third grade, and so on. I went to school until I was 22 years old to finish the eighth grade.

Q. Oh, is that right?

A. Yes, because I lost three years, from the time I was fifteen until I was eighteen. My dad had a big family, there was seven of us, and he had to make a living for us because the little old forty[5] didn't provide enough to keep the family. So, we worked in the timber. In those days there was any amount of timber work: making rails, making posts, making slats to make fence out of, and so on. So, us three, the two older boys and Dad, would work in the timber practically every day, every day if it was fit. And so I missed school for those three years.

Well, then I was twenty years old, or close to it, and I got back into school. I was eighteen, really, that's what I was. Because the man that taught the school that winter wasn't very much older than me; he used to depend on me to help out quite a little in different things.

Q. Now, this would have been at Honey Bend?

A. No, I never went to Honey Bend. This was at Hazel Green. That's where we went to when we moved to the forty. Hazel Green. That building is made over into a house, [too]. It's still there and you can see the old building, the original, by stopping a quarter of a mile north there and see the machine shed that's in that man's group of buildings, right close to the road, too,[6] and that building used to house 61 scholars a day.

Q. I didn't realize there were that many! Was this a one-room building?

A. Just one room. They had a stove in the middle of it. Part of us froze and part of us cooked. (chuckles) The teachers were all trained in those days to hear all of those classes. After the reading come mathematics, you know, and you start in down here in [book] number one and number two and number three and number four. Number three was about as high as we ever got until you was ready to finish the eighth grade. Then they brought you into geometry and . . .

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[5]When Mr. Aikman was eleven years old, his family moved to a farm northeast of Honey Bend, Illinois. Mr. Aikman refers to this farm variously as "The Little Old Forty," "The Forty," "The Home Place," or "The Timber" throughout the interviews. [Ed.]

[6]See addenda item 5.

Q. Trigonometry?

A. No, not trigonometry. Geometry and . . .

Q. Algebra?

A. Yes. That's right. That you had in the last course in the eighth grade. Then you also had history classes. We had one. That was just once a day we had a history class because the younger scholars didn't get that. That was the older scholars that could profit by it, you know. They got the history.

Q. Was this American history?

A. Yes. History of the United States from the time they broke away from England and came over here, you know, and settled at Plymouth Rock and so on. We had a teacher that was studying law and he was keen for dates. Well, I never was very good on dates, but we had one fellow in the school, an Irish boy, that never forgot a date. He could read that history and I've seen him go up to the blackboard and just pretty near cover that blackboard with dates. And they'd be correct! He could tell you what every one of them was. And the poor bugger drank himself to death when he got to be a man.

Q. What kind of fuel did you use in the stove?

A. Coal.

Q. You used coal?

A. Yes. Some of the bigger boys carried it always and the teacher would call back, "So-and-so, stoke up the stove, now. Need a little more heat."

So, I attended four schools—Lily was the first one, and Vignos was the second one, and Burnet was the third one, and Hazel Green was the last one. We had to walk three miles and a half to go to the Vignos School.

Q. Three and a half miles!

A. Yes. And we walked it, you know. They didn't take us to school. It was a little under three miles up here to the Burnet school so Dad went and got permission to transfer us up to the Burnet school. That's how I come to be in it. We were not in that district but I went to it two years.

We had a very brilliant teacher. He was a dope fiend but he was brilliant. Oh, that fellow was smart! His name was Buchanan and he was just really keen but he was cross as a bear. I think it was because of the dope, in all probability. He'd get low on dope and he had to go to Raymond to get it if he got it. Maybe further than that, I don't know. Everybody knew that he used dope but I never did see him drunk on it, or anything but what he was keen. He used a hickory. He didn't argue with kids. He'd take them

out and give them a good tanning with the hickory. Boy, you miss two words in spelling and he'd give them to you the next day and you miss them the next day and he took you right up and tanned your hide. (laughter)

Q. So it wasn't only discipline, it was really making you learn?

A. Yes, sir! And I learned multiplication tables under him and he says, "Now you learn them backwards." And I says, "All right." Wasn't long until I could say all of them backwards.

Q. Did it take many hickory stickings to learn them?

A. I never got whipped. (laughter) I was always up with what he required. He'd stay in the country through the summer to work with the threshing crews and so on and Dad told him one time, he says, "Bert's got it in his head that when he's big enough, he's going to lick you." (laughter) And he said the old man just like to laid down and rolled. He said it just tickled him to death.

Q. What kind of games did you play at school?

A. We played ball but we didn't play baseball. It was what was termed town ball. You knocked a ball. If they could get it and throw it in front of you between bases, you were out. They didn't have to touch you—throw it across your line of travel. That was our main game and then we played kick the picket. You've played that, of course. Black man.

Q. I'm not sure. Kick the picket, you say?

A. Yes, kick the picket. Somebody'd guard the picket. Somebody'd run in and kick it and then they'd have to be It. So it was just passed around. It was just amusement, that was all. Main thing was exercise. We played marbles . . . and kick the picket. Black man. You know what Black man is?[7]

Q. No, sir.

A. You don't?

Q. I may know it but I'm not sure.

A. Well, that way you chose sides. When the noon bell was [rung and] we got done our dinner, well, we'd step outside and choose sides and that put one side against the other. Well, then we ran through to the other side and they had to catch us. We started all in a line. You'd be standing in line. I'd stand next to you but you'd be on one line and I'd be on another. Well, I'd take off for the other side. If you could catch me before I got to the other line then I had to go back and take your place. So, all of it was exercise—vigorous exercise.

The last school I went to, I told you about this man hearing me at noon

[7] See addenda item 6.

and recess. It wasn't the last school. It was next to the last school. A lady taught it and she was raised there in the neighborhood. There was two men that were grown men, one of them was 32 years old and the other one was 27 and they would come to school. They'd ask permission of her if they could come to school and she let them come. And they brushed up on what they wanted, mathematics largely. They'd brush up on it and they'd come just the same as a scholar, by gum. Well, then with 63 scholars,[8] she'd take in those two extras, you know, and let them . . .

Q. What did a teacher have to do to prepare to teach?

A. They had to have a second grade certificate for their first school. You could get that by going to Hillsboro and taking an examination before the superintendent of instruction, you know, in the county. That was only good for one year's teaching. When you finished that year, then you went back and applied for a first grade certificate which meant that you had been studying as well as teaching and you advanced up to where you could handle the advanced literature in the school.

I'd give anything if I had my school books but you know I was the oldest and those things cost like everything those days and Dad was poor. So as quick as I finished a book, it went to my brother below me and went from him to the next one. They wasn't torn up, they were used. I had a higher grade arithmetic that I wouldn't have taken ten dollars for but I let Nel have it in school as a reference book and somebody stole it. So I never had a school book left.

We had Saunder's Readers and Spellers and we used Ray's Arithmetic a great deal of the time. Wherever I went you'd run into Ray's Arithmetic. I don't know whether you ever saw Ray's Arithmetic or not, but it was one of the hardest along that line that I've ever seen. He put in problems that were problems, I'll tell you he did. If you could work the third book of Ray's, you really had some mathematics.

Q. So you had to buy your own school books. What other equipment did you have? Paper, for example?

A. Well, we had a blackboard and the school furnished the chalk. That was all. We had a . . . all of us had a slate and a slate pencil. That was instead of your notebook that they use today with a lead pencil, you know.[9] I never used a notebook in all my school work, but always a slate. Then you could wipe it off, keep a damp cloth and wipe off, go right ahead and put on another example.

Q. What size were the slates normally?

A. Slates? About as long as that paper and about that wide.

Q. So about 13 by 10 inches?

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[8] See addenda item 7.

[9] See addenda item 8.

A. Something like that and they were well bound. They were framed and well bound and then around the outer edge they had holes punched and they run a weaving around there. String clear around the thing so it wouldn't come loose in one place and lose part of it and so on, you know. They were good slates.

Q. So you used chalk instead of pencils all the way through school, I guess, then?

A. I used the slate pencil on the slate. That was just another piece of slate but it was cut in the shape of a pencil. Then you could make definite marks with it and wipe them out and then the chalk was on the blackboard. That was what we used up there always.

Q. I guess you had to slap erasers together to clean them?

A. Well, we had erasers to clean it with. It was always somebody's job to clean the erasers once a week and to clean up the board good and clean the last of the week, especially if we was going to have a spelling school on Saturday.

Q. In the sports program, the games that you played, were any of those games played between [schools]?

A. Not between schools, on the games. Just the spelling was the only thing that we had contests in. Oh, now I'll take that back, the kids did visit schools. They'd get permission from their teachers to go and visit a certain school for an afternoon. Of course, they played the games but then they were not competitive.

Q. What did you eat at lunch at school?

A. Well, we always had to carry a dinner bucket and we tried to have sandwiches and Mother would put in a little glass of dessert of some kind if she had it. If she didn't have it, why we just didn't have it. I just despise sorghum molasses yet because we (chuckles) grew the sorghum, you know, and made the molasses and we had that at home.

My dad was a beekeeper. That is, he always had bees and we usually had honey. I didn't eat as much sorghum as the rest of them did. The rest of the family liked it very much but I didn't. My wife liked it very much and my brother today. I expect there's a part of a glass of it in there, my sister likes it. I expect there's part of a glass of sorghum in there now.

Q. What kind of clothing did you wear to school in those days?

A. Just like I've got on now, everyday work clothes, and they were not so expensive. You could buy a very good pair of overalls for fifty cents. You could get a shirt as good as this one for thirty-five cents and shoes were a dollar and a half. Boots went higher, you had to pay about three dollars for a good pair of boots. All the boys, practically, wore boots because we waded snowdrifts and everything, you know, and the girls—some of the girls wore boots. I went to school up here at Burnet and there was

one family at Burnet that there was, I think there was, four girls in it. Their dad put boots on them the same as he did on the two boys. It always made me feel bad to hear them go clumping up to class. I didn't mind hearing boys do it but I did feel bad for those girls.

The teacher would call a class. He had it stand right in front of his desk. He sat in the back of the building, you know, and he'd call you right up close to his desk. You either sat on the front seats or stood up, usually stood up. We didn't mind that because that was part of the exercise.

Q. Did you have individual desks at that time?

A. Two at a desk. There was the back of this desk here, now, that sloped this way, [it] held my seat; and my desk over here was part of the next seat in front of me, you see. So that all the space was used. We had to scoot in to get in the seat. They did turn up, though. You could turn them up and turn them down. They were just wood seats. No cushions of any kind. In latter years, they had ink wells on them and we could use a pen.

Q. And you say the teacher sat in the back of the room?

A. Yes, he always had his desk at the back of the room and when he called a class, why they came right up to that, you know, and stood in front of him and he'd give out orders to recite--reading or spelling.

We spelled everyday, of course, and in the spelling in the everyday work, we had to give the definition of every word we spelled. That was a wonderful help to me when I went on the road as a telegraph operator. If I knew the definition of the word, why I could spell it correctly on the wire, see? So, it was a big help to me to have to take those definitions.

Q. How large a plot of ground was there around the school? Was it an acre, or what?

A. About an acre.

Q. About an acre.[10]

A. And it belonged to the township. It wasn't assessed, you know. The ground around it was assessed but it wasn't. It was free of assessment. Fact is, the ground around it was assessed to keep it agoing.

Q. What other buildings were there there? Did they have a small stable for those that might ride horses?

A. No, they didn't at any of the schools that I went to. If there was any of them rode, they brought their own stable. Their dad would come and make a little lean-to, you know, to put the horse in during the day.

Q. What material would he use?

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[10]See addenda item 9.

A. He'd use pine boards. Those days you could buy lumber, you know, that was lumber. It was made of good stuff and it didn't cost so terrible much to put up a little place for a horse; or maybe two or three of them would go together and make one, you know. But in my own family, we walked, we never had a horse. Dad came after us once or twice when it was real stormy and brought an extra horse for us to ride. We'd ride three or four of us on a horse.

Q. When he came after you, was it a regular box wagon that he brought?

A. No, he'd come on horseback. He'd ride a horse and lead a horse. One or two of us would get behind him and then fill up the other horse, you know. Then he didn't have to lead it after we got on, we'd take the bridle.

END OF SIDE ONE

Q. Was the weather in the winter ever severe enough so that you couldn't get to school?

A. No, I don't ever remember a time that we couldn't get to school, but I can remember it being so severe one winter that we walked right across fields on big drifts over the fences. The fences were under drifts six and seven feet deep and we could walk right on top of those drifts, too, and we would do that; we'd get up there and walk instead of walking through the snow.

Q. Did you use snowshoes?

A. No, I never knew there was a snowshoe until I was grown.

Q. Just regular boots?

A. Just regular boots and wool socks. Our feet got plenty cold even then, while we was out in the snow. But we never frosted them, never once do I remember us having frosted feet. Working in the timber, we worked just in those boots but, of course, we was working hard and got up a good flow of blood.

Q. In the school activities, how often did the parents come to school to see how you were doing or did they have meetings of some sort?

A. Well, very seldom. My dad was a better educated man than the average run of the people around here and he only had the eighth grade, that's as far as he come. But he was a great reader. He read everything that he could get his hands on. In those days he took the only newspaper, I guess, that come to Raymond, I don't know. It was the Toledo Blade published in Toledo, Ohio. Come once a week. And when he got that paper, the neighbors knew when he got it and they would come in and he would read the entire paper to them, advertising and everything. So he was a splendid reader. He was the best reader outside of an elocutionist I ever saw. I couldn't even compare with him, at all. He loved to read out loud and he

read the Bible through to us twice during winter months. After supper he'd get out the Bible and just read chapter after chapter until bedtime and I heard it read through twice.

Q. Did he read other types of material to you?

A. Oh, yes. He read everything that was interesting in that paper. Then it got to where he wanted books and there was no libraries. There wasn't any libraries short of St. Louis or Decatur, you know. One of the neighbors, who was a great reader also, got Dickens' works, the complete works in paper binding and they were that big. Great big books. Hard to hold and not big print but Dad read those things and my, my, my how we did enjoy them! There was The Pickwick Papers and David Copperfield and all of them. We just loved them.

Q. About what size in inches would you say the books were, 10 by 14, or . . .

A. Oh, they were bigger than our slates. I would imagine they were 12 by 24. They were big and he read the whole thing. There was a number of volumes of Dickens' works, you know. I've read The Pickwick Papers twice since I've been married. (chuckles) Just pick up the book--find it some-place, you know--and borrow it and read it. I enjoyed it so much.

Q. Did you take any magazines at that time in the family?

A. No. No magazines. Didn't even have religious papers. We had Sunday school papers in the church, but that was the extent of papers that we got. We had quarterlies to study from, that was one thing.[11] My dad was superintendent of Sunday school.

Q. Where was that?

A. The New Hope Church. Do you know of it down south? The Baptist Church?

Q. Yes, I've heard of it, I believe.

A. Well, they attended that all of the time after we moved to the timber. When he was up here on Gerlach's place, he came to this same church that's in Waggoner now, the Baptist Church. It was built out in the field a quarter of a mile south of the crossroads there, where you turn to go to Harvel. It was built in that field, that church was, and we went to church there. And then after we moved away and I'd lost track of this part of the country entirely, why they took a notion to move it into Waggoner. When the railroad went through and they got to building a town there, why they moved it across country to Waggoner and never broke a plaster, never cracked it. I don't know how on earth they done it.[12]

Q. And that's still the same building there?

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[11] See addenda item 10.

[12] See addenda item 11A.

A. Same building. And that's got some of the most wonderful lumber in it. I helped an electrician wire in there through the attic.[13] A traction engine could go up over the roof of it and not break through. It's just trussed so perfectly. But we attended New Hope Church down there.

Q. While you were living there on the Trout place and then you moved over to the Gerlach place, what was your dad doing? What type of farming was he doing?

A. Just general. Raising corn, wheat, oats, and hay. He had four horses and a plow, and a pair of cultivators, and I'm not sure whether he owned the planter or not. You know, farmers those days borrowed one another's stuff all around the country. They'd go in cahoots and buy a planter and all of them use it around, you know, because they had to have a check wire to make check rows so they could cross plow it. Had they known what they know now, they wouldn't of had that wire because it was a detriment. But that always went with the planter.

Q. The check wire--what did it do?

A. It dropped the hill. It ran through some pulleys up here and then it hit a fork. It had knobs on it about the size of the end of your thumb and those knobs couldn't go through these forks. The wire would run along until they [the knobs] would come to that [fork] and then they'd flip back, jerk the plate around,[14] and drop the hill into the ground at the right place.

Q. And the purpose was to make them evenly spaced in both ways?

A. Yes, make them evenly spaced, crossways as well as lengthways. I used a check rower after I came up here in 1910. I bought a planter with a check rower on it and I used it for, oh, all the time I farmed.

So, the drilled corn, or the corn as they plant it now, came in after they discovered, in the experiment stations, that we were cutting roots and retarding corn instead of developing it. That's what we were doing and so they began to talk about drilling corn. Well, then they sent out corn planters with plates that ran steady, you know, and they just drop a grain every eight inches or six inches or whatever you wanted, just like they do now. Only they multiply them—they were two rows to start on. Now they are six and eight.

Q. Did your dad . . .

A. He just had a two-row.

Q. A two-row planter.

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[13] See addenda item 11B.

[14] See addenda item 12.

A. And I'm not sure whether he owned it. I rather think that he borrowed it from a neighbor close by. I expect they bought it together. He sold out to the other man when he left because, when we went to the forty, why we didn't have a planter to plant corn until we bought one at a sale. We had sales around the country and he got one at a sale and began planting corn.

Q. Did he rotate crops in those days?

A. Yes. We tried to grow one field of clover each year to rotate and we'd grow a certain amount of wheat and that was sown to clover and that clover stood over winter and then was cut for hay the next year. The next year, why we plowed it up as a rotation, you know. So, we worked on rotation pretty hard because we didn't have commerical fertilizers in those days. None at all.

Q. No nitrogen or anything?

A. Nothing of any kind. They did buy bone meal for wheat once in a while. If they could afford it, they would sow bone meal with the wheat and that stiffened the straw, made it stand up better. Made a little better yield, too.

Q. What kind of wheat did you grow? Bearded wheat?

A. Fulse. Fulse wheat. Everybody grew Fulse. It was a red wheat, they would call it today, a red, hard wheat. It wasn't a soft wheat, it was a flour wheat. Well, then they developed from that into . . . The experiment stations began putting out . . . you know, I don't know half the names of the wheat that we used later on. Then they got to getting the hard wheat in, which is the best flour wheat there is, the hard wheat.[15] They got it in and that was grown here in this part of the country for a long time. It was bearded.[16] People didn't like to work with it because it was mean to handle. All the time you got beards in your clothes, and beards down your neck, and, oh, it was miserable stuff to work with. But the experiment station took off the beard. Then they used it practically all together in the later years.

Q. When did you usually plant the wheat in the spring? About what time of year?

A. Not in the spring. It was all fall wheat. Stood over winter. We tried to get it sown early in September so that it would make a good growth for winter coverage of the roots.

Q. Then when would it be ready for threshing the next spring?

A. Well, the next year it would be ready for harvest about the—to cut with a binder—about the Fourth of July. Well, then they went in with the binder and cut it and bound it in bundles and shocked

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[15]See addenda item 13.

[16]See addenda item 14.

it up and those shocks stood until the threshing machine came. Then there would be bundle wagons go and pick up those bundles in shocks and bring them in, pitch them into the machine.

Q. Usually what time of year did they thresh?

A. They'd start threshing the latter part of August and go on until they had threshed out a territory. The threshing machines developed territories. The Baker boys had this territory in here for a number of years.

Q. Is that Roy Baker and . . .

A. Roy and Frank. Then, later on, why, south of me got a co-op organized and bought a machine of their own and just hired an engineer to run the engine, somebody to run the engine.[17] The men themselves took care of the separator, they took turns of taking care of the separator. There's quite a little job to keep a separator oiled and so on.

Q. You mean oiled while it was working?

A. You had to stop it to oil it but then they had to know where to oil. That was the size of it. If they neglected one bearing, it would burn out on them, you know. So, the men had to learn. It wasn't everybody that could take care of the separator, there was usually two men in the crew that knew how.

Q. When your dad was farming during the years you were going to school, what power were they using? Did they have the steam engines then?

A. No. No, the first steam engine I saw was the last year we was on the Gerlach place. It was just a boiler set upright on wheels. They'd hitch four horses to it and hauled it from farm to farm.

Q. It wasn't self-powered, then?

A. No, it wasn't self-powered. It wasn't even mounted; only on four wheels and they were only about so high, so you wouldn't upset it. That was the first steam engine I'd ever seen thresh. Well, then when we went down in that part of the country, why there was a man named Sullivan--Jerry Sullivan--and his brother, Steve. They bought an outfit. They had some land down there adjoining us, or close to us, and they bought a machine and started running it. They had an engine that pulled itself and pulled the separator, and wasn't that something!

Q. What power did they use before they had the steam power?

A. They used horse power.

Q. How would they do that?

A. Well, did you ever see a horse-power?

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[17] See addenda item 19.

Q. No, sir.

A. You never seen one? Well, I don't know whether I can describe it to you or not. They were built so that you had to turn them with a team. You hitch a team to them. Turn them round and round. There's a big gear in the center of it and it runs over a little gear here that furnishes your power. You drive your team in a circle, just round and round. In fact, you don't have to drive them, you tie them to a stake. They soon learn it. You just tell them to get up and they go and that furnished the power.

Well, that power furnished the tumble-rod that went over here to a wheel that they could put a belt on and it would run the separator.

Q. A tumble-rod, you say?

A. Well, they called it a tumble-rod because the horses had to step over it every time and another thing, it had a--what do you call these things in there--universal joint in it. It had a universal joint so it was always called a tumble-rod.

Now, they never threshed with one at our place but I seen them run, I knew how they did it. That thing, that power was quite a job to move. It was heavy and had to be loaded onto something and hauled to another place and that tumble-rod taken down and the pulley taken off and so on. Then they got an engine that pulled itself and pulled the separator and, oh my, what a wonderful thing it was.

Q. Can you describe how the separator operated?

A. Well, it operated just exactly like a combine does today, just exactly. A combine is an old separator with an engine in it, that's all. There's an engine mounted in these things, in the combine.

Q. The only difference would be you threw the bundles in instead of cutting the wheat as you went through the field?

A. Yes, the combine goes through the field and cuts the [grain] off and elevates it up into a cylinder just like the bundles did, they went into a cylinder. Those cylinders had teeth on them about the length of my fingers and they were very hard steel. Then there was plates put down in the separator that they ran between. They just missed those plates, just went between them but a grain of wheat couldn't go between them. So, when they hit a head of wheat, why they left it back on that side of the . . . the . . . Oh, what am I trying to say? . . . Well, don't matter. Left it in the front of the separator and it went down a chute. A belt carried it down a chute and it went into the . . . Now, I'm telling you wrong on that. It <u>did</u> carry it through. It carried it clear through because it . . . the straw went clear through and so did the wheat and it was separated back there in the separator.

They had riddles there that worked one above the other and they got smaller. The top ones took out the main part and the others got a little smaller until they got it down where it was clean wheat. Then that run down into an auger in the bottom of the separator and that auger augered

it out into the measuring box. Somebody sat in that measuring box, was a half bushel, and let the half bushel flow and struck it off. You struck it off with a straightedge and then you poured it in sacks, men-held sacks.

Q. By "struck it off," you mean you . . .

A. Struck it off level, so it would just be full because they settled by that. The threshing machine settled by that and also they counted that as a bushel of wheat. When two of those was dumped in a sack that was a bushel of wheat. Oats they didn't use the half bushel on. The oats run in there and they shoveled them into the sacks. If that wasn't some job! I did that, too. That did give you something to do. Take a field of oats making eighty bushel, oats would come out so fast there it would make your head swim and if you let your box fill up, you had trouble spading. I would get so mad at the sack carriers. You'd get some pokey sack carriers; why, you'd be waiting to shovel, and they'd be talking politics or something. I'd yell my head off.

Q. Why did you sack it there? Couldn't you have taken it in a box wagon to the elevator?

A. No, wheat was all sacked in those days from the machine and it was hauled, if you put it in the granary, it was hauled up and the sacks were opened and just dumped in the granary. It went to the elevator in sacks. We didn't have tight wagons then like we do now to haul grain. It was all sacks.

I worked for one man that had two years wheat crop in a granary. He had rented a man's barn that lived close to him and he had two thousand bushels of wheat in that barn. Wheat got to a dollar a bushel and he had a payment to make on his farm. He said to me, he said, "I'm going to sell my wheat and clean up my debt." There was two of us named Bert working there. About the same size. I was about sixteen and the other fellow was a little older; he was a year or two older than me but he wasn't any bigger. And we sacked that wheat, that two thousand bushels of wheat. He [the farmer] got neighbors to come with the running gears of wagons. In other words, they took their beds off and put bridge plank on the wagons. They would throw these sacks crossways of the bridge plank and take fifty bushel of wheat at a load on a wagon. When they got to the elevator, why the wagon and all was weighed, you know, and then they went up and dumped it into the elevator and come back and weighed the sacks and the wagon. So, us two Berts kept them five or six wagons a-running. We like to worked ourselves to death. (laughs) My, my, my, we did go to town!

Q. Do you remember anything of the lunches or meals that were eaten while you were threshing?

A. Yes, the women vied with each other as to who could furnish the best meal for threshers and we really lived on the top of the hog. (laughs) They really went to extremes. At the last, they got to where it really was an extreme. They had everything. They'd go and buy these baked hams, cut all the fat off of it, slice that lean meat and put that on the table.

The men would eat their fill and it's a wonder it didn't kill them.

Q. Speaking of food, back in the school days when you were living on the Gerlach place or the Trout place, what types of things did you eat at home, say for breakfast?

A. Eggs, largely, and bacon.[18] We cured our own meat. Dad would kill hogs and salt it down. He had his bacon and hams and shoulder. Mother would usually try to have something in the meat line that she could make sandwiches of to put in our buckets. We depended on a sandwich for dinner. We didn't eat a big dinner, I'll tell you that, because we were too keen to get out on the ball field. We didn't need a big dinner. But we had plenty, enough, always and, as I said, she'd try to put in something in the way of a little dainties—sometimes it would be nothing but egg custard. We were all fond of that and a teacup or two of that run us.

Q. What then would you normally eat in the evening?

A. Well, we had a regular supper. We'd have a supper of, usually, meat and potatoes, cabbage, beans, and so on. Just what we had in the way out of the garden, largely—in the fall of the year, at least. Then, through the wintertime, of course, we had potatoes and they made lots of hominy those days from corn, the whole grain hominy. Made it themselves. We used lots of hominy. It could be fried or it could be put on the table just boiled and it was very good food. It was corn, you know, whole corn, germ and all.

END OF TAPE

A. To make that, they had to put that corn through a pretty strong solution of lye and it would loosen the hull on the corn and, after it had been in it so long, you could just rub your corn like that and all the hulls would come off.

Q. Just rub it between your hands . . .

A. Yes. It would be clean corn and it was sure good.

Q. This was just normal field corn, was it?

A. Yes. Just whatever we had, but those days I never seen yellow corn until I moved up here in 1910.

Q. It was white corn, then?

A. It was all white corn. They grew white corn altogether. They began to learn yellow corn in Iowa and then there was a seed house started developing it and sending it out. Now, it's all yellow. This man east of me here grows white corn. He has to hunt a special market. He can't sell it in the elevator. They won't mix it. It makes it look like rotten

[18] See addenda item 15.

corn; so they won't buy it. He sells it to the hominy mills and to . . . Oh, it goes south! I don't know, it . . . You've been in Florida, haven't you?

Q. Yes, sir.

A. Did you ever eat any grits?

Q. Oh, yes, sir.

A. (laughs) The grit mills, I think, get about half of it, because it goes down there some place and is used for human food more than stock food.

Q. You didn't eat grits here, then?

A. No, I never heard of grits until I went through Florida.

Q. I see.

A. And that was after I lived up here ten or fifteen years. We had hominy and we used to get cracked hominy here. It was made from white corn. They would break it up in small pieces and sell it in the grocery store. Then we cooked it until it was like the other hominy, you know, cook it thoroughly and we used a lot of that but you can't buy it anymore. Can't get it at all.

Q. Did you eat much corn bread in those days?

A. Yes. Quite a lot. Though my dad was a biscuit man. He didn't have breakfast if he didn't have biscuits and my mother baked them and of course we all liked them.

We traded wheat for flour. There was an old O.K. farmer's mill stood in Litchfield,[19] north—well, it's right about where Dr. Driscoll's office is now, if you know where—I don't mean Doc Driscoll, I mean Doc Billiter. Do you know where his office is?

Q. No, sir, I don't.

A. Well, it's up State Street. There was a mill there that would take the whole wheat and weigh it and give you the equivalent in flour. Every fall we took a load of wheat down and changed it to flour and we had flour for all winter. Well, that made splendid biscuits, you know, Mother baked light bread, too.

Q. When you brought the flour back, it was in sacks, I guess, was it not?

A. It was in the same sacks we'd taken the wheat in only we changed them from outside to inside, you know.

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[19] See addenda item 16.

Q. Did you have any problem with keeping the flour over the winter? Did it spoil?

A. No, we never had any weevil or bother that I ever remember at all, but nowadays, you'd have a time, you know you would. Just have weevil, weevil, weevil—but we never did have that. We didn't have near the parasites in those days, we do now. In fact, they grew wonderful apples without spraying of any kind. Just wonderful apples. I'd give a lot if I could get a tree of some of those old-timers. They used to have Bell Flowers, Rambos, and all of those old-time apples that were so delicious. Northern Spy. I bet you never saw a Northern Spy.

Q. No, sir.

A. They grow them in Dakota yet and once in a while they ship them down here. I see them on the market once in a while. They were a wonderful apple. Then there was Winesaps, two kinds of Winesaps. Then there was Romanite, two kinds of them, big and little. Genetins. You never see any of those apples anymore. I don't know why they went to Yellow Delicious and Red Delicious. I think that the Red Delicious is a very poor apple, to my notion.

Q. When you lived on the Trout place, did you have an orchard there?

A. No. No orchard there. We had an orchard, though, at the Gerlach place, a good orchard. We dried apples. That was another thing, too, we dried lots of apples. In the fall of the year when they'd get ripe, why we would bring them in and peel them and cut them in about eighths, I guess, maybe a little less. Then we had laths that we made frames of. We would spread them out on those laths so we could carry them and put them out on sheds where the sun would hit them all day. [We would] put mosquito bar over there and weigh it down so the flies couldn't get on them and dry those apples. And, boy, if you ever tasted dried apple pie . . . (laughs)

Q. Really good, huh? You had potatoes, they didn't require drying. Was there anything else that you stored over the winter that required drying?

A. Yes, we dried pumpkin. I hated the stuff but we used it. I didn't like it at all, but the folks did and we dried quite a lot of it. They'd just cut pumpkin in rings, rather thin, and string them on a string and put them out in the sun, you know. They dried readily and would keep good.

Q. Where did you store the apples and the dried pumpkin?

A. Well, that was all stored in the house or in the smokehouse. They usually had good smokehouses those days, buildings that were free of rats and mice, you know. You could store your meat in those places. We had a big box we put the meat down in, with a lid on it so those things couldn't get into it if they did get in there. A lot of the things were stored that way, put in boxes in the smokehouse and stored, anything that [it] wouldn't hurt to freeze. Course everything froze in there, you know.

But then we buried the apples. We'd pick the apples in the fall and we'd take them out and make a great row of them. Then we would get forked sticks and stand [them] up like this over them and cover that with a heavy layer of straw. Then [we'd] scoop dirt, make a trench clear around it and cover all of that with dirt. Then when fall came, we'd go to hauling horse manure and cover that over with horse manure. I don't know whether you know it or not but horse manure ferments and it would smoke. It would get so hot it would smoke in the wintertime. The horse manure and the dirt and straw kept those apples from freezing. The best apples you ever tasted came off of that ground.

Q. Did your mother do much canning in those days?

A. Yes, but you couldn't get cans. The fruit jar wasn't known at that time. She canned in . . . oh, jars. Take a big jar and put the fruit down in it and weight it, but it was more inclined to ferment. It was hard to keep it from fermenting and we didn't have canned goods like they do now, home canned, I mean. Later on, when they began furnishing cans and can lids and so on, why, we canned an awful lot of stuff but we still buried those apples because they were so good and we buried the potatoes. Dad counted on fifty bushels of potatoes to take us through a winter. We grew them ourselves, you know, and we'd fix them just the same as the apples.

Q. Used forked sticks, you say, and formed kind of a tent over them and then covered . . .

A. We'd put those sticks up and then we'd put brush on them sticks and then straw on that brush, you know.

Q. Did you use the manure technique on the potatoes?

A. Yes. Everything that we didn't want to freeze, you know, we'd pile that horse manure on there. Well, down there we had a barn and I guess five or six horses and there was quite a lot of manure that we hauled out. Every week we'd pile some more manure on there. Then in the spring of the year—we always buried them in the garden—when spring come, we'd spread that manure all over the garden, you know. Tore down the apple pile and the potato pile and took them in.

Q. Were there any types of food that you generally bought in those days rather than . . .

A. We bought coffee and sugar regularly. Sometimes we bought crackers but to buy crackers you had to buy a box. A box was as big as a four-dozen egg case. It was a big square box if you took it. I don't know what it weighed but it was pretty expensive, anyhow. Well, if we bought a box of crackers, we counted on that lasting us quite a while.

We used lots of potato soup. We had cows and milked, you know, and we used lots of potato soup and crackers, bread, and then Mother fried bread. I still like fried bread. Take light bread and slice it and make you up a batter of egg and milk and beat it up thin and dip your bread in that and then fry it. Oh, boy, I like it yet.

Q. But you didn't like sorghum on it, though?

A. No! (laughter) I ate it those days but I got my fill of it.

Q. How often during those days would the family generally go to town?

A. Once a week.

Q. Once a week?

A. Yes. Usually in the big wagon. We didn't have anything else to ride in. I was married and away from home before . . . No, I wasn't either. We got a spring wagon when I was about sixteen, I guess. From that time on we used the spring wagon to go to town for groceries and so on.

Q. Was this normally on Saturday or Saturday evening?

A. Well, usually the end of the week. The grocers had to carry most of the farmers on their books for three months, until harvest time come, you know. So, it wasn't any disgrace to ask for credit. And I don't believe that the grocers that we traded with ever shorted us, I don't think so. I think they were just as honest as we were and Dad always met his obligation on paying them at the right time.

Q. Where was this? Was this at Raymond?

A. Raymond. But we went to Litchfield for the flour as I told you. We got that there.

Q. How often during a year would the family generally go to Litchfield?

A. Oh, they'd go, I'd expect, in the summertime, I expect they averaged once a month. We went to the shows. You know shows came through those days--Barnum and Bailey and all of those big shows, Buffalo Bill.[20] We never missed one of them! Dad would strain himself to take us kids to see them.

Q. How would you get there?

A. We'd go there in a big wagon.

Q. A wagon all the way to Litchfield?

A. Oh, we'd all go in the big wagon. Take horse feed, go to a wagon yard and put the horses to the end of the wagon and put in the feed. They usually had a place where you could get in the shade to eat dinner and we'd take our dinners with us and eat dinner. Then, we'd go to the show after dinner, you know.

Q. And then come back that night or did you stay overnight?

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[20]See addenda item 17.

A. No, we'd be out by five o'clock and come home at night in time to milk, do the chores.

Q. How long did it take by horse and wagon to Litchfield?

A. Two hours.

Q. Two hours then.

A. Yes. You never figured less than that. The roads were just dirt roads, you know, and that time of year the dust would be about that deep.

Q. About six inches.

A. Oh, how it would fog up! I never saw an oiled road until after I moved up here. In fact, I helped put through the oiled roads. Ira Baker was the road commissioner and we voted to have some road oil. We could only have so much allotted to us because they didn't have it at first. They didn't make the effort to provide it. So, I would ride one direction, Ira'd ride the other. We'd see the farmers and try to get signatures enough to get Springfield to let us have the oil and we'd get that. If that wasn't a job! Every farmer wanted his road oiled out in front of his house. Well, you'd have to tell them you had to start someplace and you had to keep adding to the end of that and so, "We'll start at Waggoner and we'll oil from the end of where we get to and we'll get to your place eventually." Oh, we had a time, but we got it through finally, got the whole township oiled and it was a wonderful help. Before they had oiled roads, we begin to get Fords.

Q. The Ford car, you mean?

A. Yes. They would go through quite a bit of mud but the township bought some iron drags. They called them scrapers but they were really a drag. The front part of them was a blade that would level in front of it. The back part was a straight up and down piece of steel and it leveled what the front one failed to level. Well, we kept those things at certain places in the township and when we'd have a thaw out in the winter and we'd know we was going to have a bad mud deal, one of us would go with a four-horse team and hitch on that and drag the roads to town so we could get in. Then if it froze that night, we had a smooth track to Waggoner.

Q. A regular hard road then. Well, sir, we've been at it for little over an hour now and I think I've got sufficient here to keep me busy for overnight, at least, to get this transcribed. Do you feel like we could break and pick up tomorrow afternoon on this?

(Tape was turned off. Shortly thereafter, the taping was resumed in mid-sentence.)

A. . . . up to the time I was sixteen years old, I gave him [his father] half of all I took in and then when we got in the timber, why of course, I didn't get any wages, he collected all of it there.

Q. That was one area, the work in the timber, I think, that I would want

to go into some detail with you.

A. Okay. That's all right. It was very interesting work to us because it was a new thing. Those pickets that we made. The woven wire fence wasn't known at that time at all. You could buy barbed wire by that time but you couldn't buy any kind of a woven fence. No kind. So, some energetic fellow perfected a machine and he wasn't a robber on it. I don't know who he was or what state he was in. He perfected a machine that you could put right on the ground, string the wires through it, and then turn the crank and weave pickets in it. Turn the crank this way this time, this way the next time . . .

Q. Opposite.

A. . . . and it would weave those pickets right in there and you could make a good picket fence and it would turn pretty near anything, especially hogs. We made a thirty-inch picket for hog fences. There was a lot of farms down in there that were fenced clear around with those pickets. They'd take that machine and start in. Three men could make a whole lot of fence in a half a day if they had the pickets. The wire looked just like baling wire but those days it lasted twice as long as wire does now, if it wasn't burned up or something. I don't know why. What did they do to iron?

Q. Gosh, I don't know.

A. It's not what it used to be. We used to get wire that lasted, you know. That first baling wire that come around here didn't have any galvanizing on it but it would last and last and last. I don't know what they done.

But, anyhow, that looked just like baling wire, in size. They'd have their posts set and their wires stretched around and then run this machine along and tack them on.

Q. And they would do a whole forty-acre field, for example?

A. They could do that. Some of them, they'd been making hog fences of six-inch planks, you know; nailing them about that far apart.

Q. About six inches.

A. Well, this was so much better and so much easier, too, because you left it, you didn't have to tear it down and build it every year.

Q. In the timber, you were in the process of making the pickets.

A. Dad was the river, they called them. He learned to use the tool--they had a tool they called a froe.[21] It was merely a piece of steel about this long . . .

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[21]The froe is a cleaving tool for splitting, or riving, staves, shingles, and the like from blocks of wood. One who performed this riving, was called a river. [Ed.]

Q. About a foot long.

A. . . . and about four inches wide and it was tapered down. We didn't keep it as sharp as an axe but it was sharp so you could drive it down into wood. Then on this end of it was an eye in which you could put a handle to hold to while you manipulated it, you know. Well, you take a block of wood and set it up here and put that old long thing on there and drive it in as far as you could drive it. Then start prying and go right down, off would come a slat, you know. We had to saw those blocks the right length, split them into eighths, peel them with an axe, and usually heart them, and then turn them over to him, to use the froe, you see.

Q. What was the right length, normally?

A. Thirty inches was for hog fence. We made more of that than anything. We made a few garden fences, four feet, but that was difficult to get timber for that. Four feet is quite a long strip of timber . . .

Q. For being straight and all.

A. Yes. Making the slat of it. Those were split off. They were not sawed or anything, they were just split with the grain of the wood. Of course, they seasoned in the wire. Then, I don't know how long the fences lasted. I know they lasted quite a long time.

Q. You had a team then that cut the wood and went through all these processes. About how many of these slats would you make in a day?

A. Oh, I can't . . . I can't tell you. I've lost that. We piled them in piles, ten in a layer, then crossed them, ten again, and the man who was paying for them could count very quickly how many he was buying. They were not our timber. It was always somebody else's timber we was working in and we fixed them so the man could sell them or use them. He could tell. We were paid by the pickets we made. I don't remember what he got, whether two cents or one cent or what.

Q. Was this your father's industry then?

A. During the winter. We worked at that all winter, yes, sir.

END OF SIDE ONE

A. And we worked up a lot of timber, too. Then, when spring come, why both of us worked on a farm as hired men. He and I together would put in what crops there was there on the forty, usually about fifteen acres. Then, we'd work for other farmers to get along. I worked many, many, many days for fifty cents a day, twelve hours.

Q. Twelve hours.

A. Went to work at sunup and you quit at sundown.

Q. That's a pretty good day for work.

A. I'll never forget my first suit. The neighbors wanted to sow oats and I was big enough by that time to hold a walking plow and two horses. I followed a walking plow a straight week and I thought my legs were going to quit. Ooooh, they got so sore, I just couldn't hardly walk at all and I got three dollars. They gave me three silver dollars for the whole week and I went home and I said, "Dad, I want to go to town and buy a new suit." He said, "Well, all right. You've earned it.I'll take you in and we'll get a suit." And we went in and there was a Jew store there in Raymond—man named Leesman—and Dad told him, he says, "Now, this is this boy's first suit"—I mean a tailor-made or hand-me-down, whatever you call it—and he says, "He's got three dollars and he wants a suit." [The merchant] says, "Well, I'll get him a suit for that." He brought out a suit and it fit me good and it was a pretty suit and he says, "Now, that's a mighty good piece of cashmere. That will just wear like iron." And it did.

Good night! I wore that until I quit wearing it for a Sunday suit. I wore it a lot for work. Three dollars!

Q. Gee whiz, three dollars for a suit! Well, sir, I need to check this word list with you . . .

(Tape stops and starts, portion not transcribed.)

Q. . . . and that was town ball that you played. Town?

A. Town ball. We called it that. I don't know whether anybody else ever played it but that school. (laughs) I never played it anywhere else.[22] I don't know, but we developed it anyhow and that was our game because, we . . . That's another thing I ought to tell you. When we moved down there on that railroad, we knew that the railroad was using rubber car springs. Now, that's something you never heard of.

Q. No, sir.

A. And we went to hunting for a car spring that had broke loose and fell off and it wasn't long until we found one. It was a solid piece of rubber about that deep . . .

Q. About six inches deep.

A. . . . and about that big around . . .

Q. Almost a foot.

A. . . . and it had a hole for a bolt through it. The bolt had broke and let the thing drop. The weight of the car sat right on, just worked up and down on that piece of rubber. They didn't have springs on them at all. Well, we took a saw and sawed that thing in two and then we sawed out pieces,

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[22] See addenda item 18.

quarters, like you'd cut a cake. Then we took them and whittled them with a pocketknife until we made balls of them.

Q. Oh!

A. And those was the dingdest balls . . . (laughs) . . . that we ever played with, cause a man could knock one of them almost a quarter of a mile. You couldn't catch them on the fly. That's the reason we played town ball, where they could throw them across in front of you, you know, and put you out. You wouldn't throw it to a fellow to catch. The catcher stood behind the bat; he stood far enough for a first bounce.

Q. And you just went along the railroad tracks until you found one that had fallen off of . . .

A. Found one of those springs. Of course, we stole it but it would have never been picked up.

Q. Well, that was a good supply of balls.

A. That made balls all the time that I went to school there, we whittled them out. I made most of the bats. I'd go down to the creek and find a dead willow tree and find one that was fairly straight and I worked a bat out of that. Willow was tough and light but it was heavy enough for those balls. Sometimes we'd play two-cat with those things.

Q. Play what, sir?

A. Two-cat.

Q. Two-cat?

A. Well, you and I would stand behind two girls. They would be at bat. We would throw that ball and they knocked it and we caught it if we could. Then we'd throw again, you know, and after they knocked three balls they had to change corners. They had to run through and if we could cross them out, we crossed them. We did cross them (laughs) because it was too hard to catch that ball.

Q. What would happen, would they just bounce out of your hands when you tried to catch them?

A. Oh, boy! It was just like catching a piece of iron. We didn't have gloves in those days. Why, I never saw a pitcher's mitt until I was grown. We caught them barehanded, you know, and I remember one time we was playing two-cat. The girl on my end got a good clear shot at it and she knocked that ball and hit the other woman right in the cheekbone here. It didn't quite knock her down but it come awful close to it and boy did she have a . . .

Q. Swelled up, huh?

A. She didn't cry. I thought she'd cry but she didn't. She held it back.

(tape stops and starts)

A. It was Pennington. Yes, Pennington. He'd been the superintendent of schools down in Jersey County and he had gotten beat at the election and he just went back to teaching and he come up and bid into our schools. He was a mathematician—oh, I don't know how big—but he just loved mathematics. When he got the A arithmetic class—that was the top one, you know—when he got them up to the board, the rest of the school just done as they pleased. (laughs) I seen a fight one day in the schoolroom while he was listening to the A arithmetic class. He turned around, one fellow had hit the other fellow and knocked him over a seat. He made quite a racket, you know, and the old man turned around and he says, "What's going on here," and, of course, they admitted that they was in a fight. He took those two boys up there and he had seasoned switches, huge switches. He made them get on their hands and knees and he put their heads between his knees and he'd take that old cane and come down on their back and it would double down over their rump and—oh, boy, did he lick them! I never saw another fight. (laughter)

He'd kill me if I told that, I expect, if he was alive. He was a man past middle age then, though. He sure was a mathematician and he had short cuts. Us boys tried to figure out his short cuts. We did some of them, we got onto them. He was a great whittler. He whittled all the time he was hearing a class. He brought white pine sticks with him about an inch square and he would whittle them three-cornered places on them and them was where he did his arithmetic. He'd rub that out, put it on with a lead pencil, you know, and he'd rub them out. He'd never let one of us get ahold of one of them. So, we went to figuring to catch him and we finally figured out. We could beat him on the problem, finally. Well then, he give up, he knew we had his secret. But he was a whiz on arithmetic. He taught the school that winter and, as I say, he paid no attention to noise, didn't care how much they whispered or what took place down there as long as they had their lessons. But they better have them because those hickories come down easy.

Q. And he used it if you didn't have your lesson?

A. You bet he used it. I never got whipped in school but I thought sure I would several times. I wasn't good by a whole lot but I just didn't get caught.

END OF TAPE

Q. How large was the Trout farm?

A. The Trout farm was 160 acres. Dad was there two years and he recuperated some, got a little ahead, you know, and then he wanted up in this blacker dirt. That's in whiter soil down there, nearer to the timberland. You probably don't know it, but there's a break in the soil, the second glaciation is all we got through here, we never got the third and part of that down there, I think,was cheated even on the second. It's called timberland. Well, it'll grow wheat even superior to this, if they

get it in right and take care of it. There's where the chinch bugs originated. There's where we had the awful time with chinch bugs, at one time. So, that land, even the home place, was in that timberland.

Well, now since they have obtained tractors--I don't know hardly how to explain to you. When they started in here with teams, and oxen, and so on, to farming, they plowed the same depth every year, one year after another. They just plowed just a certain depth. Well, in the course of time, plow-pan developed there, and that's what they termed it in the experiment stations, plow-pan.

Q. A hard area?

A. This was a hard place that water didn't penetrate so that the subsoils were robbed of the water they should have got through the winter and spring, you know. Well, pretty near every one of those places had plow-pan and when they got tractors and began to fertilize and so on, they broke that plow-pan. They went down another four inches probably. It had been plowed about four inches; they went down about eight and broke that all up. Well, it was like breaking out a new piece of land, almost. It got the subsoil watered and aerated and since then I've been made to just marvel at what tractors did to this country. Even in here there was plow-pan, right here in this good black dirt. Plowed the same depth every year and that plow-pan developed; well, you could see it when you broke it up; it was just hard as slate pretty near.

Q. So the 160 acres of the Trout place was further south?

A. That's the way I remember it. Now it could have been 120, you maybe better say a 120, but I think it was 160; but it was white land and he wanted up in the black land. The black land starts in--do you know where Bill Bailey used to live?

Q. No, sir.

A. Did you ever know the Benning place?

Q. No, sir.

A. You knew where the Harberts lived.

Q. Yes. The old Starr place?

A. Yes. Well, about a mile and a half south of there was the drop-off.

Q. Just about along where Route 48, then, runs going into Raymond.

A. Yes, that's right. That could be classed as the dividing line, and yet there is some awful good black dirt south of [Route] 48, some farms. When you get a couple of miles south of there, you begin to hit the timber soil where timber was cleared off of them, put in cultivation. Then they produced real good for, oh, a number of years, even that timberland. I saw five acres cleared one winter when we were working with the pickets. There was a neighbor that was aclearing five acres and he gave away the wood to get it hauled off his place. He'd chop it and trim it

up and gave it away and he broke out five acres. Well, that five acres has been farmed until it's just as bad off as the rest of it now because [of] going too long without recuperating. Now, when they put the fertilizer on, what the experiment station says they need, they can grow crops. But they don't get the rain we do here . . . as a general thing, they do certain seasons but, as a general thing.

Now, my father had just his forty acres. There was about fifteen of it was farmable. The rest was timber pasture and we'd keep several head of cows, horses, and so on; the grass in there, you know. Fine grass, grew wonderful blackberries. There was a creek within a quarter of a mile of our house. That was pretty near heaven to us boys, to have that creek to swim in and to fish in. The railroad ran right alongside of it. It was one side of the forty. Oh, we just loved that place, you know.

Q. That was after you moved down to Honey Bend or to that vicinity.

A. Now, up in here, the farms were all of pretty much the same quality of black soil and it just depended on the drainage a great deal for the productivity of it. They begin digging ditches and draining off the surplus water and that was a wonderful thing, but, my, it was some job to dig those ditches. The year that I worked for Tom Richardson, the first year, we dug a ditch across one side of his fields and down through John Gerlach's fields. I worked thirty days, right straight along, except Sunday, on an old scraper. We'd take a team and go down in the bottom of that ditch and fill her up with dirt. Then you had to climb that bank and hold that scraper so it didn't spill, so you could clean out that much out of the ditch.[22] Well, we dug over a quarter of a mile in that thirty days and it let some land up in the northeast corner of Richardson's place [become usable], brought in more land, don't you see?

Q. Did you have any problem with drainage on the Gerlach place when you were living there?

A. They was a big ditch went to the west of it[23] but I never knew it to be cleaned out while we had anything to do with it. They eroded very fast. You know, water running off of plowed ground and alluvial soil; they fill up, rapidly, and that ditch was never cleaned during my knowledge. After we left it, I suppose somebody did clean it up. That was good black land.

In the southeast corner of that 120, there was a swamp that hadn't been farmed. They had just got a ditch to it and began drainage in it when we moved on the place. So, we never did get to farm it, that was waste-land on that corner. But that was next to George Fooks' land and George was always saying, "That ditch down there!" Now, George was a progressive man . . . You remember George, can't you?

Q. Yes, sir.

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[22]See addenda item 20.

[23]See addenda item 21.

A. Very progressive man. A great reader and he studied those things, too. I learned an awful lot from George Fooks. He was the first man I ever worked for as a hired man. He took me when I was about seven years old and put me on the stack with him to stack—they stacked all the wheat them days. He took me up there to turn bundles around the right direction for him to lay them. He worked on his knees. The fellows on the wagon threw the bundles up but they couldn't place them. He had me place them just so he could slap them down and get on them with his knees. I got 65¢ a day! Just think of it. (laughter)

Q. In other words, you were loading a wagon, were you?

A. No, we were on a big rick. He was building a big stack of wheat and then he'd build another one over here. The threshing machine would be set directly between those ricks. They'd pitch from both sides into the threshing machine. The reason they stacked it was that they might replow the wheat ground and put in another crop. They followed crop after crop a lot of the time there.

Q. With wheat, you mean . . . Would that be wheat they were following with?

A. Yes. Wheat again. They plowed so as to sow it within the fifteen first days of September. That was wheat sowing time. After I came up here, there was a law made in the state that you couldn't sow wheat before the sixth because of the Hessian fly. It had been brought in from Germany in seed wheat[24] and that fly finished his breeding by the sixth of September. If you waited until after that, your wheat would be clear of eggs until the next year.

So, that was the beginning of the experiment stations telling how to do things, you see? Well, that was followed by chinch bugs. We never had grasshoppers to destroy crops here but we did have them bad enough that we harvested them and killed them. We had what we called a grasshopper catcher that was a big box about so high . . .

Q. About a foot and a half high.

A. . . . and the front of it was bright tin and down here was a two-by-four that you drug and it hit the clover, they'd be in the clover field, you know. Hit the clover and the grasshopper would jump and he'd see his shadow, or reflection, and he'd jump to where the other one did. Well, when they dropped down, why they immediately fell back under that tin. They didn't have sense enough to come back out. The back of it was screened and they would try climbing that screen and so . . . Well, when we got that thing full, we sacked them up and hung them on a fence post, left them for a couple of months and then fed them to hogs. They made good tankage.

Q. Did you tow this with horses through the clover?

A. Yes. A horse on each end. We had to walk to do it, you know, but those days there was no question about walking. Everybody had grown up

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[24] See addenda item 22.

walking. (laughs)

Q. Could you talk a little bit about the cultivation of the corn? What you used, equipment.

A. Corn, they finally learned after a while that it wouldn't ruin a corn crop to get on it, after it was about that high . . .

Q. About three inches.

A. . . . with a harrow and harrow the ground thoroughly. That killed weeds that were at the top of the soil. Hoes do it now, you know, but them days it was just a harrow. They would harrow corn thoroughly the first time. Then the next time, why we'd take the cultivators. They were two-shovel affairs, one shovel set ahead of the other like this. This one throwed the dirt this way (motioning away from an imaginary row) and this one throwed it this way (motioning toward the row) so that you had some loose dirt thrown in against your corn plant to cover weeds that were around it. There was also a fender that went along here, of this one, that kept you from covering up the corn. You'd throw [dirt] against it and it would let it fall down in the row of corn. That was the first cultivation.

Well, then after you got over it the first time, it should, in a very short time, be about so high. Well, then it was crossed. You went cross-ways of it. That time you didn't have to watch about covering up, you had both shovels set fairly straight, so that they just throwed a little to a side but still dirt in the row all the time to . . .

Q. Did both of these shovels go on the same side of the row of corn?

A. You had two of those on a cultivator. You had two shovels on this side and two shovels on this side and handles to them, walking plow handles, and you walked behind there, held them close to the corn and if you seen an extra weed, you could swing them into it.

Q. I see. In between the hills, then, you could swing them together more.

A. Yes, you could bring them together. Then, after that had been done, corn stood then usually until we got the wheat cut. That would be about next after the corn was crossed. We'd get the wheat cut and then we'd go back and lay it [the corn] by. Well, it would be as high as that table probably, when we laid it by. We plowed it lengthways again this time, same as the first time, and you'd set your shovels to throw everything in the row, you made a ridge about so high around the stock. We thought that had to be done to make it hold up, you know, [the] corn row. Well, it would put out spur-roots, above that dirt even, to brace itself. So, that was the . . .

Q. Were the cultivators . . . You say you walked behind them, you didn't ride on them?

A. They finally got seats on them but they didn't for—I worked for Mr. Richardson, that last year was 1900, and I walked with the cultivator that

day, or that time.[25]

Q. Did they use a two-horse team, or just a . . .

A. Just two horses on a cultivator and those horses learned the work as well as you did. They knew how to turn around at the end without breaking down all the corn. (laughs) When you was laying by, they broke down corn bad. People liked mules better than horses to lay corn by with because they wouldn't break it down. A mule would step around things. A horse will just knock them over.

So, the walking cultivator was still in existence when I quit. I quit in 1900 and went telegraphing. I went to learn it.

Q. In the fall, about what time of year did you start cutting the corn, or gathering it in?

A. Well, that depended largely on the corn you planted. Now, there was an earlier and a later variety of corn, in those days, without us knowing it but some would mature two weeks earlier than the other. I never heard them say, "I'm planting an early variety" or "I'm planting a late variety," or anything. Usually took about eighty-four days for a corn crop, from the time you planted it, to mature ready to start harvesting. We'd start husking and the husking was all done by hand, you know. I have my old hook and shucking peg yet.

Q. Oh, is that right.

A. (laughs) I ought to give them to you.

Q. Well, we might take a picture of them to put with this record set. Could you describe what it is, the pick? What does it look like? How is it used?

A. The shucking peg and the hook?

Q. Yes, sir.

A. You know, I've got them out there. I'll show them to you. Oh, you don't want to take the time now. I'll have them for you tomorrow.

Q. All right, sir.

A. They're out in the tool box. And the shucking peg went over your whole hand here, right in here [pointing to palm], and stuck out about so far and that was pointed. You'd shove that into a shuck and sock your thumb down on it and tear the shuck up and slip your hand in around the ear.[26]

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[25]See addenda item 23.

[26]See addenda item 24.

Put this one in up at the top and snap them off like that and throw them in the wagon. There was men that developed two hundred bushels a day in husking, in contests, but [for] most of us, like me, eighty bushels was a big day's work. You just husked it and put it in a crib and it cured.

Well, we could start shucking corn two weeks earlier than they can start with the combines today because the cob was green. You threw it in the crib, it dried out, you know, and didn't mold. The corn finished up drying in the crib but today they must wait until corn is ready, a certain grade up not very much under 10, or uh, not much under 12, moisture.

Q. Would that be 12 percent moisture, you mean?[27]

A. Yes, in the grade. If you go to the elevator, you see them jab a great spout into the load of corn, take it out and pour it . . . They are very meticulous to get just exactly so much. Then, they put that on a scale and weigh it to get the weight of the corn. So as to know what to count as a bushel, you know. Then that's dumped into an electric machine that tells you the moisture content just as quick as the hand can get over it.

Q. Oh, is that right? I haven't see that.[28]

A. You go over to the elevator and loaf around some when they're bringing in corn. It's quite interesting.

Q. Did you shuck all the corn or did you shock any of it, cut and . . .

A. I hated fodder. As I told you, I worked out, from the time I was thirteen on, for farmers. A number of them were cattle feeders and they cut all their corn and put it in shocks. I've got up of a morning when it was pouring down rain, hitch a team to a wagon and go out and tear that corn loose and throw it on a hay frame and the water run down your neck, you know. Good night! I learned to hate fodder just like I hated poison.

Q. Did your dad shock the corn when he was on the farm out at . . .

A. Well, yes he did, that's to feed the cattle, what cattle he had, he'd cut the corn. That was another job that was a hand job. You took a corn knife and went in the field and you measured off sixteen hills, each way. Then we fixed what we called a "horse," crossed four hills like that and tied them.

Q. Without cutting them, just . . .

A. Just the hills of corn and then we'd start in cutting right around

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[27]See addenda item 25.

[28]See addenda item 26.

them and set in enough to brace them from all sides. Pretty soon you'd have it so the whole thing was braced and you cut wherever you wanted to around and around, until you got the sixteen hills cut. We used to get ten cents a shock for cutting one of those fields.

Q. How many could you cut in a day?

A. Well, I could cut sixteen, that was about the best I could do. My brother next to me could cut twenty-four. He worked a different system from what I did. I just cut right around the shock. He'd start in and go right through the field and he'd make all of his "horses," as we called them. Then he'd start cutting down. He'd cut from this shock to that shock, set it up, and from that shock to the next shock and set it up, and he could cut twenty-four in a day; but I never worked that, that was too much carrying. You had to carry sixteen hills of corn and, if it was good corn, you got sixteen big ears, or thirty-two big ears in there, I mean--two ears to a hill. Boy, it was a job!

Q. It could get heavy, then?

A. It could get awful heavy and you'd get awful hot. I cut quite a lot of corn but I never got so I liked it, at all. I just detested fodder. So, when I come to the place, I just wouldn't cut, only if I wanted a little bit of fodder to go to the cows, I'd cut maybe a half a row or something like that. After you've done that, you've got to wait until the corn cures, then go and shuck it out and reshock it, and pick up the corn. If you don't have a wagon with you, you've got to pick up the corn and throw it in the wagon.

Every bit of it was work, and handwork. You really earned your money. Course, dollars was dollars as I told you yesterday. A dollar bought . . . Well, a dollar and a half bought a pair of shoes like these; fifty cents, a pair of overalls; thirty-five cents, a shirt.

They didn't have gloves like they do now. I guess I, well, I was a grown man before I ever started going with gloves, covering up my arm.

Q. What kind of gloves did you wear at that time, then?

A. Oh, my mother would make us cotton flannel mittens. She'd make mittens and we wore those to do all that rough kind of work. We used them all together for timber work. They were warmer than the leather.

Q. Did your dad raise much hay on the two farms, the Gerlach farm and the Trout . . .

A. Well, he usually had twenty acres to hay and that was put up in stacks or, if there was a barn on the place, you put what you could in the barn, you know.[29] Most of those rented places didn't have a barn of any size.

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[29]Mr. Aikman later explained that neither the Gerlach nor Trout farms had barns. For verbatim text see addenda item 27. [Ed.]

You had to put it in a stack. Well, we would stack it as close to where we wanted to use it as we could and fence it to keep the stock away from it until we was ready to use it, then open up and put it in a rack to feed. That was largely timothy.

I never seen a hay baler until I was a great big boy. [Then] they developed hay balers. They were run by a horsepower. I tried to explain a horsepower to you yesterday, you know. A big gear that runs around here and a little gear fits into it, takes off through other gears, develops the power. They would have to drag that horsepower around with them wherever they baled hay.

Q. They set it up in the middle of the field, then?

A. Yes, they would set it up where you could bring shocks to it. Practically all the hay, that was baled that way, was raked up and in windrows and . . . Well, I'm clear ahead of my story.

END OF SIDE ONE

A. It was put in little shocks, first, early. They'd build them in little shocks and then they would take one horse and a rope tied to the outside tug. You'd slap that rope around this shock and fasten it to the other tug of the horse. [Then, climb] up on this pile of hay to balance it and away you'd go to the baler, you know.

Q. You'd drag it to the baler.

A. Drag it to the baler. We'd drag it right up there and then take our rope loose, or the baling man would. We'd never get off the horse probably there. And get back to the field and grab another one, drag it in.

Then they developed the forks. Forks that would haul in hay and when we had those we could just scrape the hay into windrows and then take that; there was a horse on each end of this rake. You drove two horses. They were tied together in the middle with just a rope and you had a line on them so you could turn them the way you wanted.

Q. How far apart were they tied?

A. Oh, they were eight feet.

Q. Eight feet apart?

A. Yes, and you'd start in a windrow and you'd get a pile of hay coming up and up and up and up until it was ready to spill over on you. Then you'd pull out and go to the baler with that. Then, you backed your horses out. You [would] just turn them around and tell them to back this way and they'd take her right out and you'd go for another load.

Q. How did the baler work, then? You have a load of hay beside it, did you fork it into the . . .

A. Yes, they took a man to feed it and two men to wire it. There had to be a man on each side to wire in those days. They had the blocks that were made the size of a bale and there was a place through the blocks as big as your finger that you could punch wires through. You'd punch the wire through to this fellow; he'd turn it around here and punch it through to me on the other side. Then I'd tie it. And the old baler would be slamming away at you all that time, you know. It was a plunger that hit like that. (slapping fist in palm) He drove these blocks up. When he got that bale done, kicked off, why we took this block and put it on forward to where it belonged and he started another one and we went to wiring the one he was beating on. (laughs)

Q. Sounds like a rather complicated procedure.

A. Well, it wasn't so complicated. It was very simple, very little to it. Nowadays they have balers and one man runs them, you know, and they pick it up and bale it, tie and bale.

There's been a tremendous advance in farm machinery. I never got to work with much of the advanced machinery because I quit . . . let's see, I was 70 years old, I think . . . 69 or 70, when I quit. So, I never used any of those self balers. Never used a combine . . . until I went to rent my land. Of course, then combines worked here and so did corn pickers but they was rented, hired.

Q. How much livestock did your father normally have on the Trout or Gerlach farms?

A. Well, we had three cows—we wanted that many for milk cows—and the get from them, that would be six head, cows and calves. No farm could hardly do very much without four horses;[30] they just pretty near had to have four because they used drags to level ground. When they plowed a piece of ground in the spring of the year, the first thing was to put a team on each end of two six-by-sixes that were pinned together but were about that far apart . . .

Q. About two feet.

A. . . . and you rode them. You stood on those six-by-sixes and leveled the ground. So you pretty near had to have four head of horses. He usually had four horses and a colt or two; they raised lots of colts those days. So, when he moved down to the farm there, what we called the home place, I think we had six head of horses that we moved down there, as I remember, but we didn't have very many tools, just a . . . we had a walking plow, and harrow, and corn planter. I'm not really sure, as I told you, whether we owned the planter or whether there was two or three neighbors and him owned it. I don't know about that but we had a planter we used, anyhow, to plant the corn.

Q. How many hogs did you normally have around the farm?

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[30]See addenda item 28.

A. Well, he liked to raise hogs. He kept one or two brood sows. Then, if he could raise corn enough, he fed out their get. That would be about 14 head of shoats to work with. We shipped veal calves. Veal calves were valuable meat to the Jews, you know. We used to ship veal calves, some hogs and . . . He never had any corn to sell because it took it all to feed the stock. [All] he could grow on there. He rented some land besides that. It got so we had a little corn ahead after he got to using, or renting, land from other people.

Q. Did you do much butchering on the farm?

A. Yes, we butchered all our meat. Usually in the fall, just about school starting time, why, we'd kill a beef and they pickled it. They had big barrels and they'd put it in the brine and put it down that way, and it was pickled. It was real good beef, anyhow. You was asking about our sandwiches. We used to have a lot of that in sandwiches. That was elegant meat for sandwiches, cut thin.[31]

Q. Could you describe how you went about butchering the beef?

A. Yes. We'd shoot it, usually with a shotgun. Get up in front of it and shoot it in the forehead. It was all done right there on the farm. He usually got some men to help him, probably have two, because they would have to put a pulley up in the tree and start skinning, you know, and lift the carcass up as they skinned. Gutting, too, you had to have [it] up above to do that and the same way with hogs. When we butchered hogs, we always put up a place that we could hang them on. Well, two men would take a hog and come over here. They had a gambrel in these leaders here in the back legs. We put that over this pole up here and the hog come down clear to the ground. They could wash it and gut it and even cut it in two, half, you know. We did all of our butchering and usually had meat for the winter. Then bacon for the summer, bacon and some of the hams for the summer.

Q. I believe you said your dad normally salted the pork. Did he?

A. Yes, just salt pork, that's what it was. It was salted down until it would keep perfectly. Then in the spring of the year, they would brush all that—after it had cured, takes so long for it to cure, six weeks, I think, if I remember right—they'd brush off the salt as clean as they could and hang it in the smokehouse, that's where that name originated. Hang it up there and then build a smudge fire under it of hickory chips, or corn cobs and hickory chips, and make a dense smoke. That house, you couldn't hardly get in and out of it. It would smoke that meat to a brown color and flavor it. It was flavored with the smoke. Nowadays they paint that smoke on, you know.

Q. How long did it take to smoke the meat?

A. Oh, you'd be three or four or five days doing that. They put it out of

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[31] Mr. Aikman later identified this meat as corn beef. See addenda item 29 for verbatim text. [Ed.]

a night for fear of fire, you know. They usually took a washtub and filled it with ashes from the stove or fireplace or whatever, so there'd be nothing to burn there. Then put a kettle, big iron kettle, in to build the fire in. It set in those ashes. This man right south of them burned his house by not having proper equipment . . .

Q. While he was smoking meat?

A. Yes, he was smoking meat and a ham broke loose and fell down in there. It caught fire immediately—the grease, you know—and it tipped the kettle over and I guess the tub, too, because his house was practically gone before they woke up. That was in the night, he was foolish to have done it in the night, midnight.

Q. You say they pickled, was it the beef?

A. The beef was pickled, yes. Then after it went long enough, we could take it out of storage, you know, and put it in a barrel and, I think, probably they had a little brine in that barrel always, so as to keep insects away, you know.

Q. It was pickled in brine, then?

A. Yes.

Q. I see, and then you repacked it in the barrels.

A. You never see pickled beef anymore. I'd like to run onto some one time, some of the old beef we used to have. My, my, it was so good. It was salted clear through.

Then, they had what they termed the dry salt. Some people used it. My dad didn't. He never liked it but I worked for places where that was the way they cured all their meat. They would put it down and just covered it over with salt and they'd leave it so long to cure. After it had cured they'd take it out and they'd have to wash it before they could put it in the skillet or anything to cook because it was so full of salt. Well, take the bacon for it, they would slice it and dip it in egg batter and fry it and, oh boy, was that good.

Q. How about poultry around the farm at that time?

A. Well, they always had chickens. I can't remember when Mother didn't have chickens, as many as she could keep. We had eggs and, in the summer and fall, we had fried chicken, of course, from the young chickens.

They sold eggs, all that they could spare from the table. We sold them to the groceries, for groceries. Those days the groceries bought that and they would buy that meat. If you had more of that meat than you wanted, you could sell it readily at the grocery store. They'd jump at it, to get the hams, especially.

Q. Did you have other types of poultry, like geese, for example?

A. Well, my mother raised geese enough to make a number of feather beds.

We'd have one for Thanksgiving, perhaps. That was, we didn't eat them very regularly because we were not too crazy about goose. (laughs)

We tried to grow turkeys. We had turkeys when we was on the Ed Gerlach farm because I remember what a time I had of locating the nest of one hen turkey. We knew she was laying but we wanted to know where her nest was. She would just leave the bunch and start out and, if you wasn't right on her tail, why she would disappear before you knew it and go to her nest. I trailed her a half a quarter. She had a nest in the hedge. I finally located it. Then, when she'd hatch, why we wanted to bring them up to the house to shelter. Young turkeys are very tender and we'd shut her up of a night to take care of the young turkeys.

Q. You mentioned the hedge, how were your fields fenced on those farms?

A. Hedge.

Q. It was all hedge?

A. All hedge. When I come to this place here, there was . . . Let me see . . . half mile, half mile, that's a mile . . . three, mile and three-quarters . . . two miles of hedge around this place and I had to trim every year.

Q. That's what they called the Osage Orange type hedge?

A. I tried to summer trim it, keep it cut about so high, just for a good fence. It didn't rob the crops too bad that way, you know.

Q. About five or six feet high, or . . .

A. No, about . . . I tried to keep it about that high and that was an everlasting job. I hired a lot of that done when I could because half a mile of that in a day was a big day's cutting.

Q. That was just using a hedge knife?

A. No, you took a corn knife and worked this way and this way and slashed her off the top and then come down, squared it at the sides. We put woven wire in it. As soon as I moved here, why we put woven wire about that high around the whole farm in the hedge. Then I could turn hogs in any field I had, having that woven wire in it.

Q. The wire was about what, the first foot of the fence?

A. Usually, it was about 16 inches. Didn't cost too much. Two or three of us, two or three neighbors, would go together. We could put a lot of it in a hedge in a day time.[32] You didn't have to set posts, you just wired it to the hedge. It was a good fence.

Some of it was burned up when they cleaned up the fences around here. They

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[32]See addenda item 30 .

had a bulldozer clean up the hedges, finally. But there was two miles of hedge around this place and that was a lot to cut.

Q. When did you cut it normally, in the winter or . . .

A. You cut it twice a year, in the summertime; and to get it in shape, if you couldn't get it all cut in the summertime, well, you let it grow up, then you had to cut that off in winter. Well, that had to be piled and burned and that was a big job. You had to get in neighbors. [Then], with a horse on each end of a big pole—and a pole rigged out in front of that big pole—start pushing down through that hedge. You'd get a big load of it and then pull off to one side and back your log back. [Then], go down a ways and pick up another load and bring up here and jam it in. It was a job to pile the hedge brush. So, I didn't like to have it grow up if I could help it.

Q. You burned the hedge. Did you also burn the cornstalks after the . . .

A. They burned them. When I first came up here, they burned all cornstalks. In fact, they burned wheat stubble. They burned pretty near everything that should have been plowed under. It was a long time before they learned that they ought to leave everything back in the ground. I don't think it's been over twenty years that they have realized that. Oh, I guess it's been more than twenty because time gets by me so fast now, but a long time.

They would break these stalks. They'd go out of a real cold morning, with a horse on each end of this pole I'm telling you about, and they would straddle four or six rows, whatever they could. Go down through the field, and they'd break them off right at the top of the ground, be frozen, you know. Then they'd turn around and come back.

Then they had a homemade rake that fit in the back of the wagon box. They put it on the wagon box and hitched the team to the wagon and it would rake, it was a tumbling rake. It was made like that, so that this would be raking when you was going. Well, when you got ready to dump, why you let that loose and let this one fall down, and so you had four rake[s] agoing together, you know.

Q. Oh, it just kind of rotated then?

A. Yes. It turned over. It was quite a job to make one of those.

Q. What did you make it of, wood?

A. Wood, heavy wood, heavy timber.[33] The center beam had to be a six-by-six and these teeth were mortised in. Then, at the end, you had to have a round place that fit into a two-by-ten and that part fit up in the wagon for you to fasten, to drag it by, you know, and. . . .

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[33]Mr. Aikman later stated oakwood was used. See addenda item 31 for verbatim text. [Ed.]

Q. How wide would this be, then, on the back of the wagon?

A. It would only take four rows. That was as much as we could handle very handily with the rake. Those old rakes . . . Wow.

Q. With that, then, you windrowed the corn?

A. Windrowed and burned it. We would just start in and light it at one end and it would go sweeping across the field and burn everything up clean. Then [we] plowed the ground. Of course, you had the stubs in the ground but you was clear of the stalks. The reason they wanted those stalks off was because they interfered with cultivators. We didn't have good discs yet, you know. When we got good discs, and could cut those stalks all to pieces in the ground, then we quit burning so much of them. Then plow them under and disc crossways and chop them stalks up, then they wouldn't bother the cultivator very much. Time you cultivated, they'd be partially rotted.

Q. What about the use of manure from the barn and that sort of thing?

A. It all went on the field or the truck patches. Usually, we had a potato patch that we favored and a garden that we favored. Then the rest went in the field. That had to be spaded both ways. You spaded it on the wagon and you got on the wagon and you spaded it off.

Q. That must have been quite a job.

A. Yes, it was a job, and you had to clean your barn once a week because, if you kept your horses up, it would pile up in there and get in the way and we had to clean that out and haul that off. That was a Saturday job for us schoolkids, all the time, to clean the barn, one of the things we had to do if the weather was fit at all.

Then, after I moved up here, why they had manure spreaders, by that time. I had an old straw stack that was rotted down, out east there, and there was a whole pile of manure about that deep, and rotten straw. I wanted to scatter it on the wheat field. Auston Miller lived a mile north of me on the road. He had cultivated my acquaintance when I first moved up here because he and one of my father's brothers went to school together. He wanted to know me, then, because I was an offspring of that fellow that he went to school with.

Well, he had all manner of tools. He owned a section of land and raised a carload of hogs a year and so on. He was well-to-do. I went up to his house, I knew he had a spreader, and I said, "I'd like to get your manure spreader. Would you loan it, or rent it? I'm willing to pay you whatever you want for it because I want to distribute that stack bottom and I don't want to spade it." And I says, "What would you ask, now? How much a load or how much for the job?" He says, "You hitch onto that spreader and take it home with you. When you bring it home, we'll settle." Well, that was a little jubberish, you know, but I took it and went home and spread the manure, got it all done. I took it back up to him. I says, "Well, how much do I owe you? I want to pay for it." He says, "I'm just <u>so</u> happy

that you could use it. I don't want a cent and if you need another one, don't fail to remember me."

Well, then, a year or two later, I had another stack bottom. John Waggoner and I had gotten to be real close friends. John had a spreader down there on his farm and I says, "John, I've got a stack bottom to spread. What would you charge me for your spreader?" and he says, "I won't charge you a cent. You come and get it and spread that stuff. You're perfectly welcome."

Well, that was neighbors, see? That machinery cost money! Those things didn't cost under a hundred and fifty dollars and those were real dollars, too, you know. So big around. But I was favored by a number of those fellows that were here ahead of me and, of course, I had worked for George Fooks, as I told you, when I was on that farm. He was the man that handled the renting of it.

When I came up here, George was running the lumberyard at Waggoner and a coal shed. Well, I used to go down and talk to him because he was an experienced farmer and I knew that. I'd go and ask his advice about things, and so on. So, George got so he looked out for me too, you know. He and John Waggoner and those were looking out for me, that I had the right stuff to do with. I couldn't afford it yet.

Q. What was the gardening like? Back on the Gerlach place, for example?

A. Who was the gardener?

Q. Did your mother do most of the gardening?

A. Well, she worked us kids in it, of course, but she was the gardener hardly. Dad worked in it when he was caught up in the fields. They had a big garden because we lived out of it, you know. We had everything growing in it, even, my dad was a smoker, he even grew his tobacco. (laughs)

Q. Oh, is that right?

A. We grew a big garden. I can remember still how he buried cabbage and I've never been able to do it.

END OF TAPE

A. In the fall of the year, he'd have a big bunch of cabbage plants ready to put away, the heads solid, and at the right time he'd go out in that garden and dig a trench and turn them down on their heads, with the root asticking out that far. He'd bury them in there, and just go off and leave it. When we wanted cabbage, we'd go out and dig one of them out and it would just be as perfect as . . .

Q. They'd keep all winter?

A. . . . and I never have been able to do it. They'd just keep perfect. Sometimes the ground would be frozen on top and we'd have to take an axe and chop off the top, take out our old cabbage head. (laughs) It was just as good as could be.

Q. Now, you've mentioned apples and cabbages and potatoes that you stored in the garden. Were there any other types of things like that, that you stored in the garden over the winter?

A. No, that's all I think of now that we stored in the garden. We had the potato bin there and the apple bin there. We left each one of them with an opening at the south end, so we could get into them anytime we wanted to. We used out of them all winter, you know. Course, when there was a deep snow on, we couldn't get out any potatoes. If we heard of one coming, we'd get out a half a bushel or so and take in the house, but those days it froze in your house.

They didn't have houses like we do now. They were not built to turn off freeze. I've seen my mother get up many a time and take a crock of milk and it'd be frozen and dip it out and put it in there, clabber, and make biscuits. It froze the stuff. And such biscuits! Oh, boy!

Q. Really good, huh?

A. Oh, yes!

Q. What did you use to heat the house in those days? What type . . .

A. Wood. We worked in . . . At Gerlach's place, we used coal. We had a coal stove, but when we moved to the home place, to the timber, we never burned anything but wood.

Q. Where did you get the coal? Did it come from Raymond?

A. George Fooks!

Q. Oh, I see.

A. He had a coal house and we bought it off him. He shipped it in by the carload and shoveled it in the house and sold it out.

Q. Would you go to pick it up there?

A. Pardon?

Q. Would you take the wagon there and pick it up yourself?

A. Yes, we'd take it in and shovel it in the wagon. Then bring it home and shovel it in the coal house,out of the weather.[34] Then get a bucket or two full and take in the house, if it was cold. I wonder how in the world people kept the stuff they did in those houses, not built any better than

[34]See addenda item 32.

they were. They just put two-by-fours and some lathe and plaster on, you know, and weather boarding on the outside. Well, you know how much cold that would keep out. (chuckles)

After we moved to the woods, they developed a little sheet iron heating stove, which was a blessing to all the people that burned wood. It would take a stick about that long . . .

Q. About two feet.

A. . . . and you could put four or five of them in and it would heat a house pretty good. It just burned that wood, you know, and heated it up. Well, that was one thing that us boys had to do besides clean the barn on Saturday, was get up wood for the week and possibly saw it up. We had a crosscut saw. You know what a crosscut is, two men?

Q. Yes, sir.

A. And we'd saw that into sticks that would go in the stove and get it ready for the next week if we were going to school. Maybe we'd have to saw a little before we went to school, too, some days. So, we had wood to burn.

Q. I suppose it changed with different houses but, take the Gerlach house, for example, where did you normally congregate? Like you said your father would read to you. Would you do that in the kitchen?

A. In the living room by the coal stove. I'll never forget that coal stove. Us kids was aplaying blind man one night, blindfold, I mean, you know what I mean, and that stove was red hot. I put my hand against it.

Q. Oh, boy!

A. It made a solid blister, the whole hand, you know. Boy, that did hurt!

Q. I suppose your mother had a remedy for burns at that time. What did she put on your hand?

A. I don't remember what. She wrapped it up and . . . oil of some sort, I think she put on it and it healed up all right. The next day, Dad took a needle and let the water out of the blister, so that it wasn't so in the way of my hand shutting, you know.

Q. What medical services did you have? Was there a doctor in Raymond or . . .

A. There was three, three doctors in Raymond. The folks had one doctor that they'd always use. His name was Doctor Easley. I don't know his initials, but he was an elderly man and very courteous. I think, in all probability, he was a Kentuckian or something because he had that bearing and that way of talking, you know, and he brought . . . Well, he brought . . . I guess all of the boys. By the way, there was five boys. He didn't bring me because I was born down in Macoupin County but . . . Well,

I think he brought all four of the boys. There was an old doctor, or a doctor, there by the name of Seymour that my father liked very much to visit with and, as a man and as a doctor, and he brought the two girls.

Q. One doctor for the boys and one for the girls?[35]

A. My doctor that brought me, name was . . . Well, I've forgotten that, now. You know, names are terrible things to get away from you. Do you know that? You don't yet but when you get up to my calibre, you'll find that names are awful hard to keep track of.

But those doctors, there was three of them in Raymond and they drove a horse and buggy, all that time, and they took care of the whole countryside for six or seven miles around, you know, and they made a living out of it, now three of them.

Q. How would you get in touch with the doctor? You had to go get him, I guess.

A. Yes, you went and got him. I went for the doctor for her.[36] I knew what was happening. I was fourteen years old and Dad said, "You get on a horse and go get Doctor Easley." I hopped on a horse. It was three miles and a half to Raymond. I rode in and told Doctor Easley it was time for him to get out there. I turned around and rode the horse right back and, by that time, they had herded the rest of the kids over to the neighbors. So, I put up my horse and went over to the neighbors. Midnight, Dad came in and said, "We've got a girl!" Well, you know we'd been wanting a girl so bad, we were that tickled.

Q. You had said that, in the evening, your father read to you. Were there any other types of family activities? Did you do . . .

A. Oh, yes. We played checkers and we played . . . What's that goose game they used to play?[37] Did you ever play it?

Q. Goose game . . .

A. I don't know. It was much like checkers. You put them on a board and moved the grains of corn. We played that. There wasn't checkerboards enough to go around. Dad wouldn't allow us to play with playing cards. He'd been a Christian all his life and he wouldn't allow us to play with playing cards,

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[35]Mr. Aikman later corrected this. Dr. Easley brought all the children except Mr. Aikman. See addenda item 33 for the verbatim text. [Ed.]

[36]Referring to Mrs. Helen Brown, his sister, who was present during some of the interview sessions.

[37]Mr. Aikman later identified this game as fox and geese. He also stated they used to play a lot of dominoes. See addenda item 34 for verbatim text.

we had to use . . . But we did play Authors. You know about that, I'm sure.

Q. Yes, sir.

A. And, let's see. Then, when we began to try to learn to play musical instruments, the place was a bedlam! (laughs) I just wonder how the folks lived through it. I don't see. We had an old fiddle and scratching on it, and the banjo, and the guitar. Oh, those days.

Q. Were you teaching yourself in those days or . . .

A. Yes.

Q. I see.

A. Trying. My brother that lives in Mattoon made a fairly good fiddler. He learned it. None of the rest of us could. I learned to pick a guitar and second to a certain extent. It was just the chords, you know.

Well, then, when Nel[38] got a little size to her, Dad had got in better circumstances. He got an organ for her and we used to have singing bees there with the neighborhood kids. Round the organ, you know, they'd gather around and have a singing bee. We had plenty of entertainment. There was very few dull moments. (laughs)

I got to where I could read pretty good myself. I liked to read. I read all of Harold Bell Wright's works when they came out and . . . I couldn't read Shakespeare, I didn't like it. I got it and tried to read it. I couldn't get anything out of Shakespeare. But Dad read those Dickens' papers to us and we got a number of cheap novels. People would give them to us. They'd read them and done with them, you know, and we had quite a library of love stories and so on.

Q. Were any of the activities of that nature connected with the church? Did you have meetings at the church?

A. Well, at that time, my father and mother had joined that New Hope Church, as I told you, and they took up Sunday school work over there. My dad was superintendent of the Sunday school there for a number of years and they enjoyed it very much. He told me, in his latter life, that he was called to preach when he was converted. He said, "I got a plain call to preach." And he says, "I didn't have enough education that I felt that I dared undertake it. I plead with the Lord that I didn't have education enough. Finally, I just refused the call." And he says, "He cut me off. He's never allowed me to prosper," and he says, "I can't prosper. I never have been able to. You know the things I've tried. I couldn't prosper."

I think he was right in the end because I learned to know another man who was a wonderful preacher, that we had in our home a number of times, and

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[38]Mrs. Helen Brown, his sister.

he told me that he got the call the same way. He says, "I didn't want to accept it. I just practically refused." And he says, "I rented a farm and tried farming. Well, I couldn't make a go of it. So," he says, "I sold out. My wife was real good with a needle and she says, 'We'll move to town and I'll make hats.'" Those days they made their hats. So, they went into town and started a hat store. He says, "You know, we went broke on that. Couldn't do it." And so, then, he says, "I tried . . ." Let's see, what was the next thing he tried? He tried five different things and failed on all of them and he said, "Then I said, 'Well, Lord, I'll preach,'" and he made a wonderful preacher. If he'd have accepted his call at the start, he'd have been even bigger than he was, as it was.

Q. What was it like to go to Sunday school in those days?

A. What was it like? Well, very similar to this, only not so organized as now. They had a women's class and men's class. In fact, in those days the women sat on one side of the church and the men on the other.

Q. Is that right?

A. Yes. Then, they had, they didn't have too many graded classes. They'd have probably three, of the young people. And it was very difficult to get teachers, very difficult. So few people paid any attention to the Bible, you know, until they were converted, and then they didn't grasp it as readily as they would if they had of been brought up in a Sunday school.

So Sunday school was very important, in my estimation. It's really the teaching service of the church. That's what it's intended to be, it's not the church, but it's the teaching service, and I always got a great lot of pleasure out of Sunday school.

When I came up here, I hadn't been here . . . Oh, well, I don't think I'd been to church three times until they put me on a class, to teach, and I didn't have too much Sunday school work, but I had a lot of Bible because I had plenty of time to read the Bible as a telegraph operator. Nothing to do a lot of the time. I had a Bible laying on my desk.

And, then, we had a blind preacher there and he had a braille Bible. I don't know whether you ever seen a braille Bible but they was <u>that</u> thick and <u>that</u> big. Well, it was a load to carry, and I went to entertaining him after I got to Honey Bend and was married. We took him into our home and entertained him every time he was over there. He would come over Friday night and we'd spend Saturday preparing his sermon. I'd read the Bible to him. He didn't carry his old braille. I'd hunt up whatever he wanted and read it for him and help him get his outline made up. He was blind, he couldn't follow an outline near like they do now, you know. He had to memorize it all. But he could do it. He would have his three sermons memorized. They had a Saturday night business meeting that he preached at and then two sermons on Sunday. I learned an awful lot of Bible from him and helping him.

Q. Were there any social activities associated with the church?

A. Yes, they had ice cream suppers and . . . Oh, Thanksgiving and

and Christmastime, many a time they'd have carry-in meals, you know, everybody bring a dish and that was a hey-day—Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Q. Did the children put on programs?

A. Yes, they did. That was Sunday school work, largely. I know my dad would never apologize for anything that happened (laughs) with the Sunday school kids. He'd say, "Now, there's no apologies here. You'll take it as we give it to you."

Q. Well, they must have come out pretty good, though, didn't they?

A. Yes, they did.

Q. Now, you've said that the family, when you were living in this area here . . .

A. We attended, come to this church once a month. They just had once a month preaching to start with. It was a weak church and they'd spent about all their money, I guess, abuilding the church.

They had a young man right out of Shurtleff College. Shurtleff at that time, at Alton, was a religious college, and he was right out of Shurtleff. He came up here and held the first revival meeting that I ever remember. I was about five years old and there was several converted in it, a number of people. There was a pond right south of it [the church] and they took them down there and baptized them in that pond. It like to scared me to death. I thought he was drowning them. (laughs) They had to take me out of the crowd. I went to bellering, because I'd seen kittens drowned. (laughs)

So, we come up to that church some but that was not a regular occurrence. Lots of times we didn't go. The preacher came and visited Dad and talked with him. He enjoyed having him but so far as us attending Sunday school, we never did up here. After we got to New Hope, we began to go to Sunday school.

END OF TAPE

(During this session, Mrs. Helen Brown, Mr. Aikman's sister, entered the conversation at times. Her participation is identified by the initials, H.B.)

Q. Where were you born?

A. Hornsby.

Q. In Hornsby?

A. That's right next to Litchfield, you know. (part of sentence inaudible) . . . but it was that township, you see, in Macoupin County. The folks

lived in a house just a half mile west of there. I had a half-aunt, my father had a half-sister, and she was married to a Baptist preacher. He owned that eighty acres of land out there and they rented it from them for their start. That was the very beginning of Dad's starting to farm. He started right there and his sister helped him a little. I guess the old preacher did, too. So, it was Hornsby, Illinois, and it's still in existence. It has about four or five houses, I guess. It was close to a coal mine just west of it that worked, I expect, a hundred men--I don't know how many did work there. I was through the mine a number of times because pretty near all the relatives down there worked in the mine, or on top, some place.

Well, the mine was worked there for about five years, I guess. Then it worked out too far away to haul in with mules. Those days they hauled all the coal to the foot of the shaft with a little mule, you know, a burro type. They were not burros. They were of a burro type but they were really mules, bred for that purpose. I expect they cost quite a bit, the little rascals. They'd take them down in the mine and keep them there a whole season, you know. When they'd bring them up, those little rascals would just bra-a-a-ay like they were shouting. (laughter)

Q. Really glad to get up from the bottom, huh?

A. Sometimes there would be a strike or something and they'd pull the mules.

Well, my dad never worked in the mines but I had a cousin or two that did. Two second cousins that worked at the mine and they would see that I didn't get in the way when I went down.

Q. Was Hornsby always the name of that village or . . .

A. No, they started when the railroad, when the Big 4 built the--The Big 4 first built into Litchfield from the east. It was a New York Central syndicate, you know. Well, that's where it stopped. Well then, they discovered this mine at Hornsby and they wanted a place to have a post office so they named the place Clyde. (short interruption - Nel, Mr. Aikman's sister, tripped over the extension cord.) They called the place Clyde. Now, I never knew why. There must have been a man named Clyde in it, but the minute that they brought the U.S. Post Office in there, they searched the state and found that there was a Clyde in Illinois. I don't know where it is. So, they made them change it to Hornsby, and it was Hornsby, I expect, from about 1880. I guess it was Hornsby from that time on. Today it's just a few houses because that place played out. The Post Office has been removed, years ago, you know, and just some farmers live in there, that farm around it.[39] Very good land out around there, but it is inclined to sink.

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[39]See addenda item 35.

You know, they propped the ceiling of the mine. You know how they do that, I presume. Put props in there and they rot out eventually and the ground will settle from one to three feet. Well, it destroys all the drainage and they have to redrain the ground with ditches to get water off. But I've never heard of the ground sinking right at Hornsby. It did south of there, between there and Mt. Olive, pretty bad, and I knew about that.

Q. Where was your father born? In . . .

A. He was born near Bunker Hill, and my mother was born in Iowa. So, her parents moved here and she and Dad were neighbors. So, they were married at my grandfather Aikman's home because his wife was on her death bed and she was so anxious to have that couple married that she insisted that they come down and stand beside her bed and be married. Didn't give them any time for preparation or anything, you know. She insisted on seeing the ceremony and so they were married at home.

Well, I never had any hopes of getting a birth certificate, but when they began calling for birth certificates, I wrote to Carlinville . . . In the meantime, I had gone back down there after I was fifteen years old and worked for this aunt's son. He was farming the land then and living with his mother and step-father, he and his sister, and he came up to the place down by Honey Bend and just insisted on Dad letting me go. He wanted me to work for him. So, I went down and worked that fall for him and I got pretty well acquainted with the country by doing that and learned a lot of the history of it and . . . I wonder what it was I wanted to tell you about?[40]

Q. How long had your parents lived there when you were born?

A. Well, they only lived there three years, and then they came up here to Lone Elm and homesteaded. All I can remember about that homesteading was my grandfather was a great sportsman, a hunter and fisherman, on Dad's side, and he made his home with them. Wild ducks, as I think I told you, ate up Dad's corn crop and he [Grandfather] would take me and go out and lay under some hedge trees that were at the edge of the field, and the ducks would come in over those trees and be ready to light, you know. They would have let loose of their fall and he could shoot from behind so it would go into their feathers good, and he'd shoot ducks and send me out and pick them up. They didn't get scared of me, you know; little toddler. And that's all I can remember of my granddad.[41] I just remember that one occasion when I picked up ducks.

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[40]See addenda item 36.

[41]See addenda item 37.

Q. Well, let's see. You moved up to this area, near Lone Elm . . .

A. In about 1881, it would be my guess, because I was just about three years old when we moved up there and my brother next to me . . . Let's see, was he born . . . I'm not sure where he was born.[42] Maybe he was born up there, I'm not sure. Anyway, I was just a toddler and, as I tell you, that's about all I remember about it--was picking up those ducks and bringing them back to Granddad.

Then, there was lots of fish in those lakes up there, them days. All they had to do was take a pitchfork and wade out in the lake and just spear them with a pitchfork. They'd get catfish that long.

Q. Two feet long catfish, huh?

A. Yes. They didn't have to fish with a line at all because those fish had been in there for years, you know. It was swamp, full of reeds and cattails and so on. The fish were in there. I remember hearing the folks tell later on about Granddad going out one day after some fish and he was awading along through the water and he had on leather boots. I expect the sole was pretty thin and he stepped on a big catfish and that backhorn went clear through his shoe and clear out the top of his foot.

Q. Really spiked him, huh?

A. He had quite a sore foot for a long time, but he sat down and pulled that horn out before he went home.

So, I never have been able to locate that farm. It changed hands so many times that there is no record as I could ever find of it.

Q. You say your father--it was a homestead?

A. He homesteaded that but he gave it up, which turned it back--he didn't give it up, either. He sold his homestead to another man. He was going to go to Texas, so he sold all of his stock and machinery and everything to that man. He wasn't able to be out of bed. He laid on the bed and priced the stuff, and the man took it, because he had a farm adjoining it, and he took that 160 [acres] in, too.[43]

Q. I might be able to help with that. The next time I'm in the archives in Springfield, I'll look and see. Now, that would have been about 1881 or 1880.

A. 1880 or 1881. Yes, sir. I was just a tyker, I know, little kid and . . .

END OF VOLUME I

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[42]See addenda item 38.

[43]See addenda item 39.

# ADDENDA

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## ADDENDA

ADDENDA ITEM 1. (ref. p. 1)

Q. Do you know who lives in it now?

A. Yes. Edna Thomas. She owns it.

Q. I see.

A. She's a widow lady. Raised down here in this place. I've known her from a kid. She's the only one of the family left and lives down there by herself. She also owns this twenty acres of land across the road here.

Q. Oh, I see.

A. She heired that from her father, you see. But her husband and her had bought the Trout place. He farmed it for a few years. I don't know anything about how long, but that was when I wasn't paying any attention to it, you understand.

Q. I see.

A. But, they did. And then he died. She never married again. She just lives there and rents the land.

Q. Where was the Trout place, now? Could you locate that for me?

A. Well, you come up from the . . . from [Route] 48. Come out of Raymond. Did you ever come up that way on that dirt?

Q. Yes, sir, I have.

A. Come out that way on the dirt? First road . . .

Q. I see.

A. You come up. The second house you come to, on the east side of the road, is the Trout place and the one on the west side of the road, which is a half a quarter south of it, that's the old schoolhouse. And it's a nice building now. I don't know who owns it, but somebody that works, you know, and has a home in the country.

ADDENDA ITEM 2 (ref. p. 1)

Q. Where was the location of the Vignos school?

A. Well, you go down to the Raymond road. Well, you can't do it now because you go way down to the hard road, you know, to go to Raymond now. But this used to be . . . Let's see, it's about . . . oh, I imagine . . . Do you know anybody that lives down in that country? Do you know Sonny Goby? Do you know where he lives?

Q. On [Route] 66? On the west side of [Route] 66? Yes, sir.

A. Well, at the next corner or what would be a section line, half a mile south, the road took off to Raymond and the Vignos school was in the corner there. Right there by the road.

Q. I remember. It hasn't been too long since it was gone, then. It was . . .

A. That was the place that Webb had an office for a number of years, while he was superintendent of schools, you know.

Q. I see.

A. So you know that. That was the same location exactly, but a new building. That building burned, if I remember right, and they rebuilt it and built it of brick and that was a brick building.

Q. Yes, sir. Yes, I remember the brick building.

A. I never was in school in that, but then it was just a one-room school building when I went to it, and a big hedge in front of it. Playground was south of it and we carried our water from across the road at what would have been Lanter's place now. We carried the water for the school from over there. Didn't have a well.

Q. I see.

ADDENDA ITEM 3 (ref. p. 1)

A. Well, the teacher explained.

Q. Yes, sir. Was able to explain to them while they were reciting.

A. Yes, tell them what they was studying about and explain it. But he wouldn't take over five minutes for that class. He'd go through it. There was usually only about four or five of that age in the school, you know, starting in. So, it would only take a little while to go through that class. Then, the first reader was called next, but it was only called once in the morning. It wasn't called after every bell rang--first reader; but they were called in the morning and recited then. He gave them more time. He'd give them fifteen minutes probably and hear them recite. Then, the second reader followed them, and then the third. Then he'd quit on that, because most of them jumped right from third reader into history; instead of putting them in the fourth reader, they'd

put them in a . . . Oh, what did they call that? It wasn't a real history, but it was a kid history, you know, with principle events of the country, starting them in history. Then, after they'd studied that a while—going through that—they could keep on on that history or, if they wanted, they could have a fourth reader class. But there wasn't very many of them did. It was a pity they didn't because that's where they learned to read.

Well then, while we live at the Gerlach place, we had—I think I told you, we walked three miles and a half to school.

Q. Yes, sir.

A. This Burnet school down here was two miles and three-quarter. And Dad went around and got permission to let us go to the Burnet school. A man named Buchanan there, that taught that school, Smiley Buchanan. He was strong on history and he was death on spelling and (laughs) multiplication tables. I learned the multiplication tables both directions, forward and backwards, under him. (laughter) You had to know. He wouldn't let you quit until you did.

ADDENDA ITEM 4 (ref. p. 2)

A. That was the first one and, then, when they—they'd go from that into the first reader, you know. Then, they would begin to have them read sentences. Try to teach them to. Well, of course, those sentences were all three and four letter words, there never was a great big word in it.

ADDENDA ITEM 5 (ref. p. 3)

Q. You had started to say, " . . . and see the machine shed that's in that man's," what? Group of buildings, was it?

A. Well, it's next to the road really. It's in his group of buildings; yes, that's about right.

Q. Okay.

A. When they sold it to build a new schoolhouse, they didn't use any of it. They built a new one out-and-out. Then, when the consolidation came, why, that all sold for dwellings, you know. There was an acre of ground with those schoolhouses and lot's of people that worked would like to have one; that location, for that reason, you know.

ADDENDA ITEM 6 (ref. p. 5)

A. That's it.

Q. (Interviewer reading memoir out loud) "It was just amusement, that was all."

A. Just exercise. You know, anything to run. And that Black man, you chose sides on that, you know. And one side was here and the other side there and each had a line. Then, when the signal was given, we had to change ends. Well, if anybody could get to the line first, why he won. My, some of them could run, too.

Q. I'll bet.

ADDENDA ITEM 7 (ref. p. 6)

A. All they wanted was to brush up on mathematics. That was all. One of them was her brother and the other was an old schoolmate and she would never turn them down. She didn't recite them separate. They just went in the A class and took the same problems that the scholars did, you know. She didn't have any discipline to do with them, or anything of that kind. They were just there to learn.

Q. I see. What school was this?

A. That was Hazel Green.

Q. Hazel Green. Yes.

A. One of them was an awful strong fellow. He liked to snowball and I remember one time I slipped up behind him with a hard snowball, soaked it in water, you know. And I sneaked up behind him and I hit him between the shoulders (laughs) and then I run as hard as I could and there was a snowdrift about so deep, I had to jump . . .

Q. Couple of feet high.

A. . . . and just as I jumped, he took me and I went in that thing head first and he just roared. (laughter)

Q. Sticking there with your feet sticking out, huh? (laughter)

A. He just knocked me asprawling.

ADDENDA ITEM 8 (ref. p. 6)

A. No, we never used any notebooks. We used slates. You could use a slate about that square, and about that long, and about that wide. I think they cost a quarter. Then you got a pencil for a nickel and you could use it—it was cut out of slate, too, but it would make a mark on the slate, you know, and we did all of our mathematic work in the seat on that slate. Then we had a damp rag to wipe that off clean and take another problem, you know.

Q. Where did you buy those? At school?

A. No, there was a store in town that always handled them and we'd go there and buy them, buy them of some of the merchants. The schoolbooks have always been robbers. I bet they are on you yet, aren't they?

Q. They're pretty expensive, yes, sir.

A. They were always robbers. They charged twice. You could go buy a novel, the same print and the same binding and everything, for a quarter where you'd have to pay fifty or sixty cents for a schoolbook. Pa used to compalin about it a lot but he had to get the schoolbooks just the same because they were prescribed by the man at the county seat, you know.

And yet, he didn't make you use a certain book. Now, for instance, Saunders Readers were not standard all over the county. They had different readers. But they all, I think, had the same history. Most of them had different mathematical books but when they got up to the third grade, they generally had to get into Ray because there was the sticker, you know.

ADDENDA ITEM 9 (ref. p. 8)

Q. (Interviewer reading out loud) "How large a plot of ground was there around the school? Was it an acre, or what?"

A. Just about an acre.

Q. (Interviewer reading out loud) ". . . A half acre." Well, you had a half acre here.

A. Well, it was just about an acre. You just as well change that now.

Q. All right, sir. (Pause while interviewer writes.) Okay, so . . .

A. Well, I think the people who wanted the school real bad would donate an acre, you see, and get the school where they wanted it because there was competition between the neighborhood about where the schoolhouse was to set. Some fellow wanted it close to his kids.

Q. So, he'd donate the land. I see.

A. Yes.

ADDENDA ITEM 10 (ref. p. 10)

Q. (Interviewer reading out loud) "We had orderlies to study from, that was one thing. My dad was the superintendent of Sunday school." These orderlies, were they papers published by the church?

Q. Yes. Yes. They were just on the lessons. They had a special lesson

on a sheet, you know.

Q. Was that the name?

A. Instead of orderlies, it was quarterlies.

Q. Quarterlies. Okay, good. I couldn't find orderlies used in any of the church references.

A. Quarterlies. They were a little book, you know, and had a three month lesson in them.

Q. Yes, sir. I'm familiar with the quarterlies.

A. That, the Sunday school bought. They took up collections each Sunday and got enough to pay for such as that, you know. Them days they didn't have salaried churches. They didn't know about that. A preacher come and took what they had, you know. They'd try to give him so much but didn't always work. I've seen many a man come for ten dollars a trip and preach Saturday night, two times on Sunday, all for ten dollars. Nowadays, they wouldn't come, you know, for that.

Q. No, sir, I'm afraid not.

ADDENDA ITEM 11A (ref. p. 10)

A. That was the most marvelous thing. Steeple on it, a 30-foot steeple, I think, and they never even knocked that off.

Q. Yes, sir. What did they do, put it on wheels and . . .

A. Well, no. They had a regular mover do it, you know. He had to put it on rollers of some sort. They pulled it . . . I know how they pulled it, with a windlass. They'd get the planking—I seen them move other buildings. They'd put down planking. What we'd call bridge planks, you know; two-inch thick oak planks, foot wide. They put down two of them for rollers to roll on and then they'd get them laid, then they'd hitch on to the front of the building with a long rope, oh, fifty yards, if they could have it. And then it went around a log that was set in a frame that they called a . . . Oh, what did they call them, now . . .

Q. Windlass, maybe?

Q. Well, it <u>was</u> a windlass. That is what it was, but you used horses on it. You <u>put</u> a team on it and went around and around and around and you pulled that church clear down to that—where that was set—and then you reset that and put down your planks, but <u>they</u> crossed a creek there, you know. There's a creek down through that <u>land</u>. They had to bridge that, some way. I don't know. When I came into the country, why they still had the steeple on the church and the bell up in the belfry. It has one of the finest bells I ever heard. I think it's a shame that that bell has to hang there idle.

ADDENDA ITEM 11B (ref. p. 11)

A. Then, Herb Street decided he wanted to light the town with lights. He studied this acetylene business until he thought he knew it enough to put up a gas plant, and he did. He put up a gas plant out at the west edge of town and he put in piping in all those store buildings and in the dwellings that wanted them and he put piping through that church. That was long before I came up there, now you see, and . . .

Q. That was before 1910, then.

A. Yes. When I came there, those gaslights could still be used. But his building wore out, that he used for a tank, and it wasn't paying him anything in the end and so he gave it up.

Well then, we had to get coal oil lamps and hang down from the ceiling and, after that was there, we used them a year or two. Well then, the fellows in town begin to see Delcos around and they decided they would light the town with Delcos and there was a bunch formed a little company there. They wired the town and put in the Delco plant.

They didn't put them in all the places, they just put them where they were requested and we were getting ready for a revival meeting and I went down to them and I says, "I want the church lighted." I says, "I don't want to monkey with those coal oil lamps, now. I want some electric lights in there." And they said, "Well, it'll take some wire." And I says, "All right, I'll pay for it out of my own pocket." I says, "You don't need to worry about your money." I says, "You get the wire and come down there and I'll follow you around and see that you put it where I want it, and put some droplights in." And they did. They did it in half a day, with my help. We dropped lights down. Well, those drops are still being used, to this day.

Q. Was this one Delco plant or was it several through the town?

A. No, it was just the one, but you had to renew batteries every so often. You see, they stored into a battery. Those batteries would begin to wear, finally, and get so you'd have to run your plant every time you used maximum power. So, it got to where the old plant was just barely able to light the town with maximum power, all it had. The boys said, "Well, we're going to give it up. We're going to go see CIPS." CIPS was coming through the country then, so they went and saw—and they was tickled to get a franchise on the town, you know—and so they come down there and lit the town and hooked on to the same old lights that we'd had for the Delco.

Q. And they are still using them.

ADDENDA ITEM 12 (ref. p. 11)

Q. (Interviewer reading out loud) " . . . The wire would run along until they would come to the fork and then they'd flip back, jerk the plate

around . . . "

A. They'd get to there and they'd bring it right straight back, you know, and then it would slip off.

Q. Oh, I see. The fork would lay back.

A. Yes, lay back so the wire would slip out. You could check corn pretty good, too, with the things. After you learned it. You had to learn to keep a proper tension on that wire, not get it too tight one time and too loose the next time, and so on.

Q. How would you get the tension? When you set it at the end of the . . .

A. Pull it yourself--quarter of a mile. (chuckles)

Q. And you set it. For each row that you planted, you had to move it over . . .

A. You set your wire directly behind your planter when you . . . after you'd turned around and ready to start, you put it in the center between the rows and, then, when you got through, why you'd do the same thing again. Well, that wire would stretch over enough that you could plant the two rows clear down here. But that's why you had to learn tension, because if you tightened that up too tight, you'd break that when it pulled over, you see, and you'd have your broken wire and have it to patch and monkey with.

There's one old German that I know that . . . (laughs) He had one of them and he told me about . . . He was in the field one day and a thunderstorm came up and he says, "I was at the other end of the field and turned around and just ready to start and," he says, "I seen the lightning strike that wire down at the other end and," he says, "I just jerked it loose from the planter that way and it never did touch me." (laughter)

Q. Oh, is that right? The electricity went right through it.

A. Oh boy, that did tickle me. (laughter) He just jerked it loose. You could jerk that with it, you know, even if your wire was in the forks, you could pull it and that would throw it down and let the wire fall out. (laughs) And he let it fall out. (laughs)

Q. Didn't trust that lightning, right?

A. Fact of the matter, it didn't hit his wire.

END OF SIDE ONE

ADDENDA ITEM 13 (ref. p. 12)

A. Got it from Kansas.

Q. I see. It was developed in Kansas, then?

A. Yes. And we got it—I guess the experiment station got it but it was started in test plots and it was bearded. We didn't like that very well but we did like the yield of it.

ADDENDA ITEM 14 (ref. p. 12)

Q. Was this the Fulse wheat that you were talking about right there or was that a different kind?

A. No. That hard wheat, I don't know—wouldn't try to tell you the name of that. I've forgotten it entirely, if I knew; because they just called it hard wheat and it was a different shaped grain. It was a long grain. Kind of like a oat grain, while Fulse was a round, small grain like we have here now, you know. You see, the wheat that they grow in most places now, they're growing a round wheat now.

They're growing a semi-hard wheat in here, I think, most of the time now, because they can't get a straight carload of hard wheat, hardly at all. I worked in the elevator two falls out here, and you just couldn't get a straight load of hard wheat. You had to have it mixed, you see. So, the mills used it, someway. I don't know how they managed it, but they got out flour anyhow, someway.

But I do know that in the Northwest, up in Oregon especially—I went through the flour mill that makes the cake flour, it's noted all over the country. I asked the miller, when we started in—he was showing us the mill, you know—and I said, "What do you call this wheat, hard or soft?" He says, "Oh, this is soft as mush." He says, "This is really macaroni wheat." He says, "That's the reason we make this cake flour." He says, "We have to get a little hard wheat from Montana or some of those other states, now, even to use this for the flour. We've got to have a little hard wheat." So, I don't have the least idea.

But they had heads on their wheat that would be that square, up there. Nine grains here, in a string across that head. I never had seen anything like it. It made from sixty to a hundred bushel to the acre, you know, that stuff. They were making it into cake flour.

And, of course, they were making bran and shorts and all the other things and I remember I asked him if he made . . . What is it you call this meal that you . . .

Q. Buckwheat?

A. No, I'm thinking about the wheat, entirely. They . . . Well, I asked him about that, it—wheat germ meal. You've eaten it, I guess. It's very expensive, you know. And I said, "I want to know where you get that, how you get it out of the wheat." And he says, "Well, I'll show you before we get down here." He says, "There's eight stories here and," he says,

"I'll tell you what we do on each story." And by the time we got down to the fourth, why I was pressing him harder than ever to know where he was going to get that wheat germ meal. And he says, "Well, you'll have to wait until I get to the ground floor," and then, he said, "I'll demonstrate to you."

And when we got to the ground floor, why he was running nothing but bran, I would have called it, down through the rollers. It rolled out of the rollers onto a table that was just like . . . You've played with an old fan-mill, haven't you? On a farm?

Q. No.

A. Didn't you ever see a farmill that they fanned their wheat with?

Q. No, sir.

A. You've never seen one? Well, they had riddles on them that shook like this and shook all the trash out of the wheat. It fell off of the bottom and the wheat went to a certain place and fell through it and went down into a clean place. Well, he showed me the riddles and he says, "Now, you watch these riddles." Well, he started it going and I says, "Well, I don't see anything but bran going over there." "Well, now," he says, "wait a minute." And he took a little board and he held up there with his hand and there was just enough current of air on there to separate that germ meal. It had enough weight, that he could let just enough air in to separate it from bran and that was pure bran, too, there wasn't a speck of flour left in it.

Then, your germ meal went in there and I says, "Well, you don't get all of it." "No," he says, "I don't get all of it but," he says, "I get enough. About what I want." Well, I didn't have to watch but about a minute till here's enough to fill a box like I'd been buying it. It was just straight germ meal, you know.

Now, that was taken out of the germ of the wheat. Bran was off of the outside of the wheat and yet he separated, in the end down there in that one machine, wheat germ meal. That was fascinating to me because so many people buy it—it's rich in protein, you know, very rich—and so many people bought it and mixed it with their oatmeal. I knew lots of people that mixed it with their oatmeal, they wanted it every breakfast, you know.

ADDENDA ITEM 15 (ref. p. 16)

A. . . . soon as oatmeal came in. I can't hardly remember what year it was when oatmeal began to appear, but everybody fell for oatmeal because it was such a good breakfast dish, you know. We had our own milk and all we had to buy was the meal and the sugar. We used that all the time I was growing up, for breakfast. Rolled oats. I say all the time we did. Some days we had eggs and bacon, some days we'd have fried ham. Just what Mother wanted to cook for breakfast or had to fix that day. But they

baked all their own bread those days, you know. It was all homemade bread and it was bread, it wasn't (laughs) . . .

Q. Yes, sir. Good and heavy.

ADDENDA ITEM 16 (ref. p. 17)

A. . . . germ out of that wheat, someway, because it's the germ that attracts weevil. They must have taken every bit of that out of that flour when they traded with us. I never watched that mill grind. I never was in it, but I've taken loads of wheat and exchanged it. It was called the O.K. Mill and Dad would send down a load of wheat and get a load of flour and that lasted all winter.

Q. Yes, sir. That name was O.K. Mill, right?

A. Yes. O.K.

Q. Yes, I had Oak down here, but it was O.K. Mill. (Interviewer writes)

A. But it was finally made into a dwelling house and people lived there. I don't know whether the same building is there--I don't hardly think it is. I think it's been torn down and rebuilt.

They also had at that same time, the big mill that blew up. They had a mill there that was sending flour all over the world, pretty near. They had a big mill down in the south part of Litchfield. It blew up one morning and everybody thought it was an earthquake, anybody that was away from Litchfield. Of course, those that were around there seen it afire immediately. Knew it was it. They never knew what caused it unless it was the wheat dust germinated fire, in it. They shipped carloads of flour out of that and also shiploads. They shipped to England, even, from Litchfield.

And that was all made from that same Fulse wheat that I've been telling you about. Was grown all around here. I never heard of any other wheat when I was a boy growing up, only Fulse. Red Fulse, they called it. It was a semi-hard wheat, I know, and it made splendid bread. But I don't suppose you could find it to save your life now because they've changed so many things.

ADDENDA ITEM 17 (ref. p. 20)

A. You could hardly see the road. (laughs)

Q. For all the dust, right? How large a crowd would they have at some of the shows? The shows down there, how many would be attending them?

A. Oh, the whole county, practically. Buffalo Bill's show, I'll venture, the whole county came to see that, anybody that liked entertainment of any

kind. Same way with Barnum and Bailey. Barnum and Bailey brought in animals, you know, and we saw animals in cages that we'd read about, and so on.

We sure liked those shows. I liked Buffalo Bill's especially because of the horsemanship that was shown there. I never had seen anything like a rodeo, or never even heard of a rodeo, you know, at that day, and there was keen riders on them. They had riders that would go down under the horse at a keen gallop, you know, and come up on the other side, get in the saddle and go on. (chuckles) Us kids would go home and try some of that stuff. We'd try ariding standing up and if we wouldn't get some of the awfullest falls! (laughter)

Q. You never got the hang of it very well, then?

ADDENDA ITEM 18 (ref. p. 24)

A. . . . younger kids were going to school, baseball had begun to take hold, you know, and townball played out, pretty soon. They began practicing for baseball because they—they'd attend some of the minor games. Raymond would have a team, and Litchfield would have a team, and all of the bigger places had teams, you know. They played sometimes on Saturdays, sometimes of an evening, and the kids saw baseball played.

So, baseball took the place of townball. But they never could have used that old rubber ball that I had in there because you had to stand fifteen feet back of your batter to catch that ball, if a fellow threw it with any power at all. You got it on first bounce, but it would bounce thirty feet, you know. My goodness.

Q. And when you caught it, it felt like it was made of iron, right?

A. Yes, and it was. (laughs) It was just about as hard as iron, but how it would bounce!

ADDENDA ITEM 19 (ref. p. 13)

A. . . . shipped in by freight. They generally received them over about Virden, if I remember right, and they drove them home. I remember one time, they bought an engine and the salesman must have been a nut. He told them they were not to grease any of the gears that pulled that engine; not to grease them, that they were intended to run dry. And they started out and burned that thing up before they got home, and then he had to come and take that apart and put on new gears, you know. I don't know whether he got fired or not, but he should have been if he didn't have any more sense than that. So, from that time on, they were very particular with their greasing of those gears.

Worked off the flywheel and down through the . . . They worked through a set of gears, you see. There'd be a gear, a small gear up on the axle

of the flywheel, that handled the flywheel, and it would mesh in one bigger than it, and then the next would mesh in a bigger one still. But they had the power in this little one, you see, up here on the shaft and they'd start--they had to keep all of those things greased every time they traveled on the road. That was one thing that the water hauler had to look out for. When they were getting ready for a move, he'd better grease all of his gears, or he'd get a bawling out, proper.

Q. Oh, the water hauler did that?

A. Yes. He was supposed to and he'd get a bawling out if he didn't do it, too.

Q. The water hauler. That was the fellow that took the water around to everybody in the field?

A. No. That was the guy that hauled water for the engine. They had a tank and a team that they took with the machine, all the time. Their own outfit, see, and they had a tank that would, oh, I guess it would hold five barrels of water, maybe six. And you'd go to a well someplace and dip water with a bucket—if that's the way they got the water out of that well. You'd dip it up by bucket and fill that tank, close down the lid on it and take it in to the engine and then you'd turn it into the barrels around where he could draw it up into the boiler, as needed.

So that was called a water hauler. He had to take care of his barrels and grease those gears and take care of the team and so on.

Q. Well, there was also a water boy that went around . . .

A. No, the water boy belonged in the neighborhood, usually. Somebody would put their kid on a horse, if they didn't have a cart. They begin having those little carts like they ran racehorses with, you know. Little, just one-seated affair. Didn't cost very much and they'd get them and put a pony on that and let the boys haul water. Maybe he'd haul all over the neighborhood.

END OF TAPE

ADDENDA ITEM 20 (ref. p. 28)

Q. (Interviewer reading memoir out loud) " . . . much out of the ditch."

A. If you don't think that's work.

Q. It really was. (laughs) Well, how did you do that? You had the what? How did the scraper work?

A. Well, the scraper—you've seen scrapers, I guess, haven't you?

Q. Yes, sir.

A. Well, you know, they have a bailer on them that sticks out in front, and the screw part here is back--that is, the bail hitches toward the back end of it. Well, these handles come from here, and you can raise this up and that will scoop right into the dirt, you know. Higher you raise it, the more it'll scoop. You can stick a team with it, you know, if you keep araising it. But we would just take what was proper to load the scraper because if you took more than that, it went over it anyhow and you lost it, you'd be just wasting time.

So, we'd load the scraper and then tip on the handles and start up that bank and you had to keep them tipped all the way up that bank and climb it too, you know.

Q. You just had to put your weight on it, I guess?

A. Yes. Of course, the team helped to pull you up with the scraper but by night you'd sure know you'd done a day's work. (chuckles)

Q. You used a two-horse team on those, did you?

A. Yes, and scattered the dirt out on the land so that it could be farmed. We didn't pile it all up on the bank like a dredge boat does, you know; they pile it all up. Well, we scattered it so that we could go right ahead and farm it. And that opened up a five-acre pasture of Uncle Tom's farm that sure did produce corn, I'm telling you.

Q. (chuckles) It hadn't been farmed at all before that?

A. Yes, he'd farmed it, but it was about one year out of five that it

didn't drown out, see. But this way, why, it was a very good thing.

Q. About how deep were those ditches?

A. Oh, from 3 feet to 10 feet, and a 10 foot ditch is a long ways down when you go to wading up that side and holding that old scraper.

Q. (chuckles) I guess so. What'd you have to do, make a place along the side or did you go right out the front end of the ditch where you were digging?

A. No, we'd go out the side, right up the bank, and then go back on the circle and come in back of where we'd broke loose, and take it again. Then, when we got all of that scooped out, why we'd get a team down there, plow the bottom of that ditch again and loosen it up. We'd plow it just like you was plowing it to farm; get that dirt loosened up and then you could load your scrapers much easier and faster and go ahead. So, we dug an awful lot of ditch that year in that thirty days. But everybody worked; it was a community thing, you know. They all took their part because they was benefited by it; it was one of the jobs.

I remember old Uncle Felix Richardson, he was much interested in it. It didn't touch his land but he was much interested in it for Tom's sake. And so—he'd been retired for a good long time; hadn't done any work—and he come down there and he says, "Bert, I'm going to try holding that scraper." I says, "All right, sir, just dig in." (chuckles) But he couldn't start up the back. He was too old. Just staggered, you know; he couldn't start up, so I had to grab the handle to turn the whole around. He filled about three scrapers and he said, "I can't do it, boy, I'm past it."

I don't think he was over sixty years old, at that time. But, you know, in that day and age, a sixty year old man was old, he was considered old; they looked older and they were considered old. My dad died at fifty-six and, oh, I knew a lot of men that died just about sixty, you know. They didn't know them days, that fifty to sixty was the fatal heart time for men. And they didn't take any precautions; they went right ahead and did what they'd been used to. First thing you know, somebody was buried.

ADDENDA ITEM 21 (ref. p. 28)

Q. (Interviewer reading out loud) " . . . there. A. There was a big ditch went to the west of it . . ."

A. They didn't work it, though, while we lived there. They worked those ditches—they would naturally erode, you know, and fill. And they usually worked them about every five years. I'm counting on a dredge boat about next year here. It'll cost me five hundred to a thousand dollars to clean out that same ditch that I've been talking about—where my water goes into it from here out of the tile, you know. And I get an assessment the same as the fellows that gets surface drainage. If it wasn't for that surface drainage, the tile wouldn't do very much good, either.

My father-in-law was the first man that tiled in here and he had quite a lot of trouble. People were skeptical of it. I don't know, people are awful hard to convince about a lot of things that look plumb feasible to me, but they can't see it. And so he had a lot of trouble and they wouldn't let him empty in that ditch. When he got to it, they wouldn't let him empty in it, the ditch. Voted him down.

"Well," he says, "I've got my tile down here. I've got to dispose of my water," so he just dug a well. He went to the highway department and asked if he could dig a well on the highway, out at the edge of it where it wouldn't bother the road part at all. And he dug a well there of about 8 feet deep, and walled it up very loosely with brick. He dumped the tile in there and that would soak out and into that ditch, eventually, and drain the land. But as soon as the others got in tile districts in there, why, they put a big main tile right down in the bottom of that ditch and then they hooked all of these fellows on; hooked our place and all the rest of them.

Q. Where did that big tile end? Did it go into the creek there by Waggoner?

A. Well yes, it does empty into that. It went right under the bridge down there, right south of the Waggoner Road and right on down that creek. Yes. It went right down along the edge of Charlie Long's field, between him and that other field there and dumped right in down there just at the edge of the ditch. I guess it was about a 16-inch tile by the time it got there, because it was carrying a number of farms by then.

Q. Was that put in before you moved up here, you say?

A. No. No, that was all after I was here. I'd been here, oh, several years before that was hooked into that big tile. There's a big tile in the bottom of that ditch that is—I think it's 48 inch. And they've put outlets on the sides, you know, to let these tile go into them.

They used to haul water out of there for threshing. When the wells would get low, they'd go up there, they would—nearly always water there, just come seeping down out of the tiles from various places, you know, and they could go . . .

Q. That's where I learned to swim.

A. Did you?

Q. Yes, sir. In that hole right at the end of that, yes, sir. (laughs)

A. It was cold as ice, wasn't it? (chuckles)

Q. Yes, sir, it sure was. (laughs) What kind of tile did they use when they put in the small field tile?

A. It was concrete, largely, and burned clay. This farm is all burned clay because he bought of a different firm from the one that started in over at Raymond. There was a tile company organized over there and put in the proper machinery to build tile. They made tile to tile all the country around, pretty near. But those things will wash out; the bottom of them will eventually wash

out.

Q. What do you mean by wash out?

A. Well, the water passing over it will take a little of the top off . . .

Q. Just wear it down.

A. . . . until finally, it's just clear through it. But it will work for a long time even after that, if there's nothing breaks the top; because the hole's there, you know, and goes ahead.

And then Doug Price . . . You knew of Doug Price?

Q. Yes, sir.

A. Doug put in a tile factory when they went to put in the big ditch here. He put in a tile factory.

Q. Where was that, in Waggoner?

A. Well, he had it down south of the elevator about a half a quarter, right on the railroad tracks, so he could get his gravel and sand from the railroad. And he had the machinery all set up and worked a bunch of men there. He made an awful lot of tile.

They would make that concrete a certain consistency and then pour it in the mold and let the mold stand so many minutes until it set and then take it off and take the tile and set it up on the board--they had boards set out for it to dry on. And it had to be in the shade, you couldn't put it in the sun. They'd crack if you put them in the sun. They had to be in the shade. So he'd have a shed full of green tile, they called them, and as quick as they were past a certain stage, then he could move them out in the sun and put more green tile in.

So a lot of the farms were tiled exclusively with that concrete tile. Because the tile factory at Harvel that made the clay tile and burned them like brick--that our farm was tiled with--they claimed that they ran out of the clay that they wanted for that. The clay that they'd been using changed consistency someway, and they quit doing it. And that fellow that lives there, Stanley Fix, you may know him.

Q. Yes, I know him.

A. Stanley has a great pond there where that old ground was dug out and he's got that stocked with fish. He's got fish in there I'll bet are that long.

Q. Three or four feet?

A. Oh yes, great big things! And he's got wild ducks, mallards and teal and all of them and he clips this tendon right there and they can't fly away. And he's got wild geese and brant and all those things around there.

And he always raises a bunch of pheasants, scatters them around the country here. And he wants permission to hunt where he's scattered them, you know.

Stanley's a great fellow. I had him put the shakes on my house out here. He had a fellow working for him and they was about to have a fight, I guess they did have it later. I didn't know about it, but . . . He walked around to the back of the house and the other fellow had been working on the east end. Quitting time come and they all were folding up their aprons and he walks around there and he took his hatchet and he just knocked off them tile, goodnight. I says, "What's the matter with you, man, have you lost your mind?" He says, "Those don't suit me." And this other fellow that was standing there, he says, "I kind of thought he'd gone berserk, too." Later on, they did have a scrap. I guess the other fellow wasn't adoing it the way he told him to all the time, because he guaranteed his work and he made it right.

Q. Well, sir, let's get back to the words here.

ADDENDA ITEM 22 (ref. p. 29)

Q. (Interviewer reading out loud) " . . . the next year." Sir, there's one word there. You had said, "It had been brought in from Germany in state wheat." Is that . . .

A. Seed wheat.

Q. Seed wheat. Oh, I couldn't figure out what in the world that word was. Okay.

A. See, the eggs were laid in that head. That Hessian fly looked like a gnat, only it was about ten times as big, had long legs and, boy, when they got in the wheat field, they went right along the root and up the stalk and laid a string of eggs and those eggs would absorb every bit of strength out that straw. It wouldn't make a head or nothing else, it just . . . That was the end of it. And it took a long time for them to get that law through to hold them off, you know, because men had been used to sowing the last of August and the first of September and after they got that law so that they couldn't sow till later in the month, and farmers learned themselves that it was better even to go past the fifteenth than it was the sixth, unless you had a killing frost between time. Those things were so big to kill with frost.

ADDENDA ITEM 23 (ref. p. 31)

Q. (Interviewer reading out loud) " . . . day, or that time."

A. There was a seat on it, but I preferred to walk because I could do a better job. He was sick. He went to bed with a rheumatic fever just at corn planting time. And he called me in, he had me go get a doctor first and then when the doctor left, he called me in and he said, "Bert, the crops are going to be up to you." He says, "You go to town and hire another man, now, to help you. And you take the lead in it, but you're boss. What

you say goes. Just the same as if I said it." And, so I went to town and I got Sam McCoughlah. Did you ever know Sam?

Q. Yes, sir.

A. And Sam was a curiosity, you know. But he was a good worker. But he got jealous of my job. I don't know why. I guess he thought Richardson was favoring me more than him. And he would try to do things against Richardson's orders.

Now, Richardson had a peculiar way of taking care of his horses. He fed the horses their grain in the bottom of the manger. He never put a box in any of his mangers—none at all. He put a solid bottom down there and he fed all of his grain down in there and he said that a horse would salivate better if they did reach down like they was eating grass. I kind of believe he had the right idea. And then after you'd get done eating dinner, you'd go right out as quick as you could and throw in hay for them; let them have a chance to eat their hay. They'd have all their grain cleaned up.

Well, Sam would go and get his team out before I could get that hay in there. And I headed him off twice and I says, "Now listen, Sam. Don't you do that anymore." I said, "If you do, I'm going in and talk to Richardson. He wants these horses to eat and to rest. And he wants them to rest as long as we do, and he has always told me to take an hour noon." And I says, "And that's what we're going to do."

Well, I just had to watch him like that all the time. He wanted that job, you know. So, the next year, he got it, and he didn't hold it but hardly a month because he wouldn't do what they told him. He'd go out and do as he pleased. Poor old Sam, he was just ignorant, that was all.

But we did raise a good crop that year, anyhow. And he had to use a walking cultivator. Well, rather than hear him howl or anything, I walked too. I walked the whole season. In fact, I could do a better job and I could correct him if he didn't, with me doing the same thing, see. I didn't like being boss, but I had to do it that year.

ADDENDA ITEM 24 (ref. p. 31)

Q. Now, was that your other hand you slipped in around the ear?

A. No, your right hand with the hook on it, and you had your left hand up here next to the stem, you know, and you give it, like that, a twist and a quick jerk and that broke it off, sometimes without any shuck. More times, it would have one or two shucks on it but as you got to learning to take more of the shuck with your peg and so on, you could shuck it cleaner. But the hook fit right here.

Q. Right along the edge of your palm on the thumb side?

A. Well, right along your thumb, there. Just right in there. If you come

to a stalk that was broken over and a ear hanging down that way, you took it with this hand and done that way. Just those two motions and you had the ear out. And if it had stood up the other way, why, you took it with this hand and it was not quite so easy to do as it was if it was hanging down. But you could shuck it, anyhow. Maybe you'd want to use your peg on one. You chose whichever you wanted when you was approaching a hill, you know.

You shucked two rows at a time, walked between them. I worked for one man that made me shuck three rows. He wanted a good stalk yield. And that was an awful bother to me at first, to walk across three rows and then go back across three rows and not miss any.

Q. And the horses just knew where to go. They just kept . . .

A. Well, you'd put them straddle a row and they was busy eating shucks. Oh, they fed good while you was shucking corn. But you kept a shucked row between them and you all the time so they couldn't reach over and pull down the corn. When you first was opening the field, as we called it, making the down row, we'd start in and we'd take two rows at the side of the wagon and one underneath it, you know, and shuck them. Well then, the next time, why, we'd just straddle the row next to the one that was broken down and leave this one standing, you know. And then from that time on, why, you had your row, between you and the wagon, of shucks.

Q. Now, when you got a wagon full, then you had to take it in. I guess you had to shovel it off into the corncrib, didn't you?

A. I never was lucky enough to get one full. (laughs)

Q. What was that, sir?

A. I said I never was lucky enough to have to do that, to get one full. I'd shuck a half a day and go in and unload. That's what I did. (laughter) I never was a fast shucker. I never could shuck a hundred bushel of corn in a day to save my life. And there was plenty of fellows that worked for me that would shuck eighty and eighty-five bushels,and I'd try to follow them, you know, and they'd laugh at me. Why, they'd just go off from me like I was standing still.

Q. I remember trying to shuck corn with Roy Baker and he sure walked off from me. I had to give up. I couldn't even handle one row to his two or three. Boy, he was really going through.

Q. Yes. After they got the motions, you know, those old corn shuckers . . . In those days they had corn-shucking contests, the same as they do other contests now. Started up in Iowa and there was three or four men up there that shucked two hundred bushels of corn in eight hours. Two hundred bushels! And shoveled it off! Just think of that, now. I just can't imagine how in the world they could keep the strength in their arm to keep it going like that. One fellow, they said, filled his mouth full of granulated sugar when he started in for a load, because that was quick energy, you know. And he used that to help him pick along. They had some wonderful contests. Why, people went from all over the country to see them. If a man had a corn-shucking contest on his place, he had to have about a forty acre to park cars. (laughter)

Q. Do they ever have any right around here?

A. No, never around here that I ever knew of. They did have some shucking, what you might call shucking contests. The seed houses would come in here and ask you to take some of their seeds and plant so many rows in a certain place and compare it with other corn, you know. Well, you'd plant those rows and maybe another fellow'd want some there. Well, but you planted your own seed between them, so as to divide them. And then they were staked off and those fellows kept track of them clear through the season.

But when the time come to test those hybrids--that was when they first begin developing hybrids--to test those hybrids, why, those seed men would be out there. And they would go from wagon to wagon that was shucking on their corn. And they'd say, "Don't you leave anything that's got a grain on it. Nothing at all." There'd be a little nubbin there, you know, with just one or two grains on; they'd say, "Get them if they've got a grain on them, put them in." Well, then it'd be weighed in our favor. It was all shelled. They'd drive in and dump her into a sheller and shell it and weigh it and then it would be reckoned by how much it was making to the acre, you know.

I sent to Iowa when they first began doing that. The Wallace Farmer—I don't know as I ought to bother you with this—but Wallace Farmer advertised that if there was anybody in their territory wanted to try to make some hybrid corn, that they would furnish a hundred hills, and they says, "We want you to go down in your field after your corn is up and hoe out a hundred hills and then plant this in and put a stake at each end of it." And then it would pollinize from both sides with your corn, you see, which would hybridize it even more. Well, I sent for it and planted it and I had enough for two rows; I had two rows, two one-hundred rows—a hundred hills, I mean.

I had been growing yellow corn at that time. Yellow corn had started in the country pretty big and I'd been growing yellow corn and this was a different colored yellow; it was a kind of a red yellow. And when it crossed up with the other, it made a kind of a striped grain. And it was very easy to distinguish and all they asked was that I shuck that separate and then shuck the row by it separate, and weigh the two and give them the amount of each weight.

END OF SIDE ONE

A. And I did that and that corn, oh, it made ten or fifteen pounds more on those hills than my corn did.

Well, I went ahead. I never got any more seed from them, but I just went ahead and used the corn that I had. And, you know, that showed up in my corn for six years.

Q. (chuckles) Oh, is that right?

A. Yes, sir. It showed up in the corn for six years.

Q. You used that for seed, then?

A. Well, I didn't pick it separate, but it had hybridized across the field, you know. You could tell, by looking at those grains, that there's some of your hybrid. Well, of course, I'd take it and plant it. And it was a little bit earlier coming up and it was a little bit earlier maturing. So, there's where your maturing began to come in. We began to notice the difference in the maturity of corn. Well, then the experiment stations figured it out and told you what you could count on; you could count on 78 day corn or an 84 day corn, or some of them was 90 day.

Q. Do you have any idea about when this was when you got the corn from the Wallace Farmer? Was it the 1920's or 1930's?

A. Well, I expect it was in the twenties because I was farming actively at that time. After I got that and tried that out, why, I sent to Iowa for some purebred yellow dent, enough to plant an acre. I don't know what I paid for it, but you had to pay for a good premium on that. And they shipped it down in a sack and I remember planting it next to the edge on this side of this second forty out here. And that acre came up two days ahead of the other corn. And everybody says, "Why did that corn come up like that?" Well, I couldn't explain it, you know; I didn't try to. I said, "Well, I got some purebred seed, it must be in the seed. That's all I know." And I told them the truth about that. Well, then I picked seed very carefully out of that and used it for a number of years. That was a good yellow dent.

ADDENDA ITEM 25 (ref. p. 32)

Q. (Interviewer reading out loud) " . . . not much under twelve, moisture." Would that be twelve per cent moisture, you mean?

A. That's right, twelve per cent. They'd rather not get it below that.

Q. Why is that, sir?

A. Because it'll mold. You take that fourteen per cent and put it in without a drying wind on it or something—they dry it now, you know, too. But, before they got to drying it, they'd throw it in the bin, and they'd have to keep running that elevator day and night to shift it around and blow air through it to keep it from molding. So they didn't want it. They cut you so much on each point that was too damp.

Q. On the price, then, that . . .

A. Yes.

ADDENDA ITEM 26 (ref.p. 32)

Q. (Interviewer reading out loud) "A . . . "

A. That thing is astonishing. You wouldn't any more and get it poured in and distributed--you had to spread it out on the bottom of it and turn to your dial and it had it recorded.

Q. And that was the moisture content that it recorded?

A. Yes. And it was accurate. I've always wondered how in the world they done it and they said it was just by shooting an electric current through it, that the moisture registered so much, you see, and they counted it. . . .

Q. I'm going to have to go down and watch them do that. As a matter of fact, you say, that. "A. You go . . . "

ADDENDA ITEM 27 (ref.p. 33)

Q. (Interviewer reading out loud) " . . . could in the barn, you know."

A. He never had a barn where he could.

Q. Oh, is that right. On . . .

A. Neither place. He had to put it in stacks.

Q. Then you were able to build a barn, I believe, down on the home place after the train wreck.

A. After the train wreck, we got lumber enough to build a barn.

Q. Let's see, (resumes reading)"You had to put it in a stack. Well, we would stack it as close to where we . . . "

ADDENDA ITEM 28 (ref. p. 35)

Q. (Interviewer reading out loud) "No farm could hardly do very much without four horses. . . ."

A. He usually had two colts each spring. I should've told that, too.

Q. You mentioned there . . . Let's see. Well, not at this place. You mentioned colts someplace usually two of the horses were mares then, were they?

A. Yes. And they'd be bred and they'd foal in the spring. And the colts'd follow you, you know, through the fields. When they got hungry, why, you'd stop and let them nurse, get them out of the harness. (chuckles) It was an awful nuisance.

Q. Did you keep these normally or did you sell the colts?

A. No, we kept them to grow new stock and that's the way the poor man got

his start of good horses, you know. He'd have some pretty good brood mares and breed them to a good horse, and you'd get a good solid work horse.

When I came up here to this place, my father-in-law sold me five head of horses that hadn't had a harness on. And I started in that first winter and broke horses that winter. I had one team of blind mares that I could work on a wagon but I didn't have enough for gang plowing. I bought a gang plow, so I had to break two of the young horses, three year olds.

Q. Excuse me, there's somebody at the door. (tape stopped and started)

A. I broke two horses that spring and that fall I broke another, so I had a five-horse team the next spring, then, that I could put in. And I got one colt; just one colt was all I got. I wasn't lucky. But I finally got all of those five broke and I had good young horses, you know, and trained them myself and I had horses that were very trustworthy. Then I wanted a bigger horse. And so . . .

Q. In training the horses, did you have any trouble with them? Were they . . .

A. Only when you'd first hitch them up. They'd be kind of crazy, you know, but . . . oh, what was their names? One of the boys worked for me. Roy. Anyhow, they had one horse left from their dad's estate and he was a good one and they wanted to sell him and I says, "Well, I want a horse like that." And he says, "Well, you come down and see my older brother." He says, "You can get him, I'm sure, because," he says, "he's a good work horse."

Well, I went and got that horse and he was a five year old and well-broken and he broke colts all around here. He was just smart enough that he knew what a colt ought to do and if they didn't do it, he'd nip their neck. He'd bite them hard, too, and believe me, they'd straighten out right off from him. And so after I got that fellow it wasn't any trouble to break colts, no trouble at all. (chuckles) You just hitched them on and tied them to him and got in the wagon and started off. If they didn't act just right, why, you'd see him reach over and give them an awful nip. (laughter)

Q. So you had about one or two new colts then, a year?

A. Yes, I did that long. Then I quit trying to raise colts because all I had was those two old blind mares, and one of them we drove to a buggy. Well, we didn't want a colt adragging along on a buggy, you know. And so I quit breeding her and . . . She had one colt after this time, after I got old Bill. I broke him by the side of old Bill.

And then when Bill was about a seven year old, I guess—not more than that, I don't think—I turned him out in the pasture right south of the house here one night. There came up a terrible thunderstorm and the next morning I went out and there was old Bill with his feet throwed this way and his head throwed that way. Lightning had hit him out there in the pasture. Burned a strip from each ear clear down, and clear down here, and clear down his legs, and clear onto the hoof, you know. He got an awful jolt. It just knocked him cold, you know. Well, that's the only horse I ever cried over. I did hate so bad to lose old Bill. I never did get him replaced

because you couldn't find them like that. He was a big, heavy fellow.

And I remember one fall we had a wet fall here. One of my brothers was working for me that fall, doing my threshing. I had to quit threshing on account of hay fever. I couldn't go to the machines. I always hired somebody to do my threshing and my brother was doing it and it was wet and they'd put on too big a load and everybody was getting stuck. And they'd holler for Gene--that was his name--they said, "Gene, bring over your team." Well, that was old Bill and the other, the one that mated him good. And there never was a wagon they didn't take out.

Q. Well, let's see, sir, where were we here now? Oh.

ADDENDA ITEM 29 (ref. p. 36)

Q. (Interviewer reading out loud) "We used to have a lot of that in sandwiches. That was elegant meat for sandwiches, cut thin. Q. Could you describe how . . . "

A. Corn beef, you know. You know what corn beef is.

Q. Yes, sir.

A. That's what that was called.

Q. Oh, boy.

ADDENDA ITEM 30 (ref. p. 38)

A. It wasn't galvanized at all. That wire was no galvanizing on it. And yet there was some of it here when I had my hedges buried.

Q. Was it a heavier gauge wire than . . .

A. Yes, it was great big; oh, a lot of it would be 8-gauge wire. And it was woven rather coarse and didn't take too much to make a lot of fence, you know. And we didn't have to stretch it too tight in a hedge because if they pushed against it, it'd got tight, you know. If hogs went to pushing against it, it'd tighten up because it'd be against the hedge. We had it on the inside of the field and that was sure a saver.

But even then you had to trim the top of your hedge three times a year, if you kept it alooking like anything. And that took a lot of cutting and if you hired it done, it took quite a bit of money because a fellow wanted a dollar and half or two dollars a day to do that work, you know.

Q. Pretty mean, I guess, with all those thorns in there.

A. Yes, and poison ivy. There was poison ivy in it. If a man was subject

to that, it was worse than all the thorns in there because you get a dose of that--were you ever poisoned?

Q. Yes, sir. When I was a kid, I used to have it all the time, all summer long. Bad stuff.

A. I had it once to put me to bed, I had it so bad.

Q. I never had it that bad. I remember Mom used to . . . I used to scratch it and get it all open, you know, and she poured rubbing alcohol on that and boy that burned! It was almost as bad as the . . . (laughs) The cure was worse than the disease, I think. That'd wake you up! (laughter)

A. Yes, I bet you that did wake you up. We used a grease, my mother did. I don't know, she fixed it up. My grandmother was great on herbs. She was an old Kentucky lady, and she was great on herbs and, if I remember right, Mother used to gather this nightshade. Do you know that weed?

Q. No, sir.

A. It looks kind of like the ground cherry, only it has no pod on it. It has a black berry on it. And she would get that and fry it in grease and rub on, and that seemed to have an effect on it. But oh, I was awful sick for three days that time. I didn't know I was subject to it. I was working for a fellow and he wanted a fence row cleared and I worked on it for, well, I worked on it two days, one right after the other, you know. And by that time it had taken in good. I went home sick.

Q. Do you remember any other kind of home remedies that your grandmother . . .

A. Well, she had a lot of teas she made. I remember vervain, I know that weed, yet, myself. That was good for cramp colic and I ate, like all kids did, green apples and everything. (chuckles) Had plenty of bellyaches, you know. And when I'd get a spell of that, they'd gather up some of Grandma's dried vervain roots and it was as bitter as it could be. But you drink a half a cup of that and your bellyache'd quit. It'd knock it. So I used it a lot of times. But I never have used it since I've been grown. I know it used to grow up in my well. I had a place fenced off around the stock well and it grew around there. I used to pull it up and look at those weeds and sometimes I'd taste them and see if they was still bitter. (laughter)

Q. They still were, were they?

A. Boy!

Q. I suppose you used sassafras tea, didn't you?

A. Yes, in the spring. Sassafras, and we used to use wild cherry and crab-apple bark. That was another one of Grandma's remedies. Those two barks and we would make a tea of that. We'd just go peel that off, green, you know, and bring it in and make a tea of it. And I don't know what it was for unless it was just a general builder, because we got a round of it, anyhow, ahead of the sassafras. (chuckles)

Q. Was it bitter also?

A. No, it wasn't too bad. It was puckery. The crabapple and the wild cherry together were puckery, both of them. It wasn't too bad to take because . . . little like a puckery persimmon; you know what I mean. I know she'd always say when I'd go out to gather bark, "Now, be sure and peel that up, don't peel it down. If it does, it won't do so good." Well, I'd peel her up the tree instead of down it. (chuckles)

Well, when I was in Oregon, I was inquiring about different trees. I wanted to see hemlock. You know hemlock's very poisonous. And I wanted to see a hemlock, and I had a terrible time agetting anybody that would, if they knew them, if they would show them to me. They wouldn't show them to me. I never could get to see a hemlock tree until I went to the mill pond and seen the logs in the mill pond. They showed me hemlock there. So, I got an idea of what the bark was like.

But I wanted to know also about the cascara wood; you know there's a wood they make cascara of. The cascara that we use today is made from a tree and those trees are valuable. The men have a terrible time keeping them. They steal that bark; they'll take half of the tree, half of the bark off of a tree and steal it. Well, then it'll bark over again in a course of years, you know, and then they can take off that other half, sell it to the . . . they like to have it to sell to the manufacturer of cascara.

That was the tree, you know, that Noah made his ark of. And now, he was a hundred twenty years abuilding that ark, and that wood was good that long and held together to hold all that stuff. I don't know how much you believe the Bible but I believe every word of it. I believe that he really did do that because God made that wood last that long for him, don't you see. A hundred twenty years before he got the ark finished.

Q. Well, let's see here, we were on . . .

ADDENDA ITEM 31 (ref. p. 39)

Q. (Interviewer reading out loud) "A. Wood. Heavy wood, heavy timber."

A. Good wood, too. You needed oak for that.

Q. I see. You used oak wood for it?

A. Yes.

ADDENDA ITEM 32 (ref. p. 42)

A. Everybody had a coal house after they got coal up here. There's one thing about that that I should have told you, that I forgot. They went to Nilwood before the IC [Illinois Central] come through here. They used

to have to go to Nilwood for coal. And there was a mine over there. I don't know what it was like. They ain't any sign of it now, but I've gone with my dad and I know that's where we went, over to Nilwood and get a load of coal and come home with it. And they had a coal house and stored it in out of the weather. And so you could get it anytime.

You know, we used to have bad sleets in those days. I remember one winter, after we moved down to the timber there, that I kept skates on for thirty days. Every day they had sleet and you couldn't walk on it to save your neck with your shoes. If you had rubbers you could, you know. But with a shoe or a boot you couldn't walk on it and you couldn't lead a horse or a cow out to water. And I carried water to the cattle and the horses on skates, and then I skated to school. I'd pull them off to go in the school, of course, and put them on when I was ready to start home, here I'd come. But it'd rain, every time that it'd begin to get rough, it'd rain a little bit of a rain, and freeze on top of there, and it stayed slick for thirty days!

Q. Well, for heaven's sake.

A. And that was some sleet.

Q. Yes, sir. Maybe I'd better turn this tape over. I'm about to run out on this side.

A. Girard had a coal mine, too, I know that. I remember after, oh, I guess was when I was working for Tom Richardson, somebody talked about going to Girard for coal to me, and that was up about 1900, you see. But there's no mine there now. That's all gone. There's no sign of a mine in Girard.

Q. Well, the new ones going in just north of there.

A. I guess the new ones going in right now, over a little farther.

ADDENDA ITEM 33 (ref. p. 44)

A. I'm mistaken there. Easley brought Nel because I went after him.

Q. Okay. Dr. Easley brought Nel?

H.B. He brought both of the girls.

Q. I see. Okay. So that would make really one doctor for the whole family, all except you, I guess.

A. Yes, you just better say that.

ADDENDA ITEM 34 (ref. p. 44)

A. Fox and geese, I don't know how to play it now, but we played it with grains of corn. Much like checkers. And we played dominoes. My, my, my, how we did play dominoes. Dad wouldn't allow us to use playing cards.

Q. Yes, you said that.

A. But we had what they called, oh . . .

Q. You'd mentioned Authors here.

A. That's it, Authors, yes. And that was really instructive. That taught us a lot of the old authors of those days. That was handy when you got into history.

Q. Grandma Waggoner was the one that taught me to play Authors. She always had a set around at home . . .

END OF TAPE

ADDENDA ITEM 35 (ref. p. 48)

A. No depot there anymore. Used to have a depot when I was a kid.

Q. That was to control the trains coming out of the mine?

A. No. That was just the railroad had a depot. You know, for passengers to collect in to go to Litchfield. After the mine began to peter out there at Hornsby, they found another one at Gillespie and they extended the line on down to it, to the Gillespie mine. So, they had a depot for people to get in and get tickets and so on. Had an agent there.

ADDENDA ITEM 36 (ref. p. 49)

Q. Sir, then a little bit later, you go into having gone down there to work and you say, "I wonder what it was I wanted to tell you about?" and it was about the birth certificates. Did you get your birth certificate from Carlinville?

A. Yes. In the meantime, I had met that doctor that brought me to the world and I knew who he was. I could give his name and my father's and mother's name and the date. I sent it over to Carlinville. Second day, here come a birth certificate. I was so dumbfounded, but it was marked at the top: "Book number 2," so they just had started keeping them, don't you see.

My wife never had a birth certificate. She was born with a--what they called a . . . a woman . . . Oh, what did they call them?

Q. A midwife?

A. Yes, a midwife. She never had a birth certificate, so when they

begin to holler for them, why, we went and got some of the old relatives to swear to her birth and got her a certificate that way.

ADDENDA ITEM 37 (ref. p. 49)

A. That's just that one trip. Can't remember another thing about ever being around Granddad or talking to him or anything, but he told me when the ducks come over to say, "Bang!" and I'd say it right loud. I was a little chap, you know. Then they'd kind of start, you know, and down he'd take a couple of them. (laughter)

Q. And then, did he die there on the place at Lone Elm?

A. No. After the folks left that place, his daughter, my father's older sister, insisted on him coming to Texas and living with her. He didn't want to go but he didn't have any means of support, anymore than his children, and so he went down there and he died down in Texas.

I remember going out to his grave when the folks was there. We had to go quite a long ways out in the country to the grave. My uncle had fenced in the grave good so that stock--it was open cemeteries, you know. But he'd fenced in that grave so that no stock could bother it at all. I remember that distinctly. My father was pleased to find that, you know.

Then, another thing that makes me remember that so distinctly, Pa said that, as we went home--we went down in a big wagon--and he says, "Now, as we go home, we'll go down in the timber and get grapes." And you know, there was wild grapes grew there as big as our Concords here. I've always wondered what they could have been but we had two tubs full when they got done picking them and took home. Oh, was I glad to get them because we didn't have any fruit, you know, just lived out in the prairie. How glad I was to have those grapes to gnaw on.

Q. Now, this was down in Texas, you mean. Texas grapes.

A. Yes, Texas grapes. I never learned the name of them or anything of the kind, but they grew--low vines--they didn't climb to the top of the trees. They grew along like that. Like the top of a fence and they crawled over the brush and so on, you know, and they could pick them readily. Oh, my, they were good. (laughs)

ADDENDA ITEM 38 (ref. p. 50)

A. I'm pretty sure he was, since I've thought it over.

Q. Yes, sir. Born near Lone Elm.

A. Born up there, because he had Dr. Easley and he came up in that country and surveyed around and took care of babies and sick people. I can remember the first time he came to our house after I was any size. I stood by and watched him make out fever powders. They used to mix their own medicine, you know. They'd bring bottles and pour out so much of this and take it on the point of a knife blade and put in and measure so many of them and then chop it all together.

Then they had little square papers about so big and they'd put a dip of that on there and fold that paper and you took one an hour or two an hour or whatever, to take down fever. They fought fever those days, you know, because ague was in the country--chills. I guess they had to fight all the time for fever. But you know, doctors don't fight fever very much any more, do they?

Q. I don't think so.

A. No. The fever's a symptom, you know. It tells them something.

Q. Wasn't the ague a form of malaria? From mosquitoes?

A. Mosquitoes? Yes, but it was due to--I bet it was mosquitoes because that was all swampy, you know.

Pretty near everybody had chills in the fall. I thought my mother was going to die after we moved down to that forty down there. She got the chills one fall . . . Well, I had them, too; but I didn't have them as bad as she did. She thought she was going to die. Then we ran onto a patent medicine that was practically all quinine and that knocked her ague and she got over it.

Q. How did you feel when you had this fever? Was it . . .

A. Well, you'd be so cold you'd just freeze to death. Your teeth would chatter. You've never had your teeth chatter, I bet. But when you get that cold, your teeth would just chatter like that, you know. You can't help it. You'd just freeze to death for about an hour and then your fever would start coming up and you'd get hotter than everything then. (chuckles) All that chill would leave you. Well, when the fever quit, the chill was over. You could get up and go to work. It took about two hours, usually, to have a chill and when you'd have one, why, you felt like you was going to quit, but you wasn't.

Q. And that would happen about once a day, would it?

A. Well, every other day was what we dreaded. The every other day kind. No, I didn't know anybody to have them every day; but just every other day, you'd have a chill. I remember when the folks built the new house on the forty, I was--oh, I was all of sixteen years old at that time, I guess, because I waited on the carpenter and I waited on the brick mason and I had a chill every other day and waited on those fellows. I'd go off and lay down until the chill passed and

then I'd get up and go ahead with the job.

Q. Did you take the medicine then?

A. Yes. Took that same medicine my mother did. Finally broke it.

Q. And this was fairly common?

A. Oh, yes. It wasn't uncommon at all. People just had it all around, you know. I imagine it was the mosquitoes. Same as the old yellow fever kind. This wasn't yellow fever. This was just the shaking--the shakes, they called them. The old timers called them the shakes.

ADDENDA ITEM 39 (ref. p. 50)

A. And he got rich.

Q. Oh, is that right?

A. They ditched it and then, after that, it was very productive. My, it was the bottom of an old swamp, you know.

Q. It must have been rather expensive to do that ditching, wasn't it?

A. Well, as I told you, they did it usually cooperatively. A bunch of farmers would go together and, "We'll work on this ditch so long, down here, and let that water off." Then go farther up, you know, and let that off. The ditches were built piece-meal.

I don't suppose there was a dredge boat ever brought in there before--oh, I have an idea I was eighteen years old before there was ever a dredge boat come in. I never had seen one work until I was on the telegraph job. I never had seen a dredge boat work--I'd heard them tell about them--but I went out to see one one day.

They put down platforms and pulled the derrick onto the platform. Then set the horsepower out here to one side, you know, on good ground if they could, for the horses to go around. They'd run a rope down to the bottom of the ditch with a derrick and pick it up. They didn't have to climb the bank with that. (laughter) They were all tickled to death to get a dredge boat.

Q. This was called a dredge boat? It really wasn't a boat?

A. No, they just called it that. But the big ditches, it really was a boat. They floated it. All the machinery moved ahead as the ditch was dug. Just floated. That was where the "dredge boat" word came from. The first ones was just derricks on a platform to . . .

Q. And these used the horsepower as a winch sort of thing, then?

A. Well, they had a windlass. You never were to a molasses mill?

Q. No, sir.

A. Where they made sorghum?

Q. I've never been to one. No, sir.

A. Well, they have two great big rollers, set together, you know, and they can tighten them tighter and tighter. Then there's a rod runs to the bottom of them, onto a gear that turns both of them. They're turned opposite directions, you know. They come this way on one . . . and then there's a trough runs from them into the barrel that the juice goes into. But this rod goes out here to the horsepower and the horsepower or whatever they used for grinding with-- but I was trying to tell you about a derrick.

Q. Yes, sir.

A. A derrick was a straight up and down log, about so high, morticed in at both ends.

Q. About two feet long? Two feet high?

A. About four feet.

Q. Four feet high.

A. It was fastened so that the team could go around and around and turn it. I don't remember how it was fastened, but the rope coupled into that thing and to drag anything, why they just hitched on and started going and that would drag it. That's the way they moved houses. That's the way that church was moved. That's the way all those things were done. They pulled by horsepower. You might have to put four horses on or six horses. It would depend on the load.

Q. How many did they usually use with a dredge?

A. Well, just a dredge would be two horses, because they'd just use an ordinary scraper for a dipper, you know.

Q. Oh, I see.

A. Two horses could handle that.

Q. Did a man have to handle the dipper, then? Did he walk along with it or . . .

A. Well, I don't ever remember watching one of them work but my guess is that he did, that there was one fellow in there with high-top boots

on and he was aguiding it in there, because he worked in a regular loblolly of slush and mud and cattails, as you said, and stuff. That scraper would have to be cleaned every little bit with a spade because it all glommed up, you know.

Q. Yes, sir.

A. And that's the way they moved those things and pulled them.

A horsepower had about a six-foot cogwheel. Solid. Cast iron. And that was bolted into a frame and that frame was what you hitched the team to, to turn that around and around. Well then, there was a small gear fit into that and then went up on a shaft here, with a bevel gear to carry your power away, and it had to be low enough for the horses to step over every time they went around. That's why I called it a tumbling rod. And when it got over here to where they was agoing to use it for power, like for threshing, why they geared it up. They run it through gears, don't you see, to the fly wheel and then put the belt on. But on a dredge boat, they wouldn't have to do that. They'd just pull it with a windlass.

Did you ever see them dig a well with a windlass? Where men turned it?

Q. No, sir.

A. Well, they used to dig--I expect two-thirds of the wells around here were dug that way. A man would go down to the bottom and he'd shovel a bucket full of mud and the man on top, if it took one or two, it depended on the size of the bucket. If you had a big bucket, it would take two men, one on each end of the crank and they'd crank her right up. The rope would wind around, you know, and get her up to the top. One fellow would throw it off to one side and dump it into a wheelbarrow or something to be wheeled away from the well.

They made their own wheelbarrows. Homemade.

Q. How would they make the wheel for it?

A. Well, they had to get a wheel off of something. A low wheel. Now, take those wheels they used on moving big platforms. They were cast iron. About so high. If they could get one of them, it had an axle on each side that would go into, you know. They would put that in their wheelbarrow.

Q. But all the rest of it was just handmade.

A. Well, everything but that wheel. That wheel was cast.

Q. How many men would normally be involved in digging a well? Two or three of them . . .

A. If they were using big buckets [and] if the well had a soil that a man could spade readily, why, he could keep two men busy, with a

big bucket, you know. On top. But if it was hardpan or anything of that kind where he had to pick, why, it would go pretty slow.

Then, finally, they got to the stage where they would shoot the bottom of the well, sometimes, with nitroglycerine or--it was really dynamite, and a low grade dynamite because it wasn't very dangerous. They had to have a cap, you know, and lit a fuse. They lit the fuse at the top of the well as the man got out. He lit the fuse, because he was out before he lit it. It would go down and hit that cap and it would throw mud thirty feet in the air, maybe; but it would loosen up quite a batch of dirt in the bottom of the well.

Q. Wouldn't it loosen up to the side of the well also?

A. Not bad, if it was hardpan . . . because it's a semi-rock, you know, hardpan is. Then too, they probably cut around it with a spade very carefully before they put in that shot, you know; and then bored a hole and put it in the middle.

Q. Yes, sir. Then they would normally line it with bricks, I guess.

A. Yes. As soon as they were done. You had to start at the bottom to build a brick wall, you know. You couldn't build it until you were done and then, when they got as deep as they wanted, if they thought they had struck a good stream of water—there's where those old water witches used to reap a harvest. (chuckles) I never had any more faith in them than I did in that fellow trying to find gold.

Q. Yes, sir. (laughter)

A. I followed a preacher--he was out here one time and he began telling me how he'd find water for me, wherever I wanted it. I got up. I says, "Well, we'll go out and try it." I didn't want to tell him that I didn't believe in it at all. So, I cut two sticks. I knew what to cut, I'd seen them do it enough. I cut two peach limbs off that had forked and grown out here about that long . . .

Q. About two feet.

A. . . . and they cut them off down here and just left a little fork about that long to hold them together, you know.

Q. Couple of inches.

A. Well then, you'd take them in your hand like that and grip them as tight as you could and pull them apart. I never could explain--that's one thing I will say I don't understand. Those things would turn over in your hand and twist that in two. Twist that wood in two. If you held it tight enough, it would turn over and point down.

Q. That was the water pulling it, sir!

A. (laughter) That was where there was water, you know. (laughter)

Well, I followed this old fellow around and I found it every place he did. "Well," he says, "you're a pretty good witcher yourself." I says, "Yes, guess I am." "So," he says, "now do you want to know how deep you'll have to go?" And I says, "Yes, I'd like to know." Well, he back-stepped, so many steps back. "Now," he says, "you'll find water that deep." But I never did dig. (laughter)

Q. Oh, you didn't? (laughter)

A. No, I'd seen it done too often and be a fizzle and I didn't want to dig a hole just for fun. (laughter)

There was a lot of superstitions in those days, you know. I knew lots of men that you couldn't get to start a job of work, a new job of work, on Friday to save your life! "No, sir! We'll wait until tomorrow."

Q. It was just a bad day to start, huh?

A. Well, unlucky. Something would happen. They wouldn't do it. Well, no use arguing because they were "sot." (laughter)

Q. What were some of the other types of superstitions you ran into?

A. Well . . . Some of them actually believed in ghosts.

Q. Oh?

A. Well, they did. They believed in them and you could put a sheet over your head and that would scare them to death. (laughs) I know one fellow told me about it. He said there was an old fellow came to visit his dad that he knew was scared to death of ghosts. (laughs) He says, "He started home after dark and there was a good hedge on each side of the road. So," he says, "I just took a sheet and slipped down the road ahead of him." On the opposite side of the hedge, you know. He says, "I put that sheet on and stepped out of one row and," he says, "you know, he went right through that other hedge just like it wasn't there." (laughter) And he was just tickled to death. He never let that old man know he was the ghost, you know. (laughter)

Oh, there was a lot of superstitions that . . . I never could swallow them. At the time of the first war . . . No, it wasn't the first war—what was it? Oh, it was a big strike that hit the railroads and hit everything. They guarded that bridge down there, that iron bridge; they had it built by then and they guarded it.

Q. This is near where you lived there at Honey Bend?

A. Yes and they had a man that had to cross that every hour and see that there wasn't nobody fooling around and he stayed there all night. I was working down at the tower at that time and I went to work, sometimes, about midnight. So . . . I'm telling you about how superstitious some people were. There was one fellow they sent out there that I knew. A young man. Sent him out to guard that bridge and he went

across one time and come back and laid down, like that, with his head on a tie, on the end of a tie, and a fast train came along and the big bolt in the end of the cowcatcher pecked him right in there.

Q. Oh? Right behind the ear?

A. And it knocked him clear down the bank. They found him the next morning, not dead but just about. He'd bled like everything and that bolt had penetrated his skull. It was very evident to see what had happened to him. Well, they stopped a fast train and loaded him on that and took him to Decatur to the hospital. Well, he died as soon as he got up there, pretty near.

Well, I used to pass that place, where he went through the fence, in the night time after time, and I'd always say, "Well, George, come on out," and (laughs) George never appeared.

Q. Were there people that thought that he might, though?

A. Oh, yes. There was people that wouldn't have walked by there by themselves for a hundred dollars. (laughter)

And I got so tickled at an old section foreman we had--I'm awasting a lot of your good time telling stories.

Q. No, that's all right.

A. We had a brakeman--or a section foreman. He was a real flannel-mouthed Irishman and he came over to this country and they had a flannel mouth for a road foreman. This old man was a reliable worker and he gave him a job as section foreman. So, he had two men that he worked. He started from Honey Bend.

Well, I got real well aquainted with old Pat. He was a likable old fellow and just full of jokes. I says, "Pat, how long were you coming over?" "Six weeks," he said, "on a sailboat." Six weeks, now, on the sea, and I says, "Did anybody die?" "Yeh. Yeh." He got pretty sober then. I says, "What did they do with them?" I knew what they did with them but I wanted to hear him tell it. He says, "Well, they put them in a big sack and filled that sack with coal and then they put a board over the rail and put them down on it, with their feet toward the water, and then they give them the burial rights and tipped the board and down they went and," he says, "there never was a one that I ever helped bury that didn't turn around and look at the ship as he sank." (laughter)

The old man was so serious, I couldn't hardly laugh. (laughter) "Looked at the ship as he sank." And he was in a gunny sack full of coal and had been dead a day or two. (laughter) And now, that old boy believed that. I says, "Was the ship astanding still?" "No," he said, "they didn't stop a ship." Said, "The ship would sail right along." Well, it was very readily to see why he turned around, you know. (laughter) But you couldn't convince that fellow.

Boy, I've talked to some of them, try to tell them there wasn't no such a thing as a ghost. "Ah, you're not telling me. So-and-so saw one, so-and-so saw one . . ." (laughter)

Q. What about superstitions in regard to planting crops, you know, in the spring, in the phase of the moon . . .

A. Well, there was men that . . . There's still moon farmers. Good night, lots of them and, while I laugh at them and tease them, I really think there is something to it. I think--you know the moon controls our tides.

Q. Yes, sir.

A. Well, why wouldn't it control land as well as tides?

These girls down here will let land stand a week before they'll plant it, no matter what it's like, until the moon gets just right. And I tease them all the time about it. Then, there's a woman in Farmersville that used to live right east of us, she lived there until her husband died. She was a moon farmer and she still argues with me. She'll start it herself now, on me. (laughs) I didn't plant it in the right moon. (laughter)

Q. Is that Opal Lohman?

A. Yes, and I tell her, I'd say, "I'll take a good seed bed and you take the moon." (laughter) But that's funny. Well, now, they believe it. She believes it. With all her heart. So do these two girls and, oh, I've known--I expect I've known fifty people in my time that planted by the moon. I think my grandmother did on my mother's side. I think she was strong for it. But Dad was like me, he planted when the seed bed was right.

Q. Yes, sir. (pause) Sir, we'd better get back to reading here a little bit.

A. Yes. I waste a lot of your time.

Q. No, sir! That's not wasting time. As a matter of fact, I was thinking while you were telling those stories, there's a Dr. Ed Hawes that works out at Clayville that I've taken courses from who will be real interested in hearing those stories because he's had people go out and look for people to find stories like that.

A. Well, they're skittish. They won't tell--talk to a stranger, you know

Q. I know.

A. No, sir, you can't get anything out of them, they just shut up like a clam.

Q. Superstitious, huh?

A. Yes. They don't want to be laughed at and they know they're liable to be. They don't want to be. Because that's their belief.

Q. Oh, yes.

END OF VOLUME I ADDENDA