BERT AIKMAN MEMOIR

Volume IV

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Illinois tornado	275
Farm Bureau activities, Sam Sorrels	277
Waggoner elevator co-op	279
Support of school activities	281
Local government activities	285
Corduroy roadways	287
Farm gates	288
Banks and the Depression	288
Other Waggoner businesses	291
Story: "The $3.50 Freight Bill"	295
Cutting and binding grain (ca. 1890's)	296
Sheep around the farmstead	297
Basketball comes to Waggoner	298
Other school activities (ca. 1920's - 1930's)	300
Wild Row Park, Terrell Burford	301
Other annual affairs	303
Dwight Street's horses	306
The Dunkard Church	308
Skinny Campbell and others	309
First automobile	312
Roads (ca. 1920's)	313
Looking for a homestead (Oklahoma, New Mexico)	316
Corn planting (ca. 1890)	324

The crabtree harrow 325

Getting plow-hand legs 326

First field jobs 327

Pleasant Hill and New Hope Baptist churches 330

Plowing techniques 331

Threshing operations 332

Hay making operations 337

Blacksmithing 338

Grocery store operations 339

Telephones in the country 340

Electricity arrives 341

The Waggoner bank, Mark Waggoner 343

Other Waggoner businesses 344

Addenda 347

Addenda Contents 348

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

A.[1] I was helping thresh on a place and we were out quite a distance from any buildings, but there was a swamp right ahead of us full of willows and in the middle of this swamp an old crow had built her nest up in the top of a cottonwood tree. And this storm came across forty acres of corn. It looked like a roller had rolled through there, just like exactly. Well, I had a load of wheat on and I said to the pitcher, "What had we better do?" He says, "You drive off that way. That's agoing northeast, straight. Drive southeast and you'll be all right." Well, I hopped off the load and drove it southeast. I could see what it was doing.

[There were] some big haystacks right by the side of where I pulled off to and that storm missed them by fifty yards, at least, and after it was clear passed, looked to me like--the twister, you know, was clear passed--the tops of those stacks just piled[2] off and took off after that thing like they was paid for it. It headed right into that swamp where the old crow was setting and it picked her up--there wasn't any rain in this--it picked her off of that nest and she went up and up and up and up, and aflying as hard as she could. You could see that, and all at once it just dashed her to the ground like that, and broke her wing. One of the men went out and picked her up.

Now, that was just a big whirlwind. No rain in it. No thunder or lightning. It was out of a big cloud, of course. That's the closest I was ever to anything that whirled like that.

Q. Kind of a small tornado, then.

A. Yes, it was.

Q. Have you ever seen a tornado in this part of the country?

A. We had one go through here one time since I lived here. It was going by us a half mile north and I thought it was passed. We were standing watching out of these windows, and all at once it just turned around and come back here, just like that. This yard was surrounded with great large maple trees, I expect fifty years old, and they were only ten feet apart. It was a terrible mess of timber up there. It hit that and it tore off those limbs. Right here by the side of the house, out about twenty steps,

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[1] Mr. Aikman volunteered additional narration before starting review of this session. See addenda item 103.

[2] See addenda item 104.

was a sugar maple tree, or a hard maple, and it brought all those limbs and stacked them around that thing. It saved the house by stacking them around that. You could walk right around that tree like you was in a tent after it got by. Limbs set up in it and down in the ground, you know. There was a large tree right south of the cellar there, a large maple. Oh, it was over six feet through. I went to look to see if it had broke, I figured it was hollow.

You'd see a limb and then you wouldn't see it. I never seen a limb blow off. You'd just see a limb and then it was gone.[3] I hauled loads of limbs out of my pasture down there. Brought them up here and burned them after it was over. It shot one of them through that window, right into the room, about a ten-foot limb.

Q. Right into the living room, then.

A. Yes. That's the only damage it done,[4] to speak of, outside of balling up trees for me to chop (laughs) for about a week.

Q. Did you ever have much crop damage from heavy rains, or hail, or . . .

A. No, I've been unusually fortunate in that. Chinch bug was the biggest destroyer I ever had. As I told you, that one year I had twenty acres of corn just about like that, all laid by and green as the corn is now, and in three days there wasn't a stalk in sight. Not a stalk! They cleaned the whole thing and went on over into a clover meadow. Of course then they took wing and flew for green stuff. That was my worst experience here. But I never shucked an ear of corn that year. Not an ear.

Q. You mentioned the Farm Bureau that came over and helped you with culling the chickens. Were there any other things that the Farm Bureau was doing in those days?

A. Well, they would help you with anything that you'd ask them to. That was one of the things--really, I think that was one of the biggest things that that fellow ever put over, because there was a big crowd here, I expect fifty people, for that culling. They got the idea, then, of how to pick laying hens and everybody profited by it, oh, all around. All over the township. Profited by that culling, and it did me no harm. It did me a lot of good because it took out all the old deadheads, you know, as I said. Well, afterward I read everything I could, then, on how to cull chickens. I culled my own after that. I never had to call on him any more.

The first time I called him up, I called him up about a proposition on some rough ground I had. Corn ground got a little too dry and it was rough. And I didn't quite know what to do with it and I called him up here. I took him right into the field and I says, "Now, what am I to do with this?" And I thought he would give me some explicit direction, but he says, "Well now, Mr. So-and-so, down here, had the same proposition

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[3]See addenda item 105.

[4]See addenda item 106.

and he did this. Mr. So-and-so, way out here, had the same proposition and he did so, certain things." He never recommended a single thing. He just told what others had done. Well, I was to draw my own conclusions from the bunch, you see, and go ahead and do the work. So, it helped me out a lot, because I found what those big farmers were doing and I did likewise.

Q. What do you mean the ground was rough?

A. Oh, you couldn't reduce clods. Big clods. Too dry when we plowed it. You couldn't reduce clods. That was before I had an iron roller. The next year, why, I got an iron roller. If I'd had that iron roller, I needn't have called him, because they had the iron rollers that were corrugated and they would cut as well as mash, and I could have fixed that very nicely.

Q. What did you do that year?

A. I don't remember particularly, any more than that I double disced. Went in with a disc and double cut it; cut it both directions and then put the harrow on behind the disc, with five horses on it, the last time. That leveled it up and I could plant, then, from that. I got a good stand of corn.

Q. Was the Farm Bureau organized into groups? Did you belong to the Farm Bureau?

A. It was organized by counties. Yes, I joined that. One of the first members, I expect, that they had there, at that time. Because it appealed to me. I had been taking Wallace Farmer. I don't know whether you ever read Wallace Farmer or not.

Q. No, sir.

A. The old man Wallace that started that paper was a Presbyterian preacher, but a farmer. He was the most heart-to-heart talker you ever saw, through the print. He could just make you see it, through print. He advised all the new farmers, and everybody else, what to do. Reading him made me anxious to be in such an organization as the Farm Bureau. So, when they came--I've belonged to it now for forty or fifty years, I don't know how long. I missed one year. I was away. I sold out and travelled for one year and I missed out on the Farm Bureau. That was the only year I was ever out of it.

Q. Did they have regular meetings that you attended?

A. Yes, they had a regular meeting to elect officers every year, at a certain time of the year. Then they provided refreshments, and families and all came. Course, by that time, the women had an organization, too, that they worked in. It was very educational and, as I told you, this man was a wonderful man. And then, there was a man lived southeast of Raymond. Sam Sorrels. S-O-R-R-E-L-S. I want his name on there because he was so heart and soul with that and he was called Mr. Farm Bureau. (laughs) Boy, he did convert more farmers, because he was an honest Christian man and

they believed him.[5]

He had a very good farm, or rather his wife did, two hundred and twenty acres that he farmed. He and I had grown up together so that he always wanted to help me any way he could. He'd invite me down to see his seedings of alfalfa and his seedings of sweet clover. He began growing sweet clover, the first that was ever grown in this neck of the woods. The ground up here was all sour, most of it, and it wouldn't grow sweet clover. But as soon as it was limed, it would grow it taller than your head, you know; and they began growing it, plowing it under for green manure. He was the instigator of that.

Well, then, in order to enhance the sale of the seed, he tore up an old binder, or got parts of old binders, and built a seed gathering machine that he drove through his fields and it stripped--did you ever see a cotton stripper?

Q. No sir.

A. You never seen them work? Well, this stripped all the seed. It went along and just--it was a bar of steel and it wasn't sharp enough to cut it but sharp enough to scrape on it. He had a reel that would press [the clover] back against it and then [the bar] would scrape those off and then [the reel] would mash it down, you know. He harvested, oh, just an awful lot of seed and dried it. Then he made a threshing machine of his own to hull the stuff, right there on the farm. He had money to buy gas engines. That was ahead of tractors.

He put the sweet clover in the county. [Before] that [it] would grow along creeks but that was the only place you saw it. He put sweet clover in, and then they followed that with alfalfa because sweet clover inoculated the land. They had to lime it to get sweet clover, see, and then it inoculated the land for alfalfa, and they could grow some bumper crops of alfalfa.

It takes about five years for anything of that kind to soak through, you know. This fellow will watch the other fellow and he does so-and-so. Well, he'll watch him the next year and if he does [all right] then: "Well, I'll try it." Farmers were very cautious people.

Q. Where did they hold the Farm Bureau meetings?

A. In Hillsboro. Usually in the high school. They had a big gym and we'd have it in the gym at the high school. Have a box dinner. Usually a State speaker, an agronomist from out of the university, would come there and give a lecture.

One year we had a man from England. Oh, I could have listened to that man all day. He was a farmer here, now. He says, "The hardest thing to buy, anywhere, was brains." He says, "That's the hardest thing to buy. You're lucky if you can buy them." So, he was a lecturer over the country. He'd

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[5]See addenda item 107.

experimented in England some before he came here. He came here as a man of sixty, I guess, and went to farming here and he grew phenomenal crops. And he would take them sight-seeing over his farm. I don't remember where it was. It was north, though, of Champaign someplace.

He was in the third glaciation. That was another thing. He was smart enough to get in the third glaciation. He knew about that. I never heard of glaciation until after I had been on the farm two or three years. We're only in the second here. And that is the reason that Champaign had us beat, just a little, because the third extended down over Champaign but it played out shortly below.

Q. Were you an officer, in any way, of the Farm Bureau?

A. No. They invited me but I wouldn't serve. I had hay fever so bad those days it just pretty near run me crazy and I couldn't drive over the country and interview farmers and go out in the farm fields and wheat fields and so on. It would just drive me wild. And so I resigned from it. The Farm Bureau manager, he didn't want to let me go at all. He thought I ought to doctor for it. Well, he didn't know how much doctoring I had been doing. I finally got so I left the state. A number of years I left the state through that season. So, I never served as a--but I was a booster for it and helped all I could and when they got to where they needed somebody to talk, I was ready to talk to people.

Q. What were your duties as secretary of the elevator co-op?

A. Just merely keep track of the business. Most of my duties was to keep track of the annual meeting, see that officers were properly elected. We had a president, vice-president, secretary-treasurer, and a membership of probably fifty, you know,[6] and you had to watch that they were duly elected because the State was watching those places, trying their best to stick taxes on them. If you had five members that drew a salary, they'd tax you an income tax, and a heavy one. And we had to watch very carefully and stay within the three limit.

Q. Who were some of the officers in the co-op?

A. Well, I think every one of them are dead but me. All of them that I can remember, ever, are dead. They were young, younger farmers, or my age farmers, and they've been gone quite a while.

Q. Who were some of them?

A. Well, one of them's name was Derby. He lived down here on the southeast corner of--or on the northeast corner--of the next section.

Q. Was that Frank Derby?

A. Yes. You knew him, didn't you?

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[6]See addenda item 108.

Q. Not well, but I knew of him.

A. I bet your mother knew him well.

Q. Yes, sir.

A. Frank Derby was president a long time. Then he was followed by a man named Weitekamp. W-E-I-T-E-K-A-M-P. He farmed over adjoining Harvel Township, but his interests were all in this township. He was the president for a number of years, and then, let's see, who did we have besides--and then he lost his mind. It was the awfulest thing. He was as smart as a whip and a well-balanced fellow and not a boozer, but he got to trying to learn money. He sent and got the books from Washington, as far back as he could on money, and brought it up to the date and he tried to learn it and he just studied himself crazy. We did hate the worst to lose that man, my goodness!

And his brother took his place then. Same name, just a younger man than him. One was Frank and the other, Lee, or one was . . . No, the first man was Ed, and the next man, Leo. They were strong Catholics but it didn't make a bit of difference in our meetings. They worked just the same with us and they would vote against Catholic men that tried to get something they were not entitled to.[7] They'd vote right straight through with us Protestants. So, I thought an awful lot of those three men. I don't think . . . Oh, the first man, I guess, was Herb Street. You knew Herb?

Q. I didn't know him. I've heard an awful lot about him.

A. I think he was the first president of the elevator association,[8] and served a number of years.

When I first moved up here, why, I had worked for Tom Richardson out here. I don't know whether you ever heard of him or not, but he was an old man that worked on his knees. He had rheumatism so bad he couldn't stand up, and he worked on his knees. And I worked as his hired man two seasons out there and I got to know practically all the--he'd married Al, uh, . . . Well, what was that? . . . You'd know in a minute, if I could think of it[9] . . . So, people from west of town all visited them. I got to know Max and Reed, they were little tykes about this high at that time, and I knew their mother. Their dad was dead, you know. Oh, I learned to know Herb Street and he had a brother who ran for county superintendent of schools; I forget his name now.[10]

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[7]See addenda item 109.

[8]See addenda item 110.

[9]Mr. Aikman later identified this person as Alice Williamson. See addenda item 111 for verbatim text and some discussion of the Williamson family.

[10]Mr. Aikman later identified this person as Jasper Street. See addenda item 112 for verbatim text.

Then, we had a man in the township named Tom Taylor. You probably knew him, didn't you?

Q. Yes, sir.

A. Well, Tom was active in the Farm Bureau, too. He didn't hold an office that I can remember of, but he was always a booster and would do anything you asked him for, on a committee. I thought an awful lot of Tom. He was a fine man.[11]

Q. Were you ever involved with the school board in the township here?

A. (laughs) I'd had that one experience as a school director and they run after my every year, but I would not take it! They just begged me and begged me. (laughs) I wouldn't take another school director's job. My, that's the most thankless job on earth.

Q. Where were you a director?

A. Honey Bend. I was right where they could bring all their grievances to me, just walk across the road. I had to settle more spats.

Q. What types of spats did they have?

A. Oh, the teachers would issue a certain rule and the mothers wouldn't want the kids to observe it. One teacher that I had to call in and give a good strong lecture and she didn't take it kindly at all, she wouldn't let the kids set their overshoes under the stove. She wanted to keep them in the hall. And one of the women who had two kids that walked a mile and a half, she came to me and she says, "Bert, those kids have got to have those overshoes so they can put them on of an evening when they go home. They're froze stiff and they can't get in them." And she says, "And I want you to see that that's taken care of." And I says, "Well, I think it. . . ." So, I told the teacher to come over. She came over and I told her what she'd have to do and she didn't know whether she would or not. "Now," I says, "listen, you do just what I tell you. You'll have to." And she went off mad as hops, crying. (laughs) But she did. She straightened out. Then, we had a ne'er-do-well family in the neighborhood that had a little kid that never had been bossed and he made all manner of trouble in the school. We had to keep calling in the directors and straightening that out. So, I had plenty of it.

Q. You indicated that you had done some speaking.

A. No, I just talked, like I'm talking to you. No, I never made but one speech in my life. They had an awful time after they organized the Parent-Teachers Association down here at Waggoner, and Cap Williamson's wife—you knew her, too, didn't you? Lela?

Q. Very vaguely.

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[11] At this point in the review, a discussion ensued not pertinent to the memoir until Honey Bend was mentioned. See addenda item 113 for the Honey Bend discussion text.

A. Well, I think she was the president of it, and she harped at me for a temperance talk. Wanted me to make a temperance talk and I put her off and put her off and put her off. Finally, they couldn't get anyone to talk for one meeting and I says, "Well, I'll come down and talk." But I didn't promise to talk on temperance. I said, "I'll do the best I can in that respect, but I can't make a temperance talk alone." I says, "I'm going to just tell you some of my experience." So, I gave them some of my experience as a hired man working in various families. All of them had children. The influence that I tried to exert over kids. I always tried to exert a good influence over the kids in a family.

One man I worked for had a brother-in-law in St. Louis, and while I was working for him, his [the brother-in-law's] wife died with TB. She had a little five year old boy that she had been able to just see him at meal time, if then, for a year, I guess. He was in saloons and alleys and all the worst company he could get in because he liked dirty jokes. Little as he was. Well, when she died, why, my boss went down and took him in, brought him home with him, told him he was going to keep him and put him through school.

END OF SIDE ONE

A. Well, he had the dirtiest mouth that I ever saw on a five year old. I never had seen his equal. He knew every sell there was and he took right up following me. He wouldn't follow his uncle; he'd follow me, you know. Well, he'd try a sell on me. I always bit on every one, just . . . (laughs) You ought to see that little bugger laugh. He'd lay down and just roll and tumble. (laughter) It was really funny to me.

But he'd swear so much, and the folks whipped him for it. And one morning at breakfast, they said, "Now, Bert, if he swears out with you, you're to tell us, and we're going to give him a licking for it. He's going to stop that swearing. Now, you're to tell us." I didn't say yes nor no, I just sat there and let them talk.

So, we went out to work and we hadn't been working but a little while when something didn't go to suit him and he let loose and the air got blue. I let him rant for about a minute and I says, "Now, you heard what they told me at the breakfast table." And then he cussed me, turned on me. He says, "Tell them! Just go tell them!" And called me everything, you know. And I says, "You never heard your uncle or me use such language as that a single time. Now, did you?" Well, he didn't answer me. I says, "All I want is for you to quit that." I says, "Why don't you quit it?" I says, "I'm not agoing to tell them. Don't glory about that. I'm not going to tell them any of it, but I want you to quit for my sake. You quit swearing." And you know, in a month's time, he quit it entirely. Made as fine a little fellow as you ever saw. (laughs) And his uncle educated him, and the last I heard of him he was one of the runners for one of the big banks in St. Louis, to go to where they made the exchange of a morning, you know.

So, that's what I told them instead of a temperance speech. I said, "I'm neither a father nor a teacher, and I don't think it is proper for me to try to advise people on raising children, any more than that I think they should be disciplined enough to do what's right.

Q. Where did you give this talk? At the grade school?

A. Yes, in the grade school, but the high school was all there, too. That is, the teachers were and the members of the Parent-Teacher. . . . They never bothered me afterward. (laughs) I know it wasn't much of a speech or they'd abothered me afterward but they didn't.

Q. My mother wrote me about it. In a letter I received yesterday, she mentioned it to me.

A. She did?

Q. She remembered hearing you speak in school.

A. I used to. Those days, the Bible was allowed in the school, you know, and every time we had a traveling missionary, or anything of the kind, I stood in with the principals with an understanding that I could bring over whatever I wanted to and introduce to the school; of those people, you know. They had interesting talks.

I remember I took an Indian over one time. Full blood Indian, but he'd had a university education. Claimed he was called to preach. He went over to make them a speech and he was atalking to them about a fellow that was in their neighborhood, named John Stink. He wasn't an Indian, he was a white man, but he had forty dogs and he hunted and he and the dogs lived together. They all lived in the same house and people were about half afraid of him and he had epileptic fits. And whenever he'd have an epileptic fit, why, the cowboys would find him, dead to the world, you know, and they'd go notify the Indians. He was part Indian. They'd go notify the Indians and tell them they'd have to bury him. Well, there in Oklahoma at that time, they sat a man up against a pile of rock, then just piled rock all over him, sitting up. And those dogs would dig him out every time and he'd come to. Another week or two he'd be hunting with his forty dogs. They buried him twice.

I know I was back in the anteroom when he was telling that story and I said to the teacher that was back there with me, a young lady and she was from Oklahoma, and I says, "I think that fellow is aspiffing us. I don't believe that story." And she says, "No, he's not!" She says, "That's the gospel truth. I know that." Said, "That actually happened."

So, the third time that he had a fit and they found him dead, why, the Indians wouldn't pick him up. They'd got superstitious of him and they wouldn't pick him up. So, it was up to the coroner to go out and get him and he took him down to the undertaker and they embalmed him and buried him and he (laughs) didn't come to.

Q. Not once embalmed, I guess.

A. But I used to go to a school a lot with those kind of people, you know, and of course, it was up to me to introduce them.

Q. That must have been what she was speaking of because she mentioned in the one-room schools.

A. Yes, that was the grade school but they had the high school. Why, at this time, this fellow was amaking a talk in the high school. He told the kids that he'd show them how to make arrowheads if they'd come around after he got through talking. I never went over to see it. I talked with the teachers and ones that gathered around me. The kids claimed he did show them how it was done. But I never credited it because I think that was practically a lost art. Don't you think it is?

Q. Well, I don't know. They still teach it to Boy Scouts, you know. Pressure points and all. When did the high school start in Waggoner?

A. That's a date, again.

Q. I think it was 1924. Sometime in the 1920's.

A. Yes, it was that or a little later. It was voted in. We had to issue bonds to get it. I remember being on the election board when it was voted in. George Fooks and John Waggoner both got out and took in all the territory that they could so as to reduce the taxation on the rest of us, on those bonds, you know. The bonds carried and the school was built and served as a high school for a number of years.

My wife and I always attended all of the basketball games there, while we were younger and could stand up. They didn't have a gym big enough for seats, so we always had to stand up and that's quite tiresome.

I was very much interested in education and anxious to see them do well. I had a number of nephews and nieces that were in there, you know, and I was anxious to see them get the best they could. Dorothy was one of them and I pushed her as hard as I could.

Q. That was Dorothy Hampton, you mean?

A. Yes.

Q. What types of things did you do for the school?

A. Oh, about the only things I ever done--at that time, there was the three churches but none of them had a resident pastor and they always called on me for an invocation and the benediction. That's the extent of my work in front of the school. I did that for a number of years, both schools.

One time they had a resident preacher here. I'll tell you this for--shut that thing off for a minute.

Q. All right.

(tape turned off and on)

A. I refused to go on the election board, after they got organized enough that they could handle all right without my help. I wasn't too much help anyway.

The different supervisors, of course, had to oversee the elections. The

women got their vote along about that time and they insisted that I be on the election board for that because they had to swear in every woman that voted. You had to remember the oath and give it to them and have them sign their name, you know. Well, I worked on that. And I took a fellow that was pretty hard up, a carpenter there in town, pretty hard up, as a clerk. Well, I thought a carpenter should be pretty good in figures. Wouldn't you surmise that he would?

Q. I would think that he would.

A. And that night I never had such a time in my life. I had to stand right over that fellow and watch every figure he put down. He couldn't add, he couldn't get them down in the right place, and, oh boy, that cured me of ever just accommodating some fellow that you didn't know too well.

So, I don't know. I served on the election board until they got well organized at it and then I said, "Now, I don't need that money half as bad as lots of these fellows here in town that are just as capable as I am of a day's work." I says, "You give it to them." And so, I never served any more.

Q. How about the county board? Did you have any association with it?

A. No. They wanted to run me for supervisor but I didn't want it. I wasn't interested in that.

Q. You indicated at one time that you helped bring in the oil for the roads here. Get that started.

A. Well, that was done through the highway commissioner, yes. There was three commissioners at that time on the highway, you know. And then they hired a road boss. Paid him a salary and he did the work. Well, the Baker boys, Ira was one of them. I think Tom Taylor was one of the commissioners, and Herb Street was another one.[12] They wanted to know if I would carry a petition for the northeast corner of my township. And I carried it enough that people got to know me and I could get their signatures without too much argument. At first they'd say, "I'll sign for it if you'll oil in front of my house." Well, I'd say, "Well, what good will that do? You've got to start someplace and the place to start is at town." Well, some of them you could convince and some you couldn't. But, before it was over with, they were all glad enough to sign up because we got a mile and a half started and they seen what a change that made in the road and they began to come across.

Q. How did they go about oiling the roads in those days?

A. Well, the road commissioner went with all of them in the county around. All the commissioners would get together, if they could, and then the oil

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[12]See addenda item 114.

people would come and put in bids. They'd ask, "How many miles do you have that you're going to oil this year?" You know, we had to oil what we could by the taxes we had every time. We couldn't oil the whole township at once. I think we were four years oiling the township. They would come and submit bids. Well, then the commissioners would accept somebody's bid that was the most reasonable.

They gave you the low-down on the oil, the specific gravity and those thing, you know, that we didn't know anything about. (laughs) Nevertheless, they came with it, loaded, because they expected us to have an attorney on the job. We never did, that I remember of, have an attorney. They just, the men, foxed it themselves.

Then, the oil would be supplied to the township in tanks still boiling. They'd draw it out of a retort. They got it at Pana most of the time. It would be shipped over here in a tankcar, or they would bring in big tanktrucks, and it would still be boiling. Well, they'd run it into the distributor. There was a man at Morrisonville named . . . hum . . . I didn't think I would ever forget his name.[13] He oiled roads so long . . . Well, he fitted himself to oil the county and the other counties. He bought the equipment to do it with. Tanks, on trucks, you know, and to spread it properly. I can't think of his name; maybe I will before we're through. And, he would always be there and bid at the same time on what he would get out of spreading it. And they had to make two payments at the same time.

Well, there was one place that I had to be ready to take some notes to keep track of what we agreed to. Usually the town clerk did, but if he couldn't be there, why, he'd turn over his books to me.

Q. How about bridging in the township? Were you involved in any bridges?

A. No. The steel bridges were beginning to come in and so was concrete. The little culverts they began putting in with just concrete. Take a big tile and lay it through there and then cover it with concrete so it wouldn't break through. And they did quite a lot of pretty good-size streams that way a little later on when they could get big tile like so, you know, and they'd just build on up above them.

The commissioner had to levy enough money out of taxes to take care of such things as that. He tried to. If he could see it acoming. These bridges would be applied for, a year ahead usually. He would know what he had to do and about what they'd cost. There was a man named Challacomb, C-H-A-L-L-A-C-O-M-B, in Hillsboro, who was in the steel bridge business and wherever there was a steel bridge letting, he was always there, and he seldom failed to get it. I never saw him bribe anybody but I know that he did. I'm satisfied that he did, because he almost always got it. There'd be other steel men, but they had to haul it too far. See, he just brought it from Hillsboro.

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[13] Mr. Aikman later identified this man as Louie March. See addenda item 115 for verbatim text.

And Challacomb put in a number of bridges. He had, well, let's see . . . Well, I can't tell you how many he had in this township. They were single span, most of them. Just build up a concrete wall and put steel girders across, but we called it a steel bridge. Well, a little later on, they put floors under those girders and poured concrete in there and done away with the steel bridge business, had concrete bridges.

I've seen the country develop pretty near from the corduroy days. Did you ever ride on corduroy? (laughs)

Q. No, sir.

A. Where they took poles and put them in the mud holes, cross ways. Put them about this far apart and tamp them down in the mud and you'd go driving over them. aRUaRUaRU. (laughter)

Q. Really bounce you along.

A. But you could get through places that way, a swale of some kind. You'd get through them that you couldn't get through to save your life if they didn't do it.

Q. I understand that one of the first pavings on the west end of Waggoner, as you go out of town, was corduroy at one time.

A. Yes, that's right. That was. The first oilings started at the edge of Waggoner and come this way and went west, each way a half a mile. First. That was the first thing. Then of course, they began spreading out a little farther, and a little farther. Well, then Waggoner don't go too far and they hit Macoupin, you know. Well, then they got in cooperation with Macoupin and got them to meet at the county line, and we oiled to the county line. So, that helped clear across to Carlinville and Nilwood, and over to [highway] number 4.

Q. Were there any large corduroy roads put in in Pitman Township that you know of?

A. No, not large. They wouldn't be over, oh, say, two hundred yards long. Just through a little place. Of course, when that dried up and you drove over those logs (laughs) all summer, it was worse than going . . . (laughs) But we were so glad to have them in there when we needed to get across.

You know there used to be a catty-cornered road went into Litchfield from this direction. Did you ever travel it?

Q. No, sir.

A. Well, it did and I saw it one time dug out with tractors, after they got tractors, that a tractor wouldn't hardly show above it. It just dug that clear out. And that was one place that had always been corduroyed and they tried to find a solid foundation someplace there. But it wasn't there, it was just seepy and, as keep as they went, they still was in a seep. And there was one tractor stood there the whole blessed winter, right in the middle of the road. He was stuck tight as a jug and none of the others could get in near him to pull him out. He let the water out of it

and it stayed there all winter.

Q. The Street Gate Company in Litchfield used to provide a lot of gates around here. Did you ever own any of the Street gates?

A. Never did, but I knew about them and knew about the factory. Had been out there different times and watched them work and they were a good gate. I wondered that there weren't more of them used, but fellows could take planks--those days you could buy cypress lumber in the lumber-yard and cypress is very lasty, as you probably know, and they would build their own gates out of that much cheaper than they could buy. Then they learned to put them on a slide so they could open them easily and swing them around any direction they wanted to, pretty near. Most of the gates in the township were wooden gates; only the Street gate, a few fellows had them.

And there was a--the old man that lived right at the end of the Waggoner road, settled there. His name was Westerheid. He went to the fair one year and bought a cattle gate, like they used in the West. You know what they were like. Ties, or timbers, set about that far apart and that high from the bottom and cattle wouldn't go across them at all. You drove right across them with your automobile.

Q. Laid out into the ground, set into the ground.

A. Yes. Yes, you just drove right across them. Well, there was a fellow in Springfield at the fair that year that had them that you could spread in your own gate. They were bevelled steel. Like that, you know, come up here. You just laid them so far apart. You didn't have to dig under them. Cattle wouldn't monkey with it. They wouldn't get on them. They didn't like that sharp part, you know. And, he bought one. I seen it in his gate. You'd drive right over it with anything you had to drive over it, you know.

It was at his barn lot and he had sixty head of milk cows and when he could drive them over it, I thought it was a wonderful thing. So, I went down to see him and I said, "I came down to see your cattle gate here." "Well," he says, "I'm going to tell you right on the start that I wouldn't buy another one. I wouldn't have one if they give it to me." And I says, "You wouldn't?" And he says, "No, I wouldn't." He says, "They're not made. They won't last a year. The first thing you know, those points flatten out and cattle go right over them." So, he says, "Stay off of them." And I took his advice. (laughter)

I wanted one right here at the road because I kept sheep around the place here and it would have been so nice to have kept sheep out of the way and let people drive in, too. As it was, I had an eighteen foot gate and (laughs) Doc Hayes, he used to give me a cussing every time he had to cross it. He said that was the worst gate he'd ever run into.

Q. Let's see, you were a director of the bank for a while, then, were you?

A. Yes, I served I don't know how many years, but my wife got to objecting to being left alone so much. When the bank failures were taking place all over the country, well, I was in until midnight four nights a week, at least,

fighting those fellows. That was awful crooked. They had a bunch of real robbers up in Springfield. Nothing else. They closed banks that didn't need to be closed at all.

One of the fellows they sent down here. We had some good mortgages on this kind of land. Not overly heavy. He took our case and come to those mortgages and said, "Throw them outdoors." I says, "Young man, that land will be here long after you're dead and gone." And I says, "It'll be worth just as much then as it is now. That's the best thing that you can put your money in." "Wasn't worth a damn," he said, "couldn't cash it. Couldn't turn it into cash." I says, "We don't want to turn it into cash. We want it as an investment." I fought with that fellow every night for three nights. He was determined to throw them out. Well, if he had, he'd of taken them, see. He was just a crook from the ground up.

END OF TAPE

A. He caused the two men to shoot themselves in Farmersville. Took all their good paper and just left them flat. The dirty bugger ought to have been in the pen. But he was a politician.

Q. When was this? In the early days of the Depression?

A. Well, no, it was in 1918, if I remember right. When the banks were all closing. Waggoner was the only bank that stayed open between Litchfield and Springfield.

Q. Oh, is that right?

A. That's the truth. Only one that stayed open. We had a good profit reserve piled up and some good mortgages, as I tell you, by fighting for them and we just fought them out until they gave it up. So, Waggoner went through it. Divernon had a bank; and Farmersville, two banks; and Glenarm, up there, had a bank. Every one of them that bugger shut up.[14]

Q. And this was right at the end of World War I, was it?

A. I guess it was because it was in the deepest part of the Depression, you know. You couldn't borrow money anywhere. The big banks were all holding it. In St. Louis, Chicago, and everywhere. They wouldn't take anything. They just were saving their own hides is what they were doing. And they were smart that they did because they had to be the groundwork when we started off again. They had to be the groundwork, or the backing of it.

I remember one time. Cap Williamson was the president of the bank and I kept wanting him to put out more money, loan it out, get some interest on it. He says, "How would you like to go down to our bank that we trade with at the stockyards, the Stockyard Bank of St. Louis, and talk to them fellows?"

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[14]Mr. Aikman later agreed that this would have been in the 1930's. See addenda item 116 for verbatim text.

I says, "I'd love to." And he says, "How about the rest of you directors, will you go if I shut up the bank tomorrow and take you down there?" They all agreed, so he left it in the hands of the cashier, you know, and we got in his car and he took us down there. That's the first time I'd ever gone through a bank and knew what they came up against in the big banks.

I went to asking that president questions and he was like the Farm Bureau man. He was smart enough that he wouldn't say yes or not to anything. He'd say, "Well, let's go in that department." I asked him about bonds. "Well, let's to that department." Well, we went over to that department. "Now," he says, "this man wants to know about what you've got in bonds." Well, he'd lay out a wagonload there, right in front of me, you know, and says, "That's what I'm dealing in right now, but I'm not saying that I'm going to keep them for a time." He had school bonds, municipal bonds, and all kinds, and the president turned to me and he says, "I've got a man in Texas buying every school bond that they issue, right now. If I can do it." And so, he took us through that bank until I'd seen what it looked like and what they were up against. He says, "You're not the only one that's hunting a place to loan your money." He says, "We're hunting, too." So, we didn't get anything out of the trip, only experience. Nothing more.

Q. Who were some of the other people involved with the bank at that time?

A. Ed Fite. You knew Ed, didn't you?

Q. No, sir.

A. There was . . . Oh, what's that fellow's name? He just died . . .

Q. That isn't Doc Fite?

A. Doc! It was his father. And he was a fine, honest man. And then there was Nick Boehler, Old Nick, and . . . Ed Browning. I expect you knew him.

Q. Yes, sir.

A. Ed Browning . . . Oh, who else? We had five directors . . . Oh, yes. Walter Klaus. I don't suppose you knew him. He lived over toward Nilwood. He was a very successful farmer and a good business head. He made a good man on the board. We had a working board, that worked together. There wasn't any hee-hawing or see-sawing about it. We all worked together good.

Well, I started to tell you why I got out. I had ten shares of stock. You had to own that much to be eligible to be a director. My wife began to complain so bitterly about being left alone of a night so much of the time. She wasn't afraid. She wasn't timid. But she just got so lonesome, you know. I'd be gone all day at something, or in the field or out away from here, and she hardly saw me, just at the table is about all. And she complained so bitterly. She says, "You've just got to get out of it." And I says, "Well, I'm going to make a try." Well, election time came up and I told them I didn't want to serve any more. They never paid no more attention

to it than if I hadn't said anything. Just went right ahead and put me in.

So, there was a fellow came into the country right about that time aselling coal oil burning refrigerators. Did you ever see them? Or hear of them?

Q. No, sir.[15]

A. They were a positive success. Burned coal oil and they were a perfect refrigerator and the two Griffith boys, there, took the agency. They came right out to see if I didn't--I was wanting a refrigerator but didn't feel like paying the prices they had on them, you know. But I said, to the boys, I says, "Well, I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll buy this thing if you'll take a share of stock in here at what I gave for it. Bank stock." "Well," they says, "we'll do that." So, I only had to pay out a little bit of cash, you know.

Brought that home. And, when I went in and demanded that stock to turn over, they just threw a fit. Oh, yes. Cap got plumb mad. I says, "I'm resigning." He says, "You can't do it." I says, "Yes, I'll show you. You bring that stock out here and I'll sign it over to these boys and then I'm writing out my resignation. I've listened to my wife as long as I'm going to and I'm quitting." I says, "I'm not sore at any of you or got anything against you. I'll help in any way I can but I'm quitting." I says, "I asked you to not elect me." Well, oh, they were peeved. Emmett Brubaker kind of holds it against me yet. He was cashier. Cap was president.

So, I got out of it. And the Griffith boys hung on to that stock and Herman told me, last fall I was in there one day and he says, "You know that share of stock we bought of you for that refrigerator"--that was the only refrigerator they sold. He says, "You know that share of stock we got from you?" And I says, "Yes." He says, "You know, we got $916 out of that, all told. Dividends and all." He says, "The best investment we ever made."

So, well, I hung on to the other stock until Dorothy began wanting to work in the bank. I was determined she should because she was plenty capable and I wanted her in there. So, I went down . . . just give her an option on the stock and sold it at less than it was worth. I sold her the nine shares. No, I had ten shares by that time because they'd issued a share, one share for ten shares. They'd issued a new share. I had ten.[16] So, I sold her the ten shares and I says, "Now, I want Dorothy in here as one of the members of the bank." And they listened to me. They put her right in.

Q. What other businesses were there in Waggoner in those days?

A. Well, there was the two stores and the elevator. The farm business was the main thing. There was an awful lot of money loaned to farmers.

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[15]See addenda item 117.

[16]See addenda item 118.

They borrowed money to buy cattle and they borrowed money for, oh, lots of things. I was astonished when I went in and sat in on the first directors' meeting and seen what they were borrowing money on and how much they borrowed, and so on. Even Tom Taylor, with all the land he was farming, he was borrowing money. They'd borrow it and have it a year and then pay if off, don't you see? If they didn't need it the next year.

Q. Who was running the two stores?

A. At that time there was Charlie Norvell. Well, Bob Rice was at the time I went into the bank--because he was a director and he made them take him off of the board so that they'd have to put me in. And, they put me in in his place. Bob was a hardware man and a real good one. And then, Charlie Norvell ran the grocery store and he was a good groceryman. I think your mother worked in his store some, at one time, clerked there. I'm pretty sure she did, when she was first out of school. She made a dandy clerk. She was wide awake, I'll tell you.

There was a lumberyard there at that time, too, but it belonged to . . . Oh, the Baker chain of lumberyards and they were trying to get out from under it. They couldn't sell enough lumber there, in the little yard of that size, to pay for keeping the man. They had to pay a man a hundred or better a month to stay there, you know. So, they came to the elevator people and proposed that we buy the lumberyard. Well, that building along the railroad, you know, was the lumberyard.

Q. Yes, sir.

A. Well, it rather appealed to me because it was so handy to run in there and get lumber when you needed it. Derby was the chairman of the board and I was secretary of the elevator board and we said that we would call the entire membership in and they had to decide it. We wouldn't decide it. We wouldn't take that big a responsibility. And so we called a special meeting and called in the entire board. Every farmer that had any interest there at all, he come, because they didn't want to get in the lumber business. Derby and I, I guess, were the only two that wanted it. (laughs)

They came in and Derby made a talk to them in opening the meeting and they voted on it. They voted secret ballot and I took the ballots up and tallied them and then they asked to hear from me. So I got up and told them that it suited me all right. I says, "Now, there's no ill feelings, whatsoever." I says, "Derby and I wanted the vote of the entire membership and what you decided is what we're going to agree to and we'll go accordingly. So," I says, "you fellows don't need to feel that we're offended in any way from your voting it down." I says, "Suits me all right."

Well, then they moved the lumberyard either to Farmersville or Morrisonville and moved it out.

Q. Where did you hold that meeting?

A. In the town hall.

Q. The same town hall that they're using now?

A. Yes. It was built at that time. It was after the fire.

Q. Who was running the post office at that time?

A. Well, I'm pretty sure Raymond Browning was. He's been there a long time. Raymond went into the bank. When he came out of school he wanted to get into something, and Ed Browning and I were good friends and I said, "I don't see why Raymond wouldn't be a good man to put in the bank." I said that to Browning. Well, that tickled him to death. He wanted him there. And I says, "Well, let's see what we can do." So, we went to work and the rest of them didn't find any fault. They needed the third man, you know, and they voted it in and took him right in. Well, Raymond learned banking and he worked there until he got up to the cashier's job.

Then the post office job came . . . Bill . . . Bill Lewis was the post-master at that time. And Bill died and the post office was to take over and so Raymond quit the bank and went over and got that. And he's made a very wealthy man out of himself. (laughs) I expect he's the richest man in Waggoner.

Q. Oh, is that right?

A. Oh, I'm satisfied of it.

Q. From the post office business?

A. Well, from his investments and then he heired. He heired from Ed Browning, his grandfather, you know, and Ed Gerlach, too, his mother's father. He heired from two of them, and so, I don't have the least idea . . . Then, too, he took on the treasury of the school board. When they got a high school, why, he took that job and it paid a salary[17] and he's been in that job every since. I think he's the treasurer of that yet. I don't know. I haven't paid any attention lately, but I rather think he is.

So, Raymond was a good man. He's sober and industrious. His wife taught school all that time. I can't see any reason why they're not the richest people in Waggoner. And he's still my friend. (laughs)

Q. Didn't Bill Lewis run a grocery store?

A. Yes, and a post office combined, and he had Sadie as a clerk and she was a star. My, she was good. He had Harry Wagner as a butcher. Bill run it as long as he was able to. There was something wrong with that family. They both had kidney trouble. He and Brady both died of kidney disease. Both fine men. I thought an awful lot of both of them. And Brady did lots of work for me. When he came back from the service, he took his money and bought some trucks and he did trucking for the farmers around here. Anything he could get to do, you know. Finally he got so,

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[17]See addenda item 119.

if they were baling hay and needed it picked up right off of the field, he'd go and take a job of that kind. He put up hay for me a number of times up to midnight in the night. He'd clean the field so that it wouldn't get wet, you know. He was A1. I thought an awful lot of Brady. That was a nice family, the Lewis family.

Q. Didn't the Kessler Red and White Store exist about that time, too?

A. Yes. They were going, too, at that time . . . Well, they were going when I moved up here in 1910. They had a store there, and they ran it on their own, Mr. Kessler and Mrs. Kessler and Winfield, and they did very well. Then, when the old folks died, Winfield took over and then he took Harry Wagner as a butcher. Kept him in there. Winfield did me lots of favors, lots of favors.

And he worked--he went in the bank. We put him in the bank to learn it and he learned it and got up to the cashier's job, and ran the store, too. His mother and father, of course, were living then. They could take care of it, except the books, and he took care of the books.

Q. Didn't he run a delivery truck?

A. Then, he had Penny Nail on a wagon that run all over this country. Ed Gerlach had a grocery store there, too, at that time, when I first moved up here, and he ran a grocery wagon over the country, too. There was two of them went around over the country. And they were quite a help when you were very busy in the field and didn't want to go to town. They brought out bread, meat, anything they could haul on the wagon. They couldn't haul fresh meat, unless you'd called in an order and they just brought in right out and handed it to you. They had no refrigeration.

Ed Gerlach had that building that is right under the shadow of that big bin.[18] He had a store in there for years. He was going when I moved up here. In fact, I guess he started it just about the time we moved off of his farm because the town was building up at that time, I think. He and Gil Parrott--not Gil Parrott . . . Alec Parrott, started stores about the same time. Grocery stores. Gil Parrott ran the elevator for George Fooks. He had had some experience and George took him in until he could learn it. George just had a common school education and he wanted to be able to handle the books when he took it over.

There's one thing that--are you about through on that part of it?

Q. Well, yes, sir.

A. If not, why, go ahead until you finish and then there's one thing that I want to tell you.

Q. Well, we're about down to the end here. We've been going almost an hour and a half now, so . . .

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[18]The large drying shed on the south side of the Waggoner business block. [Ed.]

A. Well, I wanted to tell you an experience I had on the railroad. You asked me the other day about some of the experiences. When I was working there at Honey Bend, I had one dairyman who shipped in cattle feed from the brewery, and that was dried brewery grain. I'd never heard of such a thing, but they could sprout grain and make a malt of it, and make beer out of the malt, and then dry that grain and sell it for feed. And he shipped up a ton, about a ton a week. He had quite a bunch of cattle and one day he come in--he bought it through a feed store. He says, "The fellows at the store down in St. Louis tell me that your rate's too high here. That they can get a better rate out of St. Louis and they want to prepay this stuff up here and stop me paying the freight." I says, "Well, that's fine. Go ahead. I won't have to handle the money." So next week, why, he says, "Well, I'm going to give an order in a week or two now and I'll tell them to send it prepaid."

Came in, though, it was billed collect. Just like it always had been, three dollars and a half. And I said, when they came in I said, "That stuff came for you to pay for." "Well," he said, "that's all right. I've got a letter from the people at St. Louis saying they had paid for it. So," he says, "I'll pay you and then I'll deduct it out of my check to them and," he says, "we'll be all right." Well, I took the quarter, or, yes, three dollars and a half was what it was. I took that money and I went to trying to get rid of it, and I couldn't get rid of it. They wouldn't have it at the auditor's office. They'd say, "No, that was a prepaid shipment. Give that money back to the shipper." I says, "Well, he's an honest man and he won't take it because he knows that he's already deducted it from his feed bill and he won't accept it." He wouldn't. He said, "I'm not agoing to take it." Says, "I don't care what you do with it." And he told me that.

I tried, oh, I guess for five months to get them to take that money and they wouldn't do it and finally I got mad and I stuck it in my pocket. I says, "I've got the money. Whenever they call for it, they'll get it."

Well, I went on two years there, and worked, and then they checked me out. Clean bill of health. Didn't owe a cent to the railroad, and I still had the three dollars and a half. So, I went to Litchfield and worked. Worked there two years or better and they checked me out again--the auditor, out of the auditor's office--and everything all fine. "You're clear. Clear of the railroad."

Well, I came up here when I left Litchfield and started farming and I guess I'd been farming here five years. I'd got pretty well acquainted with the agent down there by calling; just to keep in touch, you know, with the railroad. One day I come in from the field and my wife says, "The agent at Honey Bend has been trying to get you all morning." I says, "What does he want?" and she says, "I don't know but he wants to talk to you."

And so, I just rung him up, it didn't cost anything.[19] I says, "What's on your mind?" And he told me that circumstance and he says, "Do you remember

[19]See addenda item 120.

that?" I said, "Sure I remember." I says, "I've got the money here in my pocket. I said when I put it in my pocket [that] when the railroad woke up and found out that it was owed to them, I'm ready to pay it." He says, "You are ready to pay it!" He says, "I went five years back in the old books to find where you made that deal and you've been checked out, twice. You don't have to pay that." I says, "I know it but I'm going to. You'll get a check in the morning." So, I mailed him a check. (laughs) And I think the auditor of a great concern like the Wabash Railroad would—took him five years after I was gone to find that. (laughter) Well, that was a funny experience.

I wanted to ask you another thing. Did I talk to you, in the beginning of harvesting material, about a cradle? Did I mention a cradle?

Q. No sir, perhaps only in passing. You didn't explain what it was.

A. Well, that was the early way of harvesting grain. Even in Christ's time they used cradles. It was a long scythe blade, longer than an ordinary scythe blade, and then it had a crane that reached up off of the handle here, about that high . . .

Q. About three feet.

A. . . . and there was four fingers went along there that went out the length of the blade and you took that and you swung it like a scythe into the wheat and when you cut it down, it fell against these fingers and they laid it down. When you took it back, your back swath, you jerked your scythe out from under it; took another swath, jerked it out from under it; until you had enough to those little piles to make a bundle.

END OF SIDE ONE

A. Then you stepped on and started another one and that was the way they harvested wheat. Well, then they had to go around and—they didn't have string or anything to tie it with. They had to tie it. So, they perfected a knot that they made out of the grain itself. You'd take about twenty-four straws--maybe you've seen that done.

Q. I've seen it done with rice.

A. Did you ever see them bind a bundle that was broken? Well, you had to learn that. Had to learn to make those bands and then bind your bundle and stick it in.

I remember when I came up here. My wife had an uncle down south here. The two brother-in-laws were on his land. And we traded work together. We was cutting wheat one time and he came out to the field. The binder threw off a bundle that it didn't bind, you know, and he says, "Can you bind that?" He was a funny spoken old fellow—Hen Burnet, I don't suppose you ever remember him.

Q. No, sir. What was his first name?

A. Hen. Henry. He says, "Can you bind that?" I says, "Sure I can bind it."

He says, "I'd like to see you." And I picked up a band and throwed it over and put it around and on. "Well, I'll be dogged," he says, "I don't believe there's one man in twenty-five can do that now." My dad had taught me good while I was a kid because he worked when they had it all to bind, you know.

Q. When they were using the scythe?

A. Yes. Yes, using the old cradle. Well, I never used to cradle, nor my dad never used a cradle, but there was an old fellow that lived within a mile of us that moved on five acres of scrub timber and he cut that off during the winter. It was just stove wood stuff. He cut it off and got rid of it and he had an old team and he plowed that ground that year and let it stand and then sowed it to wheat that fall and the next year that old boy took a cradle and went in there--there was stumps galore, oh, it was so full of stumps, couldn't hardly walk through it--and he went in there and cradled that five acres and hand bound it and shocked it and he and his wife stacked it. He asked the threshing machine man, who was a neighbor to him, if he would thresh it and he says, "You betcha. I'll come over and thresh it for you. All the work you've done, you're entitled to have that threshed."

Well, I helped thresh it. That stack of wheat that was cut with a cradle and bound by hand, the band cutters had to get up there with a knife and cut them six or eight straws in two, you know, and (laughs) it was a job to cut bands. I was in the measuring box. I was ameasuring it out. It made good wheat, too. He had a good crop.

Q. Was this down in the timberland? Down by Honey Bend?

A. Yes. Yes, that was southeast from the home place. The old fellow was just tickled to death to get it threshed. But that's the only deal I ever had with a cradle.

Q. Sir, I was wondering--you mentioned sheep a while ago. Around here, did you keep them on the lawn to keep the lawn cut down?

A. No, I couldn't put them in the yard. They'd eat flowers first. (laughter) My wife kept flowers. She always had lots of flowers and I had to fence the yard tight but I had all the rest of that, around here, fenced, too, and I could turn them in. By the way, they were a wonderful help—I wish I had them here today. We've got an apple tree down there that's dropping apples--I want you to get a sack and go down and get you some apples.

Q. Oh. Appreciate that.

A. And I would let the sheep in of a night and they would clean up every rotten apple that would fall under that tree. The next morning, I'd shut the gate on them, shut them away from it. People could come here and get apples and they were plumb clean of . . .

Q. The rotten ones.

A. . . . the rotten or anything else, you know. You take a sack and go down there, now, before you pull out . . .

Q. All right, sir.

A. . . . and pick you off a--they make a good sauce.[20]

END OF TAPE

Q. Sir, you mentioned basketball here in Waggoner a while back. Could you describe attending a basketball game in Waggoner? What was it like? Who was playing there?

A. Oh, they're all men now, you know, around here. I don't expect I could even name a third of them. They married and moved away and I never see them. I just lose track of them.

I was over at Raymond this morning getting a haircut and a fellow come in the barbershop there and sat down. By the way he talked, I knew he knew all about me and all about what I was adoing. And I kept alooking at that fellow and I couldn't put a name on him to save my life. Finally, I says, "What's your name?" He says, "Weitekamp." I says, "Well, you're not one of the twins." "No," he says, "I'm not of that crowd." He says, "I'm Henry's boy." Well, I never knew Henry's boy but he was in those games, see; and he knew me, well enough. He says, "I've always kept track of you. I have a farm northeast of you. I pass your place every now and then. So," he says, "I've always kept track of you."[21] Well, he's a young man yet, you know. I think he said he was fifty-seven. He and another man were talking ahead of that and one was fifty-seven and the other was fifty-nine. The barber looks at me and says, "They're both kids, aren't they?" And I says, "Yes, they're right in the prime of life; and yet," I says, "they're in the dangerous period. That fifty to sixty is the dangerous place for heart failures." It is. You read the statistics. There's more men die in them ages than pretty near any.

So, well, I had never met this fellow before but I knew his father well. Was at their place. Probably he was a kid there that I didn't pay any attention to while I'd be at the place, but he remembered it all, you see. I knew he knew too much about me, I'd better find out who he was.

Q. You said you had several nieces and nephews that went to school there at the high school.

A. Well, yes. Frank and Larry Burnet and--or not Larry. Yes, Larry and Elmer. Both were Albert's boys. Well, hold on . . . How is that? Larry isn't Elmer's boy. Elmer's boy is in the service yet. His name's . . . Well, I can't tell you.[22] Well, those were the ones. The Burnet families. And then, the Lohmans that lived right here by me, their boy was in it. The Harbert boys were in it. Oh, I don't think any of the Longs played. I don't believe there was ever any of the Long boys in any of the games.

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[20]See addenda item 121.

[21]See addenda item 122.

[22]Mr. Aikman later identified this person as Paul. See addenda item 123.

The beginning of the basketball, they had a teacher there that was an exceptional man and he really wanted to introduce it to the country. So, he proposed that they have a basketball game down here at the Burnet school. No room at all, just out in the yard. He let it be known by the kids and every kid was to invite his parents to be there, you know. Well, Lohman invited me and my wife and we went down there. We'd never seen a game. Didn't have no idea about it at all, you know. So, I called that fellow out to one side and I says, "I'd like to know just what they're doing. Explain it to us a little." So, he told us then. There was three men of us--Lohman, Beeler, and me--all interested, but we didn't know a form thing about it. We knew baseball but that's all. So, he explained it.

And then he chose up sides with the Waggoner school and the Burnet school and they played against one another, you know. And they never had played. (laughs) If that wasn't some game! I've thought about that more times. The mothers and dads would get excited, you know, and yell at their kids. (laughter) Oh, it was just too funny.

Q. What were they using for hoops?

A. They had great big barrel hoops nailed on posts. Fred Lohman fixed that part up for them. He had some tall posts and he'd taken them down there and set them in the ground, nailed the hoops on. He wasn't a director, either. He just volunteered to do it.

Q. Did they have bankboards behind the hoops?

A. No.

Q. Just hoops?

A. (laughs) That was some game. Well, then the next game was called in the gym where they had the proper equipment, you know. Well, we all crowded up to see that, too, you know. And then we hardly missed any of the games from then on through the season, of course. We took and interest in it.

And then they begin playing other schools. Harvel played them. Raymond played them, and so on. They got to having some real good men at Waggoner. Paddy Bowman was in it.

Q. Who was that, sir?

A. Dayton Bowman. He was one of the good players. Oh, let's see . . . Charlie Norvell's boy was in it.[23] They had a right good basketball team there, but a little light in weight; when it come to crowding them, you know, they could crowd them, too hard. But, we had lots of games. Got so the schools would come every time. If Harvel played us, the whole neighborhood would be there, you know, and the parents, and fill up the house.

Q. They must have filled up the house. There's not much room there, is there?

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[23]See addenda item 124.

A. No, there wasn't much, but we stood around everywhere we could to see it, you know. So, they developed better and better, of course, every term. They begin starting down then in the grade school and coming up to high school and the high school players were pretty good.

Q. What about baseball?

A. I never went down to any of their baseball, at all. I had had a seige in the hospital with what they termed pyelitis. I had a big abcess in my right kidney. Put me in the hospital for twenty-eight days, to drain that. They had to drain that kidney and I was afraid of baseball. I wouldn't go around it at all. I stayed clear of it. If a ball had of hit me there, I would have been back in the hospital again, see. So, while I like ball very much, as I told you we always played ball, but we played town ball. I never played baseball in my life, real baseball. Oh, I say I never did; I did,too. I played softball one game. I take that back. Softball.

Q. Where was that?

A. That was over at a church gathering in the western part of Macoupin County. I don't even remember the church now, but in the afternoon, why, the church had got some fellow that was athletically inclined, you know. Went around and picked out people out of the different churches and put on a game. Just for an hour's time, and I played through that game. That's the only one I ever played in.

Q. What place did you play?

A. Oh, I just batted and tried to run it. (laughs) I got put out of the game pretty shortly. When you got put out, you was out. You didn't get to come to bat anymore.

Q. What about any plays or activities of that sort in high school?

A. Well, they had some good entertainment down there. The teachers went together and put on entertainments, after we got it in the high school. They would have a dialogue or what I would call a little play. Some of them as good as you see on TV now, or better. (laughs) Lots of music and we enjoyed them very much.

Q. What types of music did they play?

A. Pianos. They'd have two or three pianos there, and pianists, and play altogether or singly or whatever. They didn't have the band at that time. That was before they developed bands. In fact, they didn't develop bands around here, that I knew very much about, until Elmer Burnet was going to school. Then he was in a band. Larry, then, followed in a band.

Q. What instruments did they play? Do you remember?

A. Well, I don't remember what Elmer played but I know Larry played a trumpet.

Q. Did they present concerts there at the school?

A. Well, they would have an evening of music and invite the patrons in, you know. That was all. Maybe the teacher would make a talk about what he thought ought to be done and so on. They didn't have outside speakers or entertainers of any kind at them.

Q. Did they have any band contests in those days?

A. No, not in my time, that I attended. I don't know whether they did later on. I presume they did later on, because Litchfield developed a pretty good band and I guess Raymond did. And I believe Hillsboro had a pretty good band. So, I think they competed quite a bit. Those schools. But those were big schools, you know. Raymond had a number of buses, and Litchfield did and so did Hillsboro. After the buses begin coming in, why, they had pretty big crowds.

Q. How about track? Did they used to play track at the Waggoner high school?

A. No, not there. They hadn't developed that at that time. But they did later on, at Raymond. They'd compete over at Raymond. I never saw one of their track meets.

Q. Do you recall when Wild Row Park started, out west of Waggoner there?

A. No, it was going when I first came up in this country to work for Mr. Richardson. As I told you, that was 1898. It was going strong at that time, because I went to the picnic out there that year. Did you ever attend one of their picnics?

Q. No, sir.

A. Well, they had quite a bit to show there, you know. Mrs. Burford was a Rogers and she had some brothers that were in the saloon business in Minneapolis and, I guess, got pretty wealthy. They fitted up a museum of stuffed animals down here. They had all manner of stuffed animals there. Built a house and put a glass front in it and had it there. Then they had a tightwire across the lake. There was a lake there, at that time, you know. A tightwire across the lake and you'd take a handhold and ride across on a wheel, you know. It was downgrade going this way and downgrade going this way. You could ride it both directions.

Q. You mean anyone could get on it?

A. Well, anyone that wanted to could, yes. Boy, it was abuzzing most of the time, I'll tell you. Kids got a great kick out of that, riding across that pond, you know. The pond was pretty deep, them days. That was a great entertainment, that pond.

Well, then they'd have a lot of stands like they used to at picnics, you know. Ice cream and popcorn (laughs) and so on. All of that junk was out there. I have an idea there was some three-shell games and such as that out in the corners, too. I didn't know anything about them and my dad had always told me never to put a dime on them. So, I didn't.

Q. Were these annual picnics they held?

A. Yes. Each year at a certain date. They had what they called a wagon yard out there, at that time, that was well shaded and people would come in their big wagons from, oh, quite a distance, fifty or sixty miles, you know. Come there and camp through. There would be two or three days of that picnic and they would camp through it. Have their horse feed and tie the horses to the wagons and feed them. You had to go in a horse-drawn vehicle if you got there, those days, because there was no other way of getting there.

Then, after I'd got in this country and got to know the Burfords, why, he'd gone into buying stock. Feeding cattle and buying hogs and shipping them. People had told me that he was a very suspicious man. They says, "You've got to prove to him that you're honest or he don't want anything to do with you."

So, I had an old sow here I wanted to sell one time. I'd sold him hogs two or three times and had an old sow that was a great big thing and I wanted to get rid of her. It was coming hot weather. I drove out there one morning and asked when he could take her. He wouldn't take them only when he got a load enough to ship out, you know. So, he says, "Well, I can take her this evening. What will she weight?" And I says, "Four hundred." And he says, "Well, I'll give you seven cents a pound." And I says, "All right. I'll be back over with her."

So, I came back over with the old sow and I run her out of the wagon and onto the scales. I seen there was something wrong immediately, soon as she hit the scales. He says, "What did you say this sow would weight?" I says, "Four hundred." He says, "She weighs exactly five hundred." And that cut the price, see. And I says, "Well, Mr. Burford, I made an honest mistake." I said, "I'd have sold her to you for four hundred this morning and let you take her without weighing her." "You would?" he says. I says, "Yes, I would." "Well," he says, "I'll take her, then." (laughs) So, after that I never had any trouble with Terrell. He was my friend from that time on.

He settled some of the Rogers' estate and I bid in one forty acres of land out west there that belonged to the Rogers. I says, "When do you want the money?" "Oh," he says, "there's no bother about that. We'll get together some day." He was the administrator, says, "We'll get together; don't worry about that." I guess it was two months before I got to catch him at the bank and pay him off.

So you see, I had established myself, now. Well then, Mr. Burnet used to have me crib his rent corn here and Terrell found out he did. He bought corn wherever he could to feed, and he found out that they were cribbing it here. He would ask me about how much there was in a crib and I'd tell him what I figured it was. And he's say, "What does he want for it?" and I'd tell him. He'd say, "Well, you count that sold." He always nodded his head this way. "You count that sold." He says, "I'll be out and get it." Well, the first thing you know, there'd be a fellow come in. "Where's Terrell's corn?" And they'd load up a great wagonload and away they'd go. Says, "I didn't know them, at all."

One time there was five fellows that hauled off great loads of corn here and I didn't know them, but I knew the time they got it. So finally I

called him up and I says, "Terrell, that corn's just about all gone. They've throwed back rotten ears here. All of them have picked them out and throwed them back. What are you going to do with that?" "Well," he says, "I'll be out there and clean things up clean, I'll pay for it."

And I says, "Well, now, I don't know who those men was. Do you?" "Yes," he says, "I know them, but," he says, "there's one fellow I'm not quite sure of." And I says, "Well, that fellow had a peculiar wagon." I says, "He had a brand new wagon and he had a double sideboard on it and he had standards on the outside that he could slip up to even the top sideboard." And I'd never seen that on a wagon before, so I took notice of that when he loaded up, you know. He put on a big load. He says, "Well, I think I know who that fellow is and you know," he says, "I think it's funny he hasn't come and said something to me." And I says, "Well, I think so, too. All this time. He's had time to feed that corn." So, went on another month or so. He called me, wanted to know if I'd come into the bank and I said, "Yes." And he says, "You know, I finally figured out that fellow by that wagon. I found out and he owned up to getting the corn. He had the weights with him and," he said, "we settled up without any trouble." There was a lot of them never did tell him. There was a lot of them got away with his corn.

Q. Oh, is that right?

A. Yes, I knew they did. Terrell was the grand-uncle for that part of that country. That's all. He just helped all of those timber rats. All of them. He helped them every way he could.

Q. Why do you term them timber rats?

A. Oh, that's what they called them, you know. That was the name of a fellow that lived in the timber; he was a timber rat. The others was prairie suckers, you know.

Q. So, west of Waggoner being all timber, they were timber rats.

A. Yes, they were timber rats. Some of them were pretty common fellows, too. They'd pretend to be an awful good friend of Terrell's, you know. Drink his hard cider and everything and then beat him out of his corn.

Q. Were there any other picnic areas or park areas, like Wild Row Park, around in this vicinity?

A. Yes, Harvel had a grove. They called it the Dutch picnic. They had an annual picnic; like Farmersville had the Irish day, you know. You knew of that, but those days, Harvel had a Dutch day. The grove was three-quarters of a mile northeast of Harvel and it grew out there in the prairie and it was all hickory trees, the whole thing, and there was five acres of it. Just the thickest timber. Nice timber and there's where they would have their picnics. That would just be full of stands and wagons and so on, you know, and they had a place for a band, and so on. And especially, they had a dance platform always, and had a dance until about midnight.

Some fellow would be enterprising, you know, and he'd run a bus back and forth from town. They'd got to having some cars by that time. He'd haul

people out there for so much. I think he charged them a dollar to haul them out there. Then, he'd get them at a certain time, if they were sober enough to get in. (laughter)

I got such a kick out of--one time Albert Davis rode with him, one time. You never knew Albert Davis. He was quite a boozer himself. A great friend of mine, while he was growing up, and he was ariding that out to the park one day and he says there was a fellow in there had had enough in town--you know, before he left--that he was sick, you know. Said he hung out of a window and puked all the . . .

Q. All the way out.

A. And he said his partner punched him and he says, "What are you doing?" And he says, "Spitting." (laughter) I thought that was too good. He was just spitting.

Q. Did they ever have any speakers at those . . .

A. Yes, the politicians took advantage of all of those, Harvel and Farmersville, both. They nearly always had one or two politicians there that were running for office, or had recently been elected and wanted to thank the people and tell them what they hoped to do and so on. They had some very good talks.

Q. Do you remember any of them in particular?

A. I remember Mike Bray and . . . Oh, there was an attorney down there. Hill! Vene Hill, an attorney at Hillsboro. He ran for state's attorney about that time. He was there and Si Bullington talked sometimes. He and Hill became partners in the law office later. I knew both of the men quite well. They were likable men.

And, by the way, that makes me think of another joke. Bullington had been raised by a pretty strict dad and he'd been taught that certain things were honest and certain things were dishonest, you know, and he had a line. When he got ready to study law, he went in with an old lawyer over there--I heard him tell this myself, now. He went in with this old lawyer and started to study law. He says, "I was around there about three days and there was some things that went on there that didn't tally with my ideas. So," he says, "when everybody got out that third day, I said to the old judge, says, 'Can a man be a lawyer and be honest?'" And he said, "The old judge sat there, (laughs) and he says, 'Well, I don't know. I never saw anybody try it.'" (laughter)

END OF SIDE ONE

A. I thought that was the best joke. Well, Si went ahead and made a lawyer, and he says, "And I'm still trying to be an honest one." (laughter)

Q. Down at Hillsboro, did you ever go to Old Settlers?

A. Yes, I did, once or twice, I think. That was much the same as these other places, you know. Only they favored the old ones.

Then, there was the Farm Bureau; they had one day at Hillsboro, too, as I told you. They had the membership come in and gave them a dinner and had a good speaker. I heard some mighty fine agricultural talks at those meetings. I hated terribly when I had to quit going to them, because they had men that knew what they were talking about and had proved a lot of things and that's what counts in farming. If you can prove it, why, well and good; and if you can't prove it, you better not tell somebody to try it. Another thing I learned pretty early in life and farming: You see a fellow doing a thing that looks silly to you, don't condemn him until you find out what he knows, because he may know something that you don't know, you see, and he's putting it in and you may get a good lesson from that fellow.

Q. Did they have displays of farm products at these picnics in those days?

A. Not at the picnics, but there was at the Hillsboro Old Settlers Day. They did then because they gave prizes for different exhibits, you know. There was a women's part as well as the men's. Canned goods and carpets and rugs and quilts and knitting and crocheting and all of that had to be judged.

Q. Did they have livestock displays?

A. No, they didn't at the Old Settlers. That come in the 4-H part, when the Farm Bureau got the 4-H developed. Then they began having that out at the Butler park. They have that every year now. I never have attended any of them because I just can't hack it anymore, you know. But they do have some good meetings, I know, and have some very good stock, too. In other words, the boys are afiguring on going to the state fair, in all probability, and they show there first. They have some real judges there and, if their stock will pass there, then they have courage to go ahead to Springfield, you know.

Q. When did the 4-H come in?

A. Well, after the Farm Bureau was organized. I don't remember what year that was. It was . . . Oh, I judge it was in the [19]20's. The Farm Bureau came in and that was one of his things that he wanted to develop, was the boys, you know; make farmers of them and that was a great help. Great help. I bet there's a whole lot of fellows that are on the farm today that wouldn't have been there but for the experiences that they had down there in the 4-H, what they learned.

You know, lots of boys hated farming. There is too much work about it. They seen this fellow in town quit at five o'clock and put on good clothes and strut the sidewalk and they was afollowing along after a mule yet, you know.

Q. Well, it was pretty hard work, wasn't it?

A. Yes, there's an awful lot of hard work about farming but it was work that I liked, and always did like. Fact of the matter is, I think I was cut out to be a farmer. While I wasn't no great example, I was able to make a living at it.

Q. Did you ever see Dwight Street's horses perform?

A. Yes. I did. We were talking about that in the barbershop this morning. One time the high school wanted to put on an entertainment and they asked Dwight if he would bring a couple of his horses--he had them trained--and put them on the stage. He said, "Yes, he'd be glad to," and he brought a couple of stallions, now. You know they are natural enemies, and he turned them loose on that stage without a halter or bridle or anything on them, not even a rope around their neck. Nothing. Turned them loose and, by word of command, he put them through all of their stunts. They ate out of a pan about that big; ate corn, together, shelled corn; never even laid back their ears. Then they'd take apples out of his pocket, and crusts of bread and so on. They'd slip up and do that. They'd slip behind him and take them out. They'd done it at home, you know. But, of course, he had them there for them to do. He just put on a real good show and there wasn't a bit of bother about it anywhere! I was scared when he come in there with those two horses, on the stage, and nothing on them to restrain them. But he had several good horsemen. Did you ever know Perry Eliason? Or his brother, Lee?

Q. I knew of him. Yes, sir.

A. Well, they were great horsemen and he had those two in the wings to help him and I think he had two other fellows and I can't recall right now. He had about five men there. So, the horses were pretty well surrounded. They could have grabbed them around the neck if it was necessary. They were used to being led that way. So, he really didn't take any chance and yet it looked to me like it was awful dangerous. That house full of people. Kids, you know.

Q. This was in the high school, was it?

A. Yes, in that building that's there now.

Q. What other types of things did he have them do?

A. Oh, I can't remember. He had them lay down and change sides. He'd let them lay down on one side and say, "Well, I think you ought to lay on the other side," and they'd flop over and lay on the other side. Then, he'd say, "Now, let's see you get up," and they'd put their front feet and start to get up. "Aw, that's enough," he'd say, "just stand like that." They'd stand there, you know. He had those horses trained until they did anything he said.

Q. Did you ever watch him in a training session out at his place?

A. Oh, I was out to his place different times. I went out there one day and he says, "Bert, come on and go down to the barn." And I says, "Yes, I want to." So, we went down to the barn and one of these stallions was standing with his front feet in the manger. He'd raised way up and put his front feet in the manger. He'd stand there. Dwight seen him and he says, "Ain't you ashamed? Putting your feet on the table!" Well, that horse took them feet out. (laughter) That was so funny to me, and he took them out one at a time. He didn't rare up and take them both out.

"Aw," Dwight says, "if you feel better with them in there, just put them back." And he put them back.

So then he says, "Well, I'm going to ride him out in the lot." Says, "Go around there and open that door." He got on him and he didn't have anything on him, at all, you know. No halter, no bridle, no nothing. He climbed on his back and he had to duck way down to get through the door. That horse went through as careful, didn't rub him. Got out in the lot and there was an empty oil barrel laying there in the lot and he says, "Hand me that barrel." Well, most horses would have run clear across the lot from it when I came at him with that barrel over my head, you know, but that horse didn't. He didn't pay any attention. Dwight took it in his hand. He'd put it between his ears and he'd rub it up and down--roll it up and down his neck. He'd rub it all over his hips and down his sides and everywhere and the horse would trot around. You wouldn't ever have told that that barrel was there, at all. He was just that well trained.

Q. How many of those horses did he have?

A. Two stallions and then, of course, he had a saddle horse that he thought the world of. I forget what he called him. He was a bright sorrel and he had him trained until he was a real saddler. You know, there isn't everybody that can train a saddle horse but he had him trained to a saddle horse. I heard Arthur Godfrey say one time that the trainer had more trouble training him than he did the horse. (laughter)

So, Dwight just naturally had that saddle horse so he didn't--he'd leave him just like a cowboy would, only he never threw the reins down. You see, a cowboy, they always threw down the reins so they'd step on them, you know. Dwight didn't. He left the reins on the saddle horn. Climb out of the saddle and go off and that horse would stand right there until he came back.

Q. Did Dwight train any other kind of animals?

A. Not that I know of. No, just--oh, you know, I never was out there very much after he got his ponies. Both of these stallions died. He lost both of them, and then he got in that pony business and got out of the big horse business.[24] Just quit them entirely. Had nothing but ponies. I never went out and watched him perform with them. I should have, but I'd just keep putting it off and wouldn't get out.

I was passing there one day. My wife and I had been down in the country south of there and we was coming along up past his place. I wanted her to see his place. There was a fellow from the lumberyard come down there with some rolls of fencing in the truck. Evidently he never had seen a farm before because he opened the gate wide open, went back and got in his truck, and drove in, and out went two ponies. So, he left his truck setting where it was and he was trying to run those ponies in. He flagged me down and with all his might. He says, "Don't hit one of those horses."

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[24] See addenda item 125.

He says, "They got out on me and I can't get them back." I says, "Well, I'll not hit them. I'll stop and help you." So, I backed the car up and got out.

Well, as quick as I got on the ground, why, the horses split. They were together when he was talking to me. But they split, one went this way and one went that way, and they were a hundred yards apart time I got on the ground. And I says, "I think you'll have to wait until Dwight gets home. Just don't let anymore of them get out." Well, he got in the gate then so there couldn't anymore get out.

Pretty soon I seen Dwight acoming down the hill. He come to the bottom of the hill and there's where that north pony was. So, he just got out and put his arm around its neck and they walked down the road together to the gate and he walked it inside and turned it loose and it went on about its business. Didn't try to go back. He turned and he looked down the road at that other one and he called it by name. He says, "Now, you get in here and get in here quick." And that horse just run as hard as he could run to get in that . . . (laughter) "You get in here and you get in here quick!" That's the only time I ever seen him perform with the ponies.

But there was a bunch of fellows went out there hunting one time and took a bird dog and one of them told me that he believed they'd have all been killed if it hadn't been that the wire fence was high enough from the ground that they could roll under it. He said the ponies discovered that dog--the dog was atrying to set quail, you know--discovered that dog and they took after him and the dog naturally ran to his owner, you know, and the boys were all in a bunch, three of them. He says, "Why, those ponies came with their mouths wide open; they just was vicious looking." And he says, "We all rolled under that fence." The dog went under and then they stopped, when the dog got out of the way. But he says, "I believe they would have killed us if we hadn't of got under that fence."

Q. Sir, did they have any Chautauquas or revivals in this area?

A. In the churches, you mean?

Q. Yes, the Chautauqua organization, you know, that held revival sort of picnics or gatherings?

A. Well, we had them in the churches. They called them revivals, you know. They'd have a week or two of preaching every night, and singing. That was for the whole neighborhood, of course, and all three churches. Anybody could go that would. Then, nearly always, each church would have one a year. Then, there was a long time that we had one day in the year that all three Sunday schools went to one church, together, and had a mass Sunday school like that, you know. All of those was very enjoyable and you got acquainted with people that you wouldn't meet otherwise. There was a Dunkard church. I guess you knew where it used to be.

Q. Yes, sir.

A. They never had anything to do down here. They never had anything to do in Waggoner, that I knew of, but they had a good strong church at one time.

I think they married off and died off until they finally had to sell the building, give it up.

Q. That was quite a large church, as I remember.

A. Yes, it was. I went there one time to one of their meetings when they had a . . . What did they call them, anyhow? . . . Well, they had a meal that they cooked on the ground and just the members of that denomination partook of it. The neighborhood gathered in, but we were just spectators. They boiled beef and noodles and potatoes and so on. They had a nice meal and they had a table arranged for that, you know, and the rest of us was around out of the way of that.[25] They had one day a year that they did that.

Q. Was it a ceremony of some sort?

A. Yes, a preaching service afterward. There was some awful nice people in that church, too. The Brubakers belonged, you know; all the old Brubaker tribe. Oh, I guess that's all I can think of now, that I knew belonged there, but there was a pretty good church the first time I went out there. I went out there with the Richardson girls when I worked for him. They had attended these feasts before and they wanted to go.

Q. Were the Campbells involved with the Dunkards?

A. The what, you say?

Q. The Campbells. Harry Campbell's dad. What was his name?

A. Arch?

Q. Yes, Arch Campbell. Were they . . .

A. No, if he was a church member, I never knew it. Neither was the next boy--your father. He was a pretty rough one, I'll tell you, that boy was.

Q. Herbert?

A. Yes.

Q. In what way?

A. Oh, he drank and caroused and he didn't work very much. He lived off the rest of them pretty much. (laughs) He was considered a pretty wild one. I shouldn't tell you all of that, I guess, because . . .

Q. I've heard that before.

A. Oh, I expect you have, from your mother and from your dad, too, probably. But, I always thought well of Skinny. We called your dad Skinny, you know. I always thought a lot of Skinny and when he got to be mayor of the town, why,

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[25]See addenda item 126.

I went to him and I says, "Now, Skinny, I want to ask a favor of you," and he says, "What?" I says, "Don't ever let them put a saloon in here." He says, "I won't." And so, I took his word for it and he stood by it.[26]

Q. Now, that was my step-father. Do you remember my father, Horace Waggoner?

A. Oh, yes, that's right, your father was Horace. That was your step-father. That was--that's right. Well, I knew Horace as a schoolboy. He was another one that was in those basketball teams. I knew him as a schoolboy, and he was always friendly with me. You know lots of boys won't talk to a man. You know that, don't you?

Q. Yes, sir.

A. They think a fellow looks down on them, I think. I don't know what they do think, but they won't talk to a man very much, but Horace would always talk to me. That's right. That was your father. I was athinking about Skinny. Skinny was your wife's father . . . No, her first husband, wasn't he?

Q. Well, Estelle and I with Horace Waggoner, my dad, and then my mother remarried after my father died.

A. Yes. Well, that's right. I kind of lost track of it.

Q. You mentioned earlier having known John Waggoner pretty well. Did you know Henry Waggoner very well?

A. Yes. I knew Henry. They always called him Sport, you know.

Q. No, I didn't know that.

A. Didn't?

Q. No, sir.

A. Oh, yes, that was his nickname. When I first came up here, why, Sport came around and introduced himself and wanted to be acquainted because I knew John. I'd known John when he bought cattle down there, as I told you, time I was working for him. So, I wasn't a stranger to John when I moved up here. Then, as I worked for the Richardsons, too, why, I knew the Waggoner family. I knew the one that started the bank, at the time he started it, but I can't remember his given name.

Q. George?

A. That don't sound right.

Q. John was . . .

A. John, later, but this, that started the bank . . . There was a . . .

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[26]See addenda item 127.

Q. It wasn't Horace, too? Horace Greeley?

A. Yes, that's who it was. Horace. Yes. He was the one that started it.[27] He had one daughter, I think. He didn't have any boys, I don't think, at all.

Q. I don't remember offhand. I don't believe he did. No.

A. No, I don't think so because he died early. He died shortly after I moved up here. I didn't much more than get acquainted with him. I don't remember what killed him but he died. There was a man named Knotts that had banking experience, that went in with him to start the bank. So, Knotts carried on. Then he took in John and Hen Burnet and Felix Richardson and Bob Rice and . . . Oh, let's see . . . There's another one that I'm amissing of those old fellows.[28] Who was he? . . . Well, I can't think now. There was five men that were fairly established citizens of the community that went in there, too.

Then they sold stock and got some stockholders, you know. But, at first, the stock was pretty much held by those five or six. They didn't branch out right on the start. Then they found that it paid to have a fellow own a little stock, you know. He'd do business with the bank better. They had some pretty stiff competition with Raymond because Emmett McDavid was in there and he was a go-getter when it come to going and getting somebody. He didn't take no for an answer, either; he was like a good agent. So, they had to build up gradually.

Then, Knotts married Ripley's daughter--oh, I guess the old man Ripley was the other director.[29] I imagine so. I'm not positive of that but I guess he was because Knotts married his daughter.

That's a long time back, you know. See, that goes away back there to . . . in the [19]30's.

Q. Well, the bank, of course, was started in what--1895, I believe.

A. Yes, it was going when I came up here but I'm thinking about the men that were at the head of it when I come into the community.

I got acquainted with it when I was working at Richardsons because I went up there and cashed checks from him, you know, and Felix Richardson wouldn't stay in it. He sold his stock. He told me, he says, "Bert, they're making too much money." He says, "They can't be honest and make the money they're making." He says, "I'm getting out." I says, "Well, I wouldn't get out if they were making money. What did you go in for?" "Well," he says, "they can't be honest and make that much money. So," he says, "I'm getting out. Don't you say this to anybody else, but I'm telling you why I'm quitting." And he did. Sold his stock. Got out.

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[27]See addenda item 128.

[28]Mr. Aikman later identified the other member as Ed Fite. No verbatim text transcribed.

[29]See addenda item 129.

Q. Did you feel they were dishonest in any way?

A. Why, land no, they wasn't dishonest. They had a good paying bank, at that time, you know.[30] There was lots of cattle fed in this country and lots of men borrowing money to feed out a drove of cattle and so on. And then there was a lot of land that was mortgaged, you know, early. They had real legitimate paper, I know. Wasn't any question about it.

END OF TAPE

Q. There was only the one bank in Waggoner?

A. That's all, but there was a National and a State bank in Farmersville. Old man Ball, who owned about nine hundred acres of land around Farmersville, started the National bank. I told you the other day about him buying cattle for everybody that wanted it, putting up his own money out of the bank, you know. Buy them, take their note, and he never had any trouble until they got that crooked examiner in there that came down out of Springfield determined to bust everything he could. And he did. That fellow ought to have been shot.

Q. Sir, when did you buy your first car?

A. 1917. It wasn't an automobile. It was just a thing on wheels. (laughs)

Q. What kind was it?

A. An old Saxon. It was an assembled car. They had bought parts from all factories, I guess, and put them together. I wanted a Dodge, but the owner wouldn't promise me a Dodge under six months time and I wanted it for that summer because I had the money to pay for it at that time, and I wanted it. And he says, "This is just as good a car as a Dodge." Well, it wasn't any car at all. I paid eleven hundred dollars for it and I'm satisfied I paid a thousand the next year keeping the thing arunning. Oh, it was awful. There were different times I was terribly tempted to just get out of it and leave it beside the road.

Q. What kind of trouble?

A. Engine trouble. You couldn't drive from here to Raymond and back but--it was a six cylinder--but what there'd be three spark plugs that wouldn't be firing when you got home.

Q. Then what would you do? Did you clean them yourself?

A. Yes, I learned to clean the spark plugs and I also learned to take the top off of the block and clean the block because there'd be a pile of soot on the top of that block. Oh, it was a Jonah. I sold it for a hundred dollars, or traded it in on a Ford, and my troubles ended. Right there. When I got a Ford, no more trouble.

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[30]See addenda item 130.

Q. How did you learn to drive?

A. I learned right on that thing. I drove it home when I bought it, drove it from Raymond. He drove right ahead of me so as to--no, right behind me so as to help me if I was to need it. I drove it home. I was satisfied I could drive because I had steered a threshing machine engine a little. I knew how to steer things. I never had any trouble with it, at all, in that respect.

Q. Did you have any trouble with the tires in those days?

A. No, the tires weren't good at all. The tires that were on that--I had to retire it the first six months. Had to retire clear around. Well, I went to Springfield to buy tires and I went to Firestone and he put some tires off on me that were no earthly good. He knew I was a greenie and he put tires on. So I bought tires, tires, tires, tires. Finally I got tired of it and I went to the Goodyear people and I said to the Goodyear man, "I want you to tell me why I can't keep a tire on this car." He says, "What does it weigh?" and I says, "It weighs 2600 pounds. I've weighed it." He says, "That's your trouble. That car is a load for any of the tires that you've been putting on. When you put anything above that, you took a chance on a blowout." And they would blowout. So, oh, I spent an awful lot of money on tires and having it in the shop and so on.

Dwight Street helped me out on it. He was a good mechanic, you know. Some things, I'd just go out to Dwight and have him help me because he would show me what he done and why he done it and he helped me a lot about learning to keep the thing amoving. So, I thought a lot of Dwight Street.

Q. Was he living on the farm at that time?

A. Living with his folks. Yes, they were on the farm.

Q. When you went to Springfield or to Raymond, did you use the Black Diamond trail over here?

A. No, as a general thing, we went right out here on what's 66 now and went until we got up even with Girard and then we'd cut through the country and hit number 4. Number 4 come as far as Girard and then branched off southwest. It didn't come straight down. So, we'd go over and get on number 4 and go on into Springfield on it. But, if the dirt road was good, why, we'd go right on in on the dirt, but if it was a little muddy or anything, why, we'd try to go to number 4.

Q. What was it paved with?

A. It was paved with cement. It was one of the first roads that was put in, I guess, down below there. Old man Caldwell, who lived at Jerseyville, was a state senator. The state senator, now, and he had pull enough that he got that road built to his house. To his town, rather. It was the first one that came south out of Springfield.

Q. So, it missed this area here, went west of us?

A. Yes, entirely. It was way over there. Didn't even hit Nilwood. It was

clear west of Nilwood, yet, down through the country. Went to Jerseyville and that was the end of it. Then it was dirt road from then on, if you went on farther. But he had a concrete road to go in on, to go to Springfield; and I guess they had a road to Chicago, by that time, I don't know. Anyhow, he'd take a train, I presume, always to Washington, anyhow.

Q. Are you familiar with the Black Diamond name? How did it get that name?

A. Well, they got State help after a while for roads, and that was the first road in this part of the country, that I knew of, that got State help. So, they named it the Black Diamond to designate it for this help, you know, and it just went to Pawnee. Well, it started at Hillsboro, as you know, and went on up to Pawnee. It was rocked first with just gravel and then the gravel got pitted and everything and when they got to having the oil, why, they began leveling it up and oiling it. They got help from the State to do that. These other roads out here, we couldn't get any oil, you know; we couldn't get oil to oil the roads on the side.

So, it was a great help to go up--sometimes I'd go that way. Go out here and hit that and go to Pawnee and then go across to hit number 4.

Q. Otherwise it was dirt road all the way in?

A. Yes. We used to go up when we crossed what's Springfield lake now. The road went right through that. Wasn't any bridge there--yes there was, a bridge over the creek. Sugar Creek, there, had a bridge on it. But they built that lake and condemned the land and took it. They had one old fellow that sat at his house with a shotgun for a long time and they didn't go near him. He swore he'd kill the first man that came on his place and they were a long time agetting somebody that could reason with the old fellow. They finally reasoned him out of it. Paid him for his land and got him out of there. I don't know his name or anymore than that. I just heard them telling about it. It held up the lake, though, for quite a little while.

Q. Do you remember when they paved Route 66, or I-55 now, I guess, isn't it?

A. Yes. It's still 66 partially. I think south of Litchfield is 66 yet, to go down to Edwardsville and so on.

Well, let's see. I think that was built in . . . about . . . 1922. No, hold on. I guess about 1928 because I had a Ford by that time. I'd got rid of that other thing, and I bought it in 1917 and I was using Fords, at that time. I think it was somewhere close to 1928 that they built that. They put a little railroad out from Waggoner along side that and hauled all their material out there to build that.

Q. Oh, is that right?

A. Yes. Little narrow-gauge engine pulled a string of concrete cars; dump on that, you know. All the gravel, ties, and things that they had to have for the road was hauled by the little railroad. Quite a cute little train.

Q. Just running from Waggoner out along the road?

A. Right along there. It had a whistle on it. (laughs)

Q. What did they do, mix the concrete in Waggoner?

A. Yes, and hauled it out, at that time. They had the mixer, and the gravel and all, unloaded from the railroad, you know. Then into the mixer and then they ran it in these cars and hauled it out along the way. I don't know how they dumped it, but they had a way of dumping it where they wanted it, anyhow.[31] They could take a bunch of men and slide that track over, you know, with crowbars; they could move it back and forth where they--within reason, you can't bend the rail, but you could move it within reason. And they had it fixed so they hauled all that material, building 66. North and south, both.

Q. Did they put that concrete road that goes into Waggoner from 66 in at that time?

A. Yes.

Q. So, it went right up to the railroad then?

A. There's where the supervisor was a power. He says, "If you're going to put all of this junk here in our town, you're going to build a concrete road into it." So, they did. When they got 66 built, they turned right around--they had the track laid along side of it--turned right around and built the concrete into there.

Q. Who was the supervisor then?

A. John Gerlach. And he got the Waggoner concrete put in. He never took any credit for it. I never did hear him say that he had anything to do with it, but I knew he did because I knew well enough that somebody with pull was adoing it politically; and he was the man that had to be. Then, John Waggoner was the president of the bank and he was backing him, too, you know.

Q. Who was working at the bank at that time?

A. Well, at that time John Waggoner was the head of it.[32] I kind of believe they had one of the Ripley boys in there as cashier. Seems to me like it was. Maybe Knotts was still there. I can't remember when Knotts left that bank. Probably Knotts was in there at that time because he was an experienced banker. pretty shrewd fellow, as well; and a likable fellow.

Q. Did Cap Williamson take over from John Waggoner?

A. Cap was a cashier under John. He went in under John and I think he followed whoever it was was in with John ahead. I think he followed them in, alearning the business and being the cashier. Well, he was cashier

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[31]See addenda item 131.

[32]See addenda item 132.

until John threw it up. John got tired of being a director and he said he was agoing to quit, he wouldn't take the presidency any longer, that they had to elect a new president. So, then we elected Cap as president and took Winfield Kessler in as cashier.

Winfield Kessler and Cap and Raymond Browning and Dayton Bowman and . . . Dorothy all were in my time, and I'm trying to think, after I left they had . . . Crabtree. Young Crabtree. Jim's boy. He went in there and learned it. I think he's still working in something of that kind.[33]

Q. Is this the Jim Crabtree that married Norma Long?

A. Yes.

Q. Yes, they have an income tax service. There in the old bank building, as a matter of fact.

A. Well, she does that, but that boy's in something else. I think he's in the banking business some way because he learned it well and wanted to be a banker.[34]

Q. Sir, I wonder, could we make a big jump now. One thing that was mentioned early and that we haven't gone into at all was, before you came up here in 1910, you went out to Oklahoma and New Mexico to look at homesteading. Could you describe that a little bit. Why you went out there to look for a place?

A. Just because I wanted to farm. That was government land each time, that was being entered, you know. And the first time, when I went down to Oklahoma, why, that land, you had to bid on it. You had to take a certified check for so much and you couldn't bid beyond your certified check on a quarter section. That is, that would be a dollar an acre that your check would pay. You had to put up a dollar an acre. So, when we got down to that place, why--of course, I'd never been in on anything like that. I didn't know what they done or how they did, anything about it.

Just before we got to Lawton, Oklahoma, there was a man that I could tell to look at him was a farmer and he came and sat down in the seat beside me in the car and he says, "You know they're going to have hotel rates up, clear out of reason, down here now when we get into Lawton. A trainload of men coming in like this." And he says, "How would you like to bunk with me. Would you be willing to sleep with me tonight?" And I says, "Well, sure I would." "Well," he says, "we can rent a bed for what we'd have to each one pay for if we had got single beds." "So," he says, "if you don't mind, we'll just to in and register together and we'll go to bed together." So, we did that and I slept with that man all night. He got up earlier than I did and was gone. I never did learn his name, or anything about him. (laughs) That was a funny experience.

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[33]See addenda item 133.

[34]See addenda item 134.

Well, the next morning I got up and went down and I naturally hunted up the land office because it was a government business, you know. Well, I went to the land office and there was a thousand men or more in town that were wanting to bid on that land. I went to the land agent. I says, "Now, what's the procedure here? How do I proceed?" "Well," he says, "this land has just been surveyed and there's a cornerstone at--where it belongs--at every section and it's marked very plainly. It's just a pine stick driven in the ground but you can read it, after you start in, and," he says, "there's a township of it, of land." So, whatever you did was in this township and he says, "You've got to look at the land and I'd advise you to get a locator, a man that knows the land out there, and has an outfit to take you out because it will take you the better part of a week to go over the whole thing and look at the land before you do any bidding."[35]

And I says, "Well, recommend a locator." "Not me," he says. "You think I dare do anything like that with all the men there is in town?" I says, "Well, I hadn't thought of that." I says, "How would I go about finding a good locator?" "Well," he says, "you'll just have to take a chance." He says, "You go out and you'll find a number of fellows around here that are locators. They'll have a wagon and a team and a tent and a way to bed you down of a night and so on. But," he says, "you've got to find one of them and then you've got to find enough men to suit him to haul. Some of them will haul four, some of them want five, some of them want six, and so on. So, it will be up to you to get him a load, if you find you a locator."

Well, I just walked back across the room and got in a corner and just stood there. I didn't go outside at all. I just stood right there in that corner. Men kept coming in. They'd want the same thing from him as I had, you know, and he'd tell them all the same thing, just like he told me.

Well, he seen I wasn't leaving the room there. Finally he motioned to me to come back up to the window and he says, "I'm going to help you a little." He says, "There's a merchant right around the corner here runs a grocery store that has a good mule team and a good wagon and a good tent and he has a big carpet that he can spread down on the ground for you to sleep on. He carried the chain for all this surveying, so he knows every section in there. You go around to him but don't you tell him I sent you!" I says, "I won't. I'll keep it absolutely secret. Nobody will know that you've done anything for me."

So, I went around to see this fellow and he was a young man. I says, "Have you got a load to haul out?" "No," he says, "I haven't got a soul." And I says, "Well, I'm ahunting a locator. What do you charge and just what's the lay out?" Well, he told me that he would furnish a tent and a team and wagon and bedding for us to cover up with of a night, you know, something to cover up. This was in March!

So, he says, "I want four men and I'd like to have fellows that are really in earnest about buying land. You go find them and you bring them back here

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[35]See addenda item 135.

and when you come back here with four men, we'll be ready to take off."

Well, I went out in the crowd and listened to fellows talk, looked them over, and there was two young men that I sized up for brothers. I could tell they were German descent by their language and I introduced myself to them and I says, "Where are you fellows from?" Well, they were from Pennsylvania. They'd come clear out here from Pennsylvania. And I says, "Have you got a locator?" "No," they says, "we don't know how to get a locator." I says, "Didn't you ask in the land office?" No, they never asked nothing. They were just standing around there waiting for somebody to ask them. I says, "Well, I've got a man that will take you," and I told them what he would charge and the lay out. And I says, "We've got to furnish our own grub and do our own cooking and all of that but he will furnish a tent and a carpet." Well, they says, "Count us in. Right off."

Before I got done talking to them, there was a nice looking fellow walked up and he says, "You still lack a man?" I says, "Yes, I do." He says, "Well, I'd like to throw in with you three fellows. I haven't a locator." And he says, "I'm a schoolteacher from right up here in Oklahoma. I want to locate."

So, I says, "We'll go down and we'll start out." So, I took the three of them down to the store and learned their names and presented them to the fellow and he made his proposition to them, as he had to me, you know. And he says, "Now, you've got to buy enough groceries to take us a week, out there, and camp out." And I says, "Well, what's the matter with you making up that week's supply and we'll pay for it." He says, "I'll do it." So, he hurried around in his store and made up a week's supply of what we would need--bacon and ham, and so on; you know, cured meat, and eggs, and coffee, bread. After he got all that made up, he told us how much it would cost. Well, we plunked down the money and paid for it and he put it in his wagon. "Now," he says, "we're ready to get in the wagon and go."

END OF SIDE ONE

A. He says, "Everything is in it, except the groceries. We'll start out right now, this afternoon." Well, we got ahead of the crowd, way ahead of them, by that old land agent ahelping me that much, see.

And so we went and got located, down in where we wanted to begin looking, by night, and we camped out.[36] Did our own cooking and so on. That was my first experience in camping out. I never had camped out as a boy. Never had. And we camped out there and he had a shotgun, he put it in the wagon. He says, "We may see a cottontail, and if we do, they're good to eat." But they wouldn't eat jacks, you know. So, as we went out, why, the two Pennsylvanians spied a cottontail and grabbed that gun and cracked him before he could get out of his nest. They had him for supper. Well, I couldn't eat rabbit. I'd never eat rabbit (laughs) from the time I was a kid. I got sick of them when I was a kid because I'd shoot at a rabbit--I'd shoot him full of hair, you know, and I got my mouth full of hair a few times and

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[36]See addenda item 136.

it cured me of eating rabbit. (laughter) Well, those boys enjoyed that rabbit hugely, you know. They all ate it. I says, "Well, when you get done cooking your rabbit, then I'll fry me some bacon." And I fried bacon and eggs for my supper and they ate rabbit.

Well, from then on it was the same every day. We just drove, drove, drove and looked at different sections of land and learned what section it was, put it down in the book, put down beside of it what we would bid on it, per acre. We stayed out the full week, until Saturday evening.

And Saturday it rained all day and there wasn't any roads, we were just driving over prairie, and it got so the mules couldn't pull us men in that wagon. The wagon drove way down. You had to walk the last day, all day. We used up our last grub for breakfast the next morning. That was the end of it and we were ready to get out to where there was roads, you know.

"Well," the driver says, "we've still got to cross Deep Red Creek," and he says, "I know a squatter in here that has a ford down here in his land. We'll drive down there and find out about that ford." And he says, "We'll cross tonight or we stay here until that creek goes down."

Well, the squatter told us exactly what to do. He had taken big logs and put in the bottom of there and staked them and then filled in between them so that a wagon and team could go across on them. They went slaunchways across the creek because you couldn't drive straight down. It was at least twenty feet down that bank and we went down it slaunchways from this side and slaunchways up the other side.

When we got there and looked at it, I says, I don't think you can cross. There's too much current there." The driver says, "We cross now or we don't cross until that creek runs down." I says, "Okay, boy, start driving." I helped him with his mules all the time because I was used to working with horses, you know. He drove in and we got halfway across and one mule crowded the other one off of the corduroy and he just disappeared right now, harness and everything. I thought, "Well, here we are in the middle of this creek and the creek arising and one mule will probably drown." But the other mule braced his feet and begin to pull and pretty soon he hauled him back by the neck yoke onto the logs and he got his feet and we went on out. (laughs) And we got out on the other side, unhitched. We were out of grub. Didn't have any grub left and we knew we had to drive most of the next day to get to a town.

So, we started out and we had another slough to cross and you never could tell how deep those things would be until you got in them, because it had rained a lot of water in two days and a night, you know.

We came to that slough and there was a farmhouse right on the edge of it and there was a kid asitting on the fence there. The driver says, "Can we cross the slough?" He said yes and then he laughed like a fool. He just laughed and held his sides. The driver says, "What are you laughing at?" "Oh," he says, "you can cross all right. Just go ahead. I know you can cross." Well, that made us suspicious, him alaughing so, you know, but we drove in there and it liked just about that much coming over the edge of the wagon bed.

Q. About six inches.

A. We got through it and got on the road and drove into a gin town and they had an eating house there. We drove down to the eating house and engaged rooms for the five of us. Then we had to go to a wagon yard and take care of this team. They had wagon yards in those places that you put a team up and fed them in your own wagon, you know; but they were fenced in, they couldn't get away. So, we went to a wagon yard and put the mules away.

And I says, "Now, I want to go down to the gin. I haven't seen a gin since I was a little kid and I want to see one." So, we went down to the gin and looked it over. Then we went back up to the house.

Well, when we first got in town, why, the schoolteacher, he noticed that I didn't cuss like most men did. (laughs) When we got in town there, he says, "Do you drink?" And I says, "No, sir. I have no use for liquor whatsoever." "Well," he says, "neither have I. When I'm going with you wherever you go. Because," he says, "that driver is aheading for a saloon, now, and the Pennsylvanians went with him," and he says, "those fellows will all get drunk. You know they will." He and I went over to the gin, and we looked the gin over and then we headed back home, or to the eating house. Running out of tape?

Q. Yes, sir. I'm right at the end of it, I'm afraid.

A. Well, we five had a good supper and a good meal. The boys left that fellow when they seen he was agoing to get drunk, they come and joined us. So, all of us were sober at the supper table but the driver could just barely see his plate (laughs) and it wasn't long until his head was in his plate. And the schoolteacher said to these fellows, "You take him and put him to bed." And they did and we all went to bed. The next morning, he was sober.

So, that was the end of it. He took us back to town and we paid our bill.

END OF TAPE[37]

Q.[38] . . . Oklahoma. You remember you took the tour out through the countryside.

A. Yes. Well, we came back to Lawton and went to this same land office and to the same men that had helped me get the locator, you know. So, I felt very kindly to that fellow and I went up to him and got my papers. I says, "Now, you give me what you think I ought to have." Well, he dished

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[37]See addenda item 137.

[38]Before starting review of this final basic narrative, Mr. Aikman waived review of the narrative collected in the review sessions. See addenda item 138 for the verbatim text.

them out to me and he says, "Couldn't he read all your corners?" And I says, "Yes. Very readily, and it wasn't long until I could." And he says, "Well, that's what I figured."

He says, "Now, you've got a certified check here for . . ." I think I had three hundred dollars, I don't remember the exact amount, but it was just a certified check from the bank made to me and I endorsed it to whoever I wanted to, see. So, that had to go in with my bid to Washington. He says, "Now, how many pieces did you pick out," and so on. Well, I had it pretty much in my head, then, and I told him. He says, "What part did you like best?" and I told him what I did. He was very familiar with the country. He knew. He'd say, "Now, that's the kind of location. I hope you got the right kind of a bid on that."

But he says, "Now, remember, you've got to have a dollar for every acre you bid on here, now." Well, that handicapped you to a certain extent. So, I went ahead and made my bids and I remember there was a piece of bottom land, down in one township there—see, this was three counties. All had been Indian territory and they'd throwed it in to be settled on. He says, "Some of these pieces of land, now, are what you think they are; and some of them are not. So," he says, "just be a little bit cautious." He says, "If you don't know this country, you better be pretty cautious." So, I guess, I was overly cautious. That one piece of land I spoke of, I come within one dollar an acre of getting that. I bid ten and the old Oklahomian bid eleven and he got it. So, I lost out on the real piece that I wanted and I didn't care very much, after that, whether I succeeded or not. But it took three months for your bids to be worked in Washington. Then they sent back your three hundred dollar check, just as it was, and told you--they called attention to your bid, you know.

Well, there was different quarter sections. You could bid on a quarter section. That's all you could bid on. You couldn't bid on a section.

But when I went down to New Mexico, later, that was several years later, you could bid on a section of land, six hundred and forty acres. And I remember I went to the land office to get a locator that time. I'd had pretty good luck before and I went to the land office and he put on his hat, at once, and says, "Well, come and go with me," and he took me right over to a place. "Now," he says, "you can rely on these men." Says, "You go ahead and hire them." Well, I hired them to locate me.

They surveyed by a string tied to a buggy wheel and we wouldn't miss the corner post over ten feet, hardly ever. The guy that was in the buggy counted the revolutions of that buggy wheel. We knew the amount it covered, you know, and when we got there, why, right there was a corner post. That hadn't been resurveyed, that was old surveys you had to look for. Well, then the fellow would get out and he'd go to kicking in the sand. Maybe he'd have to dig a foot or a foot and a half (laughs) to find a post. It was drifty.

Well, I bid on a section there because I thought probably if I located there, my two brothers that were farmers would like to also, and I would have had land enough for all of them. So, I blowed my pile there. I lost the money, that time. They didn't send it back. They took it.

After I came home, my father-in-law had seen I was determined to get out of the telegraph job and get on a farm. So, he came down to see me at Honey Bend and he said, "Bert, I've never got to travel any in my life." And he says, "You've been around a lot now, on passes. You've seen a lot of the country." He says, "What's the matter with you going up there and taking the farm and let me run around awhile." Well, that just tickled me to death because this was a good location and I knew it was. So, I came up here, then, and you might say I became a fixture. (chuckles)

Q. Why didn't you prove up on the land there in New Mexico, once you got started on it?

A. Because of him offering me this. I just dropped everything when I got a good farm here in Illinois because I knew how to farm it. There was other fellows from around Honey Bend that went down there ahead of me and, oh, every one of them just come and plead with me to come on down there. They wanted to get a sort of a colony of Illinoians down there because all of those people down in that country claimed those southerners were--well, they don't say lazy; they have lethargy. And they all wanted a fellow from up here where it's been colder and where he worked for a living.

So, one fellow from over there, he came to see me, I guess, three or four times. He had already been down and located himself, but he went and rented a farm that another fellow had proved up on and had broke it out. So, he didn't have to do all that improving and building up. And he says, "I can get you one just as good right there within a mile of me.

Now, I never had grown cotton. I didn't know a think about it. I seen there was a great change taking place in cotton, too, by the newspapers, because they were developing the pickers, you know, and getting so they handled bigger acreages, and they also went to the long staple cotton. Well, now, I never had heard of anything of that kind. Ordinary cotton is a short staple, about that long.

Q. About three inches.

A. But the long staple is something like that long.

Q. Almost a foot.

A. It grew just the same as far as you could see, but when you gathered it, you had a whole lot more lint in each boll than you would out of this common cotton. So, that was about as much as I knew about it.

I knew they grew wonderful watermelon, but there was no market for them there, at that time. They had quite a lot of trouble digging wells. Some wells they'd dig--I found that out by the locator, he took me around to practically all of them that were aproving up and I found them that run into straight chalk when they got down about twenty feet. I called it chalk. I don't know what mineral it was but it was just exactly like chalk. You could break it with your fingers and bring out chunks that big. You could just break them off and it was just white and looked just for the world like chalk.

I asked a fellow that was adigging how deep he was. Well, he told me. I says, "Any sign of water?" He shook his head. He was pretty badly discouraged. He didn't want to knock those locators because they'd located him. But he shook his head to me; he didn't see any sign of water and there they'd dug that well down twenty or thirty feet. They were way down there.

And they were getting killed in those wells, too. They were not smart enough to let down a lantern to look for firedamp. They'd leave a well overnight and think they could go back in the morning and drop down in there and go to work and there was a number of fellows killed. They'd drop down in there and no air, you know, and they'd just drop. A fellow would go down after them and he'd drop. Well, I decided I didn't want any of that.

But, I had cousins that went down there with me, at the same time. They were the ones that got me to come down there and they went down with me the same time and they each got a quarter section. One of them was an old maid, she never had married, but she wanted some land in her name. I don't know whether she had him already picked out; anyhow, she married not too long afterward. He was no earthly good, so her brother tole me later. After she was dead, why, he told me that she just got stung worse then ever on that man, worse than she did on the land.

But his children took over those homesteads. They were partially finished, you know, and they finished them up and when I was down there in . . . oh, let's see. I started going down there in . . . When did I go, Nel?

H.B. You mean down to New Mexico?

A. Yes.

H.B. Oh, that was about 1941.

A. 1941? Well, anyhow, I got down there and those fellows had brought in productive farms. They found the artesian water that was supposed to be there, both farms.

When I got down there, I never had met his kids after they grew up. I knew them as little kids. I never knew them after they grew up. So, I had to hunt them up. I went to the old lumber dealer in Demming and I says, "How long have you lived here?" He says, "Thirty years." I says, "Well, aren't you pretty well acquainted with the country, then; who lives where and so on?" "Yes, sir," he says, "who do you want to find?" And I says, "I'd like to find the Yates family." He says, "Well, one of them works over here in this warehouse." He says, "Johnny does," and he says, "He's a go-getter. You get in touch with Johnny and you'll have a good advisor." So, I run around--I followed him around that big warehouse pretty near a half a day before I could ever catch up with him. I didn't know him, you know, and I had to get somebody to point him out to me and then run him down, but I finally got him and he says, "Well, I want you to see Paul's farm, now, as long as you're down here. So, you come and go home with me, now, and I'll put my wife in your car and take you down to Paul's." That was a brother older than him, had been on the land longer.

And I went down to his farm. He had three hundred and twenty acres, just a beautiful ranch, now, and he was raising cattle and cotton and federal reserve, or head corn, whatever you want to call it. They grew it for feed, largely. Cotton. And they grew pinto beans. That was their main crop.

Johnny, working in this warehouse, knew a lot about the futures on those pintos and he told me, before I went out to Paul's, he says, "Now, Paul's got all of his beans stored here in the warehouse." They had a cooperative warehouse. And he says, "I begged him with all my heart to sell those beans when he brought them in here." He says, "And he stuck them in and they're not worth near as much now as they was when he put them in, and they're not agoing to be, either. There's too many pintos. He's already paid a lot of storage and he's agoing to have to keep paying as long as they stick in here."

Well, when I got all that information, I was thankful to my heart that I did come here instead of going there. I'll tell you I was; because the daughter-in-law told me, when she was taking me out to Paul's, she says, "The last year that was stayed on Johnny's farm"--that was her father-in-law--she says, "We had a beautiful field of corn, twenty acres. I wouldn't have asked for prettier." She'd been raised in Oklahoma where they grew corn and she says, "We laid it by at about that high. It was nice and green." Of course, they knew they had to irrigate, all the time, or it didn't get rain. She says, "We laid that by and we had plans for another irrigation." And she says, "You know, there was a southwester came up and started blowing sand and in three days you couldn't see a blade of that corn. It drifted sand clear over the twenty acres that deep. I said to my husband, we're quitting right now! We're getting out of this." So, he went to town and got a job in the co-op. I don't know what she done but she was a real wide awake young woman.

Q. So, you decided to come back to Illinois, then?

A. Well, I was already located here. No, I wasn't already located, either. Yes, I was, at that time, because I'd been going down to New Nexico to winter for a winter or two and I hadn't looked them fellows up and I decided that winter I would look them up, find out what that country was--let's see, it was a hundred and twenty miles south of where I was, up in Hot Springs. You could drive it back and forth in a day, you know. So, I had my stakes set right here, at that time.

Q. Sir, I wonder--you know the other day the tape was bad during that session and there was several things that you covered on that. I was able to listen to it. I can't use it because we can't play it on anything except this recorder here. You can't hear it on anything else. So, I wonder if I could ask you some questions about those things that we lost through that the other day? For example, on the beginning of that tape you were describing a handheld corn planter. A box with handles on the side that you manually planted. Could you describe that?

A. That was the first corn planter that I ever saw, you know. They had a handle on each side and were about that square, sheet iron, and you filled that with corn, about a half a bushel, maybe a peck. Depended on your laziness, you know; what you wanted to carry. Down at the bottom was a

place to put your foot on a bar and jam that in the ground. They laid off the land like I told you, with a drag, and you'd go along and stick that--you'd walk between two rows, stick it in between, each side of you, and then step on the ground after you'd pulled it out, so as to firm it. And it worked very good. They could plant corn fairly fast with it. It was much better than a hoe and dropping it by hand. That was the beginning of raising corn, you know; drop it by hand and cover it with a hoe.

That machine I never saw after the real corn planter appeared, that you could hitch a team to, you know. Whatever become of them, I don't know. They're museum pieces if they could be found, I'm sure of that, because I don't ever remember of seeing but one and that was a neighbor owned it. He was planting corn in stumps where you couldn't have worked with a corn planter at all. You couldn't have got through because it wouldn't pass over them or between them. He raised a right fair crop of corn on five acres that year by planting it that way and then taking a single shovel, of a double shovel, and going around this side of the row and then turn around and come back this side. One round to a row and he used a blind horse and he could drive that old mare through the stumps and she would never stumble. He'd say, "Oh, now, easy, whatever-he-called-her, easy," and she'd feel for that stump just like you or I would.

Q. Really a smart horse, then?

A. She was smart and a good one, I'll tell you. Now, he could have taken horses that could see. They'd awhipped around there and got his machine tied up, you see, but she'd go so easy and never was tied up a bit.

Q. Sir, a good part of that tape that we lost had to do with the first farm hand jobs that you were--when you left home to go work on farms. One of the first things you mentioned was having constructed a crabtree harrow.

A. Yes. Well, I was still at home for that. That was the year we moved down by Honey Bend. Dad had the worry of moving in March. He had to give up the place up here the first of March and we had rather a bad March. The worry of it, and moving down there, he developed--he was subject to bad rheumatic attack--and he developed a rheumatic fever that put him in bed the 8th of March and he wasn't out again until about the 10th of June. He was just flat on his back in bed and there I was--all the people strangers to us, you know.

I never will forget how the Duffs came and helped us. My goodness, how they did work to get everything done that should be done, at the right time. Even to getting up stove wood. When we'd go to school, he'd come down Saturday afternoon. "Well, hitch up a team and let's go hunt some wood." Them days you could go in the timber and take all the down stuff you wanted to. Nobody cared. They wanted it out. And we'd go and haul in a big load of down wood, put it on the wood pile, and then it was up to us boys. We had a crosscut saw, two-man, and us boys would saw up enough wood to last Mother for cooking and heating through the day. Well, when we got home from school, two of us had to jump on that saw again, and the other one would feed the stock and so on. So, that was all at home. That was my first experience, really, at being the leader of a farming.

Q. And you had the crops to get in that spring, did you? The neighbors helped you with that?

A. Yes. The neighbors helped. That was when they came and sowed the twenty acres of oats. Pa rented twenty acres of ground from another man and he wanted this sown to oats because he wanted to put wheat in it that fall, this man did.

So, it was a mile and a quarter from home and Mother had to cook dinner and boil coffee and take it all from home down to all those men. We had a big wagon and we had to sit and hold that old coffee pot that way to keep it from splashing all over, you know. That's when they cut me the crabtree and put me on it for a harrow.

Q. Could you describe that, sir?

A. Well, they just—do you know the wild crab?

Q. Yes, sir. It's rather a small tree, isn't it?

A. No, they get big. They'll get that big through.

Q. A foot through.

A. But they grow very thick, in the top. The top is a very thick growth. When they chopped it down, why, they cut a ring around it and put a chain on it, or something that would hold to hitch to, and then they took an axe and hacked these top limbs all down so I could get up there and stand to drive, you know. They gave me a sack of straw to stand on on those limbs and I drove that thing until we got the oats harrowed in. And it did as good work as the harrow, too.

Q. Oh, is that right?

A. Yes. They had thorns on them, a crabtree does. Thick limbs and the limbs didn't break easy, but that was about done when I unhitched from it.

Q. When you started as a farm hand, did you work for a hog-feeder first?

A. Well, I started out first working for one of the Duffs. I just worked as a plow hand, then. Take a two-horse plow and two horses and you walked for everything, you know, them days. You walked for plowing. You walked for harrowing. You walked for everything.

Well, I started out with him. I worked for him two weeks. He just hired me by the day, 50¢ a day. The neighbors all went in cahoots that spring. That was the next spring after we'd moved down there. They all went in cahoots and put in oats, one field after another. They'd go the whole bunch into my field and put it in and then over to your's and put it in and so on. They worked that way.

Well, I plowed constantly. I just walked behind that plow and by the end of the week, I didn't think I could put one leg ahead of the other at all. I just thought I was done for and I said to Mr. Duff--we'd sowed his that

morning--I says, "Mr. Duff, I just don't believe I can harrow this evening." He was a big man, he'd weigh two hundred. He says, "Bert, I don't believe your legs hurt a bit worse than mine," and he says, "I've got to get those oats harrowed in. It may rain between now and Monday." It was Saturday, you know. He says, "You try it and, if you can make it, when we get through with that, I'll put you on a horse and let Fred take you home." That was his boy. So, that's the way we worked it.

I went home and I told Dad I didn't want any supper, I was sick. (laughs) And he says, "Sick nothing. You're tired out. You come in here and drink some hot tea and eat a supper and you'll feel entirely different." I remember I did. I felt entirely different and, by Monday, that had worn off. I could walk all day and never feel it at all.

And then I began working for all the neighbors. If they wanted a hand with the team, to handle a team, they'd come and get me. I was rather small for my age. I didn't grow until I got to be about eighteen, I guess; I was still growing. I was small. I had to reach up this way to hold a plow handle. I couldn't do like a man did, hold them down here, you know. After I got my legs broke in, I could walk any of them down.

So, I worked all spring and when corn plowing time come, why, another neighbor wanted me. His name was Morrell. He says, "I think you can plow corn." "Well," I says, "I never have." And he says, "Well, you come on over. I'm pretty sure you can plow corn and I need somebody to plow." I went over to his place and he says, "Now, I'm going to put you on the easiest cultivator I've got, but you've got to learn it. They're tricky things." And he says, "I'm going to show you how to take advantage of all of it."

Well, there was two wheels over here and there was an arch that went over like this--one wheel, I mean, over here; another wheel over here and then a singletree on the end of each beam. You had two beams on there. You plowed a row at a time, you know, with that. But those wheels were fixed--I never figured out why they were that way because I never saw them after that second year. If you wasn't very careful in turning around at the end, the whole thing would lay down on you. Those wheels would just collapse like that. They'd lay down flat and I just bawled my eyes out the first two days I tried to plow corn with that thing. Well, then all at once it dawned on me that if I would pull on one handle, pull back, that would keep it from collapsing, the team could take it on around, and away we'd go again. After I got used to running it, I wouldn't have traded it for any cultivator he had. There was no tongue on it. Nothing but two wheels, an arch, two beams, and two singletrees.

Q. And you walked it, I guess?

A. Oh, walk. You walked for everything them days. Yes.

END OF SIDE ONE

A. The reason I liked it so well, it was so low down and light that, if you covered corn, you had time to kick it out as you come to it, with your feet. I could do as good a job as anybody, after a week's time.

Q. Did it have one blade on each side of the corn row?

A. There was two shovels on each beam. You set the front one to throw the dirt away and you set the back one to throw it back over. Then you had a couple of fenders that--fenders were pieces of sheet iron about that long and about that deep . . .

Q. About a foot and a half foot.

A. . . . and they were fastened on them beams so they kept that from covering the corn. It would, especially if a team walked fast, that would throw dirt. So, you had to watch that all the time and not cover your corn, because if you did, it couldn't get through very good. Corn will come up once, but it don't come up twice very good.

Then after I worked for him through corn planting, why, he kept me through harvest. I helped shock wheat. Through all of it then, I just worked by the day. Fifty cents a day. He had another hand that he paid by the month. He paid him about sixteen dollars a month, which was very little more than 50¢ a day, you see. He was always helpful. He was a much older fellow than I and he was always helpful. If I bumped into something I didn't understand, I could get a correct answer from him. So, he made a hand of me. We worked together all that year.

Even to plowing wheat ground. I helped plow the wheat ground that fall. Hundred acres we plowed with two plows and that was some job. We hit a bumblebee's nest in practically every furrow, someplace along. He had a riding plow, the old man did, and I just had a walking plow but I used three horses in that job. I had a bigger plow than a two-horse. He took his knife and cut a bunch of switches that were about that big around and about that long and he bound them good with string, good and tight. Did this at the house, you know, where he could do it right and he ties that and he kept that across his lap, all the time. When we'd plow up a bumblebee's nest, either one of us, we took the team on out of the way and then we'd both get off and go back and he'd keep that in his hand and keep the bees off of me and I'd take a chunk and throw on their nest and hop on it and tromp it in. That was the end of the bumblebees. We could go right ahead. (laughter) I seldom got stung. He could keep them off with that. Those switches were like . . .

Q. A flyswatter?

A. A flyswatter. Yes, sir. They'd down him and when they downed him, why, we'd tramp him, you know.

And I worked for him through the hay harvest. Next year he was back after me again. I worked for him about three years, off and on.

Q. What was his name, sir?

A. Morrell. George Morrell. He cleared his two hundred and twenty acres of land and then he sold it and moved to California. I didn't know anything about him after he moved to California. I knew he got along all right some way because he came back to visit the neighborhood and go to the World's Fair.

By that time I had quite farming and was in the telegraph office there at Honey Bend.

They had lots of gold in California. All the gold money they wanted to carry, you know, and he thought it would be quite a sight to show us fellows gold. Well, right at that time the railroad was apaying us off in gold all the time. Every month they'd go in a paycar and I'd get forty dollars, two twenties. The other fellows according to what they earned, you know.

So, I'll never forget him coming in the morning he was agoing to the Fair. He was buying the tickets. He was visiting another one of the neighbors and he brought this neighbor and was apaying their way to the Fair. He told me how many tickets he wanted and he says, "How much is it?" and I told him and he plunked down a twenty dollar gold piece. He says, "You haven't seen very many of them, I guess." I says, "Yes, I have." I says, "We get paid in them every month." (laughter) So, I shoved it off to one side while I made out the ticket. So, he got his tickets and handed them to each one of them around the room, you know. He was adoing the stunt, and the twenty was still laying there. I just left it until just about time for the train to come, for me to get outside. I says, "George, do you want this twenty back?" "My, God!" he says, "Did I leave that there?" (laughter) Did he want it back. Oh, that was funny.

Q. Who did you work for after you worked for Mr. Morrell?

A. Well, then I worked for his neighbor, George Wood. I worked for him by the day, though; I never worked for him by the month. He was one of those stock men that I told you was in the fine hog business. He imported sows and boars from England and I used to feel like I ought to take my hat off every time I slopped them hogs because they (laughs) had royal blood in them, you know.

But, the poor bugger was as hard hearing as I am. There wasn't any help, them days, for them, you know. When he'd have his sale in the fall, why, he'd advertise it through the stock journal and there'd be men come from Iowa and Missouri and, oh, all over, for those hogs, because they knew they were imported, or they were get from imported. Well, they'd come down there and they'd soon find out how deaf he was. Well then, two of them, if they were from the same state, they'd say, "Well now, I want so many out of bunch so-and-so." They were all penned, you know, and numbered. "Out of number so-and-so. How many do you want?" Well, they'd take that pen, the two would, and well, this fellow would say, "You do the bidding. I'll keep out of it." Well, as a consequence, there wasn't any bidding. People around there couldn't buy them because, just for stock hogs, you know, they were too high priced. Hogs sold for a hundred and fifty dollars apiece. Why, my goodness, [if] you could take a big hog to town and get thirty dollars for it, you was adoing a hundred, them days.

So, I worked for him off and on part of one season. The next season, well, I went and hired to a man named Martin, by the month. He gave me $14 a month, which was just 50¢ a day, but he boarded me and he was a good boss. A wonderful stock man, and then, a fellow I kind of liked. He had been raised in a big family and I never knew the particulars but he was the only one that

got well-to-do out of it. Some way, he got well-to-do. The other boys didn't have much business with him, so I figured he did a little cheating in that settling of the estate. Though I never knew it. But I worked for him a part of two seasons. Just work up to a harvest, then I'd go out and work by the day. I got so I could get a dollar a day as a harvest hand after that. I got big enough I could draw a dollar a day.

I always gave my dad half of my wages. He needed it and needed it the worst ever. I gave him half of my wages until I was twenty-two.

Q. What type work did you do for Mr. Martin?

A. Well, he farmed a little. He grew twenty acres of corn. Very little grain aside from that, and he would hire practically all of that cut into fodder and feed it to his cattle. He was a cattle-feeder. And then, the work I did for him mainly was build fence. He fenced a place . . . I wonder if I can remember how many acres. I think there was eight acres that he built a hog-tight fence around with boards. He didn't use these pickets, like Dad had been making. He got boards and made them and I set posts and he made pens for hogs, hogs, hogs, hogs, you know. He could have just pens for hogs.

Nobody got the best of him when they had a sale, don't you think. He knew what he was adoing. He heard them plotting against the other fellow. He told me so and he said, "It put me on my mettle." And he says, "I seen if they wanted it they better get in and bid because," he says, "I had somebody that would buck that fellow a little." He'd back them.

So, he was a very agreeable man to work for and his wife was an awful nice lady. She was just as kind to me as she could be. Poor old soul. She didn't have any neighbors. The neighbors weren't there at all, hardly. They did go to church, though. They belonged over at the Pleasant Hill church. That one over on the road. They went to church and Sunday school. She got to see the people that way.

Q. This is the church there on 66?

A. Yes. They moved it across the road now, you know. Rebuilt it. So, that's been a church a long time. Dr. Allen is . . . I don't know what his age is, in Litchfield. He's been a doctor there a long, long time. I went to school with his dad a little while at Hazel Green. That was the name of the school that we attended at home. There was a big family of those Allens and there was three of the men studied to be doctors. Doc Allen's father was the only one that lived to get any good of it. The other two contacted typhoid fever, I don't know whether it was in the disecting room or what, but it killed them before they got their diplomas. One fellow was on his deathbed and they brought the diploma up from the college and presented it to him so he could see he did get it, but it didn't do him any good.

Then, this old man, now, their father, was a Campbellite preacher and I used to hear him preach. He was a fine old man. Lived on a farm and tried to get those boys to farm but they wouldn't do it, you know. They wanted something else. I don't think any of them--yes, there was one of

them made a farmer. One boy. He was an awful nice fellow.

Q. Where did Mr. Allen preach? Was it at Pleasant Hill?

A. Pleasant Hill.

Q. Where was the New Hope church?

A. The New Hope church is about three miles south from that church and then go west a mile and a half.

Q. Somewhere near Barnett, then?

A. Well, it's close to the New Hope school. There's a New Hope school out there that belongs to the Litchfield bunch. It's right out there close to this church. It's not hard to find the church.

Then, there was two sisters in that membership out there that were full blood French. Their father--I don't know whether he immigrated from France or whether his parents did. He was a full blood Frenchman and very peculiar. If you got a dime out of him in the collection box, you did pretty well. (laughs) He had a good farm and raised stock and good property but these two girls outlived him and heired all that he had and, after they did that, why, they went to work on that church to make it what they wanted it to be all along. They dug a basement under it, bricked it up and bricked it in, and they spent I don't know how many thousand, but a big end of his money went into that church. (laughs) He belonged to it but he was just one of those fellows couldn't let loose, you know.

Q. Sir, who'd you work for after Mr. Martin, then?

A. Well, then I went away from home over by Harvel. I went to a man named Wylie. He had a gangplow. Now, that's the first gangplow I'd ever found in my working out, but he had a gangplow and a team broke to it and he had good horses.

He had measured his ground so that he never planted a row of corn in the dead furrow. You know what a dead furrow is, the furrow between lands.

Q. Yes, sir. It's kind of a ditch.

A. Yes. A drainage. They never liked to get in that furrow with a row of corn because it was easy to cover up, see. So, he measured his fields and marked them off and then plowed them accordingly, and there wasn't a row went in there. And he said to me, he says, "Now, you're to start on those furrows and lay off your lands and, if you watch your business, you'll finish without ever turning around. Don't you let me catch you turning around in the field to finish a land. You finish it clear through the field." Well, he really did teach me to drive a furrow; a straight one, you see. Sure enough, when we planted the corn, it all stayed on top; there was not a one of them in the furrow.

Q. How did you drive so straight? How did you guide yourself?

A. Well, the team had a furrow to follow. You see, you put a swing horse out here in this furrow. And he soon learned to stay in it, because if he stepped out here, he was in plowed ground; if he got out here, he'd be jerked back. So, he'd stay in that furrow. Well, that guided things straight. If you got the first one straight, why, he'd keep it straight for you, you know, right through the field; and then, when you come to the end of finishing a land, maybe you wouldn't plow but a half a furrow with each plow. You had two plows, you know. So that you would be sure to finish in that space.

Q. That's the reason they called it a gangplow, because it had two . . .

A. Two plows. I never had seen a gangplow, a real gang of plows, until I went west and seen those big, oh . . . discs. They used disc plows in the west and they would cut ten feet on a side, you know. Each side cut ten feet, twenty feet at a through. And when I saw them, I said, "Well, they've sure got her made. They can put in all the wheat they want to." And they did, too. That's where Kansas and Oklahoma got the lead on the wheat business in the early days. It was because they had those big old discs. Those discs would turn under stubble just about as good as a plow because they could set them deep and they kept them sharp. They were a dangerous thing if you fell off in front of them.

Q. Why didn't they use those around here?

A. Well, it was too short turning, around here, because you turned in a quarter of a mile. Well, those fellows, lots of them, went a mile. They'd go down a mile and come back a mile, you know. Maybe farther than that. I've seen some of them that I'm satisfied . . . In Washington, I think I saw a fellow making a five mile through. I was just driving through the country and seen where he was aplowing and I watched where he went to to turn and he went clear up in the edge of the foothills before he turned around.

Q. Hardly see from one end to the other, then?

A. No! And he'd grow wheat there, too.

Q. Was it while you were working for Mr. Wylie--did he get the threshing machine?

A. Well, he owned a half-interest in it. He and his brother-in-law, the man who'd married his sister. They owned it together and they were congenial fellows, got along without any trouble. I never heard a word between them. They always agreed. One did one thing and one did the other, you know. The other man ran the engine. He was a pretty good machinist, could keep an engine going. Wylie took care of the separator and, I think, done most of the collecting. The worked all over the country around them there. Took in a big territory.

Q. How big a crew would they have to work the threshing machine?

A. Well, there'd just be these two men, and then they had to have two feeders. A man couldn't feed a machine only about an hour. An hour is a long time to feed a machine because you stood up and . . . They

would take a bundle, the bundles would be thrown with the heads toward the cylinder, and the band cutter would--well, they had to have band cutters, too.[39] Two band cutters. They would stand there with a knife and snip the string and then the fellow would reach over with one arm and, as he reached over, he'd put this arm under and that way he spread that wheat so it just went in there as even; clear across the cylinder, you know. Well, it took practice to learn that and to do it he had to lean over where he breathed dust and they didn't have any respirators or anything of the kind, those days. They just took it.

Well, a fellow up there, if it was real hot, thirty minutes was an awful stunt, you know. He'd stand up there . . . I cut bands an awful lot of time and I never hit a man's hand but once. I hit one man's hand but he had on gloves; I didn't cut him. I stopped the knife just as it struck. But what a look he gave me. (laughs)

Q. Were you standing on the machine when you were cutting these bundles?

A. Yes. They had a platform that reached along under the feeding platform. There was one time I cut bands when they put a bushel of wheat under me. They'd fill a sack with a bushel of wheat in it, then put me on top of it so I could reach over. I was short. I cut lots of bands that way; but I never did cut wire bands. Now, the first binders bound with wire. They had a wire similar to baling wire only it came on spools. They put that spool up there and that wire fed through just like the string did later. They finally developed the sisal string and then they did away with the wire because you had to have tin snips to cut that wire. You had to be pretty sure you snipped her, too, because if that went into the cylinder and hooked on the concaves, too, you'd think the end was coming out of the machine. Terrible jerk.

Q. When you were cutting the bundles was it on the treadmill, or moving loader, inside the feeder?

A. Well, that was before they had self-feeders. Oh, they didn't get self-feeders until I was grown. Then you pitched in and there was no bands cut, only as the machine cut them. They had a circular knife that run in front of the feeder there that cut all the strings pretty good.

Q. So, you fed them right into the machine itself, right into the mechanism?

A. We pitched them, yes, from the wagon. But when I was cutting bands, why, I stood--the feeder would be in front of the cylinder--but I stood back over there on that side and I reached over here and cut the band and he'd reach over and grab the bundle, you know. They didn't like everybody cutting bands because some of them were too careless with their knives, you know. You had to have a pretty good knife.

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[39] See addenda item 139.

Q. Did you also run a bundle wagon?

A. Oh, yes. Then when I went to working for Wylie, I drove a bundle wagon all through the threshing. All over the country. I got acquainted with the country completely. That was over southeast of Harvel in, I think it's Ware's Grove Township, if I remember right. They threshed over a great scope of country there and the grain was hauled to Butler and Hillsboro and Raymond, and some of it went to Harvel, after we got up in that neck of the woods. So, I worked over a lot of territory that fall on that.

I only worked for that man the one year and the next year I tried telegraphing. I determined I wasn't agoing to work--no, I take that back. The next year I came up here and worked for Mr. Richardson and I worked for him two seasons. Worked for him until I was 22. Then I went into the telegraph office at 22 and I stayed there--I went in the first day of November, the election day. Presidential election. Maybe it wasn't the first day. On election day anyhow, I went in and I worked until the 1st of March and then that tower was awanting a man pretty bad and the agent said, "You're capable of handling that tower, so you're going to go down there and finish up your telegraph education right in that tower." Because we had the dispatchers wire went through there and every order that was given came through that place. I could copy orders all night, you know. Just sit there and just pretend I was agetting them to trains and I never copied but one in the year that I was there for a train. (chuckles)

Q. We covered that part of it pretty well, sir. There are a couple other items that were on that bad tape . . .

END OF TAPE

Q. For example, you described how you went about loading a bundle wagon. Could you describe how you stacked it to build your stack on a bundle wagon?

A. Well, when wheat's shocked--you wouldn't know it unless you'd been there and torn up shocks, but when wheat's shocked, the head part is pushed in. In other words, they don't set straight up and down; they set like this.

Q. At an angle.

A. So, the base of a bundle is long on this end and short on this end. Well, when you start loading your wagon, you would throw that long end over the edge of the frame. Every bundle, you'd put it over the edge of the frame. Well, then the next time when the bundles came up to go around, you put the long end over the string of that other row of bundles.

Then you filled in in the middle. You'd not stop with just going around the outside, you'd put bundles around until you'd filled the whole frame, you know, with bundles. Well, then the next round, why, you'd go as I tell you, so that that long end went outside and that kept it--it had a tendency to dig in, see, so you wouldn't spill your bundle going to the house. Took you a little while to learn to do that with a pitchfork, but it was a wonderful help to do it wih a pitchfork instead of with your hands, because you had to bend over to lay every bundle with your hands, you know. With the pitchfork, you just slapped them down and stepped on them.

When you got your load way up high, why, you pulled in just a little with your top bundles, so that it kind of topped it, you see, and filled the middle extra full. Then you went to the house. If a fellow wanted to try to get the clean side, lots of times he'd keep loading when he shouldn't. Well, then he'd have a load on there that was in danger of losing some of it. He'd try to outstay another fellow aloading.

I remember one particular time there was a fellow that was quite a cheat about getting the clean side. Everybody watched him. I had a neighbor, that lived right down here, apitching to me, at that time. That was when I was working for Richardson and I was running a bundle wagon. He says to me, "Are you going to let that fellow put you on the dirty side?" I said, "Well, no, but do you want to pitch them up as high as I will have to go?" He says, "You keep aloading until I quit pitching." So, I loaded up a load there that I really had a load and a half, but I outstayed him. (laughs) He had to go take his dirty side.

Q. Sir, what did you mean by the clean and dirty side?

A. Well, they'd try to set a machine facing the wind. Well, the dirt would tend to go to one side, anyhow, and there would be a clean side here that the dirt didn't blow on, all over you, and you could breathe a lot better. I had to put a handkerchief over my face, oh, for a number of years. Whenever I'd start in to the machine, I'd take a great big bandana and tie here. Just like a surgeon's mask, you know, and breathe through it while I was up there. Because I had hay fever and had it bad.

Q. I believe you said you dad was an expert at building strawstacks from the machine.

A. Yes. There was a sight to that. The other day I was over in the barber shop and there was a fellow begin talking to the, oh, just to whoever was in there. He knew all of the fellows that was in there. I didn't know any of them. The barber knew my age and one of these fellows asked the other how old he was. Well, one was 68 and the other was 66 and the barber looked over at me and he says, "They're both a couple of kids playing around, aren't they?" And I says, "Yes, that's right, but," I says, "they're in the dangerous age for playing around." Because fifty to sixty is the man's heart time. He wants to watch.

So, one of these fellows kept atalking about things that I knew he knew about me and, finally, I says, "What's your name, anyhow?" He says, "Weitekamp," and I says, "Well, who are you? You're not one of the twins." He says, "No. I'm Henry's boy."

"Well," I says, "I want to ask you--your grandfather used to work around the threshing machine when I was agoing with it. He stacked straw for everybody. He did the hardest job there was to do around there. Do you know what time he settled up in that country?" He says, "No, I don't." About that time the barber jerked out a book and he says, "We'll see here. We'll find out pretty quick." And they went looking. He says, "What was his given name?" to this fellow--the barber did, you know. He says, "Land, I don't know what my granddad's given name was." I says, "Well, I do! It was John." And this boy's name was John and I says, "I knew him quite well. He stacked straw all around there for those fellows. Did the hardest kind of job and he didn't have to do it because he just did it out of pride, it seemed to me. He made a wonderful stack."

Well, the secret of that was building the middle solid and let the outside be loose. Just throw straw up, or make the stacker throw it around outside and not tramp on it much, but they would tramp up and down through the middle and make it solid enough that it wouldn't settle. Well, when the stack settled, it would settle these outside places and would drain, you see, and this middle was solid and wouldn't take water. That was the secret.

There wasn't every man that could put up a good stack. There was very few of them. My dad was one of them that followed it. He got dollar and a half a day for doing that when they were paying a dollar a day for a harvest man. And he stacked straw and he had a bad heart. I always have wondered how he breathed in all of that dust and stacked straw like he did. He just followed the machine and stacked straw because he got a half a dollar a day more.

Q. The stacker was the pipe that the straw came out from the machine through?

A. Yes, and it had a blower at the bottom of it that blew it, in later years. In early years, they had a slat machine that carried it. The separator would bring it out, if it was slats, and then it would light on this extra and it would carry it on slats and they could elevate it away up and make a good big stack of it. But you never seen them after the wind-stacker came on. The wind-stacker took it all.

Q. Sir, there was some discussion on that bad tape about hay loading, a machine that you attached to the rear of the wagon to load hay with. Could you describe that for us, sir?

A. Well, it was similar to one of those stackers. It had a slatted part that run up and down and it ran between slats so that the hay wouldn't fall off and they had fingers of wire that caught the hay. They'd pick it right up off of the ground and bring it on up, and it all dumped in one place on your load. They were fairly hard to load after because you had to carry that to the front of your wagon all the time. It would dump it at the back of it, you know, and you had to carry it to the front, but it was a lot faster than a pitcher, much faster. You could put on a load of hay a whole lot quicker than you could with a pitcher because that thing ran steady, you know, as the team walked along. Then, when you got

to the stack to unload, why, you'd been careful to pack that middle pretty tight so that the fork would take hold and you'd get it off that way.

Q. Sir, you mentioned two types of hay forks, in the harpoon. A straight harpoon and a double harpoon. What was the difference?

A. Well, the double had an arch, across here, and it just had two single harpoons down from the arch and they both had a finger, like that, that you threw out when you fixed it to pull up. You could clean off a load cleaner with it than you could with a single one. The single one would take all of the bigger hay but when you got to the bottom of the load, why, the double one would beat it, ataking it off.

Well, then, they perfected this eagle claw that snapped shut like ice tongs and you could just clean the wagon as clean as a pin with that thing.

Q. Is that what they called a grapple hook?

A. Yes.

Q. Didn't you introduce the first one in this area here?

A. Yes, I did, and it went all over the country. I have always wondered where it went to. It was a well-built one. It never got out of fix, never was broke in the years that I owned it. I owned it a number of years. I let anybody use it that wanted to, that would bring it back when they got through. That was a stipulation. They were to bring it home when they got through because somebody else would probably be waiting for it. I never charged a cent for it.

Q. These forks were for putting hay in a barn, then?

A. Yes. You could use them in a barn the same as on a stack. Didn't make any difference. On a stack you had a derrick, you know, that pulled them up; swing the derrick over the stack and then dump it.

Q. Did you construct this derrick yourself?

A. Well, they were made by carpenters, usually. They were a pretty good job because there had to be a pole go up through the center of them, an eight-by-eight. It had to have a collar up here where it would fit in, a steel collar, and then above it was the arm that took off for the fork to work through and out.

Q. What would you do, swing that pole, then, over the wagon?

A. You'd swing that around to you, yes. The part that would swing.[40] Well, then when the team pulled it up, why, the team would pull it around

[40] See addenda item 140.

pretty much. By pulling straight, they'd straighten that thing up, see, so it would be over the stack and, if it wasn't, the man on the stack would put his fork against it and push it to where he wanted it and then tell them to trip it and drop it where he wanted it.

Q. There must have been quite an art to building a stack like that?

A. There was an art to all of those things. People thought farmers didn't know anything, you know. They thought they was the dumbest people on earth. There was a lot of the handiest men you ever saw that were farmers. Many of them were blacksmiths on the side. They'd sharpen their own plow. Shod their own horses, and fixed up machinery for other people around them. There was nearly always one in a neighborhood that could do almost anything that a blacksmith could do and save a trip to town, many times.

That was the curse of the nine-hour law. When that--or eight-hour law, whichever you want to call it--when it took effect, it left us lots of times with broken machinery at four o'clock in the afternoon and you couldn't get a thing done until the next morning.

Q. What was the nine-hour law, sir?

A. Well, the nine-hour law took effect in . . . I don't know what . . . I told you about dates. I don't know what the date was. It took effect on the railroads first and it wasn't long until it was made the law of the country. Hired men quit at the end of a nine-hour day. They unhitched and come in.

I know the first hired man I had here on this place . . . He had a girl in the neighborhood and he wanted to go see her every night. I told him, "Now, there's so much work got to be done and I can't do it." I'd been in the hospital a month and I says, "I can't do it. You're going to have to do it and you'll have to work the full eight hours. Don't take out, now, until the eight hours are up; then come in and I'll take care of your team and you can hitch up and go ahead." And that's the way we worked it. I took the team off of his hands. I did get a half hour more work out of him by having that done.

Q. And this effected, in town, the blacksmith shops and the support you needed?

A. Yes. Everything was shut up, you know. You go to town with a repair; nobody working, everything closed up. Oh, it was a terrible Jonah for a while.

Q. Who in this vicinity was good at blacksmithing?

A. There wasn't anybody right in here. There was a good smith in town, in Waggoner. He was a good one. People come to him from long distances and all around and, as the old man up east used to say, He didn't lay any time back. The old man Lohman had that saying. If he'd see some fellow ahurrying, he'd say, "He didn't lay any time back." (laughter) So, I got in the habit of saying, "Lay time back." you know. Soldier'd a little.

Q. Who was this blacksmith?

A. His name was Shocktoe. I can't give you his first name. I don't remember it now, but he was a good, honest workman and I never heard anybody complain of his blacksmithing, horse-shoeing or anything.

Q. Where was his shop?

A. You know where the bank building is?

Q. Yes, sir.

A. Well, right at the end of it, across the alley. His shop was right there.

Q. Oh, there used to be a big barn there.

A. Well, Kessler put a barn in after the blacksmith shop moved. He moved away. He moved from here to Nilwood and opened up a shop. Kessler then took over the shop and made a barn of it. He had his wagon that he drove over the country and he wanted a shed for it, you know, and he built a place for it. Then, he had the team to take care of in that building, because he had horses. Gerlach used a self-propelled machine. He sent it around over the country. It pulled itself.

Q. Was this a truck?

A. A truck that he mounted his wagon on.

Q. They went out all during the week, did they?

A. Yes, every day. They'd go, even on Saturday morning. They went Saturday morning. People had to have bread for Sunday, you know, and a lot of them depended on them to bring them meat. They'd order their meat and they'd have it wrapped for them and turn it over to them and he'd carry it out. They had no cold storage on those things, you know. So, get it out to the country and there they had it wrapped so it'd last over until Sunday morning, but most of them knew how to take care of it. They'd put it on and start cooking.

Q. On these wagons, they used to collect a lot of chickens and eggs, didn't they?

A. Yes. They did. Winfield sold these chickens and eggs to a wholesale fellow. They'd send their wagons up and pick them up, you know; and, also, he shipped a lot of the eggs by express to St. Louis. I think he sent a lot of them that way. Got rid of them. Got a little better price.

Winfield was an awful good merchant. He worked for the farmer's interest as much as he possibly could.

Q. In what way do you mean, sir?

A. Well, like that. He would buy the eggs and the chickens and so on.

He'd buy cowhides. Anything that he could ship out and make a little money out of, he'd buy it and take it on. Lots of grocers wouldn't fool with such things as that, you know. You couldn't--you'd probably have to go to Litchfield to sell a cowhide. I don't know whether you can sell one now, at all, or not. I doubt if you could. I think you would have to give them away, now.

Q. Sir, when did you get the telephone out here?

A. Well, that was a mutual affair. The farmers began going together and using barbed wire fences, where they had a fence that they could use that way, for a wire. Electrify it, you know, and then they'd put poles where they had to and go from house to house. The whole neighborhood was connected and you could listen in on everybody in the neighborhood. (laughter) Regular newspaper office.

Q. You say barbed wire? Just regular barbed wire fencing was used?

A. Yes. They fixed it. They had to put insulators on it, you know; but there was a lot of barbed wire fences used and especially in the West in the ranches. They used them pretty near altogether.

So, we got telephones and they were a great help to the country to get doctors. You know, I had a phone there in the railroad office at Honey Bend before there was any of the people around me had phones. They'd come there for doctor calls and special calls of every kind. There wasn't any expense to it; they just called and told what they wanted and got it.

Q. They would call where?

A. Well, Raymond had a central office and they would call her and she would get on a line that would reach anybody around that they needed to get in touch with. If it was in Litchfield--they wanted to get in touch with somebody down there—there was phones in Litchfield. They would get in touch with them and get their information out.

For doctors, they just depended on it pretty nearly entirely in that neighborhood. They'd come running in there and say, "Bert, I want Doctor So-and-so." Well, I'd ring Litchfield. Litchfield had a central office. I'd ring them and say, "Ring Doctor So-and-so," and they'd ring them right off. Wasn't any monkeying about it, they'd ring him; and if he was there, he'd answer right off, too, you know. Well, you'd tell him what was wanted, as near as you could what was the matter, and out he'd come with a horse and buggy. Those days they didn't have anything else, you know, to travel by.

Old Doctor Colt was the first surgeon in there and he kept a horse that was a goer. Boy, oh, boy, that horse could go. He was a trotter but, my, how he could get over the road! But I was scared to death, pretty near, to ride with the old man. The old man was seventy years old and driving that high strung horse. (laughter) He didn't mind it at all, he'd just sit there. Talk to you all the time and tell you what he was adoing, what he was going to do next. (laughs)

He was the Wabash doctor. When I moved to Litchfield, why, I had to call him if I ever needed a doctor for the trains and I got real well acquainted with the old man. I liked him.

Q. Where was the central when you got your telephone here?

A. It was at Waggoner. They had a central office where the Griffith boys have their blacksmith shop now. That was the central office. Then they reached Raymond and Litchfield. I'm not sure whether Farmersville had an office or not,[41] or whether Waggoner rang the phones up there.

Q. Who ran the central office at that time?

A. Well, by that time they had got to electing directors. They'd formed an organization, a mutual organization, and elected directors and those directors hired the help that had to be had and hired those centrals, you know. They drew pay. They looked after it much as it is now, only in a formal way, you might say, because they were most of them farmers that were the directors.

Q. Who were some of the people involved? Do you recall?

A. Well, I can recall one, if I can think of his name . . . He lived in Waggoner . . . Oh, if I can remember his name . . . He had a big farm, but he quit farming and devoted his self to keeping the phones working. He made a lineman out of himself, in other words, and kept the phones going. John what? I don't think I can think of it.

But toward the last, why, then he began buying up stock. You see, this had been a stock company among the farmers and he begin buying up stock, and practically all the farmers were ready to sell if they could have the phone left in their place, and that was in the bargain. And they would sell their stock. I think all of them got twenty-five or thirty dollars for their stock. He bought up the stock. Well, then he sold it to some one of these concerns that control it today, that amalgamated, you know.

What was . . . Grisham! Dave Grisham. I bet you knew him.

Q. Yes, sir.

A. Dave Grisham. He was the fellow here . . . and he was good.

END OF SIDE ONE

Q. How about electricity? Did you get electricity about the same time here on the farm?

A. No. We didn't get electricity, on the highline, for a number of years. In fact, I wore out three Delco batteries. I bought a Delco set. I was determined I wasn't agoing to crank a cream separator all my life and I bought a Delco set. They cost about four hundred dollars a set, motor and

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[41] Mr. Aikman later confirmed that Farmersville did have a central. Verbatim text was not transcribed.

battery. Albert Niemann. Maybe you knew him. You knew of him, I betcha. He was in Litchfield and he had the agency for them and I bought it of him and he brought it up here and installed it. Put it there in the cellar. Then I got it wired up so that I could hook it on to the cream separator and, oh boy, what a relief that was. Then, of course, we had lights in the house and my wife had one plug in there that she could use an iron on, but that was all. It had to be wired with great big wire, you know, because that was a direct current.

I went ahead then and wired all the buildings, had them all wired. The henhouses and the barn and the corncrib. I had them all wired up so that we could have lights all over the place, as well; and I used up, as I said, three sets of batteries. They lasted five years. Well, I used them for fifteen years and then the power line come down and I sold the Delco set back to Niemann for practically what I gave for it. He knew I'd taken care of it. He says, "When you get ready to let loose of that Delco set, I want first chance at it." And I says, "You can sure get it. When they will put me in current here, why, you can have it."

So in the meantime, before I put in the Delco, I wrote to the C.I.P.S. and asked them about bringing a line down here to me. They had a line out to the end of the Waggoner road, out there to 66, and that man across the road had power, and I asked them to bring me a line from the end of that around to here, you know. And they wrote back to me and says, "You'll have to build that line yourself, at your own expense, and when it's ready to use, we'll electrify it and you'll deed it to us." Well, I vowed I'd never take any current off of C.I.P.S. until I had to, and so, I never have had to.

Q. Your present line here doesn't come from C.I.P.S. then?

A. Well, of course it does. They're all amalgamated now. Mine comes from Mattoon, really; but Harvel is where the transformers are stationed. It comes from there over to me. When they got that in, or when they got ready to hook me up, I says, "Now, I want an inspector here to look over the wiring, before you hook me up," and they sent an inspector out here. He seen the Delco plant the first thing and he says, "How long have you used that plant?" and I says, "Fifteen years." And he says, "I don't need to look at your wire. You've got wire that they wouldn't think of putting in here. You've got great big wire, all over." And I says, "Yes, I know I have." He says, "I'll okay your wiring right now. You'll never have any trouble with it." So, he okayed it. They hooked me on.

(portion not transcribed--discussion of review procedure at the end of which Mr. Aikman resumed narration)

Q. So, what I'd like to do is start Monday and I don't know what rate, maybe, Monday and Wednesday, or something like that, we might get the first two and then we'll have to see how rapidly we can do it from there on. If that's okay with you, I'd like to. . . .

A. I don't do anything only sit here.

Q. Yes, sir. Well. . . .

A. I'm a worthless nothing.

Q. Well, I don't know, you're not going to be worthless with this record, I'm sure.

A. Well, so far as that's concerned, that isn't a part of me. It's just experience.

Q. Well, that's a part of a lot of us, isn't it. Experience?

A. I had a lot of experience in my life. I tried different things. I thought once I'd like to work in the bank. Went down there. They'd have taken me in readily. I went down and worked six weeks and I decided, by the end of six weeks, that I didn't want any banking.

Q. What bank was this, sir?

A. Waggoner. I knew all the men, you know, the directors and everything. In fact, I was a director. They'd have been glad to have taken me on but I soon decided that I didn't want any banking.

Q. Why was that, sir?

A. Oh, I didn't like handling other people's money. You had to be too accurate in everything, you know. You had to be accurate to a penny. One night Cap Williamson and I worked until nine o'clock for a dime and I says, "I'm not going to work any longer, I'm agoing to put in the dime." He says, "You're not going to do anything of the kind." He says, "If you do, it will show up in a day or two in something else, and we won't know where it come from." So, we worked until we found it. The reason we had it, John Waggoner had been in while we were gone to dinner and somebody had come in and wanted a check cashed and John cashed it for them and he short-changed them the dime. (laughter) We never did tell John. He didn't know a thing about it. He was president of the bank at that time, you know.

Q. Did Mark Waggoner work in the bank while you were connected with it?

A. Yes, Mark came in there and learned it, but he didn't work as a banker. He went out immediately as a bank examiner. He got that part in his head and he started right out as an examiner. Well, he went up rapidly because they were wanting them, hunting smart young men, you know; and Mark was a smart young fellow and if he had any bad habits, I didn't know them. I don't think he had very many. I think he was a pretty clean young fellow. In fact, we liked him in the bank.

He told me, when they took him up to Chicago as a bank examiner, that they took him down in one of those vaults, three or four stories down. He says, "They started bringing bonds in in wheelbarrow loads and I had to check them and verify them. I worked for a week averifying bonds that they had there in that bank." Just think what a bust that would have been!

I thought a lot of Mark . . . and John, I thought an awful lot of John because he was helpful in a number of ways to me, when I come up here. Especially farming. He wanted progressive farming done and he was as anxious to see it as I was and he believe in the Farm Bureau. There's no use talking, the Farm Bureau really put things on the map.

Q. Were there any other organizations, like the Farm Bureau, in the county that did that type of work?

A. Nothing that I had anything to do with. No. Just the Farm Bureau. It covered all phases of farming, you know. Housekeeping, raising stock and chickens, and all. It covered the whole works. In fact, they developed egg-laying hens ten years ahead of where they would have been if they hadn't have come in here and culled the hens and showed the people how to pick out a hen that was laying or would lay. There's lots of hens that are not built to lay. They had to convince the people of that. Take them out of the flock and sell them. They were deadheads, you know, and they ate as much as a good laying hen. So, they developed the egg business.

Well, then after they got that well developed, then these batteries began to come in. You know that big string along the railroad there in Waggoner. That was an egg-laying place. They had two thousand hens in that at one time. I was down there and seen them.

Q. It smells, too.

A. Yes. (laughter)

Q. I don't know why they put them on the west side of town because all of that smell came right into town.

A. Well, I'm talking about right along the railroad. This one right along the railroad they use for grain storage, now. They kept two thousand in that.

Q. Oh, they did?

A. Yes, and two thousand out in that west one; and they wouldn't sell you an egg! Nor they wouldn't give you one.

Q. Oh, is that right?

A. No. They culled out eggs by the dozen, soft-shelled, and they wouldn't give them to anybody. They throwed them in the trash heap.

Q. I wonder why that was?

A. Oh, they didn't want people coming around and begging, you know, and bothering them. So, that was a great thing. Well, that appealed to some of the young farmers. There's a young farmer right up northeast of me here, named Fuchs. He and his wife built a henhouse on the pattern of that one, put in hens. That was after they could hire expert cullers. You didn't have to do your culling. You could get an expert culler for so much a head, you know. And he didn't leave any deadheads in there; he got them all out. And they developed that and then she told me they couldn't dispose of their eggs.

Q. Oh, they couldn't?

A. No, these other things were beginning to take all of the eggs to St. Louis and so on, that they wanted. "Well," she says, "we sold our hens and thought we'd raise hogs in there." And they did. They made a hog house out of it. I guess they're using it today for a hog house. I haven't been up that road for a long time.

He used to tinker with radios and I'd take my radio up there if it got off of business and so I got acquainted with them that way. They had a big investment there. That house didn't cost them less than a thousand dollars, I know. Maybe more. I put one up out here that cost me . . . Let's see, what did it cost me? . . . It cost between three and five hundred. The lumber man favored me in every way he possibly could. He favored me with the best of lumber and everything.

Q. What lumber man was that?

A. His name was . . . This was a branch office of the Morrisonville lumberyard, which is the . . . Well, what's their name . . .

Q. That isn't the Baker chain?

A. Yes. I guess that's it. Yes. I guess it was one of their chain.

Q. This was the lumberyard there in Waggoner?

A. Yes, they had the chain there and tried to sell it to the elevator, I told you about that, and the stockholders voted it down and I was glad they did.

Q. Who operated the lumberyard? That is, managed it?

A. They had a man named Galloway that was a good lumber man and a fine fellow. He was an honest man and he wouldn't put anything off on you, at all, because he was just the hired hand.

I remember I went to build a hog house after I had built the chicken house. I wanted a hog house and I went down and I said, "Well, you done such a good job of figuring that henhouse out, I'm going to let you figure out a hog house for me now." And I gave him the dimensions; told him what I would need. So, I went down with the team when I got ready for the lumber and he'd left a hired man in there. The hired man--I knew the boy that was in there--he says, "When Tom left this morning,"--Tom Galloway--"he told me that you were an extra good customer and that you were to have the best lumber that there was up here. So," he says, "if you see a board that you don't like, shove it back up." So, I got perfect lumber all the way through, near as I could judge it, and built the hog house out of it.

But after that, why, it got so they couldn't afford to pay Galloway wages to keep him there. He was too good a man. He went west, then, and I think he went into a big lumberyard; worked as a lumber man out west.

Q. Was it Ben Lohman's brother that sheared sheep or something in that lumberyard a little later?

A. Yes. Ben had it rented. After they done away with the lumberyard, why, he rented that building and bought wool. Yes. He bought wool there for a number of years. He had his sacking arrangement and his scales and everything fixed up so he didn't have to dirty his clothes. He could wear good clothes and buy all the wool that they offered, and then when he got ready to sack it, why, he had some boys that he could call in. They'd get in those sacks and tramp it, you know. That's a job, tramping wool in a sack. Hot job, and dirty. But they'd tramp her in for him and then he'd get his wool. He dealt with some Jews in St. Louis. He knew they were Jews and he was about as big a Jew as they were, when it come to dealing with them. They never got anything on Ben. And Ben did that as long as he lived.

He was getting ready to go back to work in a couple of days, when he died. He had diabetes and it got so bad he had to have this leg taken off . . .

Q. Oh, he right leg?

A. . . . right about here. I went to see him one day and he says, "Bert, I'm feeling good enough that I'm agoing to go down there and buy wool. I don't see why I can't. All I do is sit around here." He says, "Why can't I sit around there and buy the wool that comes in?" "Well," I says, "I'm sure glad to hear you say that, Ben, but I wonder if you aren't overdoing it to attempt to work a whole day?" "Well," he says, "if I get too tired, I'll just shut up shop and come on home."

So, two days afterward his brother-in-law came adriving in here and he says, "Get in here, Ben's adying." And I got in the car and he was dead before I got up there. Well, that was just two days after that. That old diabetes is a killer. (portion not transcribed)

END OF TAPE[42]

END OF VOLUME IV

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[42]See addenda item 141.

ADDENDA

ADDENDA CONTENTS

ITEM NO.	SUBJECT
103	Story: "Grandfather Burnet's defiance of robbers," Zanesville, Lincoln's Trail
104	Tornado action
105	Tornado damage
106	Tornado damage
107	Sam Sorrels as demonstrator
108	Waggoner elevator co-op auditing
109	Nick Boehler, co-op activities, depression impact
110	First co-op directors, Frank Derby
111	(Footnote: who married who) Williamson family
112	(Footnote: recalling Jasper Street's name)
113	The Honey Bend railway bridge, the "home place" today, some more reminiscences
114	The Baker boys and road work, Ira Baker
115	(Footnote: recalling Louie March's name)
116	(Footnote: confirming 1930 vice 1918 date)
117	Coal-oil refrigerators
118	Dorothy Hampton
119	Raymond Browning
120	Reason for no-cost phoning
121	Nel (Helen Brown) as narrator
122	John Weitekamp

ITEM NO.	SUBJECT
123	(Footnote: Paul Burnet identified)
124	Mr. Aikman's only football game
125	The attack on Dwight Street
126	The Dunkard feast
127	"Skinny" Campbell's saloon, eating blackbirds and crows, killing off crows
128	John Knotts
129	Hardin Ripley and other barbers in Waggoner
130	Cattle feeding operations, grain shipping
131	Laying Route 66
132	Waggoner bank personnel
133	Mark Waggoner
134	Jim and Norma Crabtree's son, Harold Warner, Winfield Kessler
135	Homestead area further described
136	Description of homestead land
137	Mr. Aikman comments on his long life
138	Mr. Aikman waivers review of the addenda data, plow moldboards, early experimentation
139	Additional threshing crew men
140	Hay stacking derrick operations
141	Some final thoughts: carpentry, elevator operations, Charles Hampton, some Waggoners

ADDENDA

ADDENDA ITEM 103 (ref. p. 275)

A. Mr. Burnet, my wife's grandfather, came from New Jersey and he shipped by boat to Alton and he took a land way from Alton up here and then homesteaded on one hundred sixty acres of land south of this. At that time there was no railroads at all in here. Now, I'm giving you all this from hearsay. I don't know any of that. But there was no railroads, and as I told you, the stagecoach went through old Zanesville.

Well, old Zanesville was a post office for all of this section in here. The stagecoach brought the mail once a week, as I understood it. After my grandfather had got located here--he had a family of two boys and two girls and they were good big kids at the time--they got word from the postmaster some way down there that he had a registered package had come to the post office and to come and get it.

Well, Uncle Hen, his brother, was living with him. So, he went down after it and got the package. Signed up for it and brought it home. They didn't have any idea what it was until they got here and I never have learned what it was, whether it was deeds or--it was something pertaining to the land though. It wasn't money. But there was a lot of loafers around there. That was just after the Civil War, you know, and they had a lot of those carpetbaggers; you've heard of them. Evidently there was one or two of them aloafing around that post office and seen him sign for that registered package and followed up and seen where he located.

Well, that night they came in a body, hooded like KKK's. They demanded entrance to the house. My grandfather was a very religious man but he also knew his rights and he says, "No! You're not coming in here. We're not letting you in here at all." And he went and picked up his shotgun and stood by the door. They just had a plain plank door across the entrance into the house. They just had a little house. So, the fellows says, "Why, you'll either let us in or we're going to kick that door in." He says, "You better not try kicking that door in." About that time one of them tried it and he shot through the door and he hurt him. He hurt him bad, some way. They never did find him, but they trailed him by blood way past old Zanesville. He was trying to get away someplace down south, you know, and when the blood ceased, why, they lost the trail. Never did find out anything about him, but he sure stopped them.

Well now, that was one of the episodes to show you what the homesteaders was up against, you know. They had those rascals ahanging around here.

Q. Well, I've understood--now, it was way back about 1825 or 1830 that old Zanesville was started and there was a tavernkeeper there that started

that place and he was a pretty rough character. There were several murders that they figure he was involved in. He finally was hung in Iowa. They chased him out of down at Zanesville.

A. You probably have got more information than I ever had.

Q. Oh, no sir. I just happened to remember that. You know, Zanesville was to this part of the country like Virden, over here, was to that part of the country back in—later, in the 1910's, 1920's . . .

A. Well, I think Lincoln's Trail went through Virden and down through this way and hit there and veered off, some way, to go through south of Raymond. There used to be a place right south of the cemetery that they said used to be a stopping place for them, change horses. I've seen that place and it was a brick building and had an upstairs for transients.

Q. Is it gone now?

A. Yes. It's gone. No sign of it, at all. Course, the land, I guess, changed hands three or four times since those days. But you can put that in some--at the beginning of that.

Q. Well, I won't be adjusting the order of it. Everything we've said will go in the memoir in the order that we've said it. The only adjusting that I'll be doing is--well, like this right here, you see. Now, this will go in an addendum to the basic. The basic I've completed now. Six hundred and thirteen pages I've typed out of this thing and I've completed that and we have three more parts of it to review like we're doing this afternoon. Then that's the basic part. Now, while we've been reviewing, you know, you've added things, expanded on things. Well, I'm going to make those addendum items. They'll be short . . .

A. I know what you mean by addendum.

Q. Well, I mean they'll be divided into short . . . parts of an addenda.

A. Will they be on the same page as the rest--or in the back?

Q. No, sir. They'll be in the back. I'll footnote and then refer back to the addenda. Yes. Yes. I just talked to the instructor this morning and what we're going to do, we're going to make up a special course, just for me, and he'll guide me through doing all of that this fall. So, I'm afraid you're not going to be rid of me this fall. I'm going to have to be dropping back (laughs) now and then to check with you on this. And then, there may be other things we would want to add. For example, I was thinking this morning, something that--I don't want to get into it now because we've got to get to this, you know, but one thing that we've just barely touched on was your Sunday school work, or your church work, you know, and I'm sure there's some things in that that would be good in this record. So. . . .

A. Nothing special . . . about that. Any more than that I stood high

enough with Harkness* that I had a standing invitation, when I had any special speakers, I was to bring them to school. That was a standing invitation. That was before the Bible was taken out of the schools, you know. I took all missionaries and special speakers over there and also to the grade school. That's the only special thing about . . .

Q. Well, then there was the Sunday school teaching, though, you see . . .

A. Well, I taught Sunday school class there for forty years but . . . there's nothing of that.

Q. Well, I don't know, there may be some things like that that we might get into later on, that will add to it during the semester. So . . .

A. I say I taught; I tried to teach. (laughter)

Q. Well, let's see. We better get to reviewing here and get done what we've got now before we get into what we're going to do later. Let's see, this is . . .

ADDENDA ITEM 104 (ref. p. 275)

A. That was a funny looking thing! There was two or three ton of hay that just took off the top of those stacks and just went like they was hitched to it.

Q. Just following right behind it. (laughter)

A. Took it clear over to that swamp.

Q. Looked like they were alive, huh?

A. That was the most uncanny thing.

ADDENDA ITEM 105 (ref. p. 276)

Q. Sir, was there anything in particular about that hollow tree? We kind of stopped there. We said, "I went to look to see if it was broke. I figured it was hollow," and then you jumped to, "You'd see a limb and then you wouldn't see it."

A. Well, the tree was the same age as the others but it was on the stream of water that goes down here, that the well's on. Then there was a big one in the northeast corner of the yard, too. Actually as big, but it was a solid tree. Real solid. It didn't affect it, only limbs. But this one, it didn't do anything to it only limbs. It didn't blow it down or break it off, but I expected it to because it was partially hollow and some of the roots were partially rotten.

*Mr. Jesse Harkness, principal of the Waggoner Community High School in the 1930's and 1940's. [Ed.]

Q. But it didn't. Perhaps the house . . .

A. No, it didn't break it up but I hauled limbs out of the pasture, that was a pasture down there, and I hauled limbs a whole day out of that up and made a great bonfire of them, you know, that had been taken out of all these trees and dumped down there a quarter of a mile.

ADDENDA ITEM 106 (ref. p. 276)

A. Now, I didn't finish that, either. It blew the hay barn away. I didn't tell that. It was empty and it just spread it out down in the pasture. Just like you'd take your hand and done like that. (demonstrates with a sweep of the hand) Took the roof like that . . .

Q. Yes, just spread it out.

A. . . . and the sides, it just spread them out and I went down in two or three days with a four-horse team and drug that back up to where it belonged and got carpenters and put them to work and they put the thing right back up again.

Q. Is it one of those that is standing out there now?

A. No. It was a hay barn that stood up northeast here across this little cornfield. It was plumb empty. If it had had hay in it, it wouldn't of happened, you know, but it was plumb empty.

Q. The wind got inside and just blew it apart, huh?

A. Yes, it just spread it and all--it just looked like you'd taken your hand and smeared it down the ground.

Q. But it didn't tear the lumber up much?

A. No. But it broke every section apart. The north end was loose, the south end was loose, the west and the east was loose and the roof done like that, just spread it out and I took four horses on each piece and hauled them in. Like a sled, you know.

Q. And put them back together and you had your hay barn again.

A. Yes.

Q. Was there any other damage besides that?

A. No. That was the extent of the real damage. Of course, I had insurance to pay for that. It didn't cost me anything.

ADDENDA ITEM 107 (ref. p. 278)

Q. (Interviewer reading from transcript) "He had a very good farm or, rather, his wife did."

A. He demonstrated everything. He planted just as they told him to, you know, and he'd take anybody that would come out and show them. He convinced them.

ADDENDA ITEM 108 (ref. p. 279)

A. I should have mentioned in there, we always called in a CPA [Certified Public Accountant] and audited the books at that time, too. I had to oversee that. I didn't do any of the figuring, now, don't misunderstand me. He did it, but I had to be sure that it was done. That was part of my job. And, when we got through with an annual meeting, we knew just exactly where we stood.

Q. Was that required by law or just the co-op wanted to have that done?

A. I rather think there was a law to that effect on co-ops. I won't be sure about that, but I rather surmise there was because we tried to stay in the law in everything we did, if possible. For one thing that we were very particular about was that none of the directors, or officers, drew any money, didn't get any pay. Because of income tax. The income tax people said if you had three drawing a salary, you had to pay income tax on the whole thing, you know, where you wouldn't have had to pay very much. Oh, we had that to fight every year, pretty near.

There was two fellows that came here that were, I guess, just genuine crooks. They worked a week down there on the books atrying to find someplace where he'd paid--where the manager had paid some of us. He told them, right on the start, he never had. He says, "They never get a cent of pay."

Q. This was Romee Vignos, you mean?

A. Yes. Well, they finally figured it up that he had. Didn't take his word for it and presented him a tax bill of . . . oh, I don't know, one hundred and forty or fifty dollars--it would pay them well for the time they'd spent there and they laid down the bill and says, "There's what you owe." He says, "When the county judge tells me that," he says, "I'll pay it, but not before," and they had to leave. And you know, those rascals drove in front of a train down there where that tower was and was killed in just a few days after.

Q. Down at the Illinois Central and Wabash crossing?

A. Yes. Just drove right in front of a train down there.

Q. Were they federal agents or were they . . .

A. Aw, they pretended to be. I think they were just a couple of crooks.

Q. Oh, I see. They wanted him to pay them right then?

A. Well, yes! They were going to put that away, don't you see? And he knew it! He was sure they were crooks. He told me, he said, "I'm not

agoing to pay them a cent." Says, "I'm agoing to fight them through the courts before I'll give them a dime." We never heard anymore about it after they got killed.

ADDENDA ITEM 109 (ref. p. 280)

A. And Nick--Nick Boehler. You knew old Nick?

Q. Yes, sir.

A. Well, Nick was one of the directors. He helped organize it and he was one of the directors and he would take a stand against the rest, you know, but those fellows would always come over and there'd be four votes against him. You could just count on it as sure as . . . (laughs)

Q. What type things would he try to do?

A. Oh, well, just--I don't know whether I ought to tell this on there or not, but one of the things was—Rome put all the spare money in bonds and come that kind of a panic when banks was all having a lot of trouble, you know, and it was necessary that we have plenty of money on hand for a wheat harvest and a bean harvest--beans were beginning to be plentiful then—he had to sell those bonds. Well, of course, I had to sign them and, you know, Nick never would give me permission. He wouldn't vote to let me sign those bonds and I says, "Why, Nick, can't you see that I'll never handle those bonds? They won't be in my hand. All I'll do is write my name here and you can watch me if you want to." "You got no business asigning them." He wanted to.

Q. Oh? My goodness. (laughter)

A. And he wasn't secretary, you see. It wouldn't have done. So, the rest of the boys said, "You go ahead and sign them, Bert." So, I signed all the bonds and they went into St. Louis and made cash and I never heard any more out of him about it. He didn't fall out with me for the simple reason that--I know that he didn't fall out in the least bit, because . . . Luther Barbee, I told you, failed in his health and I had to finish his town clerk job.

Q. Yes, sir.

A. Well, I was town clerk at that same time. Nick was ahaving a drainage election out at his house shortly after this took place and he called me up and he says, "Bert, the law says that in these elections, for them to be legal, I must have the town clerk present to keep the minutes." He says, "Can you come over?" I says, "Yes, be right over." So, I went over and he helped me out all he could getting everything straight and he says, when I went to leave, he says, "Now, you just rest assured I'm going to see you get paid for this." (laughter) So, he didn't fall out with me.

Q. Did you ever have any problems in the elvator with keeping enough money around during the Depression?

A. Have what?

Q. Have any problems with having enough money in the elevator during the Depression? During those years?

A. (pause) I don't believe I understand you.

Q. Did they run short of money to operate the elevator. You know . . .

A. Oh, no. We were very conservative. The bank was very conservative and we were, too. At that same time I was a director in the bank and I knew all about the situation over there as well as at the elevator. They were very conservative. That was the only bank that stood between Litchfield and Springfield. They closed all the rest of them.

Q. Were there any problems with any elevators around here? Did any of the elevators close?

A. No. I think the elevators all held on, because they'd hoarded their money and either had it in grain at St. Louis or in bills down there, something. No, I don't think--[don't] remember a single elevator going under.

ADDENDA ITEM 110 (ref. p. 280)

A. I know he was.

Q. He was. Yes, sir. (resumes reading) ". . . and served a number of years. When I first moved up here, why . . ."

A. Now, I wasn't a director, though, under him. Never was. No, he picked older men. He had Ed Browning and . . . and John Browning, if I remember right. Oh, Martin Brubaker, and Ed Fite, if I remember right, was his board of directors that he had. All of them was neighbors out there to him, you know, and they were in the elevator, or helped to buy it.

Q. Did Frank Derby, then, replace him?

A. Yes. After Herb quit, why, then we elected Frank and Frank was president of the board--well, he was until his health got to where he couldn't--well, he was there until they sold out. His health didn't fail until after he sold out. Frank had that shaking disease, you know.

Q. I didn't know that.

A. Oh my! He'd stick his hands in his pockets as deep as he could, when I'd go to see him, to keep me from seeing his hands shake. That's a terrible thing! And they tell me that it's affected by a little--(points to back of his neck) right down there, right at the base of the brain is what's affected. They never have been able to head it off. My sister's second husband died with it and he was sick for a year or two, just pitiful. We spent money. My goodness! He tried every way to get benefited but they just didn't have anything for it. They claim now they have a medicine that, if they'll stick on it--it's kind of like epilepsy--you know, they say epileptics will be all right if they'll take their medicine. Well, this is that way. If they take their medicine regular, it will keep down shakes, or keep them to a minimum.

ADDENDA ITEM 111 (ref. p. 280)

Q. (Interviewer reading out loud) "Well, what was that?"

A. Married Richardson's oldest daughter. Maude Richardson.

Q. Okay. Let's see. (resumes reading) "He'd married . . ." Now, he was--Herb Street?

A. No, that was Derby.

Q. Oh. Frank Derby . . .

A. Yes.

Q. . . . married Maude Richardson . . .

A. He followed Street, you know, as director and that's who I thought we were talking about.

Q. Yes, sir. Yes, sir. I see.

A. And he married Maude Derby and they had two girls--Juanita and . . . Oh, the other girl just died here a couple of months back--Glenn Wood's wife. What was her name? Don't matter, she's gone; both of them are dead.

Q. Well, let's see now. You say Frank Derby married Maude Richardson? (narrator nods head) That was it. Yes. Let's see, now, this then . . . let's see . . . (resumes reading) "I worked for Tom Richardson . . . worked as his hired hand and I got to know practically all the . . ." Now, I think we are talking about Herb Street. He lived out west of town, didn't he? (narrator nods head) Okay, because you go on and say, ". . . he'd married Al . . ." and I think that was Tom Richardson who married someone from west of town.

A. Yes. Al Williamson. She was a Williamson. Did you know Casey Williamson's dad?

Q. No, sir, I didn't know him. I knew Casey.

A. You knew Casey and . . . Well, she was a sister to him.

Q. I see.

A. Marion Williamson was his name, you know. Then, there was another one that lived out--well, he lived out right close to where Clarence Bowman's place is--to another Williamson that lived there. They were her brothers.

Q. Yes. So--and that was what you were speaking of. He'd married Al--was that Alice Williamson?

A. Alice, yes, that's right, but he always called her Al.

Q. Yes. Okay. "Well, what was that?" So we've cleared that up now. So,

(resumes reading) ". . . people west of town all visited them."

ADDENDA ITEM 112 (ref. p. 280)

Q. Do you remember his name?

A. Oh, let's see. What was his name . . . I knew him as long as I did Herb because he was a schoolteacher.

Q. Was there a Grant Street? That wasn't it . . .

A. There was a Net Street. That was a sister to her and she taught school for years. Taught grade schools, you know, for years. Well, I--Jasper was the fellow that run for county superintendent of schools.

Q. Okay. Yes, sir. Okay.

ADDENDA ITEM 113 (ref. p. 281)

Q. . . . and then I drove down to Honey Bend and looked at the land where you worked down there and I walked down and walked over that railway bridge . . .

A. You did?

Q. . . . just to see what it was like to walk on those ties and that is a long distance down there, isn't it? (laughs) I was wondering. Were there two tracks on the railroad at that time or just one?

A. No, there was just one until fair time came. When the St. Louis fair was developing, then they double-tracked because they handled so many trains. My goodness, we handled passenger trains them days. Just trainload after trainload. See, they'd start at Detroit and at Toledo and then they'd consolidate at Decatur, if they could. If they couldn't, they'd make two sections of the train and here she'd come aboiling, two or three thousand people in them, you know. Those were really railroad days!

Q. Yes, I looked down at the creek. I don't know--where was your swimming hole from there?

A. Right east of the bridge, but now it's all filled up.

Q. Well, there's a hole there. There's a wide spot right there just east of the bridge.

A. Yes. Yes, and we had it so we could wade in at the west end and just walk in on sand and you could go as deep as you wanted, clear over your head, and that quicksand was just beyond that turn there, that I got that team in.

Q. Yes. Yes, you told me about that. (laughs) Yes, I saw a bunch of logs in there, too, like the one you hit your head on.

A. Well, I expect they are different ones by now. You didn't go over to the dam?

Q. Yes, sir.

A. West of the bridge?

Q. Yes, I drove around--there's a trail--well, the road that used to go west, I guess . . .

A. Yes, they've got it blocked.

Q. . . . it's all blocked off and there's a big dam there. I didn't go up on the dam. I just went down to the creek there by the base of the dam. Yes, I was looking for a way to get back west and I had to go back out then and up north . . .

A. Yes, that's all under water. They say that's fifteen feet deep where that bridge used to be, to the west side there.

END OF SIDE ONE

Q. There on the north side of the road, as you go back to the railroad from the east, is that the house that you lived in there? That was the one that replaced the log cabin?

A. Has an extension off from the roof to the south? Bay windows?

Q. I couldn't tell. They've got a great big trailer setting right in front of it.

A. Yes, that's the one.

Q. I see. Yes, sir. Where was the log . . .

A. It was idle for a number of years. The man that bought it from the--from the estate--see, my brother bought that when my mother's estate was settled. My third brother bought it and he and his wife lived there until they died. Well, when his family settled up, this was sold to a Nail, to one of the Nail boys, and he works in Wood River. He never had the intention of living there. He come up and did it as an investment. So, they said he never had anybody in that house, I don't think, in seven or eight years and the coons tore the roof all to pieces and made dens up in that attic. They said it just ruined the house and that's why that trailer's there.

Q. I see. I couldn't tell. All I could see was the roof and there's some kind of bay windows in the front upstairs there that I could see, but--where was the log cabin in relation to that house?

A. It stood just west of that. We left it until we got the house done and then tore it down.

I was thinking today about the size of that. It was--it must have been pretty close to thirty feet each--square. It was a good big building. It had two big rooms in it.

Q. Yes, that's beautiful timber down there. I enjoyed walking down the railroad tracks.

A. You can see why us kids were so crazy over it.

Q. Yes, sir. I'm surprised at how rolling it is. That's a big drop down there to the creek from . . .

A. Yes.

Q. It's a good fifty feet.

A. My dad owned ten acres right on the creek. But the ten acres between him and the road belonged to the Eagleholts. But they told him as long as he would keep a barbed wire fence around it, he could use it for a pasture and he needn't pay a cent. Just keep if fenced. So, all the time he and my brother lived there, they kept that up and used it for a pasture. My brother made more out of his cattle running on that timber pasture than he did farming. You were driving, then?

Q. Yes, sir. I just drove down in the truck.

A. You didn't see it from the plane?

Q. Well, yes sir. I have pictures of it from the air.

A. Oh, do you?

Q. Yes. I've got to get those processed yet. Actually, what I'm going to have to do it go back and take some more because I took them with . . .

A. I thought that's what you was adoing the other day.

Q. Well, yes sir, but they didn't come out as well as I'd like them to. It was awful hazy that day. You may remember. It was just--that kind of smoggy condition was in.

A. About like now.

Q. Yes. Yes, today's kind of a hazy day. What I need is a good, clear sunshiny day. We had it a couple of weeks ago. There was a couple of days I should have gone out, but I want to take them in black and white. I took them in color and--it was slides, you know, and that costs too much to get them processed. So, but--yes, I got pictures from the air.

I got one real good picture and when I drove down there, I looked at it from the ground and it's just as white from the ground. There's a corn-field just across the road from that house and that ground is just as white as chalk. It's just pure white.

A. I saw that cleared. That's where I told you the man gave away the wood to get that cleared. He chopped all winter on that five acres and gave away the wood to get it out of the way and then he broke that up and took a double shovel and a blind mare and plowed that corn and he could put that old mare around stumps by gee and haw and she wouldn't

even bark her shins.

Q. Yes, sir. Oh, that was where the old fellow, then, grew the corn and the wheat, was it?

A. No. No, that was a mile and a half farther southeast.

My father rented from a man named Westbrook over there. He had sixty acres of land. I guess he'd been gypped out of everything that he rented to and he found out my dad was honest. Why, he wouldn't let anybody else have the land but Dad. Dad always seen that he got everything that was coming to him and after he died, his wife went to settle the estate and they couldn't get her to sign the papers unless he was present. He had to be there and say it was all right or she wouldn't sign the papers.

Q. They really trusted him, then?

A. Yes, they did.

ADDENDA ITEM 114 (ref. p. 285)

Q. (Interviewer reading out loud) "I think Tom Taylor was one of the commissioners and Herb Street was another one." I can't quite tell there. You say, "Well, the Baker boys. Ira was one of them." You mean one of the commissioners? Or was he one of the road bosses?

A. He was just one of the Baker boys. He was the oldest--oldest Baker. Ira. And then there was Roy and then Frank.

Q. Was Ira the road boss?

A. Yes.

Q. He was the road boss.

A. He was a commissioner and also the road boss. Because he and Frank owned a threshing outfit and they got a grader at that time that they could pull with a traction engine and, of course, the township hired that engine because it was local, you know, and they ran that and did the work on the roads. It was a wonderful advantage to what scrapers had been. You know, a scraper left it all in one pile, and that spread it. Bring it up out of the ditch and then spread it out over the road, you know, and--wonderful help. Why, I just served under Ira while I was aserving as town clerk.

Q. Yes, when you were filling in. Okay, I'll straighten that out a little bit, then, because I couldn't tell from it whether he was road boss or commissioner and he was both of them.

A. He was both. Yes. He was a very fine man. I don't know whether you knew him or not, but he was just as honest as they make them. To kind of even things up for me--I didn't get any pay much out of the town clerk job, you know. To kind of even things up for me, when I carried

his petition, why, when he got down to the bottom of the oil tank--they shipped oil in them days in a railroad tank, the first oil--and when they'd get to the bottom of the tank, it'd be pretty near pure tar and I went down and seen what it was like. I says, "I'd like to have a five-gallon can of that and spread on my hog house roof. They drew it off from me, and they never forgot me afterward. Every time, here'd come a five-gallon of oil. (laughter)

Q. So, you did all your roofs that way, huh?

A. Yes. (laughter)

ADDENDA ITEM 115 (ref. p. 286)

A. March!

Q. What is it?

A. March. M-A-R-C-H. Louie March.

Q. Okay. We couldn't think of that then.

A. He's still doing it.

Q. Oh, he still is?

A. Still doing it. He oiled right out here this year. He's got--I expect he's got fifty thousand dollars tied up--maybe a hundred--in equipment. He's got a big--but he oils all the way around him, in Christian County and Montgomery and all around, you know, and he's, seems to be, strictly honest.

Q. Well, he must be if he's been at it that many years.

A. He has and he--now the oil is all shiped to him and he brings it in a big tank car, as you said there, still boiling. He puts it ahead of these wagons and when they run out, why, they run right up and fill up, back up to where they took off, and away they go again. The tank wagon pulls a little farther ahead, you know, about what they'll need to get to.

Q. Yes, we have him on the tape then, because they went by a couple of times while we were taping. Well good, we have his name now.

ADDENDA ITEM 116 (ref. p. 289)

Q. Sir, when I asked on that date--now, I've already written a preface to this, and I explained your point about dates, you know, that sometimes they'd be off. But on this one, now, you explain that by relating it to the Hoover years, later on when you're talking [of it] again, but it's a long way from this. I wonder if we could change that--you say, "Well, it was in 1918, if I remember right." Well, that would have been the early Depression years, so it would have been the 1930's, wouldn't it?

A. I be dogged if I can be sure, yet. I--I don't know where you'd get that information. I do know, too. You know Emmett Brubaker.

Q. Yes.

A. Well, you talk to him about that.

Q. Oh, okay. Okay.

A. Because Emmett was in the bank.

Q. Yes. So, that would have been--let's see, 1918 was right at World War I and Emmett wasn't in the bank . . .

A. Oh, no. It wasn't then. It was about the 1930's, then.

Q. Yes. Someplace along in the 1930's. All right, sir.

ADDENDA ITEM 117 (ref. p. 291)

Q. You know, I was down at Griffith's Garage the other day and I mentioned the fact--asked them about their selling them and he said yes. He said--it was Herman I was talking to--and he said, "You know you can still buy coal oil refrigerators?" I'd never heard of such a thing.

A. Yes, there was a couple lived in the flat with us the first winter we were in New Mexico. They came from northeast New Mexico, had homesteaded up there and got very wealthy. They sold out and retired and he told me, himself, that he got $160,000 for his layout. And he came down there and he says, "I want to fish the rest of my life and," he says, "I'm going to." They had one that they had bought, one of the first ones. They used it all the six winters that I was there and they still had it when they both died.

Q. Well, for heaven's sakes. So, they really worked?

A. Oh, worked! They worked as good as anything you ever saw. They were absolutely noiseless but I had to get rid of mine on the account of my nose. There'd be coal oil fumes. You know how a lamp--did you ever burn a coal oil lamp?

Q. Oh, yes sir. Yes, sir, when I was a kid on the farm . . .

A. Well, you know how sometimes they'll smoke a little?

Q. Yes, sir.

A. And the fumes are terrible on your nose. Well, I just had to get rid of it. So, the power line had come in by that time and I sold this to another farmer up north that couldn't get on a power line and I bought a refrigerator out of Springfield. Frigidaire.

Q. Yes. He said he remembered selling them.

A. But . . . I oughten to tell that, I don't think, on the tape. Herman didn't tell you anything about me buying one?

Q. No, sir. He didn't mention that. You said--we have here a record of your giving the stock for it here.

A. Yes.

Q. Yes. Let's see.

A. That's the way I got out of it.

Q. Yes, sir.

ADDENDA ITEM 118 (ref. p. 291)

A. They thought they was going to put me back.

Q. Oh, I see. Well! (laughter) But it didn't work, huh?

A. It didn't work.

Q. You substituted Dorothy for it. Well, thank you, ma'am. (Mrs. Brown brought a glass of cold water)

H.B. Do you want one?

A. No. Thank you.

Q. (resumes reading) "So I sold the ten shares and I says, 'Now, I want Dorothy in here as one of the members of the bank.' And they listened to me. They put her right in." So, Dorothy was your subsititue, huh?

A. Yes. She was a . . . She was a--out of school, you know, and wanting a job and I knew she was plenty capable and trustworthy, because she'd grown up right here. She was in our home an awful lot when she was growing up and I thought a lot of her and still do.

I got her in there and she worked as long as she wanted to. She just quit a year or two back, you know.

Q. Yes. Yes, we used to--you know, I do business with the bank and when I've been all around the United States and over in the Far East and everything, they'd send me the statements and, every once in a while, there would be a little note in there from Dorothy, you know, about something or other. She just stuck it in.

ADDENDA ITEM 119 (ref. p. 293)

Q. (Interviewer reading out loud) ". . . and he's been in that job ever since . . ."

A. He was a township treasurer. I didn't make that plain. He had <u>all</u> the school money.

Q. Oh, I see. Yes.

A. In the township.

Q. Well, is this the Panhandle Units, maybe? The Raymond and Farmersville and . . .

A. Well, I guess it would be just Farmersville and Waggoner but, at that time, there was still grade schools, out, you know. Like Burnet down here and Fireman up here and what was that one out by the cemetery, out west, by the Wild Row Park. What did they call that? That was still in existence. Well, those--he was treasurer over all those school monies. The township collector turned the money over to him and he had to sign all of the orders to the teachers.

Q. Oh, I see. My goodness. And that--so, it was a township job.

A. Yes. So, I don't know what salary he got, but I know he got a—something out of handling that money and a good job there in the post office and he never—never went with--run around anywhere or did anything to get rid of any of it.

Q. So, he ought to still have it.

A. And he's a fine fellow.

ADDENDA ITEM 120 (ref. p. 295)

Q. Sir, I was wondering—why didn't it cost anything to call Honey Bend?

A. Well, it was rather a mutual affair, to start on. The farmers all went together and put up the line themselves and they hired centrals. They had to pay them, but they also charged us so much a month for the use of the phone.

Q. So, it was just a flat rate. You didn't pay for the amount of use.

A. Yes, and so, I could ring Raymond, tell her to ring Honey Bend, and she'd get him right off.

Q. And no cost other than your flat rate?

A. No. No cost.

Q. I see. Okay, I was wondering there, it ought to have cost something.

ADDENDA ITEM 121 (ref. p. 298)

Q. So, we recorded my getting apples, this . . . (laughter) How about that?

A. That's history.

Q. Yes sir, that's history. (laughter) Well, someone might want to know whether you had apples on the Aikman place out there a few years back, you know. You never know. You know, I put in the preface that I wrote out for this that there was a little bit of strain between you and I, occasionally, as to what value this was, because neither you nor I knew what part of it was really valuable for history.

A. I don't think that my part is very valuable.

Q. Well . . .

H.B. Turn on the . . . (indicates the air conditioner)

Q. Oh, I'm going to have to go, so if . . .

A. Go ahead and turn it on.

H.B. It's pretty hot. Shut your door, Bert.

Q. I think it's cooling down now, a little bit. That overcast has thickened up on us, I think.

A. There was a warning out at noon, in Jersey County.

Q. Oh, is that right?

A. Yes.

Q. They seem to have an awful lot of thunderstorms down there around St. Louis and that area. And they don't--you know, it's real funny up here, I've noticed . . .

A. That's just swelled. (referring to difficulty in closing the door)

Q. The thunderstorms seem to come up down in the southwest and they'll move north and then they'll go across the north of us and then they'll come back down this way and they very seldom hit right around Waggoner. I don't know . . .

A. There's a . . .

H.B. Well, that warning was for the entire WSMI [radio station] district. Bert never did get that.

Q. Oh, so it might have been . . .

H.B. Yes, it come through here.

Q. My goodness, that's a pretty dress!

H.B. Macoupin and Montgomery. (pause) What was that you said? (laughs)

Q. I say that's a pretty dress.

H.B. (laughs) It's an old, old one. It's about twelve or fifteen years old.

Q. Well, that doesn't make it any less pretty. You know, I was talking about you this morning. Mary Ann Dillon. She was born and raised down here by Ware's Grove, you know.

H.B. Yes.

Q. She's interested in the history of Montgomery County and she's interviewed like this, you know, several people--not as extensively as we're doing here. Well, we were talking and I asked her if she'd ever heard of you people here and I mentioned what I was doing and she said that she would like to get some stuff . . . on Honey Bend area, you know. It was one of the places she'd never been, in the first place and, in the second place, she'd like to interview some women. I think she's interviewed two women of maybe the eight or ten people that she's interviewed. So, I told her that you might be a real good prospect. Would you be interested in being interviewed?

H.B. Well, I'll tell you. You see, I left here in 1925.

Q. Okay, so that means from 18 . . .

H.B. 1892 to 1925.

Q. Okay, but see that--you see, that period of years and were you down at Honey Bend most of that time?

H.B. Oh, yes.

Q. Yes. See.

A. She was born there and raised.

Q. So that would cover . . .

H.B. I spent six years in Springfield. Then . . .

Q. They always want stuff from Springfield. I was telling her this morning, you know, she . . .

H.B. I worked there in the offices in Springfield until I left. When we left the home farm, why, you see, the second brother was dying of pernicious anemia and the doctor called me in and he had been running the farm.

Q. I see.

H.B. And the doctor called me in and he said, "Now, Nel, you're going to have to take over." He says, "Warren's not going to live a year," and he said, "I want to tell you so that you can make your plans accordingly." He said, "I don't think you and your mother will want to try to run the farm. Do you?" And I said, "No, I couldn't possibly handle the farm." So, I went into business college and then we went into Litchfield and kept Warren until he died there, in 1918, wasn't it? And then I went right into Springfield and went to work. Took Mother with me and then, when I got married, I left there and went west.

Q. I see. Well, I don't know--of course, this program here, our oral history program is on Illinois. Gosh, you know, I was telling her that I was going through here with Mr. Aikman and got to asking about the log cabin and some of the cooking in it, you know, and I told her about the argument on the strawberries, whether you had any strawberries or not. (laughter) I told her that there was probably a lot of the cooking part of it, you know, that you would know a lot better than you [Mr. Aikman] would remember. So, and that's the type thing that she would like to get. The only problem is, now, she didn't say this--Cullom told me that afterward, he--I mentioned it to him. He's the instructor, you know, in charge of the office--and I mentioned to him and he says, "Well, you better hurry up if you're going to have Mary Ann doing it, because they're leaving." I didn't ask, I don't know what the circumstance is there, but they may be departing. So--but the main thing, whether it's Mary Ann or whether I do it or whether we get someone else up there to come down, would you be interested in that sort of thing?

H.B. Oh, if I could tell you something of the community stuff. That's all that I know about--the people and how we met together for killing the hogs and doing the farm work in the summer. We all went together and cooked together, you know.

Q. Yes.

A. See, she went on and lived at home all of those years. Well, from thirteen on, I was hardly at home, only weekends.

Q. Well, see, what I have in mind is that--see, I'm going to go ahead and complete your's now. So, we're going to have a pretty good one on what you have. Well, this one, for a period of so many years would be a real good adjunct to the larger one on Mr. Aikman, you see.

H.B. (laughs) We'd be the Waltons, huh?

Q. Yes, how about that? Yes.

H.B. Bert said the other day we had a range in the log cabin. We didn't have a range in those days, at all. We had the old Bridge and Beech stove. It was a four hole. Had four lids on it.

A. Well, I always called it a range.

H.B. Well, it wasn't a range.

A. I know.

H.B. It was just a flat-top stove and it had a hawk in front. How well I know that because I was always included--he'd kid about the cooking. I always helped as much as I could and I went there and put my knee on that thing one day and burned a B, right on top. It was a big Beech, you know, and it just branded my knee.

Q. Oh, I see. My goodness. (laughter)

H.B. I had it for a long time.

A. See, the grate was on the front of the stove. You raked ashes down in a pile, right here extended out in front.

H.B. Mother was cooking something on top, you know, and I got up on there to look in and see how it was doing and I burned my knee. (laughter)

(part of transcript deleted - not relevant to narration)

A. I thought of something. (laughs)

Q. Yes, sir.

A. Who was it that was a comic used to say, "He'd feel a grin coming on." And he'd tell a joke . . . (laughter)

Q. Yes, sir. I don't know. I haven't heard that.

H.B. One of the comedians, too, not long ago, says, "The reason that I'm laughing is that I know what I'm going to say." (laughter)

Q. A lot of people . . .

A. Red Skelton said one time, you know, says, "The reason it's so hard for me to keep from laughing, see, I know this joke." (laughter)

H.B. Do you want some more water?

Q. No. Thank you. I'm getting a spot on your table here.

H.B. Oh, it won't hurt anything. My goodness. I ought to bring you a napkin there. That's all right.

Q. Well, I'd better get going here. I've got to audit and edit that number ten. I'm trying to get . . .

A. By the way, has the baby come?

Q. Nooo. No. Oh, that's right. Ellen called . . .

END OF TAPE

ADDENDA ITEM 122 (ref. p. 298)

A. I don't know why I couldn't have thought of that. I visited with him time and time again. But he was sitting sidefaced and he's grown a little moustache and it changed his appearance till I didn't know him at all. I said something about his father. I knew his father quite well and I--I mean his grandfather. I knew his father and grandfather and I said something about his grandfather. So, I asked if he knew when he homesteaded up there and the barber jumped up and grabbed a book. He went looking in it and he says, "John," says, "what's his name?" John says, "Land, I don't have any idea," and I says, "Well, I do. His name was John." But they couldn't find his name in there. They didn't have it that far back.

ADDENDA ITEM 123 (ref. p. 298)

Q. You remember his name by any chance?

A. You mean Elmer's boy?

Q. Yes.

A. Well, let's see—Paul. But he wasn't born yet then because, see, Elmer wasn't married. He was just a kid in school. They started that down at the high school. They had such a perfect gentleman as a high schoolteacher that year that he just won everybody, and he wanted to. He says, "Well, we're not agoing to keep this just here in this school." He says, "We're going out to the Burnet . . . all the others, if they'll let us come out."

So, they notified the neighborhood that they'd be out. Fred Lohman went down and set two posts at each end and no boards back of them. Just a barrel hoop nailed on them.

I'd never seen a basketball game. We all went and he would explain to each side what the other was trying to do all the time, you know. He was refereeing and he would explain to us old people—he was half the time out telling . . . (laughs)

Q. You what was going—we have a little bit on that here in just a minute here. Let's see. (resumes reading)

ADDENDA ITEM 124 (ref. p. 299)

A. Frank Burnet.

Q. Frank Burnet?

A. Yes. . . . Don't matter whether you get that in there or not. Frank didn't stick to it. He didn't like it, but . . . they had--Tom. Tom Taylor. Young Tom was in it. He was a pretty good player. They had several that developed into real basket throwers, you know. And they played those bigger towns--teams. They held on about as well as the other schools did.

Q. Yes, sir. I understand they went to the regional [tourament] one year with a team.

A. I never went to that. I never went to a regional. I went to one football game. That's all I ever saw in my life until I got this thing. (motions to the television set)

Q. Where was that, sir?

A. That was at Hillsboro. Hillsboro and Mt. Olive played, and the reason I went, they had a man running the lumberyard then, a young college graduate. His name was Tom Taylor, too, but he was no relation to Taylors around here at all. Well, he was a prince of a fellow, too. I liked Tom. He called me up and he says, "Bert, do you want to see a good football game?" He says,

"Get ready and come to Hillsboro. I'm going to referee a game between Hillsboro and Mt. Olive this afternoon." Well, I went down--or my wife and I went down and that's the only football game I ever stood and watched. (laughs)

Q. Oh, is that right? Did you like it?

A. (laughs) I thought it was awful.

Q. Oh, really? (laughter) Kind of a rough game, huh?

A. Oh, boy! It is rough. Did you play?

Q. No, sir. Not football. We didn't have it here at Waggoner, you know, and I didn't have an opportunity to play it. Yes, it's a pretty rough game all right.

A. Pretty near as bad as wrestling. (laughter)

Q. Well, it's not controlled like wrestling is.

A. (laughing) Wrestling isn't controlled. They kick them and step in their faces. (laughter)

Q. Yes, that's quite a show. Let's see. (resumes reading)

ADDENDA ITEM 125 (ref. p. 307)

A. He lost that good saddle horse, too. Oh, he did hate that. Boy! He was a beautiful horse. Carried his neck bowed, you know, and stepped so pretty. I never rode him but anybody that wanted to could climb in that saddle and he'd canter off with them just like rocking in a cradle.

Q. Did you know anything about the circumstances--I understand that a couple of guys went out to Dwight's place one evening and beat him up and that was the reason he got the ponies.

A. No, they didn't beat him up. They just held him up. The only beating they done, he reached for a drawer where he had a pistol and, when he reached for that, one of them hit him on the side of the head with the butt of his revolver. But, he didn't hurt him to amount to anything.

He says, "Dwight, we don't want to hurt you. We told you that." Dwight knew who both of them was by that, or thought he did, but he asked the state's attorney, he said, "Had I better name any names?" He says, "I wouldn't do it." He says, "The best thing you can do is forget it." But, they never came back because they was pretty sure he did know.

Q. Well, I understood that that was one of the reasons that he got these ponies and kept them around the yard there. They're pretty mean.

A. Well, I expect it was to a certain extent, because he didn't have a dog that I ever knew of. Never knew him to have a dog; it was just horses, and ponies when he got them. I think they got about forty or fifty dollars off of him that time. He'd just keep a little money in the house to buy groceries with. But they called him Dwight from the very start.

Q. Oh, is that right?

A. Yes. Says, "We don't want to hurt you, we just want your money."

Q. Well. Okay. Let's see.

ADDENDA ITEM 126 (ref. p. 309)

Q. (Interviewer reading out loud) ". . . and the rest of us was around out of the way."

A. Just the church ate, you know. Sort of a fellowship thing, that's what they called it. Then afterward, they'd have services, you know. Preaching and singing.

Q. And everybody would attend that, would they? Not just the Dunkard's themselves?

A. They'd get to hear, yes. All the churches over the township, pretty near, would go to those feasts, as they called them. I don't remember what they called that now.

Martin Brubaker belonged. He was the only man I knew that belonged, but he and his family belonged at that time. I don't know whether Emmett ever did or not, but he and the older girls did . . . and his wife.

Q. Okay. Let's see. (resumes reading)

ADDENDA ITEM 127 (ref. p. 310)

Q. I'm not so sure. When I went through that, I was trying to think when he was mayor, because he and Homer Swires, you know, opened up a saloon in town then. It must have been after he was mayor, though, I think. I don't know how . . .

A. Well, he was, because . . . I can't remember it.

Q. Yes, he and Homer Swires had a tavern there, no the north side. Well, where Kenny West has his grocery now.

A. That was after you got old enough to know something about it?

Q. Yes, sir.

A. Oh, I see. Well, I'd lost track by that time, you see.

Q. Yes, this was some time after that. Yes. I remember my mother used to make chili for them. And they used to fry blackbirds and sell blackbirds in there. That's really something. They'd shoot them; you know, you'd get a whole slew of them out of the tree with one shot. Mom would clean those things and they'd fry them and sell them for a nickel apiece.

A. That wasn't too bad eating, either.

Q. Have you ever eaten blackbirds?

A. Yes.

Q. Is that right? I've never eaten one. I don't . . . (laughs)

A. They're black meat, that's all.

Q. Oh, is that right? Did you fry them or . . .

A. Well, as I remember it, we just fried them, just like you would a quail. Split them, you know, and take . . . I didn't think they was too bad eating. I never ate any crow but they told me they were good.

Q. Oh, is that right? A crow?

A. There used to be a lot of crows roosted up here in a big hedge that Ben Lohman had. The coal miners would come up here from Mt. Olive and Staunton and ask permission to lay under the hedges in your fields. They'd start in down here at my south line and get under a hedge and then they'd get under this one over here and they'd lay in those hedges because those crows would come in to roost. They'd just come a solid stream of an evening and roost up there. Those fellows would blast out a batch of them and take them home. They were eating them.

Q. Well, they were pretty good size. They'd make a--much more than a blackbird.

A. Oh, yes. Pretty near like a chicken, you know. Well, then there got to be such a terrible mess of them up there that the State sent down men and bombed that hedge. Oh, I don't know, I guess they must have killed five hundred crows, maybe more than that. There was crippled crows around here for the longest time after that. They'd have a wing shot off or a leg shot off, you know. They had bombs with shot in them. They were in canisters about so big.

Q. About three or four inches around.

A. They hung them in the trees and they fired the whole thing like you'd fire a row of cartridges, you know.

Q. They did it at night while they were roosting, huh?

A. Yes, with an electric current, and the State did that. It wasn't anybody, any individual. But it broke them up. They quit roosting here.

Q. Oh? I see very few crows around any more.

A. Oh, they've pretty near got them killed out. So many people kill them to eat, you know, now.

Q. I never thought of eating a blackbird, or a crow, either one. But I understand they did.

A. Yes. Both black meat. That goes against--to us fellows, you know.

But a pheasant is pretty dark, too. Did you ever eat a pheasant?

Q. Yes, sir.

A. They're pretty dark, too, but I like them very much.

Q. Oh, yes, that's good. I've eaten pheasant, yes. Let's see. (resumes reading)

ADDENDA ITEM 128 (ref. p. 311)

Q. (Interviewer reading out loud) ". . . who it was. Horace. Yes, he was the one that started it."

A. Yes. You know they hired a man named Knotts that was a banker and he and Waggoner started that bank and I was trying to think of what his name was. He had just one child, as I remember, a daughter. And she married a Barnett. She was awful nice--awful pretty girl. I thought she was something extra to look at when she was growing up.

Q. Where did he live?*

A. Well, down--do you know where Clayt McGowns lived?

Q. Yes, sir.

A. Well, right in there someplace. I think that's a farm. I think it later sold and Clayt's father-in-law or mother-in-law or somebody bought it and Clayt lived there for a number of years.

Q. That's just south of where John Waggoner lived?

A. Yes. Yes.

Q. Well, let's see. (resumes reading)

ADDENDA ITEM 129 (ref. p. 311)

Q. (Interviewer reading out loud) "I imagine so." So, he was not the other director, then?

A. I don't think so. I don't believe Ripley was in there. I think that Knotts just fell in love with the girl. She was a nice girl, too, nice looking girl and he married her. And I never knew what become of them. Do you?

Q. No, sir. I don't remember him at all. I never knew him at all.

A. No, of course, that was before your time. I thought maybe through your relationships with the Waggoners that you would know something about it.

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*This question was asked to make certain whether Mr. Aikman was referring to Mr. Waggoner or to Mr. Knotts. The reference is to Mr. Waggoner. [Ed.]

Q. No, sir. I never heard . . .

A. Of course, Knotts wasn't related to the Waggoners. He was an independent. But Hardin Ripley came into Waggoner as a barber and I got to know him quite well because of going to get the haircuts and so on, you know.

Q. Was that a brother of this Ripley, the one that was with the bank?

A. That was the old man Ripley's son. I think he was his oldest boy. Hardin. He had another boy but I can't recall his name. But I knew Hardin real well because, when I was in the hospital that time with that kidney trouble, I wanted a haircut pretty bad. Somebody told Hardin and he got in a rig and came right down there and cut my hair for me. So, I appreciated it.

Q. Yes, sir. Let's see, that was before Mr. Hart had opened up his barber shop, I guess, wasn't it?

A. Yes. That was before Hart had--and then Billy Thomason followed Hardin. Hardin . . . I don't know where Hardin went. He went someplace. I think he continued to barber but I don't know where he went. I don't remember, I mean. And Billy Thomason got his shop and then Hart opened up on the other side. There was two shops there for a while. Well, there wasn't business enough for two of them, so Hart gave it up and went to doing something else but Billy stayed on until he died.

Q. On the north side, where was the barber shop located?

A. Well, right west of Kenny's second room there.

Q. Building. Oh, I see. Right where the post office is now, then?

A. No, it was this side of that. That was before the town had burned down, you know.

Q. Oh, I see.

A. It was a little building in there that was made for a barber shop. It was sort of between buildings. Bill Lewis's store was on that side, on the west of it, and these other buildings on this side.

ADDENDA ITEM 130 (ref. p. 312)

Q. (Interviewer reading out loud) "There was lots of cattle . . ."

A. Had a big territory.

Q. Yes, sir. (resumes reading) "There was lots of cattle fed in this country and lots of men borrowing money . . ."

A. I thought of another man that was a cattle-feeder out there. His name was Gilman. I bet you've heard of him, the Gilmans. They lived right around that Dunkard church. Right out in that part of the country. He fed cattle all the time.

Q. I see. Strikes a bell, but I can't place them. What was his first name? Do you recall?

A. He was an old man when I come up here. I don't know, but I know that he was a great cattle-feeder because they all went to him for advice. Fellows that were young men . . . and feeding cattle.

Q. They'd just drive the cattle in to the stock pens there by the elevator for loading, would they? Just drive them along the road?

A. Yes. That's the way they moved them those days, from the farm in to load into the trains, you know, and then they'd get a car set in and load them into the car. They had to picked up pretty quick, you know. That was called perishable freight. You had to move that stuff. You couldn't let livestock set around because there was some of them would die.

Then they got so they had to build tracers on corn, if it was shelled in May or June. Corn wasn't used to being binned up in bins in them days and, if they'd shell a carload of corn and put it in a car and it set on the track very long, why, it'd get hot and they wouldn't handle it down at the commission houses. So, we had to put tracers on every carload of corn we shipped out of a place.

Q. What do you mean tracers?

A. Every conductor had to tell how far he handled it and what hours he handled it and they could go and get those tracers and see if there was anybody to blame for it not being there on time. I never had one of them traced. They always took care of them, I'll tell you, (chuckles) when there was a tracer on there.

Q. The corn would get hot. Would it mold or something?

A. Yes. Ruin it. And that's so funny. Nowadays, they shell corn and put it in the elevators, load it any time of year they want to, you know. Why they've had that old place down there with seven or eight thousand bushels in it. Put in in the winter and go through until next fall, maybe.

Q. Wonder if that has anything to do with the drying equipment they use now?

A. Well, I think that's the secret. I think that they dry it down to the right place and it won't heat.

Q. Yes. Get that moisture out of it?

ADDENDA ITEM 131 (ref. p. 315)

A. Well, they dumped it into a spreader.

Q. Oh?

A. I don't remember, at all, how that thing--I was atrying to think how they did work it. It had a way of taking down the end of--one end of the

car, I think, and they spilled it into a trough and the trough had an elevator that took it up into the spreader and then that spreader spread it on the roadbed, you know, level, and then the men followed that spreader with the . . . What did they call them? They had long-- I guess they were levelers. They had long boards, straight edge, and a handle on each end and a man would work on each side and scrape that all until it was perfectly level, and then they would trowel it, too. As quick as it was set enough to be troweled, they would trowel it. And they really built a nice road there. I thought we had a road for time--but it wasn't no time until she was just knocked all to pieces.

Then they didn't have steel like they have these days. When they put the new one in, they put steel all through it, you know. Steel rods about that far apart.

Q. Every six inches or so. (pause) Well, the one going into town is still in pretty good shape, the extension there that runs in town.

A. Yes, and that . . . I never knew who was responsible for that but I just surmise that John Waggoner and John Gerlach . . .

Q. Yes, you have that here.

A. . . . that got that brought into Waggoner.

Q. Let's see. (resumes reading)

ADDENDA ITEM 132 (ref. p. 315)

Q. (Interviewer reading out loud) ". . . kind of believe they . . ."

A. Cap Williamson . . . and John . . . and Winfield Kessler.

Q. Yes. Yes. Here, let me see here. (resumes reading) ". . . was the head of it. And I kind of believe they had one of the Ripley boys in there as cashier." But it was Winfield Kessler, instead of the Ripley boy.

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. (resumes reading) "Seems to me like it was. Maybe Knotts was still there. I can't remember when Knotts left the bank."

A. No. Knotts was gone. When Cap Williamson went in, he took Knott's place.

Q. Oh, I see. Yes.

A. So . . . Knotts was gone for some time before that.

Q. Okay, let's see. (resumes reading)

ADDENDA ITEM 133 (ref. p. 316)

A. And Mark Waggoner was in there. I should have mentioned him. He learned enough there to go out as a bank examiner.

Q. Yes, sir, we mentioned that later on.

A. Did we?

Q. We referred to Mark being in there. Yes, sir.

ADDENDA ITEM 134 (ref. p. 316)

Q. And actually he's . . . the mailman. Delivery, now.

A. Jim is, yes, but the boy is down south someplace.

Q. Well, this is somebody else, then, not Jim.

A. No, it's Jim's boy. Jim and Norma's son.

Q. Oh, I see. I see.

A. They just had the one child.

Q. Yes. Well, I misunderstood that. Okay, good. This is Jim Crabtree and Norma Long's son?

A. Son. Yes.

Q. Okay. And, let's see, I guess Harold Warner hadn't come into the bank at that time?

A. Not yet, but he did along about that time. I think . . . I think he followed Kess.

Q. I see.

A. When Kess . . . Kess's health failed. He had too much. He was carrying the burden of the store and the bank and he just had too much, so I think he just quit and let Warner step in. Tom Taylor wanted Warner in there, if he could have him, and Warner made a good man.

Q. Yes, he's quite a fellow. Let's see. (resumes reading)

ADDENDA ITEM 135 (ref. p. 317)

Q. Sir, I was wondering. Here, at this point, you indicate that there was a township that you were looking at and then later on you said there were three townships, I think it was . . .

A. There was more than that. There was three million acres. It had been Indian territory. It had been thrown open for settlement, you know, and it had been range country for a number of years but there were a few squatters

and there were a few fellows that had married squaws were living out there, too. There was just a few--a farm now and then in there. Well, you could get a little idea of what things was like to go to those places, you know, and see.

We had to have provisions for a full week and we ran out on Friday night. We just barely had breakfast Saturday morning.

Q. Yes, sir. Yes, you mentioned that here in a little bit. Let's see.

END OF SIDE ONE

ADDENDA ITEM 136 (ref. p. 318)

A. We left that up to him. I told him, I says, "Now, you know the best land that's in here. You've been all over it," and I says, "take us to the best land. Just skip the kind you wouldn't buy yourself." And he said, "All right, I'll do it." So, he took us down and started us in. It really wasn't a very big creek but it drained a level valley and he took us in and started us in on that and that was, looked to me like, good land. Of course, there was no way of telling anything about it. They'd burned the grass off of it. It'd been grass that high and they'd set fire and . . .

Q. Two or three feet.

A. . . . burned the whole thing off and it was clean. You could see the soil. See how the grass had grown on it. You knew there was some good in it.

Q. There weren't any trees or forest in there?

A. No. Nothing at all. So, he started in that way and he showed us around and he says, "You've had a lot of experience on farming, haven't you?" and I says, "Yes, I'm a farmer." I says, "I've got stock at home." "Well," he says, "I want you to help with the team and the wagon. I'm going to choose you for that and these other fellows can help with the tents and so on," and he arranged all of it before we even got to a campground, you know.

Then we camped and started in the next morning. He went to reading stakes to us. He'd come to a corner stake and he'd say, "Now, this is section so-and-so and township so-and-so. If you want to bid on a section here, why, write it down in your book." So, we each had a book--a notebook, you know, and wrote it down. And that's what I bid--I bid on sixteen pieces, but I was way below the Oklahomians. They knew the land and I didn't. I don't even think that schoolteacher got any.

Q. Oh, is that right? (pause) Let's see.

ADDENDA ITEM 137 (ref. p. 320)

Q. Okay. Does that sound all right, sir?

A. Yes, it's all right. I don't think I'm liable for anything in there. But I was uneasy about that other when I got to thinking about how many people had died since.

Q. Yes, sir. Yes, I'll—as a matter of fact, I'll get on that as soon as I get home and get that straightened out. (pause)

A. You know, I can't hardly realize I've lived so long. It just don't seem possible. When you go to thinking back over the people you knew and so many of them are dead.

Q. Yes. Yes, I imagine it is kind of an odd feeling.

A. Either dead or moved away, you know.

Q. Yes, sir.

A. You haven't heard any word from them for years and so on. So, I just . . .

ADDENDA ITEM 138 (ref. p. 320)

Q. Sir, this is the last of the regular sessions. Now, let's see, you said you might be leaving in October.

A. Yes, if we go.

Q. Okay. Well, on this narration that I'm collecting here as I read, you know, we'll want to review that, or at least parts of it. Some of it that are just footnotes or just explanation probably wouldn't have to [be]; but some of the additional subjects that you bring up, we probably would like to have them reviewed and I won't have them ready for review until about November. So, maybe I can send them to you if you go on out there. I could send them to you and then you could work with Nel, perhaps, or somebody and sit down and go through them and see what you think on them and then send them back to me. So . . .

A. I don't think they'll need reviewing. I think you've got it as I told it . . .

Q. Yes.

A. . . . and just let it go at that.

Q. Well, we could do that. Yes, sir, I . . .

A. Yes, just let her go.

Q. All right, sir.

A. It's a narrative of mine, anyway, practically, isn't it?

Q. Yes, sir. Yes, we don't change it a bit. We try to keep it exactly the way . . .

A. Well, that's what I say and if there's any fault to find with it, it can rest on me.

Q. Well, I don't know what fault there would be that . . .

A. Oh, there's plenty of fellows that know more about the early history of machinery than I did. All I knew was the practical use of it, you know, and that's what I've tried to give you all the way through. I didn't know anything about the manufacture or anything about the . . .

Q. Well, see--I think we touched on that before. If a person wants to know exactly what one looks like and how it worked, he could go to manufacturing records and that sort of thing and probably find drawings of them and that sort of thing, but where would he go if he wanted to find out what it felt like to use one of those things?

A. You know, back . . . back in the earlier days, I heard old men tell about them; the first plows didn't have steel moldboards. They were wood and they said it was the awfulest job to go in the timber to find a tree that had a twist in it that they could cut out to get that shaped moldboard. They would search them out, then they'd cut off a block and make a number of moldboards from it, you know, and polish it. They said that after that got hand polished, it was pretty near as good as a steel. . . . Then the steel people--they didn't wear as long, you know, they wore out--the steel people came out--Hapgood at Alton came out with the--it was just a plow factory, a foundry. My father's brother worked in it and he used to talk to me about the different things they did to make a plow. In fact, I think he had a little to do with the shaping of shares.

Q. This was down at Alton, you say?

A. Yes, but that's all long gone. I haven't heard of Hapgood in, oh, not in fifty years.

So, those earlier things that really were discoveries--you know, somebody had an idea and worked it out and then you wonder why they didn't think of it sooner. And why don't we think of a lot of things sooner, now?

Q. I don't know. It's really something, isn't it? Of course, thinking of something and actually putting it into production or getting the design accomplished and getting it so it . . .

A. It isn't everybody that can do that. Have to have a man with the genius of a McCormick or some of those men to be able to do it.

Q. Well, let me get started reading here. We were--this is the start of session ten and we were in Lawton, Oklahoma, you know.

ADDENDA ITEM 139 (ref. p. 333)

A. But they didn't belong with the machine. They belonged to the neighbors that they threshed for.

Q. So they weren't really part of the crew, they were just--I see. Yes, sir.

A. Every man furnished his own bandcutters, you know. When he called the machine in, he had picked out who he wanted to cut bands. Who to pitch and who to haul bundles.

ADDENDA ITEM 140 (ref. p. 337)

Q. (Interviewer reading out loud) "Well, then, when . . ."

A. There had to be a man run that thing, to turn it.

Q. I see. Where would he stand?

A. I didn't put that in. I . . .

Q. Yes. Where would he stand? On the ground or . . .

A. On the ground. He had a big pole to the bottom of that upright pole so he could have leverage to handle a load of hay, see, and he would swing it. You always had to have an extra man in stacking in the field for that reason, to take care of that.

Q. So then the horses would help him sometimes when you were swinging it back over, when they'd pulled it out—I see. Yes, sir. Okay.

ADDENDA ITEM 141 (ref. p. 346)

Q. So, that's session No. 10. That's all the regular sessions, sir.

A. So, you got a lot of junk. (laughs)

Q. Well, we got a lot of words. I don't know, I'm going to have to wait until later to figure out how much, whether it's junk or not. I didn't bring a tablet with me. (positioning the transcript for Mr. Aikman's signature)

A. Oh, that's all right.

Q. Is that firm enough? (Mr. Aikman signs transcript)

A. I just hope it gets you your diploma.

Q. Oh, yes, sir. It'll do that. Oh, I got an A out of the course. The course is all finished, I got an A out of it, yes, sir.

A. An A!

Q. Yes.

A. Good enough!

Q. Oh, I knew I'd do that.

A. You went back in while you were still able to concentrate, you see. You didn't lose the--that ability. That's a great factor. I can't concentrate.

Q. Oh, is that right?

A. Don't do me any good. I can read a thing--last night, I looked up a telephone number here and got it in my head, I thought, and turned around to get a pencil to write it down and it was gone.

Q. Well, I do that. Half the time when I go look up a number like that . . .

A. Well, it wasn't always that way. You know, in telegraphing you had to copy behind and you had to learn to remember a word or two that had already gone. So, when I quit that, why, I could concentrate very good.

Q. Yes, sir.

A. But . . . Yes. Then, fifty years, or sixty, or seventy makes a difference.

Q. Yes, sir. I guess so.

A. I wanted to ask you a personal question.

Q. Yes, sir.

A. Are you a Christian?

Q. Yes, sir. Methodist.

A. Good for you! That makes me like you better.

Q. Well! (laughs) Yes, I've always belonged--all my travels and everything, I've stayed right with the Methodist church there in Waggoner. Actually, my family, all of them and my grandmother, especially, she . . .

A. Well, I knew Freela did and Freela was strong. I thought a lot of Freela. We used to visit, talk about different things. (pause) So, I'm just mighty glad to know that.

Q. Yes, I miss Grandma. You know, I always, living in that house where she lived so long, you know, you have a feeling every once in a while that she's sitting there next to you or looking over your shoulder or something, you know. It's kind of a cozy feeling sometimes.

A. (chuckles) Why, you are preparing to make that a home for the future?

Q. Yes, sir. Matter of fact, this evening we're putting in new baths--the place has never had a real bath, you know. Just a corner had been cut off and made into one. This evening I want to get the 2-by-4's, from the old--you know, we've taken out some sections and are putting in new. Well, the old 2-by-4's are different size from the new ones, they're bigger.

A. Yes.

Q. Yes, quite a bit bigger.

A. They were 2-by-4's!

Q. Yes, sir. Well, almost--not quite, but almost. But they won't fit with the others. I took what used to be the old main door--you know, going out to the southwest, towards town. I took that out. That's where we're building the baths in and I've got to build that wall back in. So this evening I've got to go through my big woodpile out there and find enough 2-by-4's of that old stuff to--because the other won't be wide enough, you see.

A. But you've got something to work with in that old stuff.

Q. Oh, yes sir, that's good wood.

A. If you can keep from hitting nails, it's still wonderful.

Q. Well, I was pretty careful. Where I could salvage it, any that I salvaged, I just went through and cleaned out every nail I could find. Of course, I didn't get them all but, you know these new blades you have on these circular saws? They'll just go right through a nail, it won't hurt them a bit. They're designed for it and they have . . .

A. On a circular?

Q. Yes. They have a chromium edge on--well, not all the blades. They have blades that are designed for that and they'll just cut right through the steel.

A. Well?

Q. They have a chrome edge blade . . .

A. I'd never heard that.

Q. Oh, yes. Sparks will fly all over everything.

A. I've knocked the points off of a saw many a time, rip into an old nail, you know.

Q. Yes. I can't saw worth a doggone with a regular saw. Always curves on me, I don't know why. (laughs) I just can't do it. Well, I've never done it enough, I guess, to get to I could.

A. While we were talking about accomplishments of farmers back there, I thought of something else. All of them were jacklegged carpenters, too. Practically all of them. They could build things, you know. Things they needed about the place. If they couldn't, they had a neighbor that could, that they could trade work with and get it done and get it done without paying the exorbitant price you'd have to pay for a union man. Nowadays, it is not so. (laughs)

Q. No, sir, sure not. (laughter) Like that chicken house and that hog house that you built, did you build them yourself or . . .

A. No, I hired a carpenter. There was a carpenter in town there, at that time, and he belonged to the union. When I went to him to hire him, I says, "I want you to do this work for me." And he says, "Well, Bert, I'm a union man. I've got to charge you union wages." I says, "That's what I expected." I says, "I don't ask you to cut your wages at all." So, when he come out here and went to work, he didn't quit at eight hours. He says, "I have to charge you union wages, but," he says, "there's nothing said about how many hours I can put in." He put in ten and twelve hours lots of days.

Q. And just charged you for eight?

A. Yes, and charged for eight, you know, because we were good friends. He and I worked together. He could mark off. I could saw fairly good. I could cut lumber and he could measure it and tell what was wanted.

Q. What was his name, sir? Do you remember?

A. His name was Barrow.

Q. Barrow?

A. B-A-R-R-O-W. Charlie Barrow. He was a fine, Christian gentleman. He moved away from here and went to Granite City. Oh, I don't think he lived very long down there. I never did know, I lost track, you know, after he moved away. But he had a son that grew up in the Sunday school there, while I was active in Sunday school work, that is a Baptist preacher in the Association now and he's working out of Springfield there, at present. He's a fine fellow, too. Of the two, Mr. and Mrs. Barrow were fine people. Mighty fine.

Well, before he went to Granite City, he was out of work for quite a while and he says, "Do you think I could run that elevator?" He says, "I'm pretty sure I can keep the books." He says, "I know enough about that, but," he says, "do you think I could buy grain?" And I says, "Well, Charlie, you buy on a grade. If you buy it by grade, why, that's all that's necessary." I says, "Selling will be the hard thing for you." I says, "You'll have to get in touch with commission men and make them understand that you're going to have to depend on them and show them that you're honest and you expect them to be."

So, he went in and worked in the elevator for one whole season and it was awful hard on him because that was out of his line, you know. Different from carpentering. Working with a bunch of men, all the time, every day, you know. You'd have a bunch of men you worked with, especially when grain was moving. And he made a big mistake right on the start. I tried to stop him but couldn't. He just thought he saw a dividend for the company. At that time it was a co-op. There was a lot of corn stored in the country, in the ear, and he could shell it all right, but we couldn't get cars to ship it. I knew that, and he didn't. He went out and bought several of those cribs and give them a good price for it. Had it in his hands there and had to

shift it and shift it to keep it from heating, you know. So, I tell you, he learned to be cautious from that time on.

Q. Couldn't get it moved out. He could sell it all right, but he . . .

A. Couldn't move it at all. There's a lot of things that you got to know in grain business, I'll tell you.

Q. Was this before Romee Vignos got in?

A. Yes. That was before Romee was taken in. Afterward, they took in Romee and Romee just had a high school education but he had enough bookkeeping that he was a good bookkeeper. Romee had a fetish for accuracy. Boy, I never worked with a man that was crankier about accuracy than Rome Vignos. I worked with those fellows in the bank where you had to be accurate, but Romemakes you show why. If you didn't come up with the right answer, "Well, why? You better go back and do it over." So, I soon learned to work with Rome Vignos on an accuracy basis.

I weighed for him two falls. Of course, you had a certain amount of the books to keep, or help with. Then, in coming to settle up, why, we had a machine there--it isn't a comptometer, it isn't an adding machine, I don't know what they did call it. Cost a lot of money. You can run figures through it just as accurate as they do these machines today, but he wouldn't use the thing at all. You had to do every bit of it with a pencil. (laughter) He just wouldn't do it. He'd use it for making out tickets. For instance, you come in with a load of corn. We weighed it and, why, he'd go and get it on that, verify the weights and the tare on that thing, and put on the ticket. He'd use it that much, but that was the extent.

Q. So, every evening you had to . . .

A. You had to run your books careful.

Q. And you had to do it all by hand. He wouldn't use the . . .

A. Yes, sir! With a pencil. And, you know, all told, that was what got my wife on her ears so. I had to work nights so many times and she finally decided that I wasn't to work away from home at all. I just quit. Rome wanted me back so bad he even come to see her. He says, "Just have a little pity on me." She says, "Well, you haven't had any on me!" She says, "I'm not letting him go." (laughter) But he got along just as well. He got Charles Hampton, a boy right out of high school that was quick in figures. He got him in there and he done just as well, or better, than he did with me and I could stay at home and take care of the stuff here.

Q. Was this Dorothy's boy?

A. Yes. He's working for the State now. I don't really know what his job is. He's an inspector of the places where trucks are inspected and he has to go in and see that those fellows keep up to snuff, that they have the proper equipment and so on. He drives as much as two hundred miles a day. He has seven counties around here that he visits, so he has a pretty big job.

I never worked for the State. Railroad and bank and elevator is the extent of--and then the farm. And I liked farming best of all of it. If I was a young man and could go back on a farm, I sure would be tickled pink.

Well, I wanted to ask you, also. You own the land where the high school building stands, don't you?

Q. No, sir.

A. Well, I mean east of it?

Q. No. Aunt Estell. Estella Kessler.

A. Oh, is that Stell's? Well, do you own it across the road?

Q. No, that's Bob and Roy and Dan. They own that.

A. Where's your land?

Q. I don't have any land, other than the two acres there around the house.

A. Oh, I thought you had a farm, too.

Q. No. No, sir. I can't take care of my little two acres there around the house. What would I do with a farm? (laughter)

A. You'd rent it.

Q. Yes. Yes, probably would. No sir, I don't own any of the land.

A. Well, I declare. I thought that was your land.

Q. No sir, that's Aunties' north of the road and Bob and Roy and Dan south of the . . .

A. Well, let's see, who was Stell? I've tried to think.

Q. Aunt Stell?

A. Yes.

Q. Well, she was Winfield Kessler's wife, of course . . .

A. Yes.

Q. . . . and she was . . .

A. I knew her from a girl.

Q. Yes, well, she's my aunt. She was my grandfather's second daughter. There was an older girl that is dead now.

A. Oh, Sport's daughter then, huh?

Q. Yes. Right.

A. A sister to Wayne?

Q. That's right. Yes.

A. Oh, now I've got her straight.

Q. She's a little bit older than Uncle Wayne was.

A. Yes.

Q. You knew Uncle Wayne. There was--Florence was the older girl, and then Aunt Estell, then Wayne, and then my father, Horace. That was the four children. Then there was an adopted girl, a girl that lived with them, in addition to that. She isn't living, either. She moved to Indiana very early in--I've forgotten her name, now. She married a Hayes, her last name was Hayes, but I . . .

A. Well, I didn't know her, I guess, but I did know those others. All of them. No, I don't believe I knew that oldest girl you mentioned. I think she was away from here when I moved up here.

Q. Yes, she married a Petit.

A. A Petit?

Q. Yes, and I don't know where they lived.

A. I think she was away from here when I moved up here, but I remember Wayne and Stell and your dad, real well. But I've been trying to place Stell. I just couldn't do it.

Q. Yes, she's Sport's. I'd never heard that he was called that. Sport, huh?

A. Yes. That was a nickname they had for him around town there. Sport.

END OF TAPE

END OF VOLUME IV ADDENDA