PREFACE

This manuscript is the product of tape recorded interviews conducted by Elizabeth Canterbury for the Oral History Office in October of 1973. Elizabeth Canterbury edited the transcript and Evans Cantrall reviewed it.

Evans Cantrall was born in Cantrall, Illinois in 1884. Mr. Cantrall was raised on a farm all his life but early in his youth he and his family travelled to Yellowstone Park and literally travelled as one would in a covered wagon. These experiences definetly helped his conservationists and sport-minded attitudes. He spent one year at the University of Illinois and returned to Springfield to sell insurance and farm. After becoming quite successful selling insurance, he found it relatively easy to go about his farming a little differently than most.

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Evans E. Cantrall, October 22 and 23, 1973, Springfield, Illinois.
Elizabeth Canterbury, Interviewer.

Q. Evans E. Cantrall is an 89 year old retired insurance executive who has also owned and managed a 518 acre farm from the time of the depression until 1970. Starting when you were born think of as many things as you want to tell us.

A. Well, I don't remember anything about when I was born. They told me it was a very warm day in November and the windows were all open but I don't remember. The only thing I remember is the day we left there. We went over to Dr. Siefert's to tell them good-bye.

Q. Now that was when you left where?

A. Cantrall. We left Cantrall and moved to Springfield.

Q. And how old were you then?

A. The next September I went to school and I wasn't quite six years old and they let me in. I'd be six years old in November and this was in September.

But I remember the Siefert boys catching pigeons and giving them to me and my taking them to Springfield and my father cutting a hole in the old barn to make a pigeon hole so I could have pigeons around there. And I had pets all my life.

Q. Does that account for your interest in hunting?

A. Yes, very definitely because--but the first dog I had in Cantrall I was hauling. I had taught it to ride in my wagon but it jumped out and ran to the house and I looked under the wagon and it was gone and I didn't know where to look. The dog was gone.

Q. How old were you when that happened?

A. Three.

Q. Where did you look for the dog?

A. Under the wagon and I had to go home without it. I didn't know where it was. I found it when I got home.

Q. What was the dog's name?

A. I don't know.

Q. Was that your first pet?

A. That's the first pet I ever remember.

Q. Tell about some of your other pets.

A. Father was a trader. Father never used his hand to punish me in any form that I ever remember, but he could punish me too easy. His horses--one of them was my pony. If he wasn't using it, I could do whatever I pleased with it if I had done certain things. I had a dog, the first one that was just a dog. But just as soon as I could carry a gun, he gave me his gun. It was so heavy that I'd have to lean backwards to balance it. It had black powder so that when I'd shoot, I'd have to lean down under the smoke to see if I'd got my bird.

Q. About how old were you then?

A. Oh I started to shoot when I was ten. I guess when shooting, but I was going with them carrying the game from the time I could walk. I don't ever remember when I didn't go. Father didn't want me to play football so he said, "Well, take your choice. You can't do everything you want. Give up the dog and gun and go ahead and play football." He'd just as well have told me to cut my throat. Anyway, that settled that.

I'm jumping way ahead now, but quite a little while after that he said, "They tell me you've been smoking," and I said, "Yes." He said, "I can't quit long enough to tell you not to, but I'd been ashamed to smoke if I were you. Well that was a new thought. Other people had talked about health and everything. I said, "What do you mean ashamed of?" He said, "You know money's scarce. I'm hard up and asking your dad for money to smoke, I'd be ashamed of. Now wait until you earn your own money and smoke your head off if you want to." So I didn't smoke. I smoked very little even when I was in college only when someone would give me a cigar or something. I was Scotch.

Q. You'd rather have the money?

A. Money? No, there wasn't any money involved in it one way or another. I was borrowing money from my sister.

Q. Tell from the time you were real little what the members of your family were like.

A. Well, I had two older sisters. One of them was a musician. I never associated any with her except her music. Her health broke down and she was in poor health until she died. She lived, but was always in poor health. But the other sister taught me a love of books and had me reading very early.

Q. Now what was her name?

A. Harriet M. Cantrall.[1] She was supervisor of drawing in the public schools in Springfield.

Q. Tell me how much older she was than you.

A. About ten years. She just guided me in reading and writing and when I went to school I could write a very fine hand. But that was at a time when they wanted to teach a new kind of writing, I've forgotten now what they called it, vertical writing I think. They had me change my writing and they punished me by anything I did I'd have to stay after school and copy something fifty times. They didn't ask how I did it or anything, so I'd just give them page after page of scribble and hand it in. By that time I couldn't read my own writing.

Q. Was that when you were about first grade?

A. That was first garde. They offered a prize that year at the state fair for every grade in school on, "Which was best? City or country life?" I chose farm life and I got a silver medal for mine, and Harriet got a silver medal in high school for hers. And she said the same thing.

Q. Can you remember anything you put in that essay?

A. No, oh I just told about the pets and the animals--mostly the fact that I had a pony to do whatever I wanted to do.

Q. Did you miss the farm when you came to town?

A. I didn't know there was a farm when I went to town. I was living in Cantrall. Everything was farms. Our yard was ten acres right at the corner of Cantrall. It is pretty well built up now.

Q. Can you remember how different you thought Springfield was from Cantrall?

A. It didn't enter in my head. I was just happy. The next door neighbor was a bright little girl and I played with her a great deal and corresponded with her when I was four years old. I was writing her letters from Nebraska when I was four years old.

Q. Oh, after Springfield you moved to Nebraska?

A. When I came home from Nebraska I went in the fourth grade--no--yes--I went in the fifth grade at the Edwards school. It wasn't Hay-Edwards then; I went to the Edwards school. I started at the Hay school.

Q. And you left the Hay school to move to Nebraska?

A. My father was in the grain business and he went out there on a big grain deal and piled up the actual corn. E. R. Uhlrick and Son were grain dealers and he sold them on the idea this corn was so cheap--ten or maybe

---

[1]The same Harriet Cantrall who directed illustrations for The Sangamon Country by Helen Van Cleave Blankmeyer.

less cents a bushel, and he went out there and built the cribs and piled it up there. They didn't have a stock market in those days, grain markets. So he piled it up and the man that was head of it, Mr. Uhlrick died and his two sons inherited the business and wired father and told him to come home. Well, it hadn't gone up in price yet but the drought had hit and father knew that and thought it was funny and he sent back a few telegrams, something foolish. They jumped all over him and he did sell it then, after they got through with him. Then in less than a year this corn had gone up to fifty cents or better a bushel and he lost a fortune and two years of time.

Q. You were actually in Nebraska for two years?

A. Well, one year I was there and one year mother and three children stayed and I went to school in Springfield.

Q. Then when you came back from Nebraska?

A. When I came back from Nebraska, I went to the Edwards school for four grades there and Elsie Logan, who is still alive out at the Presbyterian Home, was valedictorian of the class.

Q. What did your dad do when he came back?

A. He tried to sell life insurance but he broke down in health and stayed in bed for most of the year, and we lived on my sister's salary. She had started to teach school by that time and she made not thirty dollars to start with, but she got up to thirty dollars before very long, a month not a day.

Q. Then she was maintaining a family of . . .

A. She never married and she became known in Who's Who in Art nationally. She was on a national art committee headed by sculptor Lorado Taft. She was known nationally and some of her paintings are in high schools and you have seen some in my home. She had a brilliant mind. She was salutatorian of her class in high school, but Bob Lanphier they gave the valedictorianship on half of one point.

Q. It was that close?

A. Well they said they were that close. But Bob Lanphier, the head of Sangamo Electric Company was the valedictorian.

Q. So you and Harriet actually went through all the rest of your school days here in Springfield?

A. She went to Pratt Institute in New York City in two years, and got part of her training, and the Board of Education said they couldn't give her an increase in salary because she didn't have a degree. She never said a word about it but started a correspondence course with the University of Oregon. [She] spent all her summers for three or four years and then went in and asked for this [increase] and he said, "Miss Cantrall, you know we'd give

it to you in a minute but you haven't got a degree." And she said, "What's this?" and handed it to him.

Q. And then she got her increase?

A. She got her increase.

Q. Okay. You were ten years younger than she, so tell about your schooling after you came back.

A. I graduated from high school. I never had much of a record as a student, but I was manager of the high school paper, The Capitoline, and I was business manager of the football team. Father wouldn't let me play, but I managed it and I ran on the relay team.

Q. Did you enjoy football?

A. Did I? Oh I didn't enjoy it as much as I did that dog. (laughs)

Q. Tell about some of your hunting expeditions when you were young.

A. Well, father took me. The first name, when I first shot a gun, he took me out to a comfortable place and gave me a box of shells and told me to keep on shooting. He put up a small target and I shot all afternoon while he was asleep there just letting me shoot after he told me how and guided me. That was with a rifle and later when he took me with a shot gun when I'd miss he'd say, "You shot at the bunch. You didn't pick your bird. Kill one at a time and you'll get someplace." Then I, when I hunted, food was valuable in those days to me and I would kill rabbits, take them home, and I'd dress them. Mother would hold the light (lamp) so I could dress them and I'd sell them for five or ten cents apiece dressed, per rabbit--and you don't waste many shells.

Q. That was one of the things that helped you to be a good shot, right?

A. Well then, I kept on shooting and I began to shoot ducks and Hal Smith was one of the best duck hunters around here. He was well-known; mayor of the city at one time, and he taught me quite a bit. By that time I followed him. He taught me all I wanted to know at that time. That was on duck hunting. I killed my deer in Wymoing.

Q. When did you go to Wyoming?

A. In 1903. I didn't kill deer in Wyoming. I killed it in Lake of the Wood later on. In Wyoming in 1903 you see I had been on a horse from the time I could walk. My sister and four or five others. I had a cousin Charles F. Canterbury former Sangamon County stockman in the sheep business in Wyoming who had retired, and before he sold his horses he wanted to go through Yellowstone Park. So he'd take my sister and these people and a party for so many dollars. Father said he'd pay my way out there and I would horse wrangle for the outfit for the summer at no cost at all if he would board me and take me.

Q. What is horse wrangling?

A. Horse wrangling--the last thing [you do] at night, you put your horse on a lariat and picket him out, and if the bears were there and I could hear that horse lunge all night. I'd get up and see if he was fastened tight enough and go back to sleep again. I'd keep the bears out with fire brands. I was eighteen. I'm ahead of my story. We started out all right from the town of Buffalo, Wyoming. I was at the south end of the street with two mules and two wagons and five saddle horses. Anyway we had a cook, a cowboy cook, and good cook for us. We had gotten out about five hundred miles, the horse threw my cousin [Charles Canterbury] and broke his kneecap, and the cook had to take him to the train. It was over two hundred miles to the nearest train. They were gone several days and when he [the cook] got back, he wasn't drunk, he just wanted to go to sleep. So I sat up the next night to keep the bears out of the wagon. That was actually in Yellowstone Park. I had camped right close to where the big hotel put their garbage. I didn't know that was garbage in there and every bear in Yellowstone Park was going past my wagon.

Q. Did it keep you busy all night?

A. It kept me busy all night and so then I, the cook and I, had the outfit all the way around after that.

Q. Tell what Yellowstone Park was like in 1903.

A. There was one hotel and main geyser, Old Faithful. I drove up as close as I wanted to and camped. I got my horses all around there and fed them. I went down into several dry holes with an ax and broke off pieces of anything I wanted. There was very little law in the place yet. You couldn't take an automobile in the place. When you'd meet a wagon on this one road, he'd get out and I'd get out and we'd decided who had the heaviest load and we'd take the lightest load and pile it up on the side of the hill and take it [the wagon] around to get past on the hill. That was the only way to get out of there.

Q. Did you help each other unload?

A. Oh sure! Everybody would. The women and everyone would carry blankets and chairs. You had to, to get the wagon unloaded and get it up on the side of the hill.

Q. Was this camping equipment?

A. Yes, at the back of the wagon you have the mess wagon. He lets a lid down for a cook table and there are all these shelves [a cupboard] and everything back in that wagon.

Q. Like a chuck wagon?

A. A chuck wagon. He does his cooking there on a stove and--you want to know what a wrangler was? The next morning I got up. The horses were all

hobbled. I get on my pony and round them all up and caught them, put halters on them, bring them back and put a nosebag on them. And we had to watch them always. We fed them very little grain. We counted mostly on their pasture, what little they got at night. They got pretty thin. Then I'd harness, get them in the wagons and get everybody started and then I'd walk around and pick up lost hairpins and various things and saddle my horse and catch up with them. Then I'd ride ahead and pick where we'd have water for noon and they'd camp if possible. We'd have a keg on the side of the wagon that we always kept water there. One noon I couldn't find any place to get water and I looked at the keg and they hadn't filled it; so we went without water that day.

Q. Everyone went without water all day?

A. Everyone went without water, horses and all, all day long until late at night in hot weather.

Q. How many were in your party?

A. Ten. There were four small children.

Q. This was like a family outing?

A. It was just a family proposition. They were all related. A cousin, Edith Lake, was from Cantrall. She married the preacher who got in trouble. Did you ever hear about the crooked preacher? They had a minister that wasn't any good. He boarded at their house and she married him. She went on this trip, she wasn't married then. Another lady from Springfield here and this man Charles F. Canterbury, his wife and four children, the cook, and myself.

Q. Did they hire a cook?

A. My cousin hired the cook and furnished the food. My sister and cousin and this other woman paid their share and I got mine free for looking after the horses.

Q. How did they sleep at night?

A. They had folding cots and tents but I slept on the ground. The first night I slept on a folding cot on the ground and the cook said, "You'll get frozen out on that before morning," and the next night I put my canvas down on the ground and got the rocks out of the way the best I could and went to sleep. I never got back on the cot again. He taught me it was warmer down there on the ground.

Q. Did you have to worry about rattlesnakes?

A. We killed them all around us.

Q. Would they come up at night?

A. No, I never had one get in bed with me but they say they were known to.

Q. Can you tell any incidents about any of the wild animals?

A. Yes, I took pictures. I still have pictures. By the way, I had a camera and glass plates and I rigged up a red light and I developed those plates in the back end of the wagon at night and printed the pictures and brought them back.

Q. You must have been an amateur photographer then.

A. Yes, I did a lot.

Q. Tell something about that. You took family pictures of scenery or what?

A. Everybody takes the falls and geysers. I looked constantly for wild animals. These bears came at night and I wasn't thinking about photographs and I didn't have any flashlight if I had, but I got a number of pictures of deer.

I would shoot partridge and grouse, pin-tail grouse and sage hens. I'd shoot until the gun would be so hot I could hardly hold it. I didn't care whether they were flying or anything of the kind. I just killed them to eat. I was just getting game with the fewest possible shells and I'd go back and feed this outfit. They would eat a lot of stuff. If they ate that, they were not eating hams. Then we'd come to a little stream and I'd cut them all a willow stick and get them a line and a hook and a grasshopper, and they'd all catch a bunch of trout, give them to the cook, and he and I would feed them on fish for a couple of days.

Q. And all of this was when you were about eighteen years old? Then you had had lots of experience getting along on your own in the country before you ever went on the trip.

A. Yes, I camped out when I was still in ward school. I'd take a buggy, a kind of patched up old buggy. Father would let me take this horse and buggy and drive to Torrence Mill which was fifteen miles from Springfield and take these others, three boys, four of us would go. Most of us had to walk most of the time. There wasn't room but we got ahold of enough money, we thought, to feed us for a week. We got out there and ran out of food.

Q. Now where was that?

A. At Torrance's Mill on the south fork of Sangamon River. So we got busy and fished and sold the fish and bought some bread from a woman and ate a lot of fish ourselves and stayed another week. We stayed two weeks out there and he [my dad] never saw his horse. [He] just trusted me to see that it was watered and fed out there. We slept under a canvas on the ground then.

Q. How old were you then?

A. I suppose twelve or thirteen.

Q. You and your father must have had a very special relationship.

A. We did. He was perfect as far as I was concerned and Mother the same way. I never heard either one of them ever have words. We just didn't have any words around the house. We just went in there at night and the table was where we had our fun and the food was simple.

Q. Tell something about fun around the table. The evening meal was a very special time?

A. I'd generally relate something I'd done during the day. This is a true story. Lightning had struck so near me that it had thrown me clear over on the dashboard. My head was hanging down by the horse when I came to. I caught hold of myself and pulled back and I got back in the buggy and went on home. And Mother said, "Evans, you've got to be careful," and Dad said, "Don't you go playing around with lightning. You'll get in trouble." (laughs) That was a sample of it. In conversations we just told what went on during the day and my sister Harriet came home and said there was a child that stunk so she could hardly stay in the room. She sent her home so her mother would give her a bath. She [the mother] sent word back that she couldn't because she was sewed up for the winter!

Q. Oh! Explain that.

A. They put their underclothes on them and stitched them tight and they stayed there until spring.

Q. Were most of the families doing that then?

A. It was common and you would see the people in all these farm houses around here took a bath Saturday night if they were real cleanly people and had a big tub and would heat the water on a cook stove in the kitchen. They'd take turns about going in there taking a bath in that tub.

Q. In the same water?

A. Oh I guess they'd change it once in a while.

Q. It was family night to use the tub, was that it?

A. There wasn't any. I lived in a house there--Father had the thoughtfulness to get it in a very nice neighborhood, Walnut and Edwards, right across from Westminster Presbyterian Church. We lived right across the street from it and paid fifteen dollars a month for it, but the toilet arrangements were about three hundred feet from the house down in the coal shed. I don't know just how long it was when I started, but I saw to it that the coal was carried up to the house and the kindling cut so that Father never had to. Anyway, I could go play baseball or anything I wanted to, but I had to do that [carry coal and chop wood] before I went to bed, and half the time I did it with a lantern. I'd carry up all the coal that mother was going to burn in the kitchen and that he was going to burn in the base burner. We had a coal, hard coal, base burner in the living room and there had to be

enough coal in there to burn the whole day until I got home the next night. That was my job and I just accepted it. When it came to cutting the grass, it was just my job and I accepted. When I wanted to go fishing I'd ask and Father would say, "Have you got the grass cut?" and I'd say, "Yes." "Coal in? Sure you can go fishing, as long as you get everything done. But you'd better be sure of it though." But I didn't think I was abused or anything about it.

After I went to work I had the same feeling. I was going to go to the World's Fair. The boys rapped on the window and said, "Hurry up, we aren't going to make it." I said, "I can't go. The boss said last night that he wants me to do something today." They said, "Hell, you've got a vacation coming." I said, "I know it, but I've got a check coming too, and I want to keep it."

Q. Now when was that?

A. That was when I was out of high school.

Q. Now, let's start your first year out of high school. Tell about your first job.

A. In the first place, I had a job every Saturday all through high school, a good deal of the time selling something. I'll start back . . . maybe when I was in Ward school. I started . . . My father wouldn't let me drive a cart for the grocery store, but I got a job making crates for the berries and I got so much for making them and I could turn them out in nothing flat. I'd go down there, then I carried newspapers when I was in high school. I used to wash buggies on Saturdays. I'd get twenty-five cents a buggy and polish it. I always had money in my pocket.

If Father would want a sack of tobacco he'd give me a dollar or he might give me five, he didn't have many of them, but he'd never ask for the change back. The next week if there was anything that had to be bought for the horses or anything hauled away, cinders or anything, I was supposed to keep track and pay for it. That wasn't my money. I had money all the time.

Q. You helped control the family finances?

A. Everybody did.

Q. After you graduated from high school, you got a job right away then?

A. Yes, the first thing I went to work at Vredenburgs. Father had known Vrendenburg all his life. They were always very close friends. Vredenburg always said Father had saved his life on a hunting expedition. The year I was born, they put off going to Arkansas until they were sure I was born. The week after I was born, Father left and Mother didn't see him. He go down in the floods of Arkansas, and she didn't see him for a month.

Q. What did they go to Arkansas for?

A. Deer. Now where was I?

Q. You got your first job with Vredenburg?

A. Oh, there were two bookkeepers there that wrote a Spencerian hand that was perfect, like steel engraving. So they put me in to help them. Well, what I did with their books! They gave me a bunch of bills to get out. It would take them a day to get out six. I'd get them out in thirty minutes. You couldn't read them but I understand they never could collect anything. Vredenburg had all the credit in the world, but the way the town ran I started out to collect these bills. I went to Ferguson China store. They'd says, "Yes, that's all right, we'll give him credit for it on his bill." So the next place I went, "Yes, that's all right, we'll give him credit." and that was the way I didn't collect. Somebody collected sometime I guess, mostly when they died.

L. C. Taylor was a doctor at that time. Everyone thought he was the leading doctor in Springfield. If the governor came there, they always recommended that he get him. Taylor never sent out a bill to anyone, and they just piled up. People couldn't settle estates because a lawyer would dun him and they couldn't get a bill. Finally they'd get a bill. I had a friend of mine who told Taylor he'd collect bills for him while he [Taylor] was gone. So Taylor gave him a whole bunch of these to collect, and when he got back, they had given him notes, no money, all kinds of thing. So I had the fellow examined later. He said, "Doctor what did you ever do with those notes?" He [Dr. Taylor] said, "I've got them over here," and he went over and got them out of the pile.

Q. He hadn't ever gotten his money?

A. No. He had enough cash of people that would pay. He never accepted a dime from a prostitute if he knew it. He was just an eccentric old bachelor, but he left quite a little money in spite of himself.

Anyway, I told you I was on the streetcar and a man who was superintendent of the electric company was on there one day. It was embarrassing as the dickens to me, he asked, "How much are you getting paid?" I said, "I'm getting twenty dollars every month." and there was nothing said about hours. He said, "I'll pay you more than that. Come down and see me tomorrow." He got off the car. I told Vredenburg, the bookkeepers were tickled to death. Everybody was happy, so I went over to the other place. I worked a couple of weeks and went in and said, "I think I ought to have an idea of something I'm going to get, don't you Mr. Schroeder?" He said, "I guess. What did you say you had? I'll give you thirty dollars." He went on and didn't pay any more attention to me. That was all that was said.

Q. What electric company was this?

A. Electric Light and Power of Springfield at that time. They owned the streetcar company, the electric light company, the gas company, the heating company. The town was heated with steam. There were steam pipes running all through the streets of Springfield and you bought steam heat for all your office buildings.

Q. So they had the heating and lighting pretty well supplied for Springfield?

A. They had all the utilities of Springfield--not the water works. It wasn't in it.

Q. What did you do for the electric company?

A. I had charge of the storeroom and another yarn you might want to hear--I had to buy all the coal, not buy it but order and distribute all the coal that was contracted for. They'd tell me they didn't want clean coal but the cheapest coal they could get would be duff. These coal haulers were the lowest type people you could consider. They'd [the company] just gave them a few dollars for themselves and their team of horses. They'd take this coal in a little wagon down to the electric light company and dump it to make all the electricity made in the city of Springfield. I don't know how many. There was a whole bunch of them and they were a tough bunch. Everything was tough. I'll have to go back a ways.

The order came down that the linemen hadn't kept track of their pay and they had to turn in a time sheet every night and sign it. Bob Flanagan, a good Irish friend of mine, couldn't read or write and couldn't make one out, so I got hold of Bob and night after night I taught Bob how to write. We made out his sheets and turned them in. So Schroeder told me afterward, he was really literally going to see me get beat up. I told this bunch of coal haulers if they brought any more clean coal and didn't haul duff coal like I told them to, I'd dock them. And the next morning there'd come a load of duff coal in and I'd dock them. They all met and had a gathering, and the second day it went on, Schroeder said he and the girls were all in the windows waiting to see me get beat up. I didn't know anything about it, but Flanagan said the toughest men in those days were the linemen, the men that went out and went up these poles at night to repair damage from a sleet storm. It was about as dangerous a job as you could get. They weren't afraid of anything. And so Flanagan told his men to tell the coal miners to do what I said--or else.

Q. You didn't get beat up?

A. No, I didn't get beat up, and I didn't know for a long while after that. Schroeder--I'd gotten well-acquainted with him at that time--called me in and fired me.

Q. Tell about that.

A. Well, he said, "You know how much I'm paying you, that's all you can get out of this company. I'm a college graduate and I'm head of this whole outfit, so I'm going to fire you so you can go to school and get one hundred fifty dollars a month and you are getting all I can pay you. Get out of here and get an education!" So I quit and I went to school for a year and half. The second year I was over there . . .

Q. Tell where you went and what you took.

A. I went to Champaign.

Q. And you were studying what?

A. Civil engineering and I joined a fraternity.

Q. What fraternity was it?

A. Phi Gamma Delta.

Q. What was fraternity life like then?

A. Well, Phi Gamma Delta was strict. How I got in I don't know. A fellow from Springfield met me at the Y.M.C.A. [Young Men's Christian Association] I didn't have any pull. He met me at the Y.M.C.A. He talked to me a while and said, "We're going to initiate this whole bunch here and so"--Bob Evans was his name--the next thing I knew I was at the Phi Gam house and he was sponsoring me all the way through and I was in the Phi Gam. That was about all there was to it--a little more but not much.

At that time and to this day, they are strong on athletes. They are very strict on their habits. I never saw a drink of whiskey taken while I was there. I doubt if they do, maybe they take a little beer, but when I was there they didn't do any of it. They rented a three story frame house and we all slept at night in the attic of this thing, on cots in the attic scattered all over. We paid seven dollars a week for board and room in a fraternity house and most of the boys, or several of them, couldn't [afford it]; so they went out and worked and got their meals at another fraternity house. They would wait on tables at another fraternity house to get their money.

Anyway, one of these men, a senior, graduated and became a prominent engineer with the interurban, Illinois Transit System. When I got out of school that summer, I went up to his office and asked for a job. He was awfully sorry that he didn't have any opening and I said, "You know I'm studying civil engineering." He said, "I haven't got anything." He let me get clear to the door and said, "I've got a job greasing switch lamps and there's a hand car out here to get to them." I said, "How much does it pay?" and he told me and I said, "That is more than I expected to get in civil engineering. I'll take it."

Q. How much was it? Do you remember?

A. I don't know, but it was pretty decent pay. Everything was down and I expect I got fifteen dollars a week. But anyway, I worked for him on the Springfield line and he told me that he wanted me to go over and build the Mechanicsburg line. He had gotten me off the greasing switch lamps by that time and I said I don't know enough to run the curves. He said, "Do you know anyone who does over there [at University of Illinois]?" I said, "Yes," and he said, "Bring him over and he'll get the job," and I did.

Q. What line was this you were building?

A. From Rochester over to Mechanicsburg. A little branch over there. It is all torn up by now. This was a big thing. It ran all the way from Champaign to St. Louis and went right past my office in Springfield, down Monroe Street of our town to St. Louis.

Q. That was a summer job?

A. That was a summer job. And so next summer--I had gone back to school--he wanted me and he told me what he was going to do, what job exactly, where it was. He had confidence in me by that time. But my uncle got ahold of me and sold me on the idea of going into the insurance business. He was a very successful stockyard man. I wrote and told him I wouldn't be back and in about six months he came in and wanted to know how I was getting along. I told him I was doing fine. I was making an existence was about all in the insurance business. He said, "I want to hire you to run the Clinton Gas Works," and I said, "What has that got to do with me?" See he remembered back to those coal haulers and all. He said, "You can handle men and you don't know a damned thing about gas. I'll tell you everything to do and I can pay you one hundred twenty-five dollars a month if you'll go up and manage the Clinton Gas Company." But I said, "That would be all right, but if you died wouldn't I be a smart boy sitting up there telling them what I didn't know!" I said, "No, I'm going to stay in the insurance business." So I sold him a life insurance policy and he died in less than twelve months and I would have been out. So you see what little I have got was due to the fact that I stayed with what I started.

Q. Now this was at the end of your second year?

A. I hadn't finished my second year. No, I was only about half finished on my second year.

Q. So you left school and came back to go into the insurance business?

A. I left college and came back and went into the insurance business.

Q. Was that your dad's insurance business?

A. You see, you don't own a business. He was an agent, a salesman in charge of it. When he died it was just gone. There wasn't anything to inherit. But the man who hired him had hired another man immediately, and he had tried to get me to come, and I had never given him any encouragement at all. I walked in and told him I wanted to go to work for him, he about fell over. He told me I'd have to work under this other fellow and I said no I wouldn't work under him I'd work for myself. I told him I didn't want anything to do with this fellow any longer, and if he'd put me in charge I'd pay my own rent. I said, "I'll work for you for twelve months whether I make my living or not."

Q. Now that was when you were just a real young man, right?

A. Twenty-one.

Q. And that was the beginning of your career in the insurance business?

A. I was the first man to move into the Ferguson Building. They took my desk off the alley and lifted it up and set it in the office, poured the floor around my desk and I couldn't use it for a few days.

Q. That was about 1906?

A. January, 1907. I was working out of that office and I went down to Virden or Chatham someplace down there and got home late at night. [I] was awfully tired, but the interurban came from St. Louis and went right by the Ferguson Building on Monroe Street. I stepped off and went up to my office and finished up what I had to do and began to realize that things were not right. There was not a sound of any kind and so I closed things down and went down back over to what was the old Dodd's Corner, well, at Fifth and Monroe--everything centered at Fifth and Monroe. The streetcars left there. That was the main headquarters and so I went down there to get a streetcar to go home. And there was a streetcar standing there but there wasn't anyone on it.

By that time I could hear, they were throwing bricks. The owner of a restaurant right around the corner had taken the fellow that they accused--it was an old Negro that they had accused of molesting a white woman. I've forgotten what. Here they came down past the streetcar and went on west on Monroe Street. There was a big sporting goods house there then, Payne's Gun Store. All the ammunition and guns in Springfield were there. I don't know why they didn't break into it, but they just didn't have the nerve enough and they didn't do it. They liked Payne, everybody liked him. Many of them traded with him, so they went on down the street, west on Monroe and turned on Spring Street to Edwards and I was sitting on this streetcar by myself. I was going to ride home I guess. I had more nerve or something.

Q. You didn't really realize what was going on?

A. Yes, I did. By that time I knew I was in a mob but I was behind it and riding so I decided to stay on the car. Well, we went out to Edwards and Spring and they stopped there and across the street was the Edwards school that I had gone to. Across the street was this Negro who had married a white girl and they went over and got him that night and they were hanging him to a tree. Later on they cut the tree up for samples and a crowd in Springfield had a little sample of that tree. Then I slipped off and went down, I had to walk clear out ot West Grand Avenue [now McArthur].

Q. You didn't actually see . . .

A. I didn't see it. I saw them struggling with this man and I read and saw the spot and everything.

Q. And you went to the back of where the crowd was and hurried home?

A. Yes, they were all everywhere and all I had to do was go on out this way, Edwards Street, and clear on out where I lived. So a day or two after that they called a meeting of the Chamber of Commerce and I'm telling you that was a serious-minded thing. Bill Butler was one of the best pistol shots in Springfield and he had charge of the National Guard unit two or three times, all of that kind of stuff, and so everybody was talking about what they were going to do about this. He said, "I'll tell you what I'm going to do. My colored men are going to be on my lawn tonight and I'll kill any white man that comes across the yard." The fellow next to him said he would, too! No one laughed or joked anything about it. Well, Henry Nelch was there--Nelch of the cement people. Now to this day--last I knew--for years they didn't have a bit of trouble getting help. They stood by and guarded their men. There were bodies thrown into boxcars. I never saw one of them.

Harry C. Luchks, loan agent who was with Northwestern, he and I were very close, he was down that night. I think he was a bigger fool then I was. He was down there right around in it over at Bressmer's corner and there was, he called him a little half-wit in the National Guard, just a young kid, and he was standing there with his rifle. And he [Luchks] said, "Buddy, you wouldn't shoot me would you?" And he said, "Not unless the captain said to."

Q. The National Guard had been called out?

A. The National Guard was there then in the city. The red light district--you see they burned up a number of the houses over there. They were easy to get to and they burned those up.

Q. The mob did?

A. Yes, and most of the burning went on in the northeast part and these other men like Nelch and others, were armed and they knew they meant business and they were protecting the colored fellows at night. They didn't call them colored fellows, but anyway . . .

Q. So the business men were really trying to protect the blacks?

A. Business men knew then what they were talking about and they proved it later. This fellow they were trying to kill and that the restraurant man had spirited out of town, he was innocent as anybody could be and the white woman had lied about the whole thing. And so it all started about her lying about the whole thing. Well, unless you've been through one, you don't know what it is nor the feeling. At night we didn't know, in our own homes, just who was coming in or going on or when we would be called out or how we would be called out or anything about it. Anyway, it was handled pretty well.

Q. How long did it take the National Guard to get there after they were called in?

A. You see, we had a troup in town so I suppose the chances are the governor or someone ordered them out while I was on the streetcar. My

guess is that men were going to the armory then to get their guns. I don't know anything about that. Later I was in the National Guard. I wasn't either. The National Guard was called out and we formed what we called the Home Guard. The business men of the town drilled there and they made me captain.

Q. Was that to take the place of the National Guard?

A. Yes, that took the place of the National Guard.

Q. Tell about that, the Home Guard.

A. The Home Guard, you can't mention a prominent man in town hardly who wasn't in it.

Q. What year was that?

A. This was the first world war. You see, I had advanced with my company [Northwestern Mutual] until they were going to make me general agent for this part of the state, but I didn't have any books or anything to show for it. They couldn't get these down there so I wanted to enlist before they did. As soon as the home office got my general agent's books and equipment to me and the office going I volunteered for officer's training camp.

I had a wonderful office manager, Grace Long, and I told her, "I'm leaving and you are in charge. If you want to take the books back to Milwaukee now you can do it, but we have started the office." She had been with me--it was her first job out of school at seven dollars a week. When she left to get married she was second if not first highest paid girl in Springfield. There was a girl in a law office who was practically a lawyer, and she could get more than my manager. But this girl, everyone in town knew her, the banks knew her. She just stood ace high with the company. They asked her advice all the time. She rated tops.

Q. She was your secretary?

A. She was my private secretary.

Q. And you left her in charge of the office when you went into service?

A. The company had confidence and let the office run with her in charge of it.

Q. And you went off to World War I?

A. I went off to the army without any agents or anything else.

Q. What about going to the army?

A. I was captain of the Home Guard that drilled there. If there had been a riot or anything we would have been the ones to go instead of the National Guard. I went down to St. Louis. My sister and I went down on the train

and I went off the next day down to Louisville and walked up and told them I was in the army. I presented my credentials allowing me to enter Field Artillery Officers Training School.

Q. Had you enlisted?

A. I had enlisted in the artillery. I had been the captain of this infantry and it would have been a cinch for me to get to be an officer in the infantry, but I again, a fool in love with a horse, wanted to ride a horse. There was all horse drawn artillery in those days. Well anyway, I signed an agreement to get into this artillery. They dropped one out of our men every week. One out of four would not graduate. They eliminated the whole thing. If you failed you were in the army as a private, subject to any kind of duty. They could make you a cook or a garbage tender or anything else. Now you have your pick of service and all kind of things.

Anyway, I went ahead and graduated in this school. It was the toughest thing I ever went through but I made it.

Q. You became what then?

A. I became a first lieutenant of artillery and the war was over by that time. I got home and I stayed in reserve [United States Reserve] for over twenty years, and was subject to call at any time. When I was 56 years old, they called me back and I went up to the home office and told them that I had to go back into the army again. I just scared the life out of them because they were all younger than I was and they thought they were going to call all of them if they were going to take me.

Q. What were you called back for?

A. They wanted me to be an artillery officer. So I reported as ordered. I knew a little bit about the game at that time, so I didn't go up to the first lieutenant I saw. I picked the colonel who seemed to be idle. I went in and told him my story. He said, "Do you want a job?" and I said, "I've got a job now that is a pretty good job." He said, "You aren't worth a darn in the army. There isn't a horse in the army, but if you want in, they'll take you and put you out at a desk with a colonel's pay." I was so old, they had to make me a colonel. Anyway, I didn't want to be a colonel, I just wanted to be left alone. So I never did resign. The next thing I knew, I got a book that I was retired. I have a dream every once in a while that they are going to call me and I'm going to have trouble explaining. Now what do you want to know?

Q. You came back from World War I, then you went back into your insurance? That would be about 1918?

A. 1919. I started in the insurance business, but I didn't have a full time agent. I had territory but no agents. I had to begin to get agents.

Q. Were you still a general agent?

A. Yes, I had been made a general agent by that time. A general agent means that you can appoint other men, and if they produce and you are careful about how you invest money with them, you can make some money.

Q. And you had a certain territory. Tell about some of your travels around your territory.

A. Edna [his wife] would take me down to the train of a Monday morning, the B&O. I'd go down to Pana and change trains there, and then I'd go over to Lawrenceville and change trains there. Then I'd go the third place, get down into some of the counties south of there, and then I'd get back Friday night if I could. If I didn't, I'd get back when I could. Sometimes it would be another week, but not very often.

Q. Did you do most of your travelling by train?

A. I had to. There wasn't anything else. Well, I began to drive an automobile a little later. It was several years before roads in my territory were good enough to travel far. This was just the beginning of the automobile business. So I wnet out and wrote a policy in the country to a pretty well-to-do farmer and he said, "Cantrall, for God's sake, take some of your commission and buy a car. Don't ever come out again with the outfit you've got." I had rented this thing at a livery stable, this horse and buggy to drive out to his farm. Incidentally, he bought too many cars and lost his farm. But I bought a second-hand car, the first one I had.

Q. Tell about your first car.

A. Well, I had a very close friend. He had bought this car. I was a coward, afraid to crank an old Ford. That thing backfired and broke more arms than anything that ever happened. Anyway, they came out with a self-starter. It was a crude thing. You'd pull the thing like this (motions) and get it going. It worked but the car would heat, so this fellow got rid of it and the real estate man, Troxell, bought it. He traded for it. So he said, "Don't buy that. It is a lemon." I said, "Is there anything wrong with it besides the heat?" "No." "Well, we can get a radiator or something to cool it." I had two lots at that time that I didn't value very highly, but anyway, I traded them for this second-hand car and bought a radiator that was big enough for it and never had a bit of trouble. I drove it for a good while and then I made a deal with a new car dealer that I would buy a new car every year, give him 25 percent. I'd never pay for a new tire, new paint, nothing of any kind. I'd just give him 25 percent and drive out a new car. I did that for eight years.

Q. Was that like a lease?

A. No, it wasn't at all. Let's say the price was two thousand dollars, then I'd give him one-fourth of that or five hundred dollars and I'd pay that five hundred dollars for the trade of my old car. He'd take my old car and five hundred dollars and give me a new car.

Q. You did that automatically every year?

A. I did it for eight years.

Q. Did he pay for the maintenance?

A. No, I paid the maintenance--my own gasoline and all. It was my car and I could have traded with anyone else if I had wanted to. It wasn't any lease.

Well, I went then and there was a Jewish fellow that sold Cadillacs and Oldsmobiles. I tried to buy a Cadillac and he talked me out of it. He said I was a darned fool and I think I would have been. I bought an Oldsmobile and I don't know how many I've had. I've got two now and I've had nothing but Oldsmobiles ever since he kept me from buying a more expensive car.

Q. So you built up the insurance business until you were a pretty busy man?

A. Very.

Q. Did you travel all this time?

A. Yes, I had 32 counties and in the meantime we have a standing committee which runs the politics of the Agents' Association. I was on that for several years and then they made me vice-president, then they made me president of this agents' association. That was a national and it was in 1936.

Q. What did you do as president of the association?

A. I had charge of the meeting. We had this big convention in Milwaukee.

Q. Now what was the name of the insurance company?

A. The Northwestern Mutual Life of Milwaukee.

Q. Was it the Northwestern Mutual of the whole United States that you were president of?

A. Yes. All the agents. At that time there were about one hundred general agents and about two thousand agents who were members of the association. Now there are 110 agencies and three thousand agents.

Q. How do you think the insurance business has changed since you were a general agent?

A. It has changed. There are men now writing--several of them will write--as much in a month as any one of these large agencies, New York or Chicago. They will write in a day what would have been written in a year. One man, lately, has written nineteen million on nineteen lives. He sold nineteen men a million apiece.

Q. That's considered big business?

A. Oh that makes even the big businesses like Franklin so insignificant compared to what this is. There is no comparison. We are still only about seventh in size, but you see we limit ourselves. All insurance men understand it--we don't write any group insurance at all where they cover great masses like Metropolitan and Prudential. And we don't write any industrial insurance where they get the five and ten cents a week.

When I was in the business, of course it is all forgotten now, I worked several years when a boy had to be twenty years old and they wouldn't take him at nineteen [as a policy holder].

Q. Tell some of the restrictions when you were a general agent.

A. The age, then only the last few years that I was there would they write a woman at all. For many, many years--twenty-five or more--they wouldn't write a woman. They wouldn't write anyone under twenty years part of that time. I don't remember the years. We were the first company to use the blood pressure instrument.

Q. Explain that, too.

A. We had a man who had studied it and knew what he was talking about. He said all companies would eventually come to blood pressure, so we put in a rule that those examined for Northwestern had to have blood pressure taken. I went out and not many [doctors] had them [blood pressure instruments]. Oh, men like L. C. Taylor would have them, but I'd go into a small town like Edinburg or Pawnee and they wouldn't have one and I'd have to persuade him to buy one, and I'd have to show him how to use it.

Q. So some of the small town doctors had to be convinced that they needed to take blood pressure?

A. It wasn't only them. Some of your leading doctors in Springfield didn't believe in blood pressure. One of them, a very prominent man, got very mad at me. His son is now practicing medicine in Springfield. He got mad at me because the company turned him down because he had high blood pressure.

Q. Why was there this controversy?

A. Well, they had the same kind of controversy between two prominent surgeons. Dr. Charlie Patton was a prominent, well-educated surgeon. He went to one school. Dr. Don Deal, our chief examiner, went to another school. One believed in draining a gall bladder and the other believed in removing it. Deal believed in taking it out and getting rid of it. Patton believed in draining it. And that was the kind of thing they were arguing about in medicine in those days--more than they do today.

Now if a question like that comes up, it is pretty well settled. There

are still companies, however, that will take risks that we won't take. They will take a man with higher blood pressure or higher weight. There are opinions of these different companies, but Northwestern continues to rank number one in cost and mortality and several things. But they--that's it.

Q. Along the way you got very interested in farming. Tell about your interest in farming.

A. Mr. Luchks was the loan agent for Northwestern, and he and I hunted together. He had entire charge of making loans on real estate for this whole area around here. When we would be out--I've always been interested [in farming]. When I was a boy, I'd spend my summers when I wasn't working, when I had a day off or anything, I'd go out to my aunt's, on the farm that I now own, and spend a day or a week or whatever it was.

Mr. Luchks became possibly one of the best informed at appraising farm land and farm loans in this part of the country. He was good enough that after he retired at 65, the Marine Bank hired him and in the meantime, he had developed a young man under him, Phillip Vance. He's still alive in Springfield and the Marine Bank hired him and he quit Northwestern. He gave up his pension; it looked like his future to go with the Marine Bank. But he became, in the trust department, the head of their farm operations. I don't know what they had then but today they've got right at one hundred thousand acres that they manage. He taught me a great deal plus this natural desire.

So when I met Joseph S. Graham and his wife in Maldner's one day, this old man who had been a successful farmer but had lost his money through poor off-the-farm investments, was crying practically. I said, "What's the matter?" and he said, "I'm going to lose my farm." I said, "Why?" "Well," he said, "I've lived all my life on the farm and my father never deeded the house to me. I just lived in it and owned this other farm and now he's dead and we've got to divide it up and I haven't any money to pay for where I live and can't sell the one I own." It was the bottom of the depression and I said--I thought about it--"What do you want for it?" And he told me and I said, "I'll buy it." He said, "Don't joke about this," And I said, "I've hunted over every inch of it. There isn't anybody knows it like I do, I'll buy it."

Q. Now where was this?

A. Twelve miles north of Springfield. So we went over to Barber and Barber's office and closed up the deal and I went home that night and told Edna, "I've bought a farm." And she said, "Has it got a nice picnic spot on it?" There isn't a place where a rabbit could hide on it--on that particular piece.

Q. How many acres?

A. One hundred forty-one that first piece.

Q. About how much did you have to pay for it at that time?

A. I'd rather not say, but land was selling--the piece of land across the road at one time sold for seventy-five dollars an acre. I paid more later. I wasn't interested enough to ask who bought it. That was during the depression of the 1930's, see? I didn't buy this until 1937 and it had moved up, and then the bottom had dropped out again and went still lower. A lot of people who bought when I did, thought they could buy it on a string and they lost what they put in. Then it wasn't long after that until I had a chance to buy another piece adjoining mine. Edna Cantrall, through this inheritance of Levi's--our mutual grandfather who settled in Sangamon County in 1819. . . . See this first piece I'm talking about, this old anut inherited it. Joe Graham had bought that from his brother, but it was one of those pieces that Levi gave his children. He gave another piece to another brother and he died and left it to a son. The son had a daughter named Edna Cantrall. They had all lost everything by that time, and so she had to sell it and she deeded it to Edna Cantrall--from Edna Cantrall Periboom to Edna Cantrall. Then it went along another four or five years and there was another piece of land south of me and I bought it.

Q. Did it adjoin your land?

A. It adjoined it. Somebody said that I never wanted any except that which adjoined me.

Q. Pretty good idea, wasn't it? How many acres was in that?

A. Altogether there are 518 acres.

Q. Then you were in business, right?

A. No, because we played along with a reasonable number of hogs and now the man who was with me seventeen years retired. He was Henry Graham. He's the one you can borrow the book from. Anyway, at the end of seventeen years he retires and I got this fine young couple there. He was ambitious and wanted to raise more hogs, so I raised more hogs and I'm raising better than five times as many hogs as well as a small cow herd and extensive grain business.

Q. Now you are in a new hog business now?

A. That's right.

Q. Tell how it's done--this new method.

A. It's very scientific. The ideal place. Their feet never touch the ground. The sow runs loose until she's going to have pigs then she's taken to her confinement and her pigs are kept on the floor, some of it warm, some not. Then it's all slatted. The manure all falls through into this pit.

Q. Is it a completely new method of raising hogs?

A. People have been experimenting on it. I asked a man one time, a well-known hog man, "I'm interested in what he's doing and I'd like to go over with you." He said, "By the time we'd get there it would be more than likely out-of-date." And that's about what it has been in the past. It's beginning to simmer down now. They've been experimenting on the slatted floor with tank beneath to catch manure and all liquids. They had planned to run it out into tanks outside and let that run into the creek. But the environmentalists are taking care of that now. You can have only so many hogs within so many feet of a creek.

Q. So you've had problems to work out?

A. All of those things had to be worked out.

Q. We'll spend some more time later going back.

END OF TAPE

Q. Evans, we've been talking about the land that you bought that totals 518 acres and recently you've been starting a new hog enterprise which you discussed our last session. Now let's go back to the time when you originally bought the land in depression times.

A. I bought the first piece of land very unexpectedly by meeting the owner. This owner was the son, in what they thought those days, was a wealthy man. But the land had gone down and he was living in this house with the windows out, rags stuffed in the windows and boards loose on the fence and barn because he didn't have nails and boards to fix it. He knew how it should be done, but hadn't done it. So a day or two after we completed the sale, I went out and the first thing I said to the wife, "You've got a big heavy vine here over the roof of the porch which is rotting it away and I'll have to take it down. She tells us afterward that, "I could have hated you. That was my prize vine and I thought that was the first thing you were going to do." I said, "Now, I want to put a new roof on here and insulate it so that you can stand to cook in here. You have to have an insulated roof over your head."

Well, she began to see it different and I went outside then and went back and asked her if she had an ax. She said, "Yes, what are you going to do?" I just swung it and knocked a hole in the basement door and she said, "Evans, are you crazy?" I said, "No, we've got termites here and all this woodwork has to be torn out anyway, and it down't make any difference where I cut the hole." I was just doing it to see where it was rotten. So we had to put in new steps and cellar door and I had had a good deal of experience with termites and I knew what I was doing. So I looked around then and said, "The chimney is likely to burn your house down any day and we'll have to get a new chimney immediately. So we got the new chimney. I went out and said, "These trees have to

come down. They're soft maple and they are all hollow. Any one of them could ruin your house and all your children." So we took the trees down.

We went out to the barn. I said, "Henry, what have you got the horses for?" He didn't know--he just loved those two old horses and he had bought a tractor and was plowing with the tractor and the horses were still eating hay. I said, "I can't force you to do it, but I'd sell them." He said that I went ahead and arranged the sale of his horses, but I kept their good will along with this thing.

I went on over to the quarry and contracted for them to haul in lime. No, I didn't go to the quarry I got free lime from the sewage treatment system of Springfield. We could haul it out there if we'd haul it, so I paid for the hauling and got my first lime that way. Then the government began to pay part of the lime if you would put it on. I knew it wasn't going to be as fast as I wanted it, so I bought what I knew it needed regardless of what the government did. I took what they gave me. At the end of the year I think I lacked two hundred fifty dollars or more of even coming out even. You see no one could have bought it and moved on there and farmed it and done that. They had to live.

Q. What made it possible for you to?

A. I could do it from my earnings.

Q. By having another income?

A. I had my own income and it didn't make too much difference if I got this farm income or didn't. I went ahead then. You see I had read and studied and knew certain things. I wanted to get lime on there so I could grow sweet clover. Sweet clover was practically unknown to furnish nitrogen for the soil. I had him put in oats the next year with sweet clover in it and then we let that lay over in those days until the next year and plowed it under. Now you can't afford to do that. Your artificial fertilizer is cheaper than you can grow clover, or even sweet clover.

Q. What did the neighbors think of you raising sweet clover?

A. Well, they stopped in there and said, "Evans, you're just sowing weeds, do you know that? That's the hardest thing in the world to get rid of, that sweet clover." Then I told them, "Yes, I remember when these roads were lined with sweet clover and you stamped it all out, plowed it up and did everything to get rid of all that sweet clover that was a natural for that soil." From Athens out to that farm were banks of sweet clover in the early days.

This farm was known far and wide as Prairie Chicken Knob. It was the highest of any place for several miles. It was on this farm where that little house was. The prairie chicken would nest up there and get their eggs out of the water of the swamp all around it before it would rain.

I went out to the fence and said, "Henry, you've got this fence here with a road on each side. You go out to the field on this side and you've got a fence on the other side. Let's decide which one we are going to have and then put the fence in where we want it."

When you buy a farm everything becomes yours. The tile that is fifty years old--you still are buying the tile. It has a life of depreciation that has to be figured in. No matter what the fence is like, you've bought the fence. You can tear it down and build and repair that fence and put it in depreciation.

But I've put several acres into cultivation. There was a little orchard out there on this little bit of a place and he had three or four apple trees scattered around on it. Cows and all did graze there, but we took the trees out and put it in corn the next year. That ground had never been broken up from the time it had been entered from the government. They had put an orchard in there and here was the richest piece of ground on the farm that wasn't being used at all.

That place didn't have hardly a place that needed a runway but I put in one of the first grass runways of any width. They all tried to have them too narrow, and I put in a good wide one that covered the whole thing. This tile had been farmed over and had washed off so that a truck driving almost any place would break through this tile. So I had to make the grass runway on top of the tile until it could fill in again on the grass and all so it could support a farm implement.

Q. Now, that was a grass waterway?

A. That's called a grass waterway.

Q. Did you have to do anymore tiling?

A. There was constant repairing. It was well tiled except they were in bad shape. It wasn't so noticeable there but after I bought the piece next to it the outlet where that tile was supposed to run in the tile was over two feet below the mud that ran into the creek. There wasn't any water running through the tile at all. It couldn't get out and it began to dig holes in the gullies and so we had to open up all of those. This is the piece now that adjoined it. There was a creek that meandered through it with willows on both sides and I put a dredge line in and made a straight shoot so all these tile had a place to get out and drain. I put quite a number of acres into cultivation from that.

Q. What kind of farm did you consider that, a stock farm or grain farm?

A. It was purely a grain farm. He had more cows than he needed for the place. The children had plenty of milk but they had more than they needed. It was just the old way of farming. He worked hard. He was one of the most progressive farmers. That is the reason that I kept him on there. I kept him for seventeen years and moved him over to the other farm, then we put the farm hand in the house that he lived in until it burned down.

That house burned down and there was an old barn there that we weren't using at all. When I got over there the house was nearly gone, but they said to me that they had saved the barn. I had insurance on the barn. If they had left it alone, I could have collected on the barn.

Q. What were prices like when you bought the farm--farm produce.

A. I can't remember too well, but corn was under fifty cents a bushel and everybody thought that if they got fifty bushels to the acre that was something to look forward to--what you were going to get. When I bought the piece of land east, the second piece I bought, there was a big agricultural company that was handling it for the owner, this girl that sold it to Edna. She [her husband] had turned it over and they wrote him and said that if he'd spend so much on fertilizer next year, they could guarantee that he'd get thirty bushels of corn an acre on that ground. In three years I had produced a hundred bushels of corn per acre.

Q. By doing what?

A. Fertilizing and drainage. We began using hybrids. I didn't have all to do with this by any manner of means except that I bought the best seed I could buy. Henry would go along with me, and I don't know how he did it. He had to strain all the time to keep in stride with me. When I first suggested that we pay seven dollars a bushel for corn, he thought I was crazy, but he'd go along with me. So we bought expensive seed and expensive fertilizer and it paid off. You see the war was still on and we sold a little of that corn the second year for two dollars a bushel.

Q. Was that World War II?

A. No, World War I, get that straight! I wasn't in the Civil War!

Q. But that was during World War I?

A. At the end of World War I. I said during World War I. The troops hadn't been closed out yet. The war was over. The prices were still up because of war conditions.

Q. What happened when the depression came after the war?

A. Well, I was running a sizable insurance business and I put quite a little bit into the farm, always improving it. I remodeled everything. When I went over to the other house—the man who had lived there originally--one way he got rid of his money--he had everything convenient for those days, and he had built an enormous copper tank on top of his house and had running water down there, but he also had termites all over the place. So the first thing I did over there was to tear off that whole end of the house where they had the termites and tank and I put in a modern bathroom and furance. I kept ahead all the time of the neighbors in what I furnished in the way of a house to live in. This house that my tenant is in now is just as nice--the conveniences she has in her kitchen and all--as any home in Athens.

Q. You took great pride then in seeing that the buildings as well as the land were kept up?

A. I demanded that they keep it up--their part of it--no loose boards around or nails.

Q. How did you and your tenant work together?

A. We had a 50-50 lease at that time on grain. After I moved over to the other place, I sold him on the idea of going in business with me and we signed what is called the Illinois Livestock Lease. The owner furnishes the farm and the tenant furnishes all the machinery and all the labor and they split half on the seed grain. They harvest it, and if they spill a bushel of corn it doesn't make any difference because each of them owns half the hog that eats it, so it's called the Illinois Livestock Lease. It's the fairest lease you can have. I wouldn't have a farm unless I had to, where the tenant raised livestock and I didn't have an interst in it. He's got to be a super human if he doesn't leave a little in the field for that animal to eat.

Q. Where do you think you got your know how to go about managing the farm as you did? You were really a town boy.

A. I told you one of my closest friends was this farm manager who was managing several thousand acres of land for Northwestern and his assistant was Phil Vance. I was in their office or they were in mine practically every day in the Ferguson Building. Then if they were going anyplace where it was interesting, I rode with them. Although they never asked a man to buy life insurance and wouldn't let me tie them in on my business. They didn't do anything on mine except when I asked about it. They gave me a world of information.

Then I had sold insurance to farmers all my life. Now unless you know something about your man's business, you'd better not try to sell him insurance. I went into a farmer's lot one time and they all sat around like they were having a funeral. I said, "What's the matter?" They said, "That mule over there can't eat. He's got a great big swollen tooth." and I said, "Why don't you take it out?" He said, "Do you think you could?" I said, "Sure!" So I went over to the woodpile and there was just exactly what I needed: a broken ax handle, a piece of hard wood, and a maul. This mule was all strapped down. I laid this wood down at the root of his tooth and hit it with the maul and it jumped three feet. I said, "Now give him soft food and he'll be all right." (laughs) Well, that's the way I learned about farming.

Q. Just by being observing and being interested?

A. Well, I was with them all the time. There was hardly a day that a farmer didn't come into my office and told me that he was having trouble with his tiling or something of the kind. I discussed it with him.

One of the first men that I sold insurance to ran a planing mill. I said to him, "I notice most of your men have a finger off." "Oh, let

me show you!" And from then on he just showed me his business all the time. Every time I went up there I was welcome and he'd show me what they were doing. He said, "You can tell a planing man anyplace. They always have one to three fingers off."

Q. Did you work any through the Farm Bureau?

A. I was a member of the Farm Bureau as soon as I could join it.

Q. How did they help you?

A. Not very much because the Farm Bureau, in those days of depression, and the head of it was a rural man who had lost his farm from the way he managed it. Then he got a job because of his popularity as head of Farm Bureau. They were building up, starting to do a good job. Now one of the things I didn't like for the Farm Bureau to do was their life insurance company, Country Life. It's misleading. They did a good job with Country Life. I'll give them full credit, it's a good company. But to this day there is a little stock in it that the original men that started it are getting income off of stock that isn't doing a bit of good to the company.

A mutual company--Northwestern is a mutual company, Equitable of New York is a mutual company and they don't need any stock. Wherever you find a stock company--Franklin Life is a stock company--the stockholders get their money first and what is left goes to the policy holders.

Q. Do you think the Farm Bureau has grown so that it is of more help to the farmers?

A. No question about it. They have had an effect on Washington and nationally and statewide their advice--a lot of people won't agree with me--but I'm not very strong for a co-op. I believe in the farmer making his money and letting the butcher shop make his money and the jewelry store make his money. If you can conceive of such a place, the Farm Bureau would own the butcher shop and the grocery store, and in theory, everybody would get their stuff cheaper. If you get the right service, it is a darned sight more important than being cheaper. If you're fortunate enough to get quality and price, of course price enters into it. But just to have a co-op. . . .

There's an insurance company now, I read the other day, where they will sell you a cheaper policy if you don't smoke and drive a car. It's very funny. It is a small company and all the large companies haven't found that out yet. Of course they know it can't be enforced, or I don't know the reasons for it, but this one small company up here at Pekin--the last thing I read they put a sticker on your bumper and if the manufacturer has complied with the latest law on bumper safety, they take off another 10 percent on your premium. Well, these big companies that have been doing business since the Civil War and have been through panics, this company has never been through a panic, they don't know what they would have done in 1930's. In the 1930's I'd say that one-third of all insurance I'd ever sold up to that time lapsed because the men couldn't pay their premiums. Believe me that meant something to me.

Q. Then that means that you really had some hard times in the insurance business during the depression just like other people?

A. Day after day I didn't do anything but watch girls make loans. We couldn't sell them, we just made loans for them. Now, I say we couldn't sell them. I personally went to where the money was. The surgeon and the doctor was getting money just the same--maybe not as much--but he still had money to buy life insurance. I sold very heavy life insurance all during the depression personally.

Q. So you could take some of the money you earned that way to put into the farm at that time?

A. Not only put it into the farm, but put it in insurance business. I had to reinvest everything I could make to keep the insurance business going. I worded a few years!

Q. How did you work?

A. Mentally.

Q. To figure out the best way to do things? When you got this great interest in farming, how much time would you go out and spend on the farm? Did you have much time to actually go out and supervise what was going on?

A. There were so many times, going to Lincoln or Athens on business, I'd stop there. It was all tied in with it. These loan agents were going to have a sale--everybody was selling out. I'd go out there to the sales. I went to one sale and bought an anvil. It's a relic. Every farm used to have an anvil or they couldn't do business. I bought an old fashioned forge where they burned charcoal in it. The fellow I got there now has acetylene torches that would burn a house down. Anyway, it has changed just that much. Incidentally, if a farmer can't repair his own machinery to a large extent, he can't make any money. If he has to call a mechanic every time a screw comes off, he can't do it.

Q. After you had started the process of lime and sweet clover, you found there was another process that built up the land. Tell about the beginning of the soybean business on your farm.

A. The first soybeans, I didn't have the first by any means, but I knew the Staley Manufacturing Company real well at Decatur. They were beginning to push soybeans growth, and so almost as soon as I had the farm, it was natural for me to want to grow some soybeans. Well, they broadcast them then--didn't put them in rows at all. That was all right except if your field was weedy, there was no way of getting the weeds out so in a very short time they swang back to where they put it in rows. Still there is lots of argument about how wide that row should be. There are people even today who say they can put chemicals in and keep these weeds down and if they can, they can grow more plants and more beans to the acre. If they could not have any rows between

them, but if you have a cocklebur out in the center, it is pretty hard to find it and get it out, and you are going to have a lot of cockleburs.

Q. How have you seen the soybean develop from the first ones you planted?

A. They've improved in production, but we have never advanced the number of bushels per acre in soybeans like we have in corn. The first we grew, maybe we got twenty to twenty-five bushels per acre. Well, Fifty bushels today is considered nearly a maximum yield. Only on very special plots have they been able to get fifty. A few men have if the rainfall is just right and everything is just right. There have been a few over fifty bushels an acre or two but I don't know what this state will average. It won't average over forty bushels this year.

Q. You don't think there has been as much progress made in soybeans as corn?

A. There has been a world of progress made in the kinds--varities--and how to handle them. You can't grow beans on land year after year like you can corn. But there have been any number of improvements, very marked, how to do it, how to plant and when to plant. In all of it, the demand for them is unbelievable. Ford, back when he made his Ford car, was one of the first men to see a future in soybeans and he bagan to make his steering wheel out of soybeans. Everybody was boosting soybeans. The Chinese knew all the time that they were good to eat and that's where they came from. Now we can't get enough over there to feed them and us both. I don't know, we'll work it out, I guess.

You see, beans have sold as high as nine dollars a bushel last year. Up to that time, I don't ever remember of them being over three dollars or a little over--anyplace from two dollars to three dollars. Even this fall now, they started in again when they were selling these beans they were over six dollars a bushel. Like everything else, when they began to harvest them, they knocked them down to five dollars now. Well, I think, it's my guess, they'll come back when the harvest is over and the demand keeps getting greater. We'll have a high priced bean again later on this year. But even if they don't, five dollars a bushel and a farm producing forty bushels, do you realize what we're talking about? A return on land, that's two hundred dollars an acre. Thousands of those acres didn't cost two hundred dollars, but to buy it today they think nothing of paying eight hundred to one thousand dollars for it. Whether they can do it, maybe the bean crop will go down or there will come a blight and they can't grow it. You've got a farm that is carrying interest. By the way, if you'd have the best credit at a bank, you can't borrow money at 7 percent. You're going to pay from 7 percent to 10 percent to get money to buy one thousand dollars an acre land. That takes a smarter man than I am to know.

Q. This just isn't the time then to buy?

A. Oh, I don't say it isn't--not at all. You take the Bunns, the wealthiest people that we have around here, they're buying land right along. Some of the brainiest men I know in Springfield have bought land at over eight hundred dollars an acre. I don't know just what they paid, but eight hundred or nine hundred dollars. Then of course if you've got something out around the lake, they sold some out there the other day, three tracts, five and ten acre tracts, for two thousand dollars and three thousand dollars an acre. It was just growing corn years ago.

Q. But it wasn't bought for agricultural purposes?

A. No, this was home sites. They'll sell one-half to one acre for a home.

Q. Let's go back to the farm now and talk about some of your conservation practices. I think you were a good conservationist.

A. Well, I put in a lot of multiflora roses. I thought, and it is, a wonderful windbreak. The old fashioned hedge that we used to grow--you wanted to know something about fencing in those days--when I took that farm over it had a hedge fence around every forth acres. He had to go out in the spring of the year and trim that hedge down or it would grow into fence posts. Some of it they did let grow and they all worked over those fence posts and valued them very highly. Today those posts, there's nothing better, but you can't afford to cut them because the labor of cutting them and trimming them is just prohibitive. So we're not using hedge now. But practically all the posts that I've put on my farm in the last ten or fifteen years have been hedge posts. I bought them over the years in big piles.

Q. You bought them rather than growing them?

A. One of the first things we did, we had to pay a man to go in and grub that hedge all out. The roots ran out for hundreds of feet and I had to take all the hedges down and put fences in.

Q. Because they were taking too much of the land?

A. Yes, too much of the land. You couldn't grow any corn within fifteen or twenty feet of the hedge.

Q. What did you think of the multiflora roses?

A. It isn't practical because the birds scatter it and your farmer is constantly fighting to keep it from spreading. It's a wonderful thing--kind of like a lie. It is an abomination before the Lord, but a present help in time of trouble.

Q. Did you grub out the multiflora roses?

A. Well, we've dug out a lot, but we still have it around the outside edges. I turned over about one acre to what I call a bird sanctuary.

It is fenced with this multiflora rose and there are evergreen trees planted in it and black walnut and every kind of tree, but you can hardly walk through it. It is just for the birds.

Q. Do you go out and watch the birds out there?

A. I did when I could. I can not watch the birds very well now. My eyesight is too poor.

Q. What kind of birds can you find there?

A. We have redbirds and when I first went out there it was unheard of to see a southern mockingbird, but common to this part of the country now. We had them nest on our place this year. When we spent more time there, I had three boxes of purple martins, but they left. One good friend out there said they know good neighbors. When they get tired of them, they leave them. Anyway, I haven't got them now. Over at Griggsville and Petersburg even, I saw a lot of martins this year. If I'd had good eyes and Edna hadn't been sick, I would have gone over and tried to find out how to get them back.

Q. But you saved this one little acre just as a sanctuary?

A. It is just a little birdhouse you might say. It wasn't the best land. It couldn't have been farmed, but it could have been grazed, part of it. That's where this tile outlet ends in there. So there's water generally in that little creek. They have water and shade and it is a pretty good bird place.

END OF SIDE ONE

Q. Mr. Cantrall, you said that you had your little bird sanctuary. Now, what were some of the other things?

A. When I went out [to the farm] the quail had become extinct and the Conservation Department of Springfield--I was very close to them--the head of it was a very good friend of mine. We tried to get quail started there again. You can't keep the quail in any limited area. The people can kill them and do, and I saw them dressing a bunch they had practically exterminated that I had turned loose. I expect these quail walked toward them at the time to be fed. That is the trouble with birds raised in captivity. You have to know how to turn them loose and protect it or your friendship will hurt it. The same way with pheasants. I have never allowed hunting on my place just in the hopes of raising some. They have left there. I tried to keep some wild ducks on my pond. They [hunters] killed all of those one day and boasted about it in the barber shop in Athens.

Another time I raised a bunch of guineas and they killed all of those that I had there. My best friend I can't let go on there and hunt, because the next man will say that you let so-and-so go. If you let everyone go

on, they'd tramp the corn all down. There would be so many going across it, there wouldn't be room.

I don't know what the country boy or the city boy is going to do in the future. He can't fish, the streams are so polluted. At one time my father would take me to Havana, Illinois. We knew we'd catch a whole basketful of fish. Then there would be a freight train that would ship out carloads [of fish] to New York City. They had one on for years until they turned all the oil and gasoline loose in Chicago. I'd go almost as far as to say that I wouldn't eat a fish now. By the way, if you want to fish at Beardstown, Illinois, they boasted that they got it in Florida. They take a pond down in Florida that is spring fed, it takes good fresh water and they catch that catfish. I eat it quite often at Mason City, Illinois. He tells me that where he buys this catfish from Florida. I tried to buy some catfish when I was in Florida and they were not fit to eat. They came from Lake Okeechobee and the water was so hot that the catfish were no good in it. But other people can raise them in their little ponds and ship them by airplane to Beardstown.

Q. So you think that fishing in our part of the country . . .

A. Why there are any number of private ponds. I spent a lot of money. I have a pond out there but it won't hold water. I stocked it two or three times but after I had it stocked one time, they [fishermen] strung trout lines all back and forth across trying to catch my fish out of there before I could get them.

Q. So not only do you have to fight pollution, you have to fight fellowman.

A. That's right. Talk about pollution. I was going to have a pond at another place on my farm, and I've always been so thankful that I didn't put it there. People who have ponds, they'll [outsiders] go in there and open a case of beer and leave all the tin cans there for the farmer. It is a pesthole. You can't keep them out.

Q. You mean people trespass?

A. They trespass, but you see a boy is frantic. Everywhere he goes there is a sign that says Keep Out. Where is he going? Well, the state could keep a stream like the Illinois River pure, but they can't keep Lake Erie pure, so I don't know what we are going to do.

Q. Do you think you've done anything to help fight pollution on your farm?

A. Oh, of course I have. These latest hog houses that we've built, the manure never goes into the creek at all. It is hauled by wagon and put on the farm far enough away that it doesn't go into the creek.

They used to feed an enormous bunch of cattle over near Peoria, but I don't know whether they can do it now or not. I'm quite sure that eventually the law will keep them from doing it. See they are right on the riverbank right where the Sangamon goes into the Illinois River.

Q. So you think it is going to be more difficult?

A. More difficult all the time to find water where the fish are fit to eat. It is not uncommon now. Men are making very good money by stocking their ponds and charging so much a pound to let people fish in their little pond.

Q. Going back to the farm now, you've pretty well brought us up to date on the things you have done, the practices and how you have improved it and your hog industry now. Tell us how long you have managed the farm yourself.

A. I bought it in 1937, and I managed it up until about four or five years ago. The Springfield Marine Bank has managed it since then.

Q. Has this been very satisfactory?

A. Very satisfactory.

Q. Do you feel that you still have a great interest in the farm even though you aren't the active manager?

A. That's right. As long as I could drive and Edna could drive we enjoyed it very much to live there, but sooner or later we won't live there because you just have to drive a car. People move to Florida thinking they retire. By the way, the most pitiful thing in Florida is the people who have retired and haven't enough money to meet the increased cost. They were told they could live there so much cheaper, but they can't. If they can't walk to the store then they might just as well be in a place up here air-conditioned as to be in a place down there air-conditioned. You've got to have a car, but everybody can't have an automobile.

Q. Tell about building your home in the country after you retired.

A. When I bought the second piece of land over there, that was about 1941, there was an old house on it about one hundred years old. I made it absolutely modern. I put in a furnace and a bathroom and we spent a lot of time out there. Marjorie was single at that time and I kept a saddle horse out there. Anyway, we tore it down and built this modern house. This is about all there is to it. That was about seventeen years ago.

Q. What was it like moving from Springfield to the country again?

A. Edna is the one that put up with a great deal. In the first place, she married a man who was much older than she was and she had to make his friends her friends, and that is not easy to do but she did it remarkably well.

Very few people realize what influence she had in the city of Springfield. She started the Newcomers' Club here that is still running. I don't know how many members they have, but it is a big going concern. She was active

in the Women's Club and made the remark that she could stand at the door and call each member by name as they came in the door. At that time she had a wonderful memory. She kept up these interest in Springfield because she could drive in anytime she wanted. We kept two cars all the time. When I was out there I'd go to town whenever I wanted to and play golf and all, but I was content more and more just to be a gentleman farmer, an agriculturalist. That is a man who makes a living in town and spends it in the country.

Q. Did you like getting back there and staying there after you retired?

A. Yes, but it wasn't any different. You see I had been going out there so much to this old house--we went out there night after night and week after week. We were there just most of the time.

Q. Then it wasn't such a change in your way of life?

A. No, it wasn't much change. But Edna adapted herself to my older friends and it is very unfortunate now for both of us that they are dead. You see she would have more close associates. She's got friends of course in the younger group, but there is nothing like what she would have had if we had remained in Springfield.

Q. Don't you consider that you've had a very satisfactory life living out next to nature?

A. I think Edna has been very satisfactory as a wife if that is what you mean. (laughs)

Q. No, I mean living out in the country next to nature.

A. When you are young there is no finer place to live. But when you begin to raise a family, those young people who are coming on now, can't get what they want. It isn't there. Suppose we had two daughters out there today, sixteen or eighteen years old. What would they be doing? Somebody would come and take them to Athens. Well, what do you do when you get to Athens? You get a drink. But I think it is a wonderful place to raise a child, especially a boy. If he likes livestock and animals, then he will fit right into it and it won't be work to him. But if he doesn't and you try to force to. . . .

Q. Well Mr. Cantrall, you've been an agriculturalist, you've been a conservationist, you've been a naturalist and a sportsman. We haven't talked too much about you being a naturalist and sportsman. Tell a little bit about your life as a sportsman.

A. When I was hunting I killed a few prairie chickens. I date back far enough that prairie chickens were sill on the farm that I later bought. There were prairie chickens on that farm when I was ten years old--not many. I did my hunting in the rough ground around Cantrall. I hunted qual. I really spent a lot of time. It was my amusement. Later on I began to shoot ducks and that was an expensive proposition. Fifty years ago--sixty years ago ten acres of ground--forty acres of ground would sell for one hundred dollars an acre, when good farm land twenty miles

from there wasn't bringing any more. There wasn't a thing on that ground except that water stood on it so we could hunt ducks on it. Those duck clubs sprang up over there.

Q. Where was that?

A. At Beardstown. The grand island--men had their own private homes around there and they took their servants down with them to wait on them. Ten thousand dollars wasn't anything to pay for a membership in this duck club.

I hunted ducks before they had any clubs down there. This fellow kept saying, "They are going to buy this up some day and you won't have anyplace to shoot." Well it happened and they formed this club right there. They wanted me to buy a membership. I could have raised the money, but I didn't want to. I knew it wasn't wise to. I was putting it in other places. I didn't go in then until about the time of the first World War. Then I did buy into this club and we kept on. I finally got a rule passed that whenever a member died we wouldn't sell his membership, but we would buy it from his heirs for a ridiculous figure--practically nothing. So each time one would die, and most of them were older than I was, you see, so finally it got down until there was only two of us left. We owned, the two of us owned, this duck club. At that time I began to lose my eyesight. Hared Chapman was the other man, and so he sold the club and that was the end of that.

But my point was--to me it was like golf. I was a pretty good golfer. I have a few cups. We'd form a foursome and meet every Saturday. I couldn't meet every Saturday and take care of my business properly or any other day. So nobody wanted me in a foursome because it wasn't a foursome, it was only three or two. Well, when you talk about the farm, I didn't have to give up things--the golf.

In the summertime we began to go [north]. My sister orginally wanted to go to Kenora, Canada. She had heard that the scenery up there was beautiful. She got off the road and got on a little boat. She was going to Kenora. They wandered all around the lake. About noon he [the boat man] said, "We don't go clear to Kenora. We only go out as far as Flag Island today. If you'll stay here all night I'll pick you up tomorrow and take you up to Kenora." He got there the next day and she said, "I don't want to go to Kenora. This is where I want to stay." They made over her there in the fishing camp and it was simplicity.

She was painting one time and this Norwegian, one of the first settlers in the country up there, said, "Why don't you let me build you a log cabin here?" In short she let him go ahead and build it. She had a piece of land that dropped down forty feet to the water. It was a beautiful spot--the most beautiful you ever saw. She had the cabin finished and was in it when the governor of Minnesota dropped by. Every boat that went to Canada had to go within a hundred yards of her point--it is still known as Cantrall Point--he offered her five hundred dollars profit and she laughed at him.

She went up there--she had a wonderful housekeeper who would go with her up there--and she'd paint every summer. She had some friends from Springfield at different time. It was rough, I tell you it was rough. There were Indians around there all the time. The Indians up there were drunk most of the time. They were of very low character. The son of one of the men who had owned this place married this Indian girl and she made a wonderful wife for him.

But anyway, I began to go up with her and then Marjorie came along and we took her up there. Then my sister got so she couldn't go, but I kept going with Edna and we would spend over thirty days up there in the summertime. We drove up there--a thousand mile trip. We were both willing to do it to get away, and you can't do that and play golf in foursome. So I'm afraid I was too much of a loner in some ways.

Q. Tell about your fishing up there [in Canada].

A. It was marvelous. They had all these guides, and by the way, my sister brought one of these boys down to Springfield and sent him to high school. He went from there to college and met the girl there that liked the country as well as he did. They went back up there and have since built up one of the biggest resorts in Canada, forty miles north of this lake.

When I'd go up there they just couldn't do enough for me. I was sitting there one morning and I knew the guides that were good. He went out and he went out and it kept on until there wasn't anybody left. I didn't say a word, I let them run things. Pretty soon they brought a man over and said, "Here's a man that is superintendent of schools from Pomoroy, Iowa. He makes his own tackle and rods and has won contests several places. We can't use him as a guide, as long as any guide is not employed. He likes to guide and he'll take you today." We got out aways and he said, "Now do you want me to tell you anything or do you just want me to guide you?" I said, "For goodness sakes, you teach me." It was the most wonderful experience I ever had. He would tell why.

We went in [near shore] and he'd say, "Do you see that rock over there? There's a big fish that will have that for his special place." I had taught myself to be very good at casting. He said, "Put your bait, if you can, between those two rocks." My bait was up in the air and he said, "You've got him!" It hit the water and this big fish hit it. I've got it mounted now. Everybody has to have a mounted fish if he's sucker enough. Anyway, this was one of the largest muskies most men ever catch.

Q. How much did it weigh?

A. It weighed 37 pounds. I took it to a taxidermist in Duluth and I never prized it as much after that. He said, "How much do you want this fish to weigh?" He was going to drop the belly down and on a mounted board you could make it weigh fifty pounds according to the scale--the length of it and all. I said, "I want it just like it was when I caught it," so that was the way it was mounted. He mounted it on a big birch board and I prized it for a while and now it is down in the basement going to pieces. The fins are off of it but you can still see what it is.

I broke my rod about the second fish I hooked and he said, "Now you take my rod." and I said, "Not unless you tell me what it is worth and I can replace it." He says, "Well, I'll tell you this much. There is twenty dollars worth of material in it and I'll bet my time that you can't break it on a fish." So I had his rod when I caught this big fish and I caught more muskies that day then I ever caught all told in all the fishing I did. He said, "Now this is just like Marshall Field corner. That big fish was there and now another one will take his place. He'll be bigger or less, but he'll have to fight for that place and he'll be the biggest fish around here because that is the best corner."

That night we had that fish wrapped up. You could take two at a time. He said, "Make up your mind whether you want to take this extra one in and I took another 25 pounder after that. We just threw it in the boat and took it in and people ate it. It was a wonderful experience.

Edna got in touch with him and that Christmas sent him the money and he made a rod for me to match the one he had and I still have it. I did a lot of muskie fishing up there.

The wall-eyed pike was the best eating, good sport and Edna could enter into it with me. She'd run the boat. I didn't need a guide after that. I knew where I wanted to go. I'd say, "Now you get me in such and such a place." She and I were talking the other day and she said that we caught more fish than anybody up there. She'd carry out what I wanted done and we caught a world of fish.

First when we went up there years ago, we didn't have any way of keeping meat at all. There was no secret about it, they just killed game in season or out of season. They ate their meat. I landed there and this lady came over to me and said, "Don't hang around here. We are out of meat. If you stay here go get a deer." So I wandered out and got a deer all right and she got ahold of one of these boys and made him go back and dress that animal out and then it was iced carefully. But the Indian, to this day, can go out and kill that animal and just cut a quarter off of it and let the rest rot and he sells the quarter. He just takes what he can carry and they have no restrictions on the Indian. He can hunt and fish whenever he wants to.

I saw an Indian trying to trade his tent, the only thing he had left, for a case of beer. I don't know where he thought he was going to sleep that night. You can hardly be out on the lake and meet an Indian but what he claims he doesn't have any gasoline and tries to beg a little gasoline so he can get over to buy his beer. That is most of them. There are a few high class guides. I've had some of them in hunting and fishing both.

Q. Tell about some of the other things you hunted for besides deer.

A. The first years the grouse were plentiful there. We had grouse right along. Then I stayed late enough in the fall to shoot ducks. This was in Canada and I had to get a permit to get them out of there. I killed grouse and deer. I never killed a bear nor a moose. Moose

swam in front of our house over to the other shore. Bear swam there. I could have killed lots of things I didn't kill. There was no reason why I'd want to kill a bear with cubs following along with it.

Q. Then that brings us to the point that you were as much of a naturalist as you were a sportsman, and you had a lot of respect for the things of nature.

A. When I was killing these quail out here away back, when we'd have sleet on the ground, I'd drive out there on a sleety road and take a sack of wheat to feed those quail. A quail can't break through that ice. If you have sleet or ice, all their food is covered up. Now a deer is all right. He eats the leaves anyway. You can't starve him out with a snow. There is a difference with every animal.

I belonged to a club in Wisconsin. This was before, when my sister was still going up to the island without me. She went up all those years before I began to go up. I belonged to this club in the northern most point of Wisconsin, the Mohamet Club. It was made up of men connected with Northwestern. One man from St. Louis, one from Des Moines, Iowa and all around. We'd meet up there about Decoration Day when the pike season would open in Wisconsin. We had marvelous fishing up there. I caught a world of fish there.

Then we went down to Florida and made the conventions and after the conventions a few of us good friends would stay over. We'd charter boats and go out there almost anyplace and go deep sea fishing. But I liked the back waters. So we very soon, Edna and I--she ran the boat--began fishing there. She'd catch as many as I did because we'd anchor the boat and catch red fish and mango snappers. We had all the fish and she'd say, "Now Evans, don't take any more in. You don't want to dress those fish and we don't want them." We had all the fish we wanted at the time.

Then we went to Florida the year that I retired from the company. She had it all planned and the grip all packed. We had this final meeting, state meeting, and I was out, fired because of old age. So we started to drive and I said, "Now Edna, go anyplace you want to go so long as there aren't any mountains. We were having a good time driving along through Texas and I said, "Why don't we go to Mexico?" She said, "Do you mean it?" I said, "Yes, I'd like to go to Mexico." The next day or two after that we were in Mexico in the highest mountains that you ever saw. We kept on going and had all the experiences you could crowd into it and we went clear to Acapulco—seven thousand miles we drove that first year after I retired.

Q. You were really enjoying life then?

A. I turned over my house here. We had a colored girl. I let the people move into the house rent free on one condition, that they keep this girl and have her here when I get back. She telephoned me and said, "He fired me!" And I said, "No, he hasn't fired you, he just doesn't want you around there. I'm paying you and you're on the payroll

till I get home." That way she is still with us. I don't know how many years--away back when Marjorie was a little girl.

Q. So we've just about covered the whole territory from the time you were a young man starting business, developing your insurance business, your interest in the land and all that goes with that. Is there any other reminiscing that you want to tell us about? As you look back can you tell what has given you the greatest satisfaction?

A. I think the greatest satisfaction that I've had is the confidence that my father had that I'd take care of my mother. She said something about it and he said, "Now I've told you the kid will take care of you." And that was the last words that he said,.

Anyway, insurance--I'd listened to him and I went into the business, but I bought five thousand dollars insurance--I don't know where I got the money--payable to her [Edna]. I went into the business in April and in June I was buying five thousand dollars worth of insurance on my life. I kept buying constantly. When Marjorie was born I didn't want Edna to go to work. I bought $25,000 in insurance when we brought her home from the hospital.

You asked about satisfaction. I carried a policy that paid me. I had the first one around here. I had heard of someone who said he'd buy this policy from me for $100,000 if I could get him an accident policy that would pay him one thousand dollars a month--$12,000 a year. So I telephoned Troxell and told him I had to have a policy for a thousand dollars a month. After a while he came in and said, "You can't buy such a thing." I telephoned the home office. They would never let us sell any accident insurance and we never wrote any accident insurance connected with our life insurance. I got hold of our actuary and he said, "I've just bought the thing you want. There is a company in Chicago that will sell one thousand dollars a month incontestable and non-cancellable. They can't ever quit you. The company has decided to let the agents sell it, if they want to, along with the life insurance <u>but</u> he sent me this contract.

The first policy was on this fellow that I was telling about the other was on my own life. The policy that pays me one thousand dollars a month and [later] only wrote five hundred dollars at the same price. Then they found they had still made a mistake, so they doubled that price and I still had this original one. Then they began to try to buy it from me to get me to quit. I carried that through age 65 when it went off. But all that time I had protected Edna and me so she'd never have to work, and if I was disabled, I'd never have to work. So I think that was the satisfaction that enabled me to go ahead and do the things I did--buy farms.

Q. Thank you Evans Cantrall for this fine interview.

END OF TAPE