



## Preface

This manuscript is the product of two tape recorded interview conducted by Jeffrey A. Eldred for Sangamon State University Archives during the winter of 1993-94. Jeffrey A. Eldred transcribed the tapes and edited the transcript.

Irma Keele Long was born December 23, 1918 on a farm near Chesterfield, Illinois. She grew up the daughter of a farmer on this same farm near Chesterfield. She married another resident of Chesterfield, Wilbur Long, on July 2, 1938. After moving to several locations in Illinois because of Wilbur's job with the railway mail service, World War II took the couple to San Francisco. Following the war, they eventually returned to Chesterfield and began life as Illinois farmers. Wilbur passed away in 1979 and Irma left the farm and moved into Chesterfield in 1981.

In her recollections, Irma describes her experiences growing up and living on a farm in central Illinois. Through her stories and memories, Irma describes the changes that have taken place in society, farming, and Chesterfield, Illinois in particular from the time of her childhood through the early 1990's.

Jeffrey A. Eldred grew up in rural Illinois where he returned after completing his undergraduate studies in Secondary Education (History/Math) from Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville. He continued his education at Sangamon State University in Public History. He is an active oral historian and a member of several historical organizations.

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

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Irma Keele Long; October 29, 1993; Narrator's Home, Chesterfield, IL  
Jeffrey A. Eldred, Interviewer

J. Irma, when were you born?

I. December 23, 1918.

J. And where were you born?

I. Out at the farm. The farm was called Elm Grove Farm.

J. Where is the farm located?

I. Two miles east of Route 111 on the Beaver Dam Road that goes to Macoupin Station.

J. Alright, let them get through here. (workmen from upstairs passed through room). O.K., who...what were your parents names.

I. My mother was Gertrude Ina Bullard who was raised over by Bullard Lake. My father was Harold Alonzo Keele who was born and raised where I was born.

J. So, if he was born and raised where you were born, about how old is the house? When was the house built?

I. Probably one hundred and fifty years old.

J. One hundred and fifty years old now, so that would have been--let's see--about 1840, approximately?

I. Probably, the kitchen part was brought over from another house that was next to the Finch Lane. And the rest of the house was ... part by part.

J. What did your father do for a living?

I. He was a farmer.

J. Farmer. O.K., was that a family thing, was his father a farmer and...?

I. His father was a farmer and he had, um, I'm looking for a word, a homesteaded the farm.

J. He had homesteaded the farm, out here east of Chesterfield...

I. Right.

J. Back in the 1840's.

I. Right.

J. Approximately?

I. Right. His name was Alonzo T. Keele. He married Ella Barnstable. Which that farm was just a couple miles east of the Keele farm. My dad was born July the 4th, 1894.

J. How big was the farm when they homesteaded?

I. Oh dear, probably, one hundred and fifty acres.

J. Hundred fifty acres. About how big was it when you were growing up, had it expanded, had they gained more land around, or...

I. We gained eighty acres of the Barnstable place and then in 1951, we gained the Wooley place which joined on the west side of the farm and next to the Loomis Cemetery.

J. Loomis Cemetery is where part of your family is buried?

I. Right.

J. That's just probably a half-mile or so, west of the house we're talking about.

I. Right.

J. What did your mother do?

I. Mother, uh, well mother worked for her sister, who lived with Addie Phelps, that lived right across the road from the Keeles and met my dad. Then she married my dad in 1913, May the 17th. And took care of my dad's mother who was ill in the...at home with cancer. Then she just stayed on as a homemaker.

J. She was a homemaker, then. Did you have any brothers or sisters? You, yes.

I. No, I'm an only child.

J. You're an only child. What was it like growing up as an only child?

I. Well, I knew nothing else. So, I guess I really don't remember as it being very lonely. I liked the outdoors. I liked the farm. I didn't know anything else though. Those days there wasn't the availability of getting very far from home.

J. Were there any other kids your age around that you could get to?

I. There was Lois Grichnik who lived up the road. I always liked to go up there because her mother would just stop everything and play with us. My mother kept busy. (Laughter) Then I had two cousins. My dad had a brother who had two boys, Bob and Rollin Keele. They were just like brothers to me.

J. And they lived right around in the area?

I. They lived west of Chesterfield. But, we did get together and were in school at the same time. In high school, the same time.

J. You talked about when you went to Lois' house that you...her mother would stop everything and play with you. What kind of things did you, I mean, what kind of toys did you have or what kind of games did you play?

I. Well, she would read to us or we'd play puzzles or house, just whatever, whatever Lois and I decided, why she'd play with us. Another place I always liked to go was up east, well, about 2 1/2 miles and stay with Ed and Stella Pressler. She would give me flour and corn meal, and like that, and let me mix it up and bake it like I was playing like I was a baker.

J. Let you play with the real stuff even though you weren't fixing anything, huh. Alright. (Laughter)

I. In those days it was a long trip to Springfield and my folks would go to Springfield. My dad had a uncle up there that was a butcher and they'd stay all night, so that was when I'd stay with Stella and Ed. And enjoyed that.

J. In relation today, where was that house at? Who lives there now?

I. Ed and Barb Boente live there now. That was an Eldred farm.

J. Yes, I knew that.

I. I could say, that I, sometimes...they left me with my aunt right across the road. One time I was sick with a cold, so she gave me some castor oil and I didn't like to stay there anymore. (Laughter)

J. Castor oil ran you off. Alright. Let's see, the Keele's today, around Chesterfield, Keele's is, you know, a name that when you think of Chesterfield Keele is a name that comes up. Come on in. Go ahead.--(workers went through the kitchen and the tape was paused)-- We had a little interruption there, but we were talking about the Keele family, today the Keele's, when I think of Chesterfield, the Keele's along with several other families is a name that comes up. Did you have that feeling as a kid that the Keele's were one of the important families of Chesterfield, or...

I. No, I never thought about important families. I think I just lived from day to day.

J. It wasn't something that just came to mind.

I. Another thing about asking about friends. Jeff here that's interviewing me, his dad [Max Eldred] was next to the farm, the

Eldred farm. And that was always meant a lot to me. Because they had families in Springfield. There was one that came down and she and I played a lot together whenever she came down. Why, Melba was Rastus' daughter, Rastus was your...great-uncle.

J. Right. I think that's right.

I. And I remember when your Grandpa and Grandma [Great-grandma and grandpa George and Eliza Eldred] lived there, of course, and grandpa died and my two cousins across the road, we would walk to school together. Because I had... well, through the pasture it'd be a mile to walk to school and I thought so much of them that I wanted to stop at the house. And I wasn't very big, I was just going to grade school at Rafferty School.

J. Speaking of Rafferty School, you said it was about a mile across the field.

I. Well, if you went around the road, it was a mile and quarter. If I cut through the pastures and walked through the pastures I could say about a mile.

J. And you walked to school everyday.

I. Walked most of the time. My uncle and aunt, Earnest and Maye Costley, gave me the first pony I had to ride to school.

J. When was that?

I. Oh dear! I couldn't have been very old. Probably, I was maybe second grade.

J. Second grade.

I. Maybe, around there sometime.

J. Had you ever ridden before?

I. No, but I always liked horses and I loved to ride horses--Still would. I had a couple of three nice horses to ride. Always had to ride to high school.

J. Which was about how far?

I. Two and a quarter miles.

J. That was in Chesterfield?

I. Chesterfield, right. Tied the horse up in the...in the lumber yard here at Chesterfield at that time.

J. So you had to walk to school about a mile, mile and a quarter

whatever to Rafferty School. What kind of school...you think of rural schools then you think of the one room schoolhouse. Is that what this was? (Grandfather Clock strikes hour)

I. This was a one room schoolhouse, two coat rooms--one for the girls, one for the boys--And it had a old furnace. You had to bring in the coal and put the coal in the furnace to heat rooms. Then you had outhouses for your bathrooms that and a pump to bring in a bucket of water.

J. Did the students have, certain students or special students, get the job of bringing in the water or the coal or was that a janitor? How was all that done?

I. Well, the teacher was the janitor as well as teaching and she usually did that. We usually had women teachers. I remember one man teacher, Don Drum. But, most of my teachers...and we had eight grades.

J. The eight grades would be first through eighth?

I. Right.

J. There wasn't any kindergarten then?

I. No, didn't know what kindergarten was.

J. What was it like being in a class, in a room, with eight different grades? Surely, you weren't all taught the same thing, how did it work?

I. Oh no! You were taught first grade, second grade, third grade, fourth and if they didn't pass they had to stay in that class again. But it was fun. You got along real well, you didn't pay any attention to the others...really.

J. Was the building divided up like you had a first grade in one corner and second grade in...

I. No.

J. Or they just kind of all mixed in and you just...

I. Had small seats and chairs though for the smaller ones. So, and then you had a bench up behind... or in front of the teacher's desk where the classes met. So when your class was called, you'd go up and sit on the bench and have your class. All your work was done at the desk... with a drawer underneath to hold your books.

J. What type of subjects did you talk about in the school? Was it...in other words, was it difficult for the teacher because she's teaching...

I. All eight grades.

J. Eight grades with all these different subjects. Was the curriculum a little bit different than today's grade school curriculum?

I. You didn't have--I don't think we had--I know our subjects weren't as hard as they are today. You had your arithmetic and language and geography and social studies and spelling. But, you know, I'm sure we didn't have to work as hard as the children do today.

J. Do you have any special memories from Rafferty or special stories that you know of?

I. Oh, we use to get out when it was snowing and [throw] snowballs or ride sleds. I know one time I got my mouth, I hit another sled and got my mouth cut. I wore glasses--I had to have glasses since I was five years old-- and the first day of school I fell and broke my glasses. (Laughter)

J. Your first day of school, your very first...

I. Very first day of school.

J. How did you do that?

I. Well, I stumbled and hit my knee on something and broke my glasses. (Laughter)

J. I bet you were upset over that?

I. Well, not as much as my folks were--(more laughter)--We had to make a trip to Springfield.

J. Well, how difficult was it to get to Springfield? You've talked about your parents going to Springfield a couple of times. How long did it take them?

I. Oh, it takes several hours. I remember one time, well this will come out later, but, we always stayed all night. One time I remember my dad saying "well how much money you going to need today?" And my mom said, "Well, Irma needs a coat. I'll need twenty-five dollars." (laughter) Roads weren't that good then either.

J. What kind of roads were there?

I. Well, you know, I really don't remember. They must have been one lane pavement. Now our (Illinois Route) 111 wasn't put through here until '31.

J. Ya, '31.

I. So, we didn't have good roads like today and the cars weren't as good either, couldn't go as fast.

J. The pavement here was put through, 111 was put through in 1931. What were the roads before that? Were they oiled or were they dirt?

I. Mostly dirt.

J. When you went to Springfield or anywhere, did you have a car at this point? Do you remember when you first got your automobile?

I. I don't remember when the folks first got an automobile. I don't remember them not having one. And, of course as I say, the roads weren't good and [cars] got stuck a lot. Even after the later years, we did too out home, on the farm. I didn't mention out on the farm. I thought we were living...my grandfather was living with us out on the farm and it was us living with my grandfather because it was his farm and he didn't die until '31. I remember his being ill and my dad taking him every day for a ride to see how far they had gotten with 111. He was interested in that.

J. Do you remember anything about the first car you remember? I know a lot of people at that time were just first getting cars and that was a big thing.

I. Yes.

J. Do you remember the first car?

I. No. I don't remember the first car that my folks got. I know it had Isinglass curtains, but I just don't remember too much. I remember more of buggies. My mother and I would get in the horse and buggy and go to see her mother. I remember those trips.

J. So, you didn't always take a car? You also used the horse...

I. No. Mother didn't drive. And so, we always had to go in the horse and buggy.

J. So you probably used that as much as you used the car?

I. Right.

J. You always had a lot of horses around then?

I. Yes, cause the men used horses in the fields and I'd go out to the barn and help my dad feed the horses. I liked the animals.

J. You said you went to Rafferty through eighth grade.

I. Right.

J. And then you came to town, Chesterfield, to school.

I. Came to the big village of Chesterfield High School.

J. Chesterfield High School. When was that?

I. That was, uh, well I graduated in thirty-six. So, I'm trying to go back.

J. Thirty-two, thirty-three. No, thirty-one, thirty-two. Somewhere in there. We got the idea.

I. Right.

J. How was it different going from the one room school house into the big town of Chesterfield and having classes separated or whatever?

I. Well, you have each room, you know. Well, we had an assembly room. Then we go for each class right into separate rooms. There were thirteen in our class. Well, it was quite different because we weren't used to that. We were all use to being in the one classroom. But, it was really nice and you felt grown up...once you got to the high school. You thought you were grown up. You got to wear high heels.

J. Got to change the fashion, huh.

I. Of course, I rode the horse to school everyday. That didn't change to much, transportation anyway.

J. Just a little bit further.

I. Uh-huh. Two and quarter miles instead of one.

J. I know there has been several schools here in Chesterfield. When you went to high school in Chesterfield, where was it at here in town?

I. It was right at the south edge of Chesterfield. It was only the one high school and there was one grade school for the children here in town.

J. So the high school you went to is the building across from the community building.

I. No, that was the grade school.

J. That was the grade school which was once the high school.

I. The building there now is what was left and Dave Kanallakan has it and uses it as a shop.

J. So, you went to high school where I went to grade school.

I. Probably.

J. The building that they tore down a couple of years ago.

I. Is that right?

J. Yah. Once you got to high school what kind of extracurricular activities did you do? Like sports.

I. They had basketball. Had some girls [sports], but we just played for fun in P.E.. We did have boys basketball. They had a track. The boys run around the track and do their exercises. We just had the girls down in the gym. That was about it. Let's see, I decided... there was one teacher that offered during the four years, I don't remember which year it was, I was probably junior or senior, was willing to teach typing, if any of us wanted to take it out of school hours. Which I did. I don't remember how many of us did, but I took it. I loved it. I was glad for that opportunity. Another thing about coming to town high school, I still had to bring my lunch. But, the girls and boys in town could go home for lunch. I just didn't think that was fair. (Laughter)

J. What kind of social activities did you do once you got to high school?

I. Well, not really very much. There was, oh, I guess, about eight or ten of the girls from all the classes got together and formed just a little click. We would meet at each others houses or stay at each others houses all night. Then they had dances in the gym on a Saturday night. Now, I don't know who was responsible for those. But, Aunt Ruby Keele played the piano and Rollie, her son, my cousin, played the drums. We danced in the gym about every week. Which was really the main thing.

J. What kind of music was the music of the time?

I. Well, it was the music, not today's. I still like it. It was ballroom dancing and music.

J. So, you knew how to ballroom dance. Was that something you were taught or it was just...

I. I don't know. It just came naturally. My mother loved to dance; my dad wouldn't dance, so she never went to dances. Same as I; when I married, Wilbur didn't dance, so I didn't get to dance either. But in high school days, I really enjoyed it. If the weather was bad, our roads were bad. I would come to town and stay all night with the Followells, which was Wilma Followell. She went with my cousin Rollie who went to the dances, so then I got to go with them and stay all night. Otherwise, I wouldn't be able to get in.

J. Wilma lived here in town then.

I. Yes.

J. And Rollie?

I. Lived west of town on the farm.

J. When did you graduate?

I. 1936. That was a hot, hot summer. Everything dried up that summer. I went to Colorado with a neighbor of my aunt from Springfield, who was a widow, and had no children. She had had to come back for business and I went back with her and stayed two months. I remember coming back and my dad and mother meeting me. The first thing was "how much money did you spend". (Laughter) I think I had spent about eighty dollars. Everything had burnt up and I guess there wasn't any money in the till.

J. You went out to Colorado the summer after you graduated.

I. '36. Right.

J. You spent two months out there. What did you do? Where were you at first, I guess?

I. Durango and Cortez. Didn't really do much of anything. Except, it was mountainous. There was some of her friends out there who took me to the cliff house where the Indians, you know, little people were. I went to church out there with these same people which was Four Square and ...what else did they call it. I'd never been to a church like that before. They all prayed at once. It was interesting. They did not do one thing on Sunday. They did eat and go to church. But, you didn't prepare anything. I guess they had to milk there cows. But, they didn't believe in working on Sunday.

J. You say that was different from anything you had ever seen as far as church goes. What religion were you and where did you go to church?

I. I was baptized in the Methodist Church here in Carlinville, or Chesterfield. Reverend Buckholtz baptized our class. The main thing I remember about it is my cousin, Marvin Woods, had had polio and was on crutches when the minister got to him he broke down. But, the church that I had been attending in Sunday School was the United Church. The Methodist Church and the Congregational Church united in 1929. Sunday School met in the Methodist Church and then church was at the United Congregational Church which now they call Chesterfield United Church.

J. That's where the Congregational Church was. Where the United Church is now located on 111 out here?

I. Right.

J. Where was the Methodist Church located?

I. It was right up the street, well, it's torn down now, where Jack Rigsby lives, it was right south in the other block. Let's see, north where it is would be Barry Walner's building.

J. So, like right, about in the middle of town, off the square a little bit.

I. Right.

J. One thing when we were talking about your father, I saw at one point he had become President of the Farm Bureau.

I. Right. In order to pay for the farm, after my grandfather died, I realized that he hadn't been living with us, we'd been living with him. My dad had to pay off his two sisters and one brother for the farm. The farm wasn't making enough, so he worked in Carlinville and served wherever he could. He was in the Farm Bureau and the Macoupin Service Company, he was on that board.

J. What did he do with the Farm Bureau? What kind of stuff did that entail?

I. I don't know.

J. He just left in the morning and came back at night.

I. That's right. The Farm Bureau was started for the farmers. To help get the farmers together. They did a pretty good job of that, much better than in later years when Wilbur and I was farming. We tried to help the N.F.O. which was suppose to be for the farmers also. But, farmers are independent, they don't like to have anybody telling them what to do. So, it's hard to get a group of farmers to follow. Which is probably good.

J. You said something about you and Wilbur and the N.F.O.. What is it?

I. National Farmers Organization. They were trying to unite the farmers and have better prices when they sold their livestock and their grain.

J. When you grew up, you said you lived on a farm. You mentioned feeding the horses. Did you have any other chores or jobs that you were expected to do around the house?

I. Oh, you helped, I helped my mother. When I graduated from high school, I wanted to go down to Schertleff which was in Alton. I think know it's a dental school. But, I wanted to go and take

secretarial work, but my dad said your mother needs you here at home. Probably didn't have any money to send me with either. But, in those days, you weren't expected to go on to school like we expect people to go get a college education these days.

J. We mentioned Wilbur several times. When did you first meet Wilbur?

I. Well, the Longs were neighbors. They lived just a quarter of a mile east of us. I went to school with him, I guess, a couple of years. I don't remember that. He would have been in the seventh and eighth grade. But, his two brothers, Bob and Sam, and I went to school at the same time. When Wilbur graduated from high school, he was seventeen. His mother had died that fall before. There was Wilbur and his dad and the two younger brothers, who had a bad... hard time making a living. So, in February of 1931, my dad took Wilbur and his dad to Springfield. Wilbur joined the Marines and never come home until he got his four years through the Marine Corps. So, when he came home then, it had been four years since he'd seen his brothers. He didn't know his brother Sam. He came out to see the folks and we met. But, we didn't go together for a while. He went with somebody else for a while, my best girlfriend. Then, we went together two years. We were married in '38. So, I guess, we started really going together in '36.

J. He entered the Marines in...

I. '31.

J. He spent four years in the Marines and then came out. That's when you met him and you married in '38.

I. July 2, 1938. By that time, he had studied and taken an exam in railway mail service. His first run was in early 1938 from Chesterfield to Springfield because he didn't have a regular run when we were married July 2, 1938.

J. You said he studied and took an exam. Where would you study for...

I. I don't know how he did that. I don't know where he... I know that you always have to do studying on... I don't know what kind of test it is to take for it. After he got in, I know he had to study and keep up where the post offices were and we didn't have zipcodes then. You had to know where the towns were and what trains would catch your mail and deliver it.

J. You say he made runs on the railroad. So, he actually was on the railroad?

I. Right. He was on the railroad. After we were married, we lived with my folks almost two years because he never knew where the runs

was going to be. They would call and tell him, he was like a sub. But, that first summer we lived with my folks. By winter, he had made enough that we bought our first car, which was a Ford we bought from Greenfield. Which we thought was real well. At that time, his pay wasn't all that much. But still, it was real good to what most people were able to make. Then, when he would have a run, like if rode from Alton to Springfield, I had an aunt up there and it was day run, so I would go stay with her and he would stay there at my aunt's. Otherwise, I'd stayed at home and he made the runs. I'd take him to Medora to catch his train wherever he had to go. Then, well, he was sent to Chicago terminal. We were up there a couple of months in an apartment, an efficiency apartment. Which is one room and your kitchen and bath. Wilbur did not like city life. He wanted the farm. So we got on the L and rode out west, came to Maywood and got off. [We] went to a real estate place, she showed us several places and the first place we had green grass, we stopped and bought a house. We had to come down home then and borrow the money as a down payment, which we borrowed from my folks. One year we had saved enough. We didn't do anything. I mean, you paid your bills and if you had a quarter left, on his day off we'd go downtown and go to a show. We could see a show that had the movie and they also had..what am I trying to say...live people...

J. Theater.

I. Theater in the theater for a quarter a piece. If we had that quarter we went, if we didn't we stayed home. We had saved enough to pay the folks back at the end of the year. In...let's see... we were up there in 1940. In 1941, Wilbur got a chance on the run from Alton to Roodhouse. So, we moved down there and had an awful time finding a place to rent, so we built a house there at Alton for \$5000. We got our F.H.A. loan. We had a five room house with basement and a floor upstairs, an attic. That was in 1941. Also, well, will get to that later, but while we were in Maywood was when he signed for the war, when he had to sign up for World War II.

J. We can talk about that now. Did he go in and enlist?

I. No, everybody had to sign up. Everybody had to put their John Henry down and their age and everything. You know, register.

J. Register for the draft and he did that in Maywood.

I. In Maywood, he did that. He wasn't called until December 1943. He was called back in the service and had to take boot camp all over again. Which at thirty-one was a lot different than when he was eighteen. So, he (people walk through room)...

J. We had a little interruption here. Irma was talking about Wilbur having to redo boot camp when he got drafted into the Marines in World War II.

I. They put him back in mail service since he was a railway mail clerk. They put him in the mail service, which was fine because he was stationed in one spot at that time.

J. Where was he stationed?

I. He was stationed in San Francisco. So, I went out and we got first, we had an attic room. Wasn't suppose to have any eats in it, but I would sneak in milk and donuts for my breakfast. I got a job at Lerner's while I was out there. Then, in order for us to get an apartment, you had to put your names in and you were on a list. I looked in the paper and they wanted somebody to oversee an apartment building and I thought well, I believed I could do that. But, I didn't realize what a job that was and it wasn't a very good location. So, I walked to the Marine headquarters office there in San Francisco, everyday for six weeks. I know they just got tired of seeing me come in, it was the only reason we ever got an apartment. 1065 Gary Street, I'll never forget it. We had...oh what do they call those beds that are up in the wall and you have your living room, but the bed comes down at night...Murphy bed, I think it was called and your kitchen and your bathroom, but Wilbur got some allowance for living, so that helped us.

J. Wilbur when he got drafted back into the Marines was doing the mail. Did he spend the whole war in San Francisco?

I. Yes, well, yes. Until about the end of his time, when it came time for them to drop the bomb over at Hiroshima, all of the Marines were called in to go over there to end the war if they could do it. Now, Wilbur hadn't practiced on the guns, his shooting. But, they were all called. He was on Ellis Island [Treasure?], was it? Anyway, he sent me home. I was pregnant and I was due to have our child out there. But, when he was called to go overseas, he wanted me to come home where I would have family around. So, then after they dropped the bomb, I was on my way home on the railway. In the railroad car, I had to have a sleeper, the doctor said. There were two of us pregnant and we were standing in line to get our food when we heard over the train that the bomb had been dropped. After that, Wilbur didn't have to go overseas. He was sent back to the mail service, the mail place there on Vaness Avenue. So, then five months later, I went back out and that July 2, he was discharged from the Marines and got to come home.

J. That's '46.

I. Yes, Trudy was born in '45 and that was '46. Right.

J. So, when he got called to go over to Japan or to the Pacific, wherever they were going, he never...

I. He didn't have to go.

J. He never left San Francisco. He never got on a boat or anything. Do you remember your reaction to the dropping of the bomb?

I. Well, at that time, I didn't realize it, but it probably saved those Marines lives. It was hard to comprehend how many they were saying were killed from it or the strength of it. You know, what it really did. We were just hoping the war could be over, get over.

J. Did you realize right away that that meant Wilbur wouldn't be...

I. No, I had no idea. I just supposed they'd take them on over someplace and they did a part of them. I think the younger ones they did take someplace.

J. What was Wilbur's rank in the army?

I. Private First Class.

J. When the war started, when you first heard about the war in Europe, before we got involved.

I. 1939.

J. '39, Right. You were in Alton?

I. Alton, we were living in Alton. The Sunday morning the news came over, we were in the car starting over to his sisters for the day, I don't know what we were going to do. I remember the exact spot we were in. We were on College, right north of Alton Memorial Hospital when the news came over the radio, car radio. I can't remember what Wilbur said, but he made some comment on that's going to change things now. I think it was something to that order, but I didn't realize what was going to change.

J. This is Pearl Harbor your talking about?

I. Right.

J. Wilbur having already spent some time in the military, do you think that's where his comment came from?

I. Yes, definitely. Because I can remember hearing him say things would get so dull, they would wish for something to happen, so they could have some action in the service.

J. So, did he know immediately...

I. Eventually, yes. You didn't know how soon. You didn't know when that letter was going to come. So, we had two years waiting looking for that letter.

J. What was that like?

I. Well, you just watched for the mail.

J. And hoped it didn't come.

I. And hoped it didn't come, but we knew it would. He had to do his part. So then, we rented out the house. I came up home and stayed with the folks while he was in the war, most of the time.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

J. We were talking about what Irma was doing, where she went when Wilbur was in boot camp. If you would like to go ahead and tell a little about it again, so we make sure we don't miss anything.

I. After boot camp, he didn't know where he would be stationed or what they would have him to do. So, I stayed with the folks then until he was situated in San Francisco and was working in the mail terminal. We lived in a one room, but we shared the flat with six other families. We had one bathroom and one kitchen. We ate at different shifts or whenever it was convenient. So, we had friends, not necessarily Marines, there was Navy and then the lady that managed the flat and her daughter. Her husband to be was an army man that she met. That's when I worked awhile in Lerner's store.

J. What did you do at Lerner's?

I. I just waited on people. Then you decide that your not making enough to do it, so I quit there and got a job with Collier's. I had good friends there, that became good friends, that helped me or I'd never made it there because I hadn't had any experience before.

J. I don't know, what is Collier's?

I. It was an encyclopedia. By working there, I got to get an encyclopedia set. (Laughter)

J. Free encyclopedia. What exactly did you do for Collier's?

I. It was typing.

J. Typing. Talking about this flat here, you had six families living together in six different rooms, but you shared a kitchen and a bathroom.

I. That was interesting. We found out, we ladies found out that we

didn't need all the gadgets that we had at home. We were just going to come home and clean out the cupboards, but mine aren't cleaned out.

J. I was going to say, did you? Since you were in San Francisco and you were living in a place with military people, how did the government programs such as rationing affect you?

I. We still had rationing. We lived in that apartment later, this wasn't when we first moved there. Then we went to that apartment. Wilbur, loved to fish, so he and a couple buddies would go fishing. I fixed fish every way there was to fix it because we had to ration our stamps and you didn't have very many meat stamps or any other. We didn't have a car out there, but our meat is what we missed the most\*and so we would eat out what we could.

J. The other day when we were here we were looking through the Chesterfield history book and you pointed to the Burlington Railroad sign. I've heard that story so many times I want to hear it again.

I. I don't know that story. I'd like to hear you tell me.

J. We maybe go back a little bit, get off the war for a while, and maybe talk about Chesterfield a little bit. Today, Chesterfield is approximately how many people?

I. Three hundred. Three hundred the sign says, I think that counts dogs and cats.

J. So it's not that big. Is that about the way it was from your earliest memories?

I. Probably, there were probably more people here, but I don't remember another sign saying how many there were here, but there were so many more businesses that I would think there would have been more here.

J. What kind of businesses were in Chesterfield?

I. Oh goodness! You want me to name them?

J. Yes, go ahead. Just some of them.

I. Oh my! We had a theater, we had a butcher shop, a barber shop, two grocery stores, a furniture store and funeral home, garage. They had before I remember anyway, they had a blacksmith here, they had a lumber yard, telephone company, of course, the bank. The dry goods store and above it they held there meetings for the Masons and the Eastern Star. Post office, of course, and the tavern, an elevator and a coal mine earlier, and the railroad station. It was a thriving place.

J. Yes, for three, four hundred people.

I. There was even a coal mine out west of town. And all the families knew everybody else, they were all...

J. About the mine here, was it in operation when you were kid?

I. No, I don't remember it being in operation. I just remember them talking about it and then of course, some of the family had lived on part of the coal mine ground.

J. Where was the mine?

I. West and north of Chesterfield.

J. We talked earlier about the railroad with Wilbur and the mail. Going back to that for just a second. You talked about Wilbur making his runs. In these runs, did he stop in all these little towns?

I. Right and throw off the mail. They had bags of mail. In fact, I've got one of his bags up stairs now and I've got his case that he studied the towns in and what lines would connect. He'd always say "Aren't you on a schedule. What would happen to the mail if I wasn't on a schedule."

J. The rain, sleet, or snow thing. (Laughter) The railroad in Chesterfield closed in '41, they say and you weren't here then. But, do you remember the importance of the railroad to Chesterfield?

I. It was very important by bringing stuff in and taking stuff and taking people. You could ride to Springfield or different towns, but really I don't remember too much about it because I wasn't here. '41, we were just down in Alton.

J. As a kid, did you ever go anywhere on the train?

I. I don't remember ever getting on that train. I don't remember having a ride on that train.

J. But, there was both passenger train that went through and...

I. Yes.

J. But you never rode on it. So, you probably...

I. I didn't get that far home I guess.

J. That was on the other side of town from where you were at.

I. Right and people used to say where somebody lived. If they didn't live out in my neighborhood, I didn't know where they lived, except my cousins and aunt and uncle that lived west of town.

J. You knew the people, you just didn't know where they lived? That's small town I guess.

I. Right. You'd see them in the grocery store. Of course, Saturday night, that's when you brought your eggs to town and traded your eggs for groceries that you would buy which wasn't very many. You'd raised your meat and your raised your garden, food in the garden and you baked your own bread. So, you didn't have...

J. You were self-sufficient to a certain degree then. Let's see, I lost my thought here for a second.

I. I threw you off.

J. No, I had a question, but I forget it. But that's alright, it will come back eventually.

I. It will come back.

J. Oh, I was going to ask you about the doctor in town.

I. Oh, we had Dr. Knoop. Now, of course, there were doctors before him here, but he's the only one that I remember. He was a great doctor. He was a good doctor. He took care of me when I had pneumonia and brought me through that. One time when I had appendicitis, he said it was appendicitis. At that time my dad was in the hospital in Springfield. I remember Doc Knoop saying to me, "You go to Springfield and get you a doctor and if you don't, you're going to be out there in the cemetery with your grandpa." Then, I remember he'd sit on the steps of the doctor's office there, he'd sit on the steps and as the people would go by to the elevator he'd say, "Well, that ones not paid for." (Laughter) Shouldn't put that in there. You can take that one out.

J. That's all right. Along with the doctor in town, I don't know if you mentioned it before, but there was also a pharmacist?

I. Yes, Chester Towse. In fact, he lived next door to where I live here now in Chesterfield. He had a drug store and he was a pharmacist. [He] had ice cream and you had little round tables with the little wire chairs. You'd go in there for ice cream. In those days, you'd could get a nice ice cream sundae for a dime.

J. For a dime. The good old days I guess. Were there any other service type businesses here in town along those lines that were important?

I. A garage that would help work on cars. Of course, we didn't have tractors, we just had horses to do the farm work with. If the horse got bad, you have to take them out to shoot them and have to get another one. But it's quite different from the tractors we have today and the machinery that we've got. I remember my dad getting

his first tractor and getting burned real bad with it. With putting water in the hot radiator, but I don't remember what year that was.

J. But, it was when you were still...

I. I was still little and out home.

J. But, you also remember him farming with the horses?

I. Oh yes, mostly yes.

J. Did the tractor make it easier for him farming?

I. Yes and quicker. You could get more work done over more ground.

J. When you were growing up, would have been the late twenties and thirties.

I. Right. We had to do things the hard way.

J. Yes, so we're talking the depression. What kind of impact did the depression have on you and your family?

I. You didn't make any money, you didn't have any money. I can remember bartering was done a lot. I remember some saying that they would truck sheep or stock down to the yards and not make enough off of the livestock that you would still have to pay the trucker for getting it there. Really, you lived on your garden. I remember we had sheep and I had pet lambs and I'm sure that we ate one of my pet lambs that got lost. You just didn't have any money to do anything with. Although, there were some a lot worse off than we were. I didn't go hungry. Lot of families I think did. I know Wilbur's family didn't have too much. They would hunt. My dad was always, he always liked to hunt quail and rabbit. We ate a lot of rabbit, quail, squirrel. They were really delicacies, as they are today really. You didn't...you could buy a dress \$5.95, \$6.95, something like that if you had the money, but you didn't have clothes...we didn't wear as many clothes as they do [today]. You know, have as many clothes in the closet. We usually had one dress that was a good dress to wear to a funeral or to Sunday School. Then, you had a couple or three maybe, that was the lot, for the week. Now maybe, everybody wasn't like that, but that was the way it was at home.

J. Did you think that or do you think now that the fact that you were an only child made it easier?

I. Oh I'm sure it did, if there had of been more in the family. Mother's family there was eight. My dad's there were four. These families that had more children, they had to divide. I'm sure it made a difference.

J. You mentioned a minute ago about Wilbur and the fact that during



the depression he had a little bit different experience than you? Do you remember anything about that or stories that he told?

I. I remember one story he told me. He'd go out and hunt rabbits and his dad would bring home a big sack of hominy that he had to pay a quarter for and that was their main substance cause his mother was gone and there was nobody to cook but him. I think that's one reason he left and went to the Marines. There was no money for schooling which he would have liked to have had. It would have been nice if he could have had a college education because he would have done alright, but it just wasn't to be.

J. You think he might of went into the Marines partially because of the depression to give himself something better.

I. Right. Definitely.

J. Was that a common experience that you know of?

I. I don't know of any others around that did go into the service.

J. Do you remember here in Chesterfield...(phone rings) We were talking about when the phone rang, I was going to ask you about remembering any of Roosevelt's New Deal programs. If you remember any of them in action here in town?

I. When did we have the C.C.C.?

J. That would have been the early thirties.

I. I know Wilbur's brother went on that and helped with that program. The New Deal? Let's see. What would we have had through that? I can't off hand remember. I know he was to change the world and probably was the starting of the changing of it, for sure.

J. Do you recall any of the agricultural programs on your farm? Did you do anything different through government subsidies or something?

I. When did that start?

J. That would have been in the late thirties probably with the Agricultural Adjustment Administration.

I. I tell you what I do remember is when we first got electricity out home which was 1939. I remember especially the folks belonging to a card club and all the rest of them were in town here and had electricity. They didn't have it out there and Mother worked so hard on those lamps, so they could see the cards, so it was really a blessing when we got electricity. It was 1939 and her father had passed away and she got, I don't know, \$500 or something, anyway, a bathroom came in with that money. I think she got an iron the first thing. So, it really changed your life to get electricity and have

some electricity and power that we weren't used to. An iron, a refrigerator because we always had an icebox before they delivered ice to your house.

J. You said she got some extra money, \$500, and you got a bathroom with that. You moved it in from outside...

I. She got the downstairs bedroom and turned it into a bathroom. They didn't have a basement in the house at that time, so they divided off that room, the bedroom, and put the pump in [the] half of it that she used for the water pump and the motor. In the other [half], we put the tub and stool and the lavatory. That was living high on the hog for us. (Laughter)

J. That was it. I'd imagine. Now that you look back to depression, what kind of impact do you think the fact that you grew up during the depression has had on your life all the way through?

I. You save your money and you're tighter spending your money because you're afraid that we may have to go through another one. It's sort of like Wilbur didn't get an education, so he wanted his daughter Trudy to get an education. Or when it wasn't easy to get and you don't want your next generation to go through the same hardships that you do, not realizing, I suppose, that that's the way we grow and mature is to meet a few hardships. But, because if you've had it, you expect it. If you haven't had it, you know what it means to get it. You think about how much harder it's going to be the next time if we have another depression which really we're in, but we don't call it such.

J. Yes, political correctness. So, do you think maybe that it kind of shaped your...

I. Your ideas of the future.

J. Would you say that was probably the impact it had on most people, your friends?

I. Yes, I think so.

J. Did the depression change Chesterfield?

I. Yes, we lost the railroad and the coal mine had closed. Then the elevator closed and places began to drop off. It changed a lot to now which is finally come down to what we have. We do have a funeral parlor. We have a grocery store which we are very fortunate to have, we didn't have a grocery store for some time. We do have a post office, a bank, and almost everything else... No doctor, no school because the school consolidated and everybody has to go to Carlinville now. So, it made all the little towns, most of the little towns, dead horses or dead places anymore to what the thriving towns were in the thirties and earlier.

J. So, the depression played a big role in that you think.

I. Right. Right.

J. That's when Chesterfield lost many of its...

I. That's when it began to go down and lost its businesses. Even the older people who have moved into town, retired from their farms, died, so you have all together a new population practically. It used to be you knew everybody, you knew the whole family and knew the history of the family. Now, I don't know a lot of the people that are living here. There's a few families left of us older families, but getting fewer all the time which is sad.

J. Yes, the families or the cities declined as the older families [died].

I. They say that's... what am I trying to say, looking to the future...that's progress. Well, we do have progress in computers and spaceships and everything, even in medicine and all. Which is great, but families are certainly declined and family life. Of course, we know where that started, the war brought that on.

J. How did the war...

I. When the war came along and the men went to war, women went to work and they're still having to work in order to pay the bills because everything is so much more expensive than it was, so that plays havoc with a lot of the family life. And another thing, it's harder for the young people because they have so many more peer pressures, so much more peer pressure in school. Subjects are harder, they're expected to learn more. More is pushed on them to learn, it makes it hard. I feel sorry for all the younger ones.

J. We'll go back and talk a little bit about the war again or after the war. You said that Wilbur was discharged...

I. In '46.

J. In '46 and then what...

I. Then when we came home. We went back to Alton and he got his job back. He was railway mail clerk until 1953. My dad was ill and knew he wasn't able to manage the farm anymore. He wanted Wilbur to leave the mail clerk job and come to the farm, which we did, 1953. It was '53 or '54 that it was so hot and drought and everything burned up. So, we started out real poor. We sold our house in Alton. We had paid \$5000 for it in 1941 when we built [it]. We sold in 1953 for \$14,500.

J. Good investment.

I. That went into the farm operation. My dad and Wilbur, fifty-fifty then on the farming operation. My folks moved into the house I'm in here now in Chesterfield and Wilbur and I moved out on the farm. We put a basement in so we could have a furnace. I remember my dad saying "We won't live very much longer, so just don't spend anything out here." But, we went ahead and put a furnace in and had some heat. Out home as a child I remember using what we called a base burner. It used hard coal and it had isinglass all around the middle of it. It looked so pretty whenever you looked at it, it was like a fireplace.

J. Did it heat the house pretty well?

I. Well, what we heated. Your bedrooms weren't heated, but it did a good job.

J. You said you moved up from Alton in '53 because your father was ill and Wilbur would help farm. Was that a tough decision?

I. I wouldn't make the decision. That was a time I said Wilbur had to make his decision. I would go along with him either way. But, he finally said yes. So, we moved up. It was very hard for him to make. I know because he had a pretty good salary coming in. And yet, seeing into the future which we couldn't do, later the railway mail service went to trucks, trucking. So, its hard telling where he would have been several years since.

J. Looking back was it a good decision?

I. Yes. Very good!

J. Was it, even though you weren't going to make the decision, is that what you really wanted?

I. I don't think it really mattered that much to me at that time. When I married I decided wherever his work was is where I should be. I guess I was a better follower than a leader.

J. One thing that we haven't mentioned here in this time period is Trudy. When was she born?

I. Trudy was born in 1945. She was an only child. The only one we could have, answered a prayer. She was in the first or second grade when we moved up here. I remember coming up and talking to her about moving up. The renter was out there at that time and they had a clock at a certain place in the front room on a shelf. Yes, she was glad to move up. But, when we moved up and that clock was gone and she left her friends in Alton (laughter) and came out on the farm, she never was a farm girl. Today, she'd rather be in the cities than on the farm. But, she has two daughters and one of them is a farm gal. She didn't like it when I moved off the farm. Trudy had a certain place out there though. There used to be a pond out east

that's filled in know. Don't suppose you remember it.

J. No.

I. That was Trudy's prayer spot. Now Laura has one, I don't know where it is. Occasionally, she has to come down. But, she didn't like it when I left the farm. In fact, she never been back in the house. She'll go out there, but she hasn't been in the house.

J. This is Laura. She's the one that's the farm...

I. Laura. She likes the farm. She's married now. She was married, it will be two years next May. May 4, so she was married in '92, I guess.

J. What does she do?

I. She's a massage therapist. Going back to college. She has about eight hours in. So, she says it will take her a long time to get it, but she's finally decided that that's what she wants to do. So, she's doing real well and likes it real well. She's always liked school. She had a year at, well two years, two and a half at Millikin at Decatur. Then went to work. Then, she decided she wanted to be a massage therapist. She said I was the cause of that because I rubbed her back so much.

J. Is that good I guess?

I. I guess she liked it.

J. You have another granddaughter...

I. Kristina. Kristina has started to Robert Morris College and decided that wasn't what she wanted. So, she's just working living with the family and working here and there right now. So, take a little time, I guess, for her to find herself.

J. You said that when you moved back up to Chesterfield Trudy was in first or second grade, one or the other. Where did she go to grade school?

I. Here in Chesterfield.

J. She came into Chesterfield.

I. Yes, so she went to what I went to as a high school and Wilbur [too].

J. So, by that time in the early fifties, most of the rural schools had closed?

I. Yes, and they were bused.

J. They were bused. How early did she have to get up?

I. The bus would pick her up about 7:30, I guess that's when she went to high school. She went to high school in Carlinville see, so she wouldn't have to had... They were bused up there, were they bused here in Chesterfield or how did she get here? I guess they were, they were bused, all of them... grade school and high school. I can remember starting her out with boots on and then I'd go for the mail down at the end of the drive. I'd find her boots in the mailbox because she wasn't going to wear boots to school. She didn't like the food. She didn't want to eat at the school lunches. (Someone at the door).

J. We were talking about Trudy coming to school here in Chesterfield. Go ahead and continue.

I. She never liked the lunches, but she was a finicky eater, so I never worried about the food wasn't good. It was just her. So, whatever she didn't like, she'd drink her milk and put it in the milk carton, so she wouldn't get balled out.

J. When you returned from Alton was there a high school in Chesterfield or had they already...

I. No.

J. Gone to Carlinville.

I. I don't know what year it went to Carlinville.

J. It was right around that time I think. It was either the late 40's or early '50's.

I. I can remember thinking it was sad kids had to go that far to go to high school, but I can't remember the year. You know, that's progress and I guess that was for the best.

J. When you moved back you were living with your father. How did that work? You said you were both farming with...

I. When Wilbur come home from the service in 1946, we went back to Alton and lived. The next year the folks, my dad, decided he couldn't help on the farm anymore, so he put his renter in the home place, on the home place. My mother and father moved into Chesterfield. They bought the house from Zela Kundel, who was a high school teacher, and her husband, Frank Kundel, who was a cashier at the bank. He had built this house for his first wife. She had made the plans for the house and was so proud she had a closet in every room. It was built by Orville Parker. Jeff's uncle, great-uncle Charlie Eldred built the house next to me which was the druggist house.

J. Was that the house we're in now? Where was that house?

I. This house right here. (Points out south window to neighbor's house)

J. Is the one they built?

I. The one that your uncle Charlie built (pointing again to neighbor's house) was this one right here. The one we're in right now was the one that Mr. Kundel had built.

J. The one we're in now is where your parents came?

I. Right. So, the renter was living out in the farm house when we, Wilbur and I, moved up from Alton to the farm. So, they had to leave. I think he was ready to retire and they moved to Chesterfield. So, it was a good time for us to come up.

J. From Alton you moved directly into the farm house?

I. Right.

J. How did Wilbur take to farming?

I. He studied and worked and studied and worked and talked to people. They all came in for coffee, the men came in for coffee. I'm sure he learned a lot from different ones. He became a good farmer. In fact, I thought he was better than my dad (spoken in a whisper). He worked at it.

J. When you came back to the farm with Wilbur was the farm the same size, had you gotten more land than when you were a kid?

I. By that time, the Wooley place was added to it. So, there were about five hundred acres by that time.

J. As Wilbur started farming did you acquire more land?

I. He rented a farm that was some of your relation Jeff, Eldred Cress. We rented that place. Eldred was a cousin of your dad's and he lived in Springfield. He and his wife would come down and visit. We enjoyed them very much. They had one daughter who owns the farm now since the parents are gone, Nancy. I can't think of her last name.

J. I'm not sure. I don't know that part of the family. So, about how many acres do you think Wilbur was farming then?

I. Oh, what did Eldred have? They had a good sized place there. Probably seven hundred and fifty.

J. Seven hundred and fifty. Was that a big, large amount of land?

I. That was a pretty good operation at that time. Now, not, but it was then. Now the farmers have dwindled until...I just read in the paper recently where the farmers aren't even counted now. It's less than two percent of the population are farmers. They're not even counted or considered in government operations very much.

J. Did Wilbur farm this by himself?

I. He had two renters. We had two rental houses and put two renters, one on each side.

J. By this point were we to the tractors?

I. Yes.

J. We were done with the...

J. Done with the teams and had all tractors and combines. When I was growing up, we had thrash machines. There was a man from Chesterfield here named Angelo, Mr. Angelo, had the thrash machine. They would go from farm to farm and thrash their grain. All the farmers got together at silo time because they put corn in the silos to feed their livestock. When that time came, all the farmers in that neighborhood would get together and work together and all the women would get together at each person's house and fix the dinners. At home, we had in the dining room a big table. Everything was taken out of the dining room and the table lengthened out. We could seat sixteen at a table and it would take two tables to feed them. It would take you maybe three or four days to get the silo. First, they had one and then, we had two silos. They're still out there. I hope that stay[s]. I think [it's] kind of a landmark. That one that wouldn't go down on the Wooley place, the renter tried and tried to get that down and couldn't. I'm glad, it's a landmark. So, that was siloing time. Then, they would put hay in the barns. They would bail the straw and bring it in. So, it was quite a community affair. Then, they used to have oyster suppers. They would shoot blue rocks. Do you know what that...

J. No.

I. O.K., it's you have a machine and one handles that machine which shoots the blue rocks up in the air. You'd have two teams of men shooting and the one that could shoot the most, hit the most, blue rocks, why, then the losers would have to give them an oyster supper. So, we'd all get together for that, several a winter. So, that was part of your social life of families.

J. I've heard stories about oysters, so that must have been a little area thing. Do you feel that community in the farming is still there today or is that something of the past?

I. Oh, no! That's past.

J. When did that disappear or do you know?

I. That passed. We didn't have anything like that. You see, this machinery, you don't have to get together and depend on each other, except, if somebody is ill. Why, some of them will go in and help them or all the farmers will gather in and go get their crop out if somebody is ill or has had hard luck. But, no, that community, social part is gone. We would get together and play cards. You'd have card parties. That's where the Masonic and Eastern Star played a big part too. It was some place for the people to go and it was good, but you also had card parties. I had mentioned the dances when I was in high school. So, life went on pretty good and it was not too much hum-drum. I don't think as much as maybe it is now. Now you go to a show. We did at one time have a show in the park and watch the show and do the shopping. To go to Carlinville on a Saturday night and watch the people go by that was entertainment too. (Laughter)

J. Still is. What kind of show are we talking in the park?

I. They would be kind of ...I don't mean commercials, but what are these little shows that they use to show before a main theater show.

J. I don't know...I mean I know what your talking about, but...

I. I don't know what it's called, mini shows. Westerns a lot of times. A lot of shooting and banging. Just regular fun.

J. Out on the farm, we talked about livestock earlier. What kind of livestock did you have?

I. We had sheep and chickens and hogs and cattle and horses, of course.

J. Did you use them for yourselves or were they sold?

I. They were sold. My dad would buy cattle and as we called it, finish them out. They would be, maybe they would weigh seven hundred pounds when you bought them. Then, you'd finish them out to a thousand or eleven hundred and sell them back to the National Stockyards. The sheep would go there and you had to have your sheep sheared every year. The chickens, that gave you your eggs and meat. Somebody came, why, mother would go out and get a chicken, kill it and fry it.

J. Did your father or Wilbur shear your sheep or was there a community sheep shearer?

I. No, there was somebody who would come through and shear them. I can't remember who it was, I guess it wasn't anybody that was local. Then, talking about chickens, in 1956...

END OF TAPE

J. When our first tape ended, Irma was talking about when they got rid of the chickens.

I. When we came back up to the farm we had chickens. In 1956 Trudy came down with what they finally diagnosed as histoplasmosis. That's a fungus of the body. They think that birds and chickens carried the germ and the winds from the south blow and bring us more germs. So, I got rid of the chickens and the parakeet we had in the house. She was in bed for four months. She was six months at home sick, but we got rid of the chickens. I was glad.

J. A lot of work probably that the chickens...

I. It's easier to go buy a chicken. (Laughter)

J. That says it pretty well I think.

I. Same as a loaf of bread, although I like to bake it...for fun, not because you have to.

J. We'll go ahead and finish off the day here. One more question that I probably should have asked you earlier. Could you maybe describe a little bit for me the makeup of the home place? Like the house and the barns and that kind of thing.

I. As a child, I remember what we used as a shop as a log house. I guess that was the first house. There was a horse barn and a cattle barn and a silo and a chicken house and a garage. A house that had a smoke house on it which originally had been used to smoke the meat in. I still have the meat block that they cut up meat on. I remember when they would butcher, why, we would can the meat because we didn't have any refrigeration, what you couldn't cure. What they cured was cured in the smokehouse. Of course, we canned everything out of the garden because you didn't buy any fresh vegetables. A lot of people as Wilbur always said at Christmas, if you got an orange and an apple that was a treat; where now we go to the stores and buy everything. As I said, the chickens laid eggs that we brought to town, mother did, once a week you traded that in for the things that you had to have like your flour and the sugar. What you had to...you used lard off of your meat for your shortening and you had your milk cows, so you had your own milk and butter, made cottage cheese. That was the best. Didn't have electricity, so you didn't have that bill.

So, you had your coal that you used for your heat. You had your stove, cook stove, in the kitchen and that gave you heat in there as well as cooking your food. Your washing, I remember mother would put a boiler on them every Monday morning and put water in it and boil your clothes and rub them on a board. Rinse them with water you carried from the well in. Then, you used that water and watered your flowers. Eventually then, they built the home house that's out there now. It had a kitchen, dining room, living room, two bedrooms downstairs, four bedrooms upstairs. Each one of the children, there were four children, had a stove in their room upstairs for

heat. Good thing they didn't have any more children, then they would had to build on. In the garage, I can remember a surrey being on one side and a car on the other, the storm wagon, storm buggy, that I remember going over to grandma's in, we had a certain team that mother drove. Then eventually, the horse barn, we tore it down after Wilbur and I were out there farming and put up a big shed. The cattle barn needs to be taken down now, but I don't know if we're going to try to restore it or tear it down. We might try to restore it, but it looks bad. The smokehouse needs to be torn down, its brick. The bricks are coming out, so I imagine I'll have to take care of that and fill that in. The back porch was just an open back porch and the folks windowed it in, so it could be used winter and summer. They've got heat out there now, so they can use it. That's about it. It was called Elm Grove Farm, so I suppose that there had to be some elm trees originally around it. There was a pond right west of the horse barn that my grandpa would fish out at. We had catfish in it. If I went down with him, I couldn't talk because I'd scare the catfish away. So, we ate a lot of catfish.

J. Very good. Is there anything else you would like to add about anything we've talked about today?

I. I kind of think I've probably said too much.

J. No, I don't think so. Well, thank you very much. I appreciate it. We'll see what we can do, maybe get together again.

I. O.K. fine.

END OF TAPE

JEFF ELDRED  
TRANSCRIPTIONIST

Begin Tape 3

J. A couple of things from the last time we talked that I've listened to and thought we might want to go over again, a little clarification. We talked about Wilbur during World War II was in the military in San Francisco. Exactly what did that involve? What did he do?

I. It was a day job. He went to work everyday. I forgot the hours, probably eight to four, eight to five. We had an apartment. It was really just like a job on the outside. But, it was all service and he had to wear his uniform and it was all under the regulations of the government, the Marine Corps.

J. So, you were living in an apartment, so he really didn't deal with the regular military conditions?

I. Yes, it was under the military conditions. I think I said in the first interview, how I went to the office to get an apartment everyday for several weeks before they acquired that apartment that we could take. Then, of course, he was allowed so much for the apartment to help pay on the apartment.

J. When he went to work and he was basically doing the same thing he had done before, he was just in the mail room?

I. He was sorting the mail like he was under the government and the railway mail service as a civilian.

J. That will clear that up a little bit. We talked about last time you being baptized here in the church in Chesterfield. Then we pretty much left church alone after that. I wondered have you always attended that church?

I. My class was baptized in the Methodist Church here in Carlin...Chesterfield which united with the Congregational Church in 1929, I believe it was. I suppose our membership went right over to the United Church. However, in 1949, Wilbur and I joined the Methodist Church in Godfrey, Illinois. Wilbur and Trudy were baptized in the Chesterfield United Church in...let's see, Trudy was nine months old... in 1946. Then later, in 1949, we joined the Methodist Church in Godfrey.

J. Where do you attend church now?

I. Now, I attend church back in Chesterfield United Church here in town.

J. Have you attended anywhere else in between?

I. I'm still a member of Godfrey Methodist Church. Then, I attended Carlinville Methodist Church while a pastor that we knew from Godfrey was up here, Reverend John Curtis. I think he put me on the membership there. So, it's just more convenient to go to here, Chesterfield United right now.

J. Talking about John, do you ever talk to him anymore?

I. Yes, I got a nice card from them. I didn't get any cards sent this year. So, I got a nice note. Trudy and I visited them and went last summer one day to church where he is in Paris, Illinois. Then went out to lunch. He would like to retire, but financially he can't. But, he's beginning to show his age a little bit. Although, he would be sixty-eight now. Marge looked great.

J. He's one of that confirmed me into the church. So, I just

wondered if you were still in touch with him.

I. We feel like he's in the family don't we.

J. Yes.

I. Do you remember Jud Sauers? You wouldn't remember him.

J. No.

I. He sang at Wilbur's funeral. He's in Litchfield Park, Arizona right now. He has just made a tape. I received one of these tapes the other day.

J. So, you went down to the church in Godfrey in 1949. I was going to ask you about the Congregational church- United Church here is the same building.

I. Yes.

J. Do you remember in '55 that building was one hundred years old I guess according to this book. But, if you weren't attending that church anymore, you might not know. The next question is is that the same building that's used today for the United Church? Is that the same one like when you went...

I. Yes, I'm sure it's been remodeled some time ago probably, but I don't know when. I know they but a basement in. I don't remember what minister was here. We were living in the country here. I remember the men all went together and but that basement in. The men's club, I think they called it.

J. If that's the case the church is 140 years old? I just wondered. We talked a little earlier today before we got started about the elevator here. I know...let's see, I'm not sure what year it closed...According to this... well, who was in charge of it when you were growing up.

I. Mr. Followell. W.E. Followell. He's the only one I ever remember running the elevator down there.

J. After he owned it is when it closed isn't it?

I. He managed it. I don't remember who owned it.

J. Anyway, there is supposedly some involvement of your father in the elevator which I know you don't quite remember.

I. I don't quite remember, but the book says he was President or the director, so I suppose he was.

J. This doesn't really say (both Irma and Jeff flip through the

Chesterfield Sesquicentennial History book).

I. I just remember them having meetings. When they would have their annual meeting, daddy would bring me back an apple.

J. So, he was involved in it, if he wasn't President at least. This doesn't say much.

I. I don't remember what year it dissolved.

J. We'll leave that alone then. In this Chesterfield history book, there is a picture in here on page 111, which I'll have a copy of when were done. It's of the Long family, it's Wilbur's family. I wondered if you could go through and maybe...

I. Name them.

J. Help me out a little bit on who's who.

I. (Beginning from the right) This is Wilbur's dad, Grant Long. Wilbur stands next to him. Ruth Long Rands is next.

J. Left we are going. Next to her is?

I. I'm going to have to get over here a little bit. Let's see. Bob Long. He was always called Bob. His name was Ollin. Minnie Long Welch. Dean Long. Nellie Long Fite. That's got to be Walter. Who does that look like?

J. They've got an extra one.

I. Oley Long Ring. Leave that one blank a minute. Lida Long Long.

J. Lida Long Long.

I. Mayo Long.

J. What was the last one?

I. Mayo. Well now wait a minute. We've missed Sam.

J. Is that Sam down there?

I. That is...we should have done this before so we'd of had it right. O.K. We've got Wilbur, Ruth, Bob, Minnie, and then it's Sam instead of who did I have...

J. I don't know Dean.

I. We'll straighten that out.

J. We'll figure it out.

I. We'll get this out and straighten it. Yes, I had missed Sam. That's Sam, Walter, Dean, Oley, Lida, Mayo.

J. There are eleven of them all together. This picture here is of a reunion in 1937. It is kind of interesting that the caption talks about if you added up the ages of all of them they were 409 years old (Laughter). I thought that was kind of interesting. Where did Wilbur fit in age wise?

I. Third from the bottom. Third from the youngest. There was one boy, five girls, and then five boys.

J. What was the range in age?

I. Sam, the youngest, was my age, born in 19...well, he was born in 1919. I was in December 1918, he was January 21, 1919. The oldest was a year younger than my dad and mom. So, he was born in 1895. My folks were born in 1894.

J. So, Wilbur was on the bottom half of that.

I. He was born in 1913, the year my folks were married.

J. Let's see. I lost my thought for a second. After you and Wilbur were married, did you keep in touch with the family? Do you still keep in touch with some of them?

I. Oh yes! As my sister-in-law says, "Once you married a Long, you were a Long." (Laughter)

J. Any of them in particular that you were close to?

I. Well, in the later years, it seemed like Bob and Wilbur, of course, they were next to each other. Bob was a year or two years younger than Wilbur, were the closest I guess because the four of us would go down to Arkansas for the horse races, Hot Springs every year. But, the whole family was close. Anybody needed help the rest were there.

J. Did any of them stay around here other than Wilbur?

I. They all left Chesterfield. Then, we came back in '53. No, none of the rest of them came back.

J. None of the rest of them came back.

I. But, most of them settled around here. There was only one, Oley was in Michigan. Practically all the rest of them were around the area. Alton, Bunker Hill, Plainview.

J. Since we've talked about Wilbur so much since he was your husband, I would like you to describe what he looked like for me?

I. Wilbur was tall. He was 5'11. He weighed around... 180 is an average I guess. He had dark hair. He had dark hair. He had ready complexion. His eyes...that's about all I can say.

J. Also could you describe a little bit what he was like. How would you describe him as a man?

I. You could probably do that easier that I could.

J. I don't remember him very much.

I. You don't remember him that well? He had a dry sense of humor. He was very loyal...very loyal to his friends, very loyal to his family. If he said anything, you could depend on it. I remember in church, the preacher got to saying something that might stick a little bit or make you think a little bit...He'd (Wilbur) say now he's meddling...you don't need to put that in. (Laughter) I always remember that. And very straight forward. He thought we should leave this world in a little better situation than what we found it. I don't know if today whether that's possible or not, but that was his philosophy. He did not like city life. He did not like cities. He wanted to live in the country, so...that's what he got to do. The last...'53 and he died in '79...about 25 years.

J. Okay. Did he have any particular hobbies or interests?

I. The fishing...He loved to fish and hunt.

J. Did he hunt anything in particular?

I. He'd just hunt anything. In fact, to survive, he had to hunt rabbits and his dad would bring home a sack of hominy and that's what they had after his mother died. But anyway, fishing... we used to try to go up to Canada, once a year, for vacation. Then, we went out east when Trudy got older and was in junior high. We took a trip out east and visited Washington D.C. and Gettysburg, Boston. We enjoyed that trip real well.

J. Did you go anywhere in particular in Canada when you went fishing?

I. Red Lake.

J. Red Lake, where's that?

I. I don't remember how many miles it is on the other side of the line, but we would usually stay overnight in... where?... in White Falls, Minnesota.

J. It's up north of Minnesota somewhere though?

I. I would say it's 150 miles up from the line, but I don't remember

for sure.

J. I don't know my Canadian geography well enough to know which province, but it was in the one right above Minnesota?

I. Yes. We took care of one car one year because the roads were so bad up there that it took care of our car that year. But, we always enjoyed it. Trudy didn't. Trudy wasn't a fisher. We would go down to... to Lake of the Ozarks fishing; get up at four o'clock and have breakfast, you know. She couldn't understand that part of it. She doesn't like to fish at all.

J. Did you, after you went fishing, did you cook a lot of the fish you caught?

I. We liked that fish. Wilbur didn't like to eat fish, but we got Walleye and what was the other one up there? It wasn't as good to eat as Walleye. It didn't smell like fish and no taste, so Wilbur liked that. We'd cook that, yes. In fact, our little cabins that we stayed in up there...you had the out houses. One place there was bear out there and the men didn't tell us that. The folks went with us that year and it was kind of like roughing it. But, it was alright.

J. You didn't know there were bear there until you got home or...

I. Well, they told us afterwards. I said...I said something sniffing out there. They told us later it was bear (laughs).

J. Glad they waited until later, aren't you? You said he liked to hunt and fish both. Did he have any particular hunting or fishing buddies around, or did he do a lot by himself?

I. Your dad, I think, they hunted some together. Lloyd Carson used to come up and his brother, Bob Long. There was always somebody from the town that would like to come and fish or hunt, so he'd take them. In fact, when we were first married, we didn't have a hunting dog, so I was the hunting dog. (Laughs)

J. Yes, I think that happened to my mother, too (Laughter) We'll move on a little bit here and we'll talk about...last time we kind of mentioned when you were married, but we didn't really talk about it. So, we'll talk about that again. So, when were you married?

I. We were married July 2, 1938. We had picked that date. Wilbur was a sub in the rail mail... railway mail clerk and he asked to get off so we could have a couple of days, but they wouldn't allow him to take off. He wouldn't tell them why, so he had to work. So we were married at 6:30 that morning. I wasn't going to change the date. I heard that was bad luck (laughs), so we were married at 6:30 on that Saturday morning out home. Mother fixed us a breakfast and there was...his brother, Bob Long, was the best man and Wilma Followell was

my best gal Reverend...I believe it was...Henderson, no Beardshaw...Beardshaw married us. He and his wife and Wilbur's dad and Bob and Wilma was all that was there. So we left 8:30 or before probably, and went to,...where did I say?...

J. Burlington.

I. Burlington, Iowa. And he had to be at work at I believe it was 2 o'clock. We got there at 12:30 and got a hotel room. He went to work and we didn't even get to eat supper together. I'd never stayed in a hotel before so I was rather naive and scared to death. But any way, then we came back Monday morning and he worked a lot that summer; In fact, he worked enough that we got to buy a...our first car in September, I think it was, or October, one of the two. Bought it in Greenfield...I don't know who would have been over there at that time.

J. Yes, I don't know. Cole's is the only thing I remember being over there.

I. Ford. It had a heater in it and that was the only thing. (laughs) but it ran...

J. Yes, that's what counts. Okay, did you, since it was an early morning, rush since he had to work? Did you decorate the house in any way or was it just.

I. No, I don't think so, I don't remember. We fixed up the front...the parlor was what we called it at the time. The front room is what we call it today. We took a...I guess we did decorate a little bit...took a archway in for the...put floors around it...had an archway there where the preacher stood, so we did do a little.

J. Yes, ok. You said that he had to work so you went up to Burlington. Was that your honeymoon or...did you...

I. Yep (laughs) that was it.

J. Never had anything later in life either that you'd call a honeymoon?

I. Not unless, and we didn't call it that, but unless he always wanted to take a cruise, and we never did get to because we were always going to do things when he retired. He was, ...built like

his dad and his dad didn't die until he was 89. And I thought gee, we had lots of time, but we didn't happen to have that much time together. But, we went to Panama...what year was that...1985, maybe...with Bob and Helen Keele. Bob was my cousin and Helen had a brother over in Panama and they wanted to go see him and Bob wouldn't go by themselves. So Wilbur and I went with them. And that was in February...I believe in 1985? No it wasn't either.

J. Ok, Couldn't have been 1985?

I. Couldn't have been 1985, Wilbur died in 1979. So it had to be 1975.

J. Ok, yes.

I. Cause it was 1985 that Irma (Fenton) and I went to Hawaii.

J. Ok, let's see.

I. You take care of all this don't you afterwards. This is just for you to...

J. Yes, we'll have it all fixed up real nice. I have a question here about the Chesterfield Centennial in 1936. What were you doing then?

I. That was the year I graduated from high school and I spent August and September in Cortez, Colorado with an elderly friend who was living by herself and so I wasn't here during that celebration.

J. Ok, so you don't know what was going on. Well then, 1986 was the sesquicentennial. What was involved in all of that?

I. Well, we had a really, a very good celebration, I thought. Everybody cleaned up, I mean all the yards were cleaned up...people took care of their own and got the town cleaned up real well and they had lots of... what do you call it...come in...like in the park. Tents and...what do you call...you know what I'm saying...that sold...?

J. Yes, the vendors...craft vendors.

I. Ornaments, yes, we had lots of them come in.

J. Yes...had a craft show, type thing.

I. We had a band, and they danced in the street, and they had it...at the same time as the fish fry, didn't we?

J. Yes, I think so.

I. We had two days of it and they served food. A tent in the park that served food also and then they had food on the...in front of where Wayne Struble has his building...where the old hotel was. We had pork chops there and then the regular fish fry on Saturday night and I believe they served lunch, too, on Saturday and did we have church in the park the next Sunday morning?

J. I don't remember that.

I. We did one time. I believe we did.

J. Yes.

I. I believe we did.

J. Ok.

I. We had a real good turnout and we had a real good parade.

J. What was involved in the parade? Do you remember?

I. Tractors, cars, and regular floats...the church fixed up one and Tom Chism had his team of horses and wagon. I remember Marge Adams rode a tractor.

J. I don't remember that.

I. in the parade...

J. I don't remember that.

I. Anne Chism had a wagon with all the Chisms in it. And I said old cars.

J. Ok, but the tractors and such were both old, antiques, and fairly new ones and such? Ok.

I. And another thing we had was a car show.

J. Uh huh.

I. And didn't they have a mud...fight...not fight, what do they call it? Mud?

J.. Wrestling?

I. I think they did.

J. Did they? I don't remember that. (laugh)

I. I think they did because it was out on Wilma's ground and she wouldn't allow them the next five years when we tried to...

J. Ok, (laughs) alright and that was 1986. So, Chesterfield was 150 years old in 1986. Ok. We talked a little bit about Trudy last time. We didn't go into her very much. So when was she born?

I. She was born September 27, 1945. She was supposed to be cesarean out in San Francisco and Wilbur got his orders to go overseas...in fact, all the marines did. They were going to make a big push. While I was on the way home, the bomb hit Hiroshima and then Wilbur didn't have to go overseas. I came on home and she was born in Springfield.

J. Ok, so where were you living when she was born?

I. With my folks...

J. So here in Chesterfield?

I. No, out home.

J. Yes, ok right.

I. Then we went back out to San Francisco when she was five months old. Then Wilbur was discharged July 2, 1946.

J. Ok, and then?

I. Then we came to the folks and then we went back to our house in Alton.

J. Alright, oh, when she was...when she was young, did she have any special toys or anything like that...that you can remember she played with?

I. No...she played with anything and everything. We were living in...well, I call it Alton...it was Godfrey township, and we had...we were the first house on that block and then we had neighbors build up close to us and they had a son. I don't know whether Buddy is one year or two years...I guess one year older than Trudy. They played together a lot. Then he had a cousin that lived next to them, so all the kids there played together. Then we had another family that had kids on the other side of us and so they all played. When Grandpa Long died-you don't have to put all this in-Grandpa Long died, Buddy, of course they were Catholic, Buddy worried so about Trudy because she didn't have any holy water. First time ever knew about holy water in the house. I guess they have it, I don't know, but we were real, real close. His mother and I were just like sisters.

J. Yes.

I. She was a nurse down at one of the plants in Alton and they finally had another boy in 1951. Buddy, you see, would have been...what would he have been at that time; 1945 well, he was seven years younger I guess,...yes, I think it was seven years younger. But, they were at my house a lot of the time, and Trudy was a poor eater, so I'd have one or two of them or maybe all of them, come in and I'd make silver size doughnuts-silver dollar size doughnuts...pancakes trying to get her to eat. She was...I don't think they expected us to raise her, but she says she's tough.

J. Yes. So where did she start out going to school?

I. She started there at McKinley then...there in Alton and we moved up here to the farm in 1953. She would have been in what grade? First, second? Her first teacher was from Carlinsville...a real good teacher. Then Wilma was her teacher, so I don't know if they had kindergarten back then or not. She went...started kindergarten down there at McKinley. No McKinley...yea, I think it is. No, McKinley is up in North Alton. What was the name of that...it's on State Street as you go down the hill by the Catholic Church. Good enough.

J. Yes, Ok. So she came when you moved back to Chesterfield,

she came to grade school here in town?

I. In Chesterfield.

J. How did she adjust to the move to Chesterfield?

I. She...we brought her up here. McAfees were living in the house that time and they had a coo-coo clock on the mantel where mother always had a clock. She was fine about moving up, but the clock was gone when she moved in and she had a hard time adjusting to that...she was lonely. Trudy has never liked the farm like I did. I was lonely out there, too, but I still liked the farm. She liked the city better. She reminds of a...one of daddy's sister...he had one sister that was a farm gal and the other one was a city gal. She didn't even want to stay overnight when she came down from Springfield. She wanted to get back to her own bed.

J. Ok, after...where did she go to high school?

I. Carlinville.

J. Carlinville?

I. Junior high and high school in Carlinville.

J. Then what did she do after she graduated from high school?

I. Then she started to Monmouth...College. She went two years and then she did one semester at U of I, but then she went out to Indiana...then she took a trip out west. That was Wilbur's idea. She...stayed with Sam and Dorothy. I didn't say Sam. Ollie was in Michigan, Sam was in Arizona. She stayed with Sam and Dorothy. That's where she met her husband, first husband. She and Rocky were married out there in 1966...July 2, 1966 and then they came back here that fall and lived with us. He took computer schooling. Nine months of that in St. Louis, and they got an apartment and lived down there for that nine months. Then came back and he got a job with Horace Mann in Springfield and they moved up to Springfield. She, while he was in computer school down there, she took a course in...now can I remember what they call it? She began to work down there in that...they call it...it's a...well, I'll never think of that. She didn't like it. So, then, after they moved to Springfield she went back to college and got her degree in...what? I don't know.

J. Don't know...so where did she go back to school?

I. She went to Sangamon State.

J. Sangamon State.

I. Uh, I guess it was in business. I don't really know. It wasn't education. She didn't want to be a teacher. I'll have to ask her! J. (Laughs) You want to know...

I. Yea!

J. What did she do? After she got the degree?

I. She started to work for Franklin Life Insurance Co.. First she went into investment and now she's in purchasing...the purchasing agent for Franklin Life.

J. Still there?

I. Still there.

J. Ok, how long has that been?

I. She's been there twelve, thirteen years. I don't know what year she started, but it's been at least that long.

J. And she enjoys it?

I. (Laughs) She's learned a lot.

J. Yes, ok.

I. I think she does enjoy it...yes, but it depends a lot on her boss and the boss's...she has a different boss now.

J. Yes.

I. One boss...he was I guess, after they've been there so long, you can't get rid of them. I don't know (laughs), but, yes I think she enjoys. She enjoys the purchasing with somebody else's money.

J. That makes sense! (Laughs) You said Rocky was her first husband, when did they split?

I. They separated in...uh...I believe it was 19...I've got it written down. They'd been separated two years when she married this guy and that was in 1991...By herself a couple of years. I ought to get that right because she says, "Mom I'd like to read that"...your paper. So, I ought to get it right hadn't I.

J. Yes, you might get in trouble if not. (laughs)

I. They separated in...I mean the divorce became final in April...I think it was April 20. She moved to her new apartment because we had her in a security place for awhile...hotel..however, it didn't mean anything. But, it was for safety. But everything went alright...I was gonna remember that...

J. Yes, so about when did she get remarried?

I. November 2, 1991. What's this? 1994?

J. 1994.

I. Now, wait a minute maybe I'm wrong. What would that've been?

J. Two years, just in November she'd been married 2 years. It'll be three years come next Nov. if it was 1991.

I. I saved a calendar for that and now I'm wondering where I put the calendar. (laughs)

J. Yes. What's his name?

I. This fellow's name is Harold Watson...W A T S O N.

J. Ok.

I. And Rocky's name was Walt Clark and he was from Arizona. This fellow's hometown is Charleston, Illinois.

J. Ok, what does he do?

I. He is...do you call it co-owner?...there's three owners...of a drapery unique...unique drapery shop there in Springfield.

J. Springfield, ok. And seem to be happy now?

I. Very!

J. Good.

I. And he has no children so that makes it nice too. They get along. He's real good to Trudy.

J. Ok. Let's go back into...we talked quite a bit about farming the last time we met. Since you came back after the war...that's where we left off. That's what you did...you moved back out onto the farm, right?

I. Right.

J. Ok, just tell us a little bit about...Refresh our memory about the circumstances about your return to the farm.

I. Well, it was quite different. We had, when Wilbur left the farm, all they had was horses. When we came back in 1953, we had tractors. When something went wrong with them, we couldn't take them out and shoot them. You had to repair them.

J. Right, right.

I. So,...

J. Or you could shoot them I guess. But it wouldn't help.  
(laughs)

I. The first year we were there, 1953 I think that was when it got so hot. 118 degrees in July and everything burned up. It wasn't a very good year to come back and start farming but anyway, we stayed with it and that was 1953. We had a house on the Wooley place and house up on the East place. I can't remember who our first hired men were. I know we had several...We had one, Norman Halcam from Brighton lived in the house with us! My dad had always had hired men that stayed in the house so we had one bedroom upstairs we called the hire men's room and Norman was a young kid. I don't know how long he was with us..quite awhile. Then we had a married hired man on the East place, and then Norman got married and moved on the west house or the Wooley place. We always had hired men!

J. You say the house on the East place? Which?

I. Was on what was originally the Barnstable place. Right east of Wheelers.

J. Ok, yes.

I. Well, right east of Wheeler's is the Finch...there's a Finch field in between...that Larry Chism farms. Then the 80 [acres] that's...

J. There used to be a house there that burned down?

I. Yes, we took it down when Keith started farming, we took that house down.

J. Ok.

I. Tore it down and then we did the west house, too.

J. What crops were you growing?

I. Then we had wheat, corn, and soybeans. And we had cattle and hogs.

J. Ok, did you grow anything else over the years or the same?

I. That was our rotation.

J. Ok, by rotation what do you mean?

I. Well, one year-now like one year we'll have soybeans in one field and next year it'll be corn. And, that's your yearly rotation. We don't have wheat now, since Keith is renting it. But before we'd have wheat and we built the farrowing house out there; the old building that's back out in the field. Then Wilbur was allergic to hogs, but he liked the hogs better than cattle.

J. Any particular reason? (phone rings)

I. I don't know why.

J. We were interrupted by the phone. When the phone rang, we were talking about crop rotation. If you want to continue on...

I. Is the rest of that on the other side...one year you'll have

beans in the field and then next year you'll have the corn...and that's called rotation, and that's the program right now. We have just have the two, corn & soybeans.

J. And when you had wheat, did you put the wheat in the same...

I. You know, I don't remember about that. Of course, we had hay, too, so I'm not sure...your dad would know how that went. But I don't remember.

J. Did you use the hay for the livestock or did you sell it?

I. No, we always used whatever...

J. Whatever you got, you used.

I. In fact, I think there's still some straw out there in that barn. (laughs)

J. From when?

I. Yes, from when?

J. Ok, so you said you raised...you had corn, wheat, and soybeans.

I. Uh, huh.

J. Ok, what did you do with them?

I. Well, sold the beans and sold the corn and the wheat which you always used your straw for your bedding for the livestock, and sometimes you fed your own corn to your livestock, too.

J. When you sold it, where did you take it?

I. Elevator, either here cause this is...or we put it in bins too. Wilbur put up bins, I've put up two since he died. But he started to putting up bins. We put it in bins, then we truck it out. We didn't truck it. We'd have to hire truck out. Like I have to today.

J. You didn't have any trucks of your own?

I. No. Well, we had some when we'd go to Medora or in town

here. I guess Wilbur probably did do quite a bit of that himself.

J. Ok.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

J. Ok, we're still talking about farming here...over the years when you were farming, how did the technology change...the farming?

I. Well, the machinery kept getting larger and larger and larger. How many rows did they go to being with? I guess a four row probably...and now, they go what is it...sixteen?

J. I think they're up to sixteen...yes.

I. I think so, too. And when they go through the field and they can really farm a lot of ground now in a short time, where used to be took a long time to get everything in.

J. Did that make it easier to raise more crops?

I. Yes. You could have more acres so you could have more and you could rent ground. We rented Nancy...well, not Nancy at that time...her dad Eldred Cress's farm. I don't know how many acres was there, but quite a few.

J. We said something about the machinery has gotten bigger. How has the prices changed over the years?

I. Oh dear! The prices are terrible. Everybody thinks the farmers make a lot of money, but if they would stop and think...or realize what they have...what's a tractor today, over a hundred thousand?

J. Yes.

I. ...and a combine, why my land, it would be out of sight. No wonder there's fewer farmers. I don't know how a young farmer could start out...and get anywhere. That's why some went

bankrupt, too. The theory was, young fellows went to U of I and they'd say buy, you know, and it was a good time to buy and farm. Quite a few of them went bankrupt.

J. Do you remember what the prices of a tractor or a combine was when you..

I. We started?

J. Yes, approximately?

I. I do know that in 1953 when we came up here, we'd sold our house in Alton and that went for half because my dad and Wilbur we were half and half, my folks and us, and we sunk all that in, but that took care of half of it at that time...which was, let's see, we build the house in 1940 for \$5,000 and we got \$14,000 in 1953. Now, my lord, that wouldn't be a drop in the bucket.

J. Yes.

I. I just don't have any idea, and that was probably going on half the machinery and we had cattle. Started out, I can't remember, Daddy had some hogs, but not a lot, like Wilbur did. Wilbur went into the hog business pretty good, he tried...I don't remember what it would have been, but look at the difference in cars. My last car that I bought in 1988, I got a lot better buy than with this thing last December.

J. Yes, it's changed.

I. I never will forget the first car that we bought that we paid...I said "Wilbur" and I almost cried, we paid more for this car than we did for our house.

J. Wow...ok. You said you had cattle and pigs-hogs...did you ever have any other livestock of any kind?

I. No, I started out with chickens and then Trudy had histoplasmosis so I got rid of the bird in the house and the chickens.

J. That's right...ok.

I. We had dogs and cats.

J. Ok, and any special pets over the years?

I. Oh, yes. We always had to have bird dogs and collie. I was raised with a collie dog and then, later when I lost my collie, Wilbur's nephew was in the air force at Chanut and he would come down weekends and spend with us. One day he brought a little German shepherd puppy named Jackie and she was a special dog. She and your dad didn't get along.

J. Didn't she?

I. I think your dad came to the door one time and rattle the door and it scared her and she remembered that forever (laughs). But she was quite a dog.

J. Ok, you lived both in the city, big city and small city, and in the country. Which did you really prefer?

I. I prefer the country.

J. Why?

I. I don't know.

J. Don't know.

I. I guess, because I just like the soil and the trees. You can just see more of the world, it seems to me. But, now, I was satisfied in Chicago. Wilbur wasn't. He hated the city. But I always figured wherever his work was, I'd be satisfied. So I can be satisfied any place. But I really enjoy the country.

J. Ok.

I. I didn't want to move into here [Chesterfield], to tell you the truth.

J. Didn't you?

I. I stayed two years out there. I knew it wasn't the best thing for me to do, and I even fixed this house up, gonna stay out there and rent it to Tish and Jerry until I spent \$25,000 and no way am I gonna...I don't think she [Tish] every forgave me for that.

J. When you came in here, they went out there, right?

I. Yes, and she didn't like it. She didn't like the country.

J. Ok. You grew up on a farm...

I. Yes.

J. And spent most of your life there. Would you say that's been good for you or good to you?

I. Yes, yes. Really, really it's been a good life. I would have preferred to have my husband some longer, but you have to make the best of what you do have.

J. Right.

I. And be thankful for what you have...because we're not assured of the next day.

J. I have this little map here. We played around last time and talked about all the business in Chesterfield when you were growing up and I thought it might be a little, kind of, interesting if we took this map and put the different businesses on the map and then take another map and put the businesses

I. that are in there now...

J. That are in Chesterfield now and make the comparison...so if we want to play around with that a little bit and see what we can do. We can cheat a little and go into this map in the history book which might have some of the things there that might jog...help you remember what's what...and see what we can do. And whatever you say, I'll try to explain it so we can get it on the tape so they might understand what we're talking about.

I. Well, here's a big one. Let's put the lumber yard here. That's where I tied up my horse when I rode a horse to high school.

J. Yes. We'll say this was in the 1930's about when you were growing up before you moved away to Chicago and Alton and such.

I. Next...right.

J. The lumber yard is on the south side of the square.

I. The park we used to have picture shows. I remember the telephone office was here.

J. Ok, and that's...we're on the southeast corner of the square now.

I. And then the bank. Now these places? These were just blank lots, I guess. I don't remember his machinery.

J. Ok.

I. Frank Towse? I don't remember him. Now here's the creamery. Ok, I remember that. Now, at one time that was a locker plant, too.

J. Ok.

I. Must have been after the creamery. I remember Ed Banks store. You could buy material there to sew your dresses and the Masonic Lodge.

J. That's upstairs and this is the east side on the north part of, east of the park.

I. Well, it was upstairs over the bank, I mean over Bank's general merchandise store. I remember the post office here. I don't remember the lodge upstairs there.

J. And this is on the northeast corner.

I. And I remember the [Jacoby] meat market there.

J. Ok. Is that where you got your meats?

I. Yes, you would come in and tell him you were gonna feed so many people and he would just fix you up. You didn't say you wanted a five or a pound, ten pound roast. You just said how many people you were gonna serve and he fixed it up, you took it home and you cooked it. I remember that.

J. Alright.

I. Yes, I remember the Moore barber shop.

J. Ok, we're on the north side of the square now.

I. ...right, northeast, well, I guess northside.

J. ...east side of the north side.

I. Tendick's Brothers. I remember that.

J. And what did they have in there?

I. Just a general grocery store.

J. Ok. Were they in competition with the Banks' store over here [NE corner of the square]? Did they have...

I. They didn't have any groceries; they just had materials.

J. Ok.

I. I don't remember Steiner's. I barely remember this. I just barely remember them telling me that Calverd had a movie house and that he played the organ, piano, or what. I don't remember- you say that there's gonna be another one of what I remember on these? I don't remember Bode restaurant. I remember a...

J. Yes, just whatever you remember.

I. .. an ice cream place. Freer's ran it. Shirley Freer was in school and her folks ran that, and that I remember here was Chism's Grocery Store.

J. Ok. Chism's Grocery Store

I. Joe Chism's Grocery Store. I think he went broke and I remember Chester Towse.

J. And that's the drug store-ice cream place we talked about last time.

I. Yes. And I remember the furniture. That was Frieda Towse. I don't remember. Now, where are we here? Oh going on down...

J. That the city where...

I. I don't remember the Wilson's store and lodge? I don't

remember that...or this. But I remember Knoop's.

J. Dr. Knoops' office-off the square to the west a little bit.

I. And the hotel. Now, this is a picture hanging in my front room, if I didn't tell you before, that was painted by Mrs. Fletcher. Landon Garage. I remember that as Jack Gahr's Garage.

J. Gahr's Garage, ok.

I. Carroll home? I don't remember that, Parker...Parker built this house. Gene and his dad...what was his dad's name? Orville Parker. And I understand Orville Parker went broke building this house. I mean...evidently, he didn't get enough to pay for his stuff and his work. I don't remember that or that school building? What? Does that mean the one that's there now?

J. No. That's there on the square. I don't know.

I. Or it's vacant now.

J. Yes, it's a vacant lot.

I. I don't remember what...I don't remember that.

J. Ok. So that takes us around the square. What Irma keeps talking about here is she's got this map of businesses in 1919 and she's gone around and said which ones are what she remembers in the spots. She says, "I don't remember this one" on this map she's saying I don't remember that store being there.

I. Right.

J. Ok-we can fiddle around while we're at it. We can go right back around the square and say what's there now, then we'll have these two maps to compare.

I. Where we started before on the lumber yard..

J. on the south side...

I. is the town building. That little white building which would be...I think where this is...wouldn't you?

J. This is [Route] 111 right here.

I. Well it would be over here.

J. This little office building would be the...

I. Right, that would be the town, well, they meet down at the community center. Well, it's their water building or just the town building, I guess.

J. Ok.

I. Just the town building that they keep talking about wanting to...ok, where should we go next?

J. We can just come on over to the east side.

I. Uh, right now this is all Chesterfield Bank.

J. The first two? When the telephone office...ok.

I. Yes, because the bank goes clear to the street here.

J. Yes, so it's gotten bigger over the years then.

I. And the next would be the post office.

J. Post office, ok, we're heading north along the east side of the square at this point.

I. Right, this would be that Hart Building that's vacant. I don't know how much in there was but the next is the... tavern.

J. Tavern, ok, that's probably, yes, I don't know how they.

I. I don't know how much...

J. Yes, they've taken out walls and such probably.

I. Yes, because the tavern goes...well, there's still the lodge building here, but I understand it's been sold and I don't know what they're going to do with it. I get reports that they're going to do another tavern there which I don't think would be allowed. So....

J. Nah...

I. I don't know, but it's been sold and the lodge is still...the lodge of Chesterfield, or whatever their name is...but they rent the Plainview lodge building and meet over there at this time.

J. Oh, okay. So they're no longer meeting in Chesterfield?

I. Now here is a building...this and this...owned by...I can see her...she was a Stankey from Alton, she married a....oh...they live...what would their name be? That building is owned by them and they've redone the front part of it and just leave it stand. Who is that? What is their name? I should know...she was a from Alton. Her mother is still living, I think, and they live on her farm up around Roth's there. You know who I mean...Roth's.

J. Yes, Roth's, out there on [Route] 108. I don't know who that is. I don't know who lives in that house. You're talking about the house on the west side of Roth's there?

I. Well, I don't know exactly where they live. I think they live north of Roth's.

J. Oh, yes.

I. I don't know why I can't think...remember their last name [Nelson], but I don't. Then that'll take care of that. This is vacant and this is vacant...owned by Keith Chism now.

J. The Tendick Brothers is vacant but Keith owns it?

I. I'm wondering now how far do we go there? Let's see cause that goes right up to Dolly...

J. The store...

I. and Dolly...let's see, this would be the funeral home.

J. Yes, the funeral home is on the west end of the north side.

I. That Targhetti. And then next is the coffee shop.

J. Charlie's coffee shop.

I. Yes...well, that's been sold to...well, now I can't think of his name. And then there's Dolly. Now how much would Dolly take up? Three?

J. She'd probably take up three, I would guess.

I. And maybe he takes up the rest.

J. Yes, I'd say he...and then is probably Dolly. Dolly's store is here, ok.

I. Caveny, Caveny bought that coffee shop. Now what Caveny, I don't know, but it's still a coffee shop. Okay, we got that.

J. Yes, ok.

I. Okay, this is vacant and this and this is owned by Nelson Fenton, I think. But it's vacant.

J. And this, this little square up here, would be "what's his faces" shed down here.

I. Oh, Wayne Struble?

J. No, that would be over here. This would be...

I. That would have been Wallner's.

J. Yes, Wallner's.

I. Wallner's Garage...now is that right? Is that where we are?

J. Yes, right. This is Wallner's Garage because this is Dr. Knoop's office down here, and they're vacant. So that'd be Wallner's and that'd be that vacant lot there. There's no building, just that lot.

I. Now Wallner would come through here then...

J. This all is his here, I would say.

I. This would be Nelson Fenton's. Right? Yes.

J. Ok, yes, and then the rest of this area here is Wallner's.

I. Right. Is Wallner's right? And then we've got Wayne Struble.

J. Where the hotel was...

I. And then we've got that...I think that's Gene Parkers.

J. Yes, most of that over there is Gene Parker's, isn't it?

I. All the way through I guess.

J. Yes, I think it is, too, because he's got that kennel off in there back a little bit.

I. Yes, and then they've got this hang area that belongs to their house that they won't sell to the community center (laughs).

J. Ok, so that pretty much does it. That's a big difference if you look at the two maps on what's around.

I. There's no railroad. There's no elevator except Macoupin now has taken over where the elevator was. You've got the hard road through for truckers, and it's a different world. It's a whole different world if you look at crime and everything else, Isn't it?

J. Yes.

I. A new generation.

J. Yep, ok, we can go on here and talk a little bit about the community building you just mentioned a minute ago. When did that all come about?

I. Well, I guess the fellows got together and decided we needed one building where everybody could meet and in Jan 1976, they bought the ground where the community center is, I suppose. Then that summer, spring and summer they put the building up and then they added a south part. Added to the south end in 1985, and it's used for the whole community or even people outside the community that want to hold parties or dinners, reunions, whatever, or business meeting.

J. Rent it out?

I. Rent it out... for the local people it's cheaper than people that don't have any relatives here. And then it serves funeral dinners free and is used very frequently. Which is what it's for...it's a service.

J. A polling place?

I. Yes, also a polling place and town hall meets here. So it's kept up. They have a janitor that takes care of the cleaning and so forth. They hire somebody to mow the yard and they have a committee that supposedly takes care of the building itself and, repairs. So it's used a lot and appreciated.

J. Ok, there's a...it's kind of connected to the community club or community group here in town that you're an active part of. Do you know anything about that?

I. About what?

J. Just the community group that meets...

I. The group that meets every month? Well, they have a President and Secretary and Treasurer and the meetings are once a month. They have an annual fish fry that they make their money for to be used for...to help the community...such as recreation equipment for the younger children around and the "EMT's", they've helped them. The ambulance service which our ambulance service comes from Medora. We don't have enough EMT's right now to have an ambulance up here, so...but we get good service from the ambulance and the EMT's that are available. They have to devote their time and it takes quite a bit of education for them and as busy as everyone is, it's no wonder it's hard to get people. Then some of us think we're too old. But, then we have in February we have a chili and soup supper and those are held on the third Saturday night of the month. August for the fish fry and February for the chili-soup supper. Outside of that, I think we really have good turn out and good cooperation from everybody. Then in September, they'll have a senior citizen party and then they'll see who is the oldest couple, oldest man, and oldest woman in the community that attend. They don't allow drinks in the building, alcoholic beverages...

J. Right, right.

I. So I think that's about it.

J. So you say they run the fish fry every year and the money goes to...?

I. Their own treasurer and they bill it out as they see fit to help the community.

J. And the fish fry has become quite an event over the years. When did it get started?

I. Get started? Back in early 1960's, 1961, something like that.

J. Ok, and it's grown over the years. Do you have any idea how many people are attending?

I. Oh, usually close to 1100 are served, counting adults and children.

J. When is it usually held?

I. It's always held the third Saturday in August.

J. 3rd Saturday in August, ok. And is there anything besides the selling of fish or food?

I. We have a craft tent and they sell tickets. Different ones will, usually have maybe twenty-eight or thirty different people who will donate money or dog food or whatever they're interested in, or groceries, or the bank will usually put a bond up and they sell chances on that. The craft tables and bingo, we've had bingo the last few years. Lots of people around here are bingo fans.

J. Ok, so that's pretty much a community come together type of thing.

I. Yes, and they come from quite a distance for it. In fact, we have a real good reputation so far.

J. Yes, ok. There used to be a hotel located here in town. It was on the northwest corner of the square, Right? It was the Alton...?

I. The Alton Way Hotel.

J. And that's what it was when you were a kid?

I. Yes, I only knew it as the Fletcher's because Fletcher's were the ones that run it, but it was the Alton Way Hotel.

J. Ok, then did it operate...has it operated continuously?

I. It...when did they have the fire at the hotel?

J. The fire was 1985, I think.

I. Well, first I remember of....there was one high school teacher or well there was more than that...they would come and live there while they taught school here. Stay there while they taught school here and then, I remember Beth Wade renting part of it and Clara Nixon renting part of it. Then I remember Crowders living there. Wades lived there and then it was a restaurant; Charlie Duckels had a restaurant there, didn't he?

J. Yes, right.

I. I just now thought of that. And then after that...after that then did he go into the tavern there and they had the fight?

J. Yes.

I. And that took care of that!

J. Yes, what was involved with this fight? Do you remember the whole story, or...?

I. Boy, I never got much of that story except one was killed. I don't think you want any names there.

J. No, don't need names. All I know is the blood was on the sidewalk forever, but...ok, so the hotel burned down in 1985 and it was still Charlie's at that time?

I. Yes, I think it was. No, remember, no...remember the family that rented Floyd Rand's house, what was their name? They were the ones that had it when it burned down. Because they got insurance. What was their name? They were so good at helping Irma [Fenton] and me for the sesquicentennial to fix up that building we had of...what was it?...the museum. We had the museum and they were so good at helping us fix that up. What was

their name? She ran a beauty shop. They're the ones that owned it then.

J. I don't know - go ahead (worker's walked through the kitchen)

I. Yes, where the hotel was when it burned down was owned by a family by the name of Gibsons and Nelson was the name of what used to be the post office.

J. Over here on the northwest corner was the Nelson's. Ok.

I. Right.

J. When we went around in the...when you were a kid...went around the square, we talked about the grocery store. It was owned by...

I. Joe Chism is the one I remember and Tendick had one, too.

J. Tendicks and Joe Chism, ok. It's moved a little bit over the years a little bit on that north side, hasn't it.

I. Yes, Dolly would be where, who did we say?

J. Dolly's got...is in

I. We say Dolly...it's Country...Hinman's Country Store.

J. Hinman's Country Store, ok. Dolly, she's that one who runs it.

I. Right, I think she's the owner.

J. Yes, I think she's kinda...she might even be a little of the Chism store as well as the Tendick store. I think she's caught the middle of those.

I. One of...let's see that map again, did I...I remember a...

J. That's right now, here's the older one back here.

I. I remember a butcher shop in here. It was a Frank Sawtell's Butcher Shop. Frank Sawtell...

J. Frank Sawtell's, "SAWTELL", I got ya. I thought you were

saying Suttle. Ok.

I. I don't talk plain.

J. You don't talk plain...well, neither do I so that's ok.

I. Ok, you want this over there.

J. Yes, in Dolly, in her store, she also serves food a little now doesn't she?

I. Yes, she is...

J. What does she...?

I. She makes up sandwiches and she and her daughter both went and took a course, the food course. And, she serves soup and chicken and noodles and makes up sandwiches. Hasn't added any pies and cakes yet, course they also sell alcohol and beer there. I didn't know whether you...uh, so I'm sure we won't have another tavern in town. Whatever they're gonna do with the building?

J. Right, How about restaurants in Chesterfield over the years? Do you...can you think of any restaurants er...?

I. The first one I remember on the east side of square was Henry and Jess Lee...ran a restaurant for awhile. Let's see...did I say any kind of years that would have been probably? In the 1930's and then in the 1950's Bud or Myron, and Fay Nixon had one for awhile where the barber shop was where Moore's Barber shop was and that just lasted awhile. I don't remember any more restaurants. Oh! sure, sure, sure...Gayle and...what Connors was she married to?...Leon's mom and dad. They had one over on the east side.

J. Was the Homestead Cafe? That was in the 1980's. Yes, that would have been just south of the tavern, right?

I. Right, seems like somebody else. Didn't Hart run a restaurant? Didn't Mrs. Hart try to run...now that was a grocery store over there, too.

J. Was it?

I. Yes, Englands ran one for awhile on the east side there.

And, another family, they moved over to Carrollton, what was their name? I can't remember. Then the restaurant and then Hart bought it. And she had a pool table in their and a tavern. Remember?

J. No, I don't.

I. You don't remember that? That didn't go very long and now it's vacant.

J. It's vacant. Ok, we'll switch gears a little bit here, and we'll talk about different organizations you've been involved with here in town...er...organizations here that you weren't involved in. There was a Chesterfield women's club.

I. Yes, now that was...I was real little. I remember the organization and I took Mother to them sometimes to the meetings but, personally I wasn't involved in them.

J. Ok, what did they do or do you remember?

I. Well, you know, I think, now maybe it wasn't quilting that they did. Maybe they had, I know they put out a cookbook. I suppose just met socially. I think the quilting was done by church people, the church ladies aid. They did quilting. They would be over the Thanksgiving supper that they would have in the church to make money. Their annual thing which has been done away with. They have a Thanksgiving feast, they don't call it feast. Their Thanksgiving service at the church and people take finger foods and eat after the service, but don't have the big suppers like they use to, they just take donations.

J. At one time, there still may be a chapter of Eastern Star here in Chesterfield.

I. That has been dispensed with. They joined when Eastern Star dispensed with their chapter here they went to Plainview. But different members have since changed to different chapters. Some gone to Palmyra, some gone to Medora, some stayin with Plainview.

J. What exactly is the Eastern Star?

I. Eastern Star is a group for the women from the Masonic Lodge. Your husband, father, I think probably brother had to be a Mason before you could be, before you could apply to become a Star. I

shouldn't say apply I guess that wouldn't be...before your eligible to become an Eastern Star member.

J. What did you do in Eastern Star?

I. Eastern Star has their monthly meeting. They have retirement homes for men and for women. The men's is at Sullivan, Illinois. The women's I believe is at Quincy. You have...then your eligible to retire there if you so desire or if they have room for you I suppose. It's...I don't know how to say it...whether you would say, I don't like to say it, it's sort of a religious organization. I don't think that would be right. But, it follows The Bible, rules and regulations and so forth.

J. Have you ever held an office in the Eastern Star?

I. I hold the office of Ada which is a star point.

J. Which means? What do you mean by star point?

I. Well, there are five star points. There's Ada, there's Ruth, there's Ester, there's...I don't know all of them (Whispered)...Ada, Ruth, Ester, Martha, Alexis. They each have a lesson to give. Each meeting you repeat your lesson.

J. Alright. That explains that well. Are you involved in any other organizations in Chesterfield or elsewhere or have you been?

I. Well, we've got Eastern Star. Nothing I can think of.

J. Nothing you can think of. Alright, that's fine? Let's see. Your involved...

I. Rainbow at one time, but that's been so long ago. That was sort of for the younger ones from eighteen to twenty-one, young girls. Rainbow which met in Carlinville, but that's all I can think of.

J. Your involved with the bank here in Chesterfield. How are you involved with that at this point?

I. I'm a director on the board.

J. You're a director on the board. What do you do?

I. We met once a month and transact business.

J. Run the bank pretty much. (laughs)

I. You better not put run the bank.

J. You don't run the bank? There's some people that might be offended by that, wouldn't they.

I. Yes! Sometimes when somebody doesn't like what happened or something it's your bank.

J. Right. True. Do you know much about how long we've had the bank here in Chesterfield?

I. O.K. We read in the history book that it was privately owned at first and we put in 1920...it became a state bank which is nice to know. It's done very well, I guess since this '94 it's been here 74...well, it's been here longer than that hasn't it?

J. Almost one hundred years. Is the building the same building it's always been?

I. No, it was remodeled, it's been remodeled. And it's been added to. Did we know when the last...November 13, but we didn't know the year did we?

J. When it was expanded. Wilbur was also a part of the...

I. Yes, he was on the board. When he died, they called, Kenny Woods, and asked if I would be willing to be nominated. The directors are nominated each year and voted on by the stockholders.

J. And you were and you've been involved ever since?

I. That's right.

J. Your also, talking about boards, your also on the Loomis Cemetery board. Where is Loomis Cemetery located?

I. I would say two miles on the oiled road east of Route 111 which the turnoff is a quarter mile south of Chesterfield.

J. It also borders the farm out there?

I. Yes.

J. How did you become involved with the cemetery board?

I. My dad was on the board, then Wilbur was on the board. After he died, I just sort of took his place.

J. You wouldn't happen to know why it's called Loomis Cemetery would you?

I. I think originally that was owned, the ground there was owned by the Loomis family. And yet there's...when my dad bought the farm that joins it west that was called Wooley farm. But, there had to be Loomis' there somewhere because they had...I don't know how much an area, how many lots it would have taken. Remember the iron railing they had around the Loomis?

J. I don't remember that.

I. You don't remember that, it was torn down. Emma, not Emma, Dorothy Adams thought we should replace that.

J. What do you do as a member of that board?

END OF TAPE

BEGIN TAPE 4

J. When the other tape ended, we were talking about Loomis Cemetery. I was in the middle of asking you what does the board do at the cemetery or for the cemetery?

I. We see that we have somebody to mow it and keep it up and see what it needs and see...have the stones repaired, if you can find some man to get it done, which we have done. And when a person dies, someone usually has to go out and show the digger where the plot is, and just try to see that it's taken good care of. Do you want the board members?

J. Yes.

I. Your dad [Max Eldred], Myron Nixon, Glenn Baumgartner, and myself. I guess...I think I got us all.

J. Yes, ...sounds about right. Is...

I. Alberta's name might be on that. Alberta Barnstable...I think we've got her name down. I don't ever think of that, but I think we do.

J. O.K..

I. Because Charlie was on there, course Charlie and Kenyon will both be buried out at Mayfield so...

J. Ok. In the cemetery all the lots about sold or is there still....?

I. We don't sell. We're not affiliated with the state, so the lots are free and then we just ask for donations through the year for income.

J. Ok, and is it pretty much...?

I. Fairly takes care of itself. This year we were minus a little bit. I think I've got this quarter wrote down. I don't remember exactly how much.

J. Ok, let's see. Since we're out talking about the area around the farm. We talked about last time the friendship and such around the neighborhood with get-together and whatever. Did those continue after you came back or did new ones start? Or...

I. Not like what I remembered as a child because when we came back we had Trudy and other people around were younger and had younger ones and had their own interest and then school interest and...

J. Right.

I. Where, when I was a youngster out there, why your social life was getting together and playing cards and wasn't as much school interests. You didn't do as much with your children.

J. Ok.

I. Weren't that many activities.

J. Alright, then uh...Well, just since my family is from right

out there, too, I'll use them as an example. What kind of relationships did you have with your close neighbors?

I. Oh, we had good relationships.

J. Did you...would you get together, or...?

I. Well, I can remember your dad coming over evenings and bringing you boys. You were little and you would eat popcorn and Wilbur would say, "I just wonder, do you think they got too much popcorn. You think they'll be sick?" (laughs)

J. Yes.

I. Ok, not you, but your dad.

J. Right, dad and Jon, I understand. When you say, "you" the first time, when you did that a couple of times, I knew what was going on, I understand. Ok, let's see, with your family out there. We talked about Trudy a little earlier. She has two daughters, right?

I. Right.

J. Ok, when were they born?

I. Laura was born in 1968, Christina was born in 1970.

J. Ok, and where did they grow up?

I. They were born in Springfield, and they've lived in Springfield all their lives.

J. Ok, are you pretty close still with Trudy and the girls?

I. Very close!

J. And you see them often or...?

I. As Trudy said, I raised her and helped raise the girls and now it'll be in on the great grandchildren, probably, I hope. I hope I can.

J. You hope you get one?

I. Well, one's due June 20. Laura is due to have hers June 20.

J. So you've got one on the way. Do they still come down often?

I. Well, they have to work so Jamie's got two jobs. Now he's through school but Laura's going to school and working. They try to get down I'd say once every 6 weeks or something like that, or I get up there.

J. When did Wilbur pass away?

I. March, 1979.

J. Ok.

I. March 19? Bob died May 17.

J. What did he die of?

I. Well, he had heart trouble and cancer so as the doctor said he didn't know which came first. I think the heart took him. Usually it does, I mean, I think it was a heart attack. He did have heart trouble and had to sell the farm equipment out in January 28, 1978.

J. Ok, how old was he?

I. Sixty-five.

J. Sixty-five. He's buried at...?

I. at Loomis.

J. At Loomis, ok. What did you do with farm after Wilbur died?

I. Well, it had been rented when Wilbur had to quit farming. He rented it to Keith Chism and he still farms it...still rents it.

J. And how long did you stay out there?

I. I stayed out there about two years and moved in here November 11, 1981.

J. Alright, so how long before Wilbur died had he quit farming?

I. Well the heart attack he had to quit was in October of...of 1977. Because I think right way, maybe it was 1976. I'm not sure. We had the farm sale, Jan 28....that would have been pretty early getting ready for a sale, wouldn't it? So maybe it was 1976 because our new shed was new. What year did we put it up? I think Keith was farming. I don't believe we could have got it ready in that soon of time. 1976 I guess, I'm not sure.

J. Ok.

I. Well, now wait a minute, now wait a minute, there I go again. Well, I even think I know where it is.

J. Let's see. You've got Keith Chism renting out your lands. How does all that work?

I. Uh, you mean him and the boys?

J. Him and you...what's how?

I. I rent it sixty-forty. Wilbur did that and most people think that's not today's way but everything....lot of its gone to cash rent, but Wilbur started it out that way and I've just left it that way.

J. Ok, alright. That's what I was looking for...and he farms pretty much the same thing that Wilbur did?

I. Yes, of course we don't have livestock. He has it, I guess it still has it down home. Does he have some there?

J. I don't know, if he does or not. Who knows.

I. I'm wondering if...

J. You got to be careful. When did you move to Chesterfield? I know you said a minute ago, but when did you move in here?

I. November 11, 1981.

J. In 1981, and do you keep...or do you get out to the farm much? Do you have anything out there anymore?

I. No, I don't go out too much.

J. Just no need...

I. Sometimes, I just ride around and go through it. Riding around through it, but, they tell me to come and I'd be real welcome. And we're doing some...we'll need to do a little more remodeling this year. I had to put in new windows before and, of course, Keith and Donna moved in out there, when?

J. Last summer, sometime wasn't it? Or has it been longer than that?

I. It won't be long until it'll be a year. So...and, the smoke house needs to come down. The smoke house and the cellar...need to be torn down and filled in. Of course, that'll mean build on the east end of the porch. There'll be other things need to be done, I'm sure.

J. Ok, this is a pretty general question, but...what keeps you busy, today? What...

I. I really don't know. I wonder what I keep doing all the time...

J. I know you're never here, so I just...

I. Just whatever becomes necessary. Of course, being a widow you have to take care of what Wilbur took care of before along with a household. But I shouldn't say that because...there's things to think about. Things to keep you going. Irma and I took a trip to Hawaii in '85 and we've taken a few trips to like Nashville and Branson and...we're planning another short trip. I think these days we'll go on short trips rather than a long trip. Been to Arizona, not lately, but I took one month one time and went out and visited people there and in California, but I can't really say what keeps me busy. I think I've slowed down so much that it makes a big difference in what I do get done.

J. Yes, ok.

I. I could say my dogs, but not too much.

J. They've been real good. They haven't been around here much at all.

I. Every night Fay and Irma come over and we play cards.

J. Do you? Ok, that keeps you busy. We're coming down to the end here, but before we wrap this up we've talked about all those things you've done. How would you described yourself?

I. Myself? Now I would like...

J. Yourself.

I. (laughs) Well, I don't know. I try to go along with the punches and take life as it comes because there's somebody with a bigger power over us than we are. But, I guess I like to try to help others if there is any way that they need it. I used to take people to the doctor...the doctor's office if they need to go, but there hasn't been much of that needed in the last year, thank goodness. Do whatever is needed at the time. Nothing special.

J. I wouldn't say that! But...uh, let's see...would you say looking back through your life have you lived a good life overall?

I. Oh yeah.

J. Wouldn't make any changes?

I. No, I probably wouldn't have changed a thing.

J. So it's turned out pretty much the way you would've like it to have, so far?

I. I don't think I ever had any special goals, you know, to be disappointed with...more or less just tried to be sure I had enough to be comfortable with and take each day at a time. I guess maybe my family wouldn't think that.

J. Alright, do you have anything you'd like to add to this?

I. Well, I've enjoyed your company.

J. Oh, I have too. This has been fun. I've really appreciate your help.

I. This has been great for you and me.

J. Yes, it has. I hope you've remembered some things.