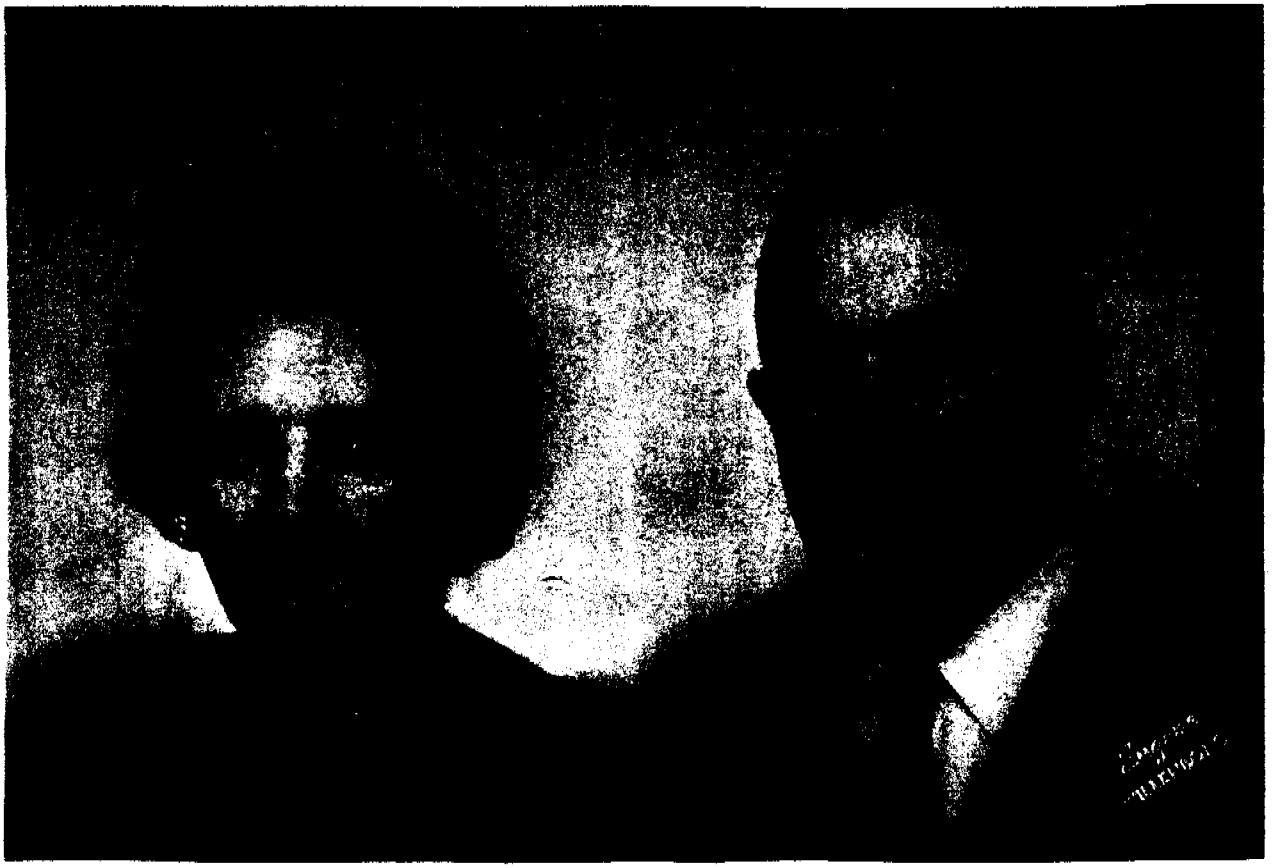

Helen and Bud Nuckols

Table of Contents

Preface

This manuscript is the product of a tape recorded interview conducted by Shirley Marshall for the Oral History Office in November of 1980. Shirley Marshall transcribed and edited the transcript. Mr. Nuckols reviewed the transcript.

Ray (Bud) Nuchols has lived in Auburn most of his life. This tape is an account of his recollections and perceptions of the growth and history of Auburn. This interview was conducted in his home which is across from the Edgewood Country Club.

Shirley Marshall is public librarian in Auburn and is beginning a collection of Oral History of Auburn to be housed in the Auburn Public Library.

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

Bud Nuckols, November 1980, Auburn, Illinois.

Shirley Marshall, Interviewer.

Q: Can you tell me when and where you were born, Ray?

A: Glasgow, Kentucky.

Q: On what date?

A: February 16, 1903.

Q: Can you tell me something about your parents?

A: They were farmers my folks were, and they lived in Glasgow and owned a farm. In 1916 we moved to Auburn, but prior to that we moved from Glasgow to Taylorville. We lived over there, I guess, three years, then came down here.

Q: What nationality was your father?

A: Scotch-Irish on both sides.

Q: Did you remember his parents on your dad's side?

A: Oh yes.

Q: Did they come over from the old country?

A: No, they came from Pennsylvania.

Q: And how did they come, by covered wagon?

A: I would assume that would be the only way they could get there. They did settle there and stayed there all their life.

Q: They were farmers also?

A: Yes.

Q: Do you remember your grandmother very well?

A: Well, yes.

Q: What was she like?

A: She was a hard working woman, I remember that. She had to be out of necessity, because there were eleven kids in the family.

Q: Your father was one of eleven children?

A: Right. I remember the kitchen. It was a huge room, and there was a homemade table in the dining room and homemade chairs. When they all got around the table, it was a crowd, you know with that many kids and all. But when dinner was over, or any meal for that fact, the dishes were taken off the table, the ones that were used, and the other dishes, well, like fruit and whatever they had extra, stayed on the table all the time in these huge glasses, I forget what they called them now.

Q: Were they like casserole dishes?

A: No, they were cut glass dishes with a top on them. Really they called them preserve stands, and they had all kinds of preserves on the table and different relishes and things like that that would be left on the table. They just put a cloth over it from noon to night and they'd uncover the table and put the food back on and go again. And there was always a demijohn of whiskey setting on the table and a bottle of wine.

Q: Did you have wine with your meals?

A: It was available if you wanted it, yes. It was homemade wine.

Q: Did they have animals on the farm?

A: Yes, cattle, and what any farmer would have: hogs, chickens, and they raised some turkeys, and that sort of thing.

Q: They have their own garden? For the family?

A: Oh yes, definitely.

Q: That was a trend in those days, you more or less grew what you ate yourself, is that correct?

A: Yes, because we were five miles from town and to go to town like we do now was unheard of. Granddad would usually go to town on Saturday afternoon, and whatever was bought, the staples, like sugar, would be mostly what it would be, because the flour and the corn meal was processed in the area down there. There'd be a mill, a grist mill, you've seen them I'm sure.

Q: You want to describe what a grist mill looks like.

A: Well, it's a . . . the mechanics of it I . . . it's a mill that's propelled by water, a water wheel, they were in those days. And, of course, there were no engines or electricity or anything like that, but it was propelled by water. The water was dammed up and flowed over it and turned it and it in turn was belted to a mill, a grinding mill, inside the mill. And you put the corn or the wheat or whatever in there

and grind it up and process it and sack it up. [It would] be for your own use or for sale.

Q: And that is where he would go to pick up the flour or the corn meal?

A: Right. Well, he'd take the corn, you'd take the corn . . .

Q: Oh, you had to take your own corn?

A: You didn't have to, you could buy it there, but most farmers did, take their own grain. That would be true with wheat too.

Q: And you just paid a fee to have it ground up for you?

A: Yes.

Q: Did most of the little towns grow up around a creek, then, since you had to have water for the mill?

A: There had to be water. Usually if there wasn't a dam available, they built a small dam to hold the water so it would flow over the wheel, the water wheel. That way it was similiar to the paddle wheel that was on boats, you know, the steam boats. But that's the way they developed their power.

Q: What else do you remember about your grandparents' home? What did she do when it was very hot and she needed to cook? Did she have an outdoor kitchen?

A: She cooked, she cooked. This house was, it was a huge house, but it was a log house and weatherboarded with home-sawed lumber, covered that way, you know. And there was only--it was a two-story house. There was only one bedroom downstairs, that was for Granddad and Grandmother and all the kids slept upstairs. There was no heat up there, it was cold as the devil and I can remember they'd--I've heard my dad say many times, they'd get up of a morning and shake the snow off the covers, grab their clothes, and run downstairs to the fire place to get their clothes on.

Q: The snow blew in then?

A: Oh yes, you know how snow does here. Well if you have cracks in your house you'd get some snow in.

Q: Did they sleep in a feather bed?

A: Yes, and wool blankets and wool covers of all kinds, and they were homemade.

Q: Did your grandma make quilts?

A: Quilts and even the clothing that they wore, the wool clothes. You didn't buy much in those days really, because she would spin her own yarn, you know, and the neighbor women would get together and do those things together and then they'd . . .

Q: That would be like their social time, if they worked on something together?

A: They'd have quilting bees, they called them. Well, all the work was done as a neighbor project, you know, they worked together.

Q: Did your grandmother ever make soap?

A: Oh yes!

Q: Did she make candles?

A: I don't remember seeing any candle molds, but the soap, they'd take the ashes from the fire place in what they called an ash hopper outside the house a ways, and it was a V-shaped container like a bin and the bottom had a trench. They'd put the ashes in there during the winter. Then in the spring, as the rains came, they'd carry water and put on it and what came out of that was pure lye at the bottom in this, through this V-shaped trench. And they'd save that. That is what they made soap out of.

Q: What else did they use beside lye to make soap?

A: I don't remember anything.

Q: Did you have to have some grease?

A: Oh yes, definitely, you had to have grease and lye.

Q: And then did they have to heat these in a big kettle or anything like that?

A: They cooked it in like a lard kettle. You seen a lard kettle?

Q: No, I haven't. Are they great big black wrought iron kettles?

A: Yes, that's what they are, they usually are. Well, the ones we used for butchering would be around forty gallon kettles, something like that, and they'd cook the soap in those too. Put your lye and grease in there and get it hot and stand and stir and stir and stir and then, well I guess experience, they knew at what point it was ready to take it off, and then take it off and pour it into a mold. And when it got cold then they'd just slice it up in cakes about like half a brick, something like that, that's what they used.

Q: They used that for their laundry and for doing dishes?

A: Even washing your face, if you wanted soap. It was pretty strong.

Q: How often during the year did they have to make soap, was that a week thing?

A: No, no, it depended on the size of the family.

Q: And how fast the soap goes?

A: Yes, and it wouldn't spoil. You could have it from year to year. That wasn't a problem.

Q: What did they store this soap in until they needed it?

A: In the smoke house. They had a smoke house where they kept the meat and the soap.

Q: Did your grandmother have to bake a lot of bread?

A: She baked all of it, all the bread.

Q: What time of day did she have to get up? To get started?

A: Oh, by daylight.

Q: Did your grandfather go out on his farm early, did he have to milk the cows?

A: Oh yes, they had cows to milk and kids to get ready for school, you know. And they had to walk to school from where they lived. I expect they walked, the closest school house was at least three miles. So you can see they had to get up early to get that many kids ready for school.

Q: About how much schooling did they have in those years?

A: Through the eighth grade was about the extent of it, but the kids, the boys especially, would be taken out of school in the fall of the year to help with the crops, you know, to harvest the crops. And they may have to be out, oh well, at our school we had six months school, not nine months, and they would probably be out a couple of months. So, they wouldn't graduate from the grade school until they were twenty years old.

Q: Oh, is that right?

A: Yes, and we would be, we little kids would be in school with grown boys and it made it pretty rough on the little kids.

Q: Were you in a one-room schoolhouse?

A: One-room school, one-room school.

Q: You still remember the teachers?

A: Well, a couple of them I do.

Q: Were they pretty strict?

A Well, they had to be, otherwise the boys would take over, as big as they were. I can remember they always sat in the back of the room, you know. They had the seats graduated from the front to the back and the little kids were all up here. And the big boys back there put a pin in

their shoe and come down the aisle and kick some kid in the shin and he'd squall and the teacher would come out and try to find out who it was. They never would, they were pretty sharp those big kids. But it was an experience.

Q: Can you describe your schoolroom for me? Did you have a stove in the schoolroom that the teacher had to take care of?

A: Oh yes, I was trying to compare it to some building around here. It was just sidewalls and a roof and finished inside.

Q: What kind of desks did you have, or did you have desks?

A: Yes, we had desks, we had desks.

Q: Did you write with ink?

A: Yes.

Q: And inkwells? Dip the pigtails in the inkwells?

A: Yes, that's right.

Q: Did the girls mostly have pigtails in those days?

A: Not too many of them really, they had just reasonably long hair. It wasn't short hair, but reasonably long and it was always a problem for them.

Q: They always wore dresses back in those days?

A: Oh yes, with bloomers.

Q: How did the boys dress?

A: Overalls, just like Rutkoski's wear up here, same thing, only some of them were homemade out of, the winter clothes would be wool, you know. The trousers would and the jackets too, they'd be made out of homespun material.

Q: Did you go barefoot much?

A: Quite a bit in the summertime, but it wasn't the best place in the world to do that, because there was a lot of little rocks in the ground, you know, and it wasn't easy to do, but you did, you know.

Q: What was the terrain like there in Glasgow, Kentucky?

A: Well, we lived, like I say, we lived five miles out and it was very similiar to southern Illinois, rolling hills and timber and the fields were all small. A couple acres of tobacco would be a big crop down there.

Q: You grew tobacco?

A: Oh yes, and maybe ten acres of corn or something like that. Your tobacco was your cash crop and your corn, what little corn you raised and what little wheat you raised, you used the wheat to eat really. You ground it up for flour and the corn you'd use it for livestock and for cornmeal. You just went from season to season like that. You didn't really have any cash crops to sell other than tobacco.

Q: How long does it take to grow a crop of tobacco?

A: Well, it's planted in the spring, I mean it's not planted, it is set out.

Q: What do you mean it's set out?

A: They are plants like tomato plants. We'd always burn a space in the edge of the timber, pile logs and burn them, and then dig it up and plant it in the tobacco seed. You'd get the tobacco plants from that. And you'd burn it so there wouldn't be any weeds in your tobacco bed. You'd cover it with muslin cloth to keep the insects off them, and then when the plants got up to a good start, then you'd take that off and let the sun in. And you'd pull the plants when they were like three to four inches high. And you'd have your ground ready and you'd lay the ground off in rows like this, like we would to plant corn, and then you'd check it crossways and you'd put a plant where the rows crossed. And you'd put your fertilizer there at that spot.

Q: This was all done by hand?

A: All done by hand. You drop the plants. There'd be a guy come behind you pushing the dirt around them and another coming behind him watering the plants. All done by hand.

Q: Back breakingwork probably?

A: Oh yes, it was hard work, but real simple now because they have machines to drop the plants, press the dirt around them, and the machine has a tank of water on it and gives them a squirt and that's it.

Q: And fertilizer at the same time, I guess?

A: Yes, everything comes out of this machine.

Q: So you could plant what probably took you a couple of weeks in just a few hours or a day maybe?

A: Yes, the patches are always small, because they're selected in places where the best soil is and now, at this time, you have an allotment, you can have only so many acres or so many tenths of an acre really. A two or three acre allotment would be a pretty good size crop down there.

Q: How about insects, were they a problem back in those days?

A: Not so much, the most problem we had with insects was the tobacco worm and you've seen that I'm sure on the tomato vines, a big green worm with horns on it. We'd have to go through it and pluck those things off the tobacco.

Q: You had to keep your eye on the crop then as it was growing?

A: Oh yes. Well, you had to go through and take the suckers off too. You've seen those, I'm sure on the tomato vine, a little sprout come up by the leaf, you know. If you didn't take those off you'd have a poorer quality of tobacco, because it took strength away from the growth of the leaves and the rest of the plant. There was work to it right up to the time to harvest.

Q: And when did you harvest the tobacco?

A: Usually in August.

Q: What does it look like when it is ready to be harvested?

A: It's about the color of that bush right out there, the leaves turned about that yellow.

Q: And what size of leaf is this?

A: Oh, leaves as big as that thing right there.

Q: Oh, that's about fifteen inches long and about five or six inches wide?

A: They'd be large at the bottom and as they went up, the leaves'd get smaller just like a cone, you know, it's the way it'd grow.

Q: Then after you gathered all those leaves, what did you do with them?

A: Well, you don't gather the leaves, you cut the stalk. The top is already out of the plant. They top it, and then you take the knife and split the stalk down to where you want to cut it off. Then you go this way and cut it off, and then you cut your stalk of tobacco and all the leaves on the stalk.

Q: Then what goes with that? Does that have to be hung up?

A: Oh yes. In those days they had tobacco barns and they were just an open shed. They had rails through there that you'd hang these sticks of tobacco on. In the field, you'd go down the row and pick these stalks of tobacco and straddle them over a stick, tobacco stick they called it, and that's what you'd hang it on in the barn. You'd haul it in a flat bed wagon.

Q: How many horses did you have on your farm?

A: About four down there, but when we came here, we used 24 mules. See on a small farm you didn't need too many horses.

Q: You didn't work them all at the same time?

A: No, no, you didn't use four horse teams, unless you were pulling logs out of the timber or something like that, not for farm work.

Q: Did your grandfather build that home that you were talking about?

A: Yes. The fireplace in the living room was huge. It would take two men to put the firewood in, if you wanted to fill it full.

Q: How did your grandmother cook at this fireplace?

A: She had a swinging thing you hung pots on. What do you call those things?

Q: Well, I don't know, it's like an arm, an extended arm from the fireplace, wasn't it?

A. Rotated in the fire and pulled it out, you know. Yes, she did a lot of cooking in there. Roasted chestnuts in the ashes under the front of the fireplace.

Q: Are chestnuts anything like buckeyes?

A: Just exactly alike. You ever seen one?

Q: I've seen a buckeye, I've wondered if that . . .

A: You ever seen a chestnut?

Q: Buckeyes are very shine and . . .

A: Brown. (shows a chestnut)

Q: Very beautiful.

A: They had a disease hit the chestnuts down there about the same time we had the elm disease here. Killed every tree in the whole county. I mean really, but they have been setting out plants in the last twenty years and that's off of one of those new trees.

Q: Did they find any way to protect the trees from disease?

A: No, they still haven't, the new trees haven't developed the disease yet. So they're doing pretty good with it.

Q: Well, that's very interesting, I guess I have never seen a chestnut before, but you hear Johnny Mathis sing about roasting the chestnuts over the fire. Was that a Christmas custom at your place?

A: Oh yes, well anytime during the wintertime it was just a normal thing to do.

Q: Did you pop popcorn?

A: Sure.

Q: Did you grow popcorn?

A: Yes.

Q: What was Christmas like when you were a boy on the farm?

A: Well, it wasn't much different than it is today. Course we didn't have the electric lights on the trees. I'm not sure.

Q: Did you bring a tree into the house?

A: Yes.

Q: String popcorn and cranberries?

A: That's what you decorated with. Colored corn, sometimes, after it was popped to make colors on the tree, but the only thing you had on the tree in the way of illumination was, it would have to be candles and you had to be very careful with those because you could burn the house down real easy.

Q: Did you hang a stocking?

A: Yes, on the mantel, always on the mantel in Kentucky. There was a whole string of them with that many kids, you know, the grandkids and that many kids in the family. When Christmastime came, there was a house full.

Q: You knew most of your aunts and uncles?

A: Oh yes.

Q: Did they all settle in that area?

A: We were the only ones that left out of the whole, out of the family of my dad's.

Q: I suppose that upset his mother and dad pretty much that he was leaving to go to Illinois?

A: Well, they were, my granddad would have been in his eighties at that time, and my grandmother was gone already when we came out here. So I really don't know what possessed Dad to want to come to Illinois, because he had a farm down there. We lived on it. An uncle of my mother's had moved out here to Taylorville and he had written some real exciting views about how nice it was up here as compared to Kentucky. You know it is all smooth and level around here and farming is lots different. It was at that time and still is, but he just decided all at once and we got out here just in time to start school in September, and we were satisfied and just stayed.

Q: How old were you then?

A: I was ten years old.

Q: That was when you were at Taylorville or here in Auburn?

A: Taylorville, we moved to Taylorville first.

Q: Where was the farm located in Auburn, the first farm that your father had? South of here?

A: Yes.

Q: That would be between Auburn and Thayer?

A: You know where Lloyd Ping lives, don't you? On the west side of the road in the brick house as you go down the road here. The white house on the east side. That's where we lived, always.

Q: Did your father have that home built?

A: No, he came down here as a farm manager for Hay Brown that raised cattle at Taylorville and he had a purebred herd down here and Dad came to take care of it. That's how we happened to move down.

Q: Was farming quite a bit different in Illinois than Kentucky?

A: It was.

Q: You can't raise tobacco here?

A: I don't think so. Maybe a little bit in southern Illinois. I think there are small patches, but you don't have the quality of tobacco you do down there on account of the different type of soil. You couldn't raise good tobacco in black soil. It wouldn't have the color and it would be strong.

Q: Bud, I haven't asked you about your mother's side of the family. Do you remember your mother's mother and father?

A: I remember my grandmother. My grandfather was killed in the Civil War. So at the age I was, I don't remember him at all.

Q: What state was he from, your grandfather on your mother's side?

A: I'm not sure.

Q: Did he fight for the North or for the South?

A: For the North. See, we would have been in central Kentucky. It was the dividing line, of course, even in that area there were families that the relation fought against each other depending on how they felt about the situation, but it happened and it happened in all the border states, you know, where there were relations back and forth. It was just like

belonging to the church I guess, if you believe in one thing you are going to fight for it and that's the way they did.

Q: So your grandfather was killed in the Civil War. How many children were in your mother's family?

A: Three, two boys and a girl.

Q: You remember your grandmother then on that side of the family?

A: Oh yes.

Q: What nationality was she?

A: I just don't know, but to say Kentuckian.

Q: Then you really don't remember any of your ancestors that came across from the old country?

A No, I wouldn't.

Q: Can you remember any stories that they might have told you about their ancestors?

A: The only thing I remember about my grandmother's father and mother who lived close by there, my great grandfather was killed in the war too, and while he was in the war they had a huge amount of Confederate money and she dug a hole out on the side of the bank of the creek there and buried that money. They were pretty close to where they were raised of one kind or another, and one army to the other and she buried that money and then when the war was over, it wasn't even worth digging up. It lost its value as soon as the war was over. But that's about all I remember about that.

Q: Well, if she was all alone, how did she make a living?

A: She had a bunch of boys, a whole bunch of grown boys. You're talking about my great grandmother now and they were grown men as I remember them. Let's see, the war would have been over 25 years at that time, 27. These boys all stayed around home, were married, and lived in that area close by.

Q: What were their last names?

A: Barber.

Q: And your mother was a Barber also?

A: She was a Matthews, my grandmother married a Matthews. And my dad's sister, he only had one sister that lived. One of them died early with infantile paralysis, but the other sister married my mother's brother so we got a whole flock of double cousins down there.

Q: Do you still have family reunions down there?

A: Yes, we had one just recently.

Q: Did most of your cousins remain on the farm?

A: No, they're pretty well scattered out. There was that many of them that live in that area that you see in that picture, but there is some in Indiana and some in northern Illinois, some in Missouri. You know they just kind of trickled out.

Q: So actually, you are just about the only farmer that was there?

A: That moved out in this area. There are farmers down there.

Q: What did your father look like, did he have a mustache? In some of those little pictures you see, they have a kind of handlebar mustache.

A: I don't think my dad ever had a mustache at all that I ever remember. I had a little one one time, but it wasn't very productive so I wacked it off. No, my dad was clean shaven, but my granddad had a full beard way down like that, but Dad never did have a beard.

Q: What were some of the Sundays like, when you were a small boy?

A: Well . . .

Q: You still had to milk cows, I guess?

A: We had--I'm talking about when we lived up here--normally three hired men, because all the work was done with teams and horses, you know. Go to Sunday School on Sunday morning, and afternoon the hired men, they didn't go to church, but usually they had their hair cutting on Sunday morning. They cut each other's hair out under the shade of a tree, something like that. Then they'd wrestle and play horse shoes and something like that. In the afternoon there really wasn't much going on, it was too hot in the summertime for much activity. No air conditioning, we just roughed it.

Q: What was one of the things you did as a young boy that you enjoyed the most? Did you ever go hunting?

A: Oh definitely, but I enjoyed the whole spectrum.

Q: You had a good childhood?

A: Oh yes, I really did and I did everything that any normal kid would do and followed that procedure up till ten years ago. I used to duck hunt and quail hunt, pheasant hunt, goose hunt down in southern Illinois, go to the river fishing, just enjoyed all those things and really took part in them.

Q: When you were a boy, did you have a pet?

A: I had a dog.

Q: What was your dog's name?

A: Pug.

Q: Was Pug a hunting dog?

A: Yes, not the kind you'd--I would hunt opossum with him. Those two girls and I would take a lantern and--we lived right on the edge of the woods--and we'd take that dog and go out through the woods hunting opossum and skunks at night, you know. We'd catch a opossum once in a while, but we didn't try to catch the skunk too much, but the dog would tree them and you'd know they were there.

Q: Did you have brothers and sisters, Bud?

A: Those two. I've got two sisters. Lilly, you know her, and Howard's wife, no brothers.

Q: And you lived pretty far I guess from any other farmhouse?

A: You're talking about down there or here?

Q: When you were a young boy?

A: I would say not more than a half mile to the closest neighbor, no, I'm sure it wouldn't be any more than that. There were several neighbors within a half a mile really like a circle or something like that, but all the farms were small so the houses were reasonably close together.

Q: Did you have a celebration like after the harvest ever?

A: We did out here. Down there we had what they called a husking bee. See, we didn't shuck the corn. We pulled it off the stalk and left the shuck on it, down there, bring it into the crib, put it into the crib, and when the harvest was all in, then you'd have a shucking bee, and a dance, the whole thing you know. The neighbors would all get around and shuck that corn and someplace along the line they'd slip in a red ear and whoever found the red ear got to kiss any girl they wanted to at the party. And you'd go from neighbor to neighbor and do that sort of thing. It was just a part of the social life.

Q: What kind of music did they have in those days for the dances?

A: You wouldn't believe it, everybody played but me. My cousins were all, they even had a band, a dance band for local entertainment, you know, just my cousins, fiddles and guitars.

Q: Did you have square dances?

A. Oh yes, and party game dances. I'm sure you have never been to a party, well like "Skip to My Lou" and all that stuff, that kind of a thing. It wasn't a dance, it was, I don't know how you describe that

function. You go around in a circle and go this way and that way, but it wasn't called square dancing.

Q: It was like a "Virginia Reel" type of thing?

A: Yes. And it was called party dancing, that's what they called it. But it was a lot of fun. We even had that out here in this neighborhood after we moved down here. I taught school down there seven years at the schoolhouse back east of our place, and we'd have dances at the schoolhouse.

Q: You taught school? What did you teach?

A: Eight grades. I had as high as 40 pupils in that schoolhouse.

Q: You taught for seven years?

A: Well, some of the kids that I taught would be Bob MacMurdo, Florence, Ilene, Gerald, he died you know, married to the Quisenberry girl. There was five of those kids in school when I taught.

Q: Well, where was this schoolhouse?

A: Well, from our house, I'm talking about the white house down there we lived in, it was just half a mile east, right across the farm. MacMurdos at that time lived here where Jim lives. See they moved there right after the game farm closed and the kids were all born out here in this house where Jim lives. It was a little house at that time.

Q: What is the road sign down here?

A: Seventeen south.

Q: So your first farm was about one mile or one-fourth mile from seventeen south?

A: Half a mile, well actually back to it would be three-quarters.

Q: And this home you are talking about that MacMurdos lived in would be half way between sixteen south and seventeen south?

A: Right, just in the middle.

Q: On the Auburn Cemetery road?

A: Yes.

Q: So what were some of your duties as teacher in the little schoolhouse?

A: Well, I taught all eight grades, and the duties would be to try to control the kids for one thing, which wasn't any great problem with me, because I got along real good with the kids and played with them all the time and everything. I didn't have a problem with discipline.

Q: Did you have to choose the textbooks that they were to use?

A: No, they came from the county office. I mean it was determined up there. You bought your books locally, but the books and the curriculum work was sent out by the county superintendent of schools at that time, which they don't do anymore.

Q: What were the hours of the school day then?

A: Nine to four.

Q: Now you taught spelling, reading, writing and arithematic?

A: The whole bit.

Q: How much science did you teach in those days? Or was it even called science?

A: No.

Q: Was it more or less like nature?

A: We didn't have a nature book.

Q: What about geography?

A: Oh yes, and physiology was strong on that, I remember that, and grammar.

Q: How about history?

A: Oh yes. We had the full line of books like they have today, only these weren't anything like the ones we got now. I can pick up Stuart's algebra book and I can't tell heads or tails out of it. I was over at the other daughter's a few weeks ago, when we went to Kentucky, and I was looking at Chris' geometry book and I was lost in that thing. It's a different process altogether now, it's no comparison. And I don't know why, maybe it's a better deal. Seem to me like it'd be hard for the kids to understand what they're doing with this kind of teaching. Because the basics aren't anything like they were in the old books.

Q: It seems that they really have to absorb more material that is more complicated and explicit than we used to have.

A: It seem like so much of it's irrevelant to what your trying to teach. Maybe it's to teach them to think, I don't know. I don't understand it.

Q: But back in our days they really taught you more about how to deal with the problems around you like a sewing problem, or papering a house, or building a cabinet, something of that nature?

A: Basics, that's what they dealt in really.

Q: Things that you would be encountering around you.

A: It'd be something like if you were going to a technical school now, and learning things like that you wouldn't get in your schools. But a lot of this school down here, there was one family of five kids, the Peliter family, you know Ora Searls, well she was a Peliter and her folks lived down there just east of the school. Then another son that had six kids lived over here in the timber where Gravits live and there was three boys and two girls, maybe there was four boys, I'm not sure. But three of those boys became chemical engineers, out of my grade school down here. Junior went to the University of Illinois, that's the oldest boy, and graduated in some kind of ceramic enigneering . . .

End of Side One, Tape One

Q: Bud, on side one we were talking about the Peliter family. You were describing the education some of these boys got and you were talking about Junior. Do you want to continue?

A: Well, there were three of the boys, Junior, Loy and Maxie. They all three went to the university, two of them at Illinois and one down at Texas. I don't know the name of the university he attended, but during their schooling or directly after, they were out of school, they developed a paint, an automobile paint, and sold the patent to General Motors and they established a factory in South Chicago around Wheaton. That's where they lived and they became fairly wealthy, really. They made a lot of money off of it. Junior is still up there and the other two boys I've lost track of. I really don't know what's happened to them.

Q: Bud, I want to take you back to your early childhood days again, and I want to ask you about some of the things you can remember. Tell me what were some of the things like during the fall of the year. What kind of things did you do as a boy in the fall?

A: Well, going to school would be the main thing that you would do. We had to walk about a mile and a half to the schoolhouse and through woods.

Q: Was this a hilly area?

A: Oh yes! Definitely, and at that early age, I wasn't involved in any amount of the farmwork, you know, you'd just do what any other kid would do at that age. Nothing that I can think of outstanding.

Q: Did you go squirrel hunting?

A: Oh yes, and the two girls and I, we did quite a bit of hunting because we lived right in the woods, you know, and we'd go out at night with a lantern.

Q: Oh, at nighttime?

A: Oh yes, hunt opossum. That's when you hunt opossum.

Q: Oh, how do you go about that?

A: Well, you take a dog and he'll pick up a track or a scent and you usually find them in a hollow log or a dead tree with a hollow in it. And you take a--if we found one like up in a tree, like that in a hollow place--we take a briar that grows down there. They call a sawbriar. It's got little sharp teeth all around it and you cut off one of those vines and start twisting it up in a tree and you could pull an animal or a rabbit or anything out of a tree with that briar because it would wind up their hair, you know, you could pull him out.

Q: So you didn't need a gun for that?

A: No.

Q: You just brought them in alive?

A: That's right.

Q: Did you learn to dress these animals yourself?

A: Not down there.

Q: Your father took care of that or did your mother do any of that?

A: If they wanted to save it they would, but we didn't eat it. You know a lot of people did eat opossum in those days, but we never did pay much attention to them.

Q: Did you catch them mainly for their furs?

A: Well, mostly just for the sport, nothing to sell or anything like that. They were a nuisance around the chicken house and places like that, you know, they'd eat chickens, really. So it was just a fun thing more than anything.

Q: Did you ever go nut hunting? You talked about chestnuts, did you pick them up in the fall?

A Yes, but we didn't have to go anyplace. They were right in the yard.

Q: Oh, you had nut trees right there in the yard?

A: Hickory, walnut and chestnuts were all right there, we didn't have to go anyplace.

Q: Did the whole family sit around the table and pick the nuts out?

A: Well, in the wintertime we would eat them, of course. You would gather around but the chestnuts, when the burr--they're formed in a burr--and there'd be three or four nuts inside of a burr and usually if they're ripe when they hit the ground, they shatter out. So all you got to do is pick them up.

Q: Otherwise do you have to use a hammer to get the burr off of the nuts?

A: If it would be a green one, yes, but most of them that fall off the tree are ripe. They just pop open.

Q: What other kind of trees did you have on your farm? Did you have any kind of fruit trees?

A: Oh yes, we had orchard trees: apples, peaches, plums.

Q: Did you ever eat a persimmon?

A: Oh yes, we had persimmons. They were all over the place.

Q: Did you ever eat one that wasn't quite ripe?

A: Not if I knew it. (laughs)

Q: Did your mother and the girls put up preserves?

A: Well, my mother did. Course the girls weren't old enough to take much part in it at the time down there.

Q: But you went out to gather the fruits?

A: Oh yes, she took care of that.

Q: What was Thanksgiving Day like in your family? Did the grandparents come?

A: Well, normally we'd go there. It'd be like a reunion thing, you know, and if something happened that we didn't, we'd have just a normal Thanksgiving like you would here, turkey and the whole bit.

Q: How far away did your grandparents live from your home?

A: Not more than a mile.

Q: You could see them often?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you have wells for your water when you were a kid or did you get your water from a spring?

A: We didn't have one early. When we built the new house, we dug a well. It wasn't too dependable, really, because there was so much limestone in the area that it was pretty hard to dig through to get to the water, but we had a spring house probably the distance from here to that Miller house down there and we carried the milk and the butter down there. We had a spring house and the water flowed through there and you put the milk and butter in there and then go back and get it before another meal.

Q: How did your mother make butter?

A: With a churn.

Q: Oh, you had a wooden churn?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you kids take turns helping to churn that?

A: Oh yes, it was kind of fun.

Q: How long does it take to make butter?

A: Oh, it depends on the temperature of the cream that you put in it. The cream has to be, well, it has to be sour cream. The cream sours and then the temperature of it, if it's too hot, it will be runny, you know, and won't gather in the churn and what you'd have to do is take the lid off and drain the buttermilk out, take the lid off and put cold water in it and turn it some more. Then the butter would all gather up and you'd have a cone of butter.

Q: Did you drink buttermilk?

A: Oh yes.

Q: And your mother used it for baking?

A: Yes.

Q: Probably never wasted anything like that?

A: No, you used everything and about everything you used was on the farm. You didn't go to town for very many things, mostly sugar. Outside of that, everything, practically everything, the meat and everything was butchered on the farm and stored, not much beef.

Q: You had like a smokehouse?

A: Oh yes, and you could put meat down in different ways. Sometimes we'd smoke it and sometimes we'd put it down a big wooden box, put down a layer of salt, a layer of meat, a layer of salt, a layer of meat, and it would keep that way.

Q: Did you have people come in to do the butchering, or was that sort of a big thing in that area?

A: Well, it wasn't as big down there as it was after we came out here, because the neighbors were farther apart and they didn't butcher as many. Mostly hogs was what we butchered down there and up here too. We hardly, very seldom ever had beef because there was no way to keep it. You didn't have refrigeration and you can't salt it down.

Q: Oh you can't, it's just too salty to eat?

A: It soaks into it and it's so salty you can't eat it, but I guess the old timers had a method of drying it somehow.

Q: Is that where beef jerky comes from?

A: That's where jerky comes from, dried beef and it won't spoil. Well, you've seen it in the movies and on television where they reach in their saddlebag and get a strip of jeky and chomp on it. That would keep them alive. I don't imagine it was very nourishing.

Q: They still sell beef jerky in the store.

A: Oh yes, I've seen that.

Q: The kids like it.

A: It's not too bad.

Q: What were some of the things that your mother fixed for you when you were a kid?

A: Well, I think I enjoyed pancakes and maple syrup as much as anything. That maple syrup, I've always loved it and sausage.

Q: Did you tap for the syrup yourself?

A: Yes.

Q: At what time of the year?

A: Usually February, it don't have to be February, but when the sap starts up in the tree. See the sap all goes to the roots in the wintertime and when it starts to thaw in the--course the tree freezes and when it thaws out in the early spring--the sap starts to come up to the leaves and you can tap it and get the water.

Q: How much syrup do you get from one tree, say for instance?

A It takes a hell of a lot. It takes forty gallons of sugar water, that's what we call what comes out of the tree, to make a quart of syrup.

Q: Now you don't kill the tree, do you?

A: No, it doesn't hurt the tree at all.

Q: Can you tap that same tree again next year?

A: Oh yes. In fact all the way around or up and down and it doesn't affect the tree.

Q: So it takes forty gallons of sugar water?

A: To make a quart of syrup.

Q: You talked the other day about sorghum. How is sorghum different from the maple syrup? Is it a different kind of tree?

A: No, it's a plant like a cornstalk or something like that.

Q: Is it grown especially for sorghum or is it sort of wild?

A: No, it's a sorghum cane like sugarcane would be in the south. This is a sorghum cane and like I said there's two varieties, one is for black strap molasses and the other one is for edible food.

Q: And you can tell the difference by looking at it?

A: Well, you raise it. Whatever kind you want. Plant the seed just like you would, well, it grows on the head and the top has, heads out, and has like a cone on the top and that seed you cook that off, you know, and save whatever amount you want.

Q: It has a lot of seed?

A: Oh yes.

Q: Like a sunflower?

A: Well, only it isn't like a sunflower. It's more like the, you've seen this elderberry thing growing along the road that's got that cone shaped thing on it in the fall of the year, there's a lot of them around here. And it's the same type of thing like that. It could be sumac or, well, it would be sumac that has that. I'll show you one when we get ready to leave, but that's the way cane would grow with that seed in the top of it.

Q: So one of your favorite things was pancakes and maple syrup?

A: Yes, I loved that.

Q: Did your mother ever make homemade candy for the kids?

A: Oh sure, Christmastime we always had it.

Q: Describe what Christmastime was like when you were a young boy.

A: Well, it was pretty much the same as it would be out here except we didn't have the gifts the kids have now days, of course.

Q: But you hung a stocking?

A: Hung a stocking. Maybe you'd have an apple or stick of peppermint candy, things like that, or if you needed clothes, or whatever, that would be there too. It wasn't as extensive as out here.

Q: Did you make gifts for each other? Did you make little homemade type gifts for each other?

A: Some little things at school would be about it.

Q: Did your parents teach you that there was a Santa Claus? Did they talk about that?

A: Oh yes, and we all believed in it.

Q: Did you have a best friend when you were a little boy?

A: Not especially. No, I had a lot of cousins around and we played together and in school too, but not one in particular.

Q: What was one of your favorite seasons?

A: I think fall of the year down there is beautiful.

Q: Since it was hilly, did you do some sleigh riding and sledding in the winter?

A: We had sleds, but we didn't have sleighs, you know the horse-drawn sleds. Course you could take the whole family on that, bundle the hay on it or straw or something, you could all go along on the sled. We never did have a sleigh that I can remember.

Q: Did you ever take a sleigh ride?

A: Yes, my neighbor over here used to have one.

Q: That must of been nice when it was quiet, and there was a big moon.

A: It was kind of romantic, I guess. Course the sleigh you pulled with one horse and the sled you had to have two horses because they were quite a bit bigger.

Q: So you kids in the winter, you did a lot of sledding and did you do any ice skating?

A: Not down there, because there wasn't any water close enough. We did in Christian County and we did down here on Sugar Creek, but earlier, no, we didn't.

Q: Did you build snowmen and make forts?

A: Oh yes, we did everything that everybody else, all other kids did.

Q: In the summertime, did you have--you said you weren't too close to any water, but did you do any swimming in a swimming hole?

A: The only water we had nearby was the branch that we put the milk and everything else in and it wasn't deep enough to swim in.

Q: You just waded around?

A: Yes, we'd play in it, but there was a river I guess two or three miles away, and I remember a couple of times we went swimming there with my dad and my uncle and we'd go there fishing quite often, usually on Saturday afternoon.

Q: Did you love to fish?

A: Oh yes, I always have.

Q: Did your family eat lots of fish?

A: No, we didn't fish that much, but they would eat fish anytime we had it. Everybody was too busy to fool around fishing, you know.

Q: You had quite a few chores then?

A: Well, yes.

Q: What were some of your chores?

A: Well, just take care of the livestock, really. That would be chickens, whatever animals you had around, you know.

Q: Did your mother ever make home remedies for illnesses?

A: Goose grease was the only thing I can think of.

Q: Goose grease, what was that used for?

A: Sore throats, congestion in your chest. Goose grease and turpentine mixed together.

Q: Did you ever hear of asafetida?

A: We had it. You carry that around your neck.

Q: I had never heard of that, but Howard and Marie both said they used it.

A: Yes, that was an old time remedy.

Q: How did it smell?

A: Terrible! You put it in a little sack and tie it around your neck.

Q: Bud, can you remember the first time you ever had a radio?

A: I'm not so sure, it wouldn't have been after we were married, but when we first got married.

Q: You didn't have a radio when you were a youngster?

A: I don't think so. I had a player piano. The folks bought me a player piano and thought that would keep me home on Saturday nights, you

know. The first night it was delivered down there, well, I played on it a little bit and got up and went to town and my mother thought that wasn't too good.

Q: Did you play a piano?

A: No, I played player pianos that's about all. No, I used to thump around on a banjo a little, but I never did play any music.

Q: What was the closest big town to where you lived down there?

A: Down there, well Bowling Green would have been the closest town of any size.

Q: Do you ever remember taking trips into Bowling Green?

A: No, I never did, but my sister did. They had--around Bowling Green--strawberry patches and they raised them, like commercially, you know, and they'd have kids come from different areas to pick strawberries and one time she went, as a group to harvest strawberries. But no, I never went over there for anything.

Q: So the closest town you went to was Glasgow?

A: Yes, that was about five miles. Bowling Green was about fifteen, maybe twenty miles from Glasgow.

Q: What was Glasgow like back in your day?

A: Well, I thought it was a great big town. I would guess then probably five thousand. I think it's about eighteen thousand now. It's a real busy town now.

Q: Did you look forward to going into town?

A: Oh yes, that was a treat.

Q: What did the stores look like in those days?

A: About the same as they do now. You would have a variety of things, everything that you do now, but . . .

Q: But you'd have open pickle barrels?

A: And cracker barrels. They were just sitting there. You would help yourself.

Q: Did they have a potbelly stove that people sat around and chatted?

A: Yes, that's the only heat in the stores that I remember, and I'm thinking about country stores now, but there was no fireplaces in those stores. I'm sure there wasn't, but how they heated the stores in town, like in Glasgow, I don't know, really. They may have had some heating system for the town, I don't know.

Q: Did they have materials there where your mother could get some material to make clothes?

A: Oh yes, and then besides that, you had wagons that came around through the country delivering, you know, selling.

Q: And I bet they had everything on them?

A: They'd sell groceries, everything, the whole bit, patent medicine. But they'd come around, maybe they'd hit your area once a month, something like that. They covered large territories, you know.

Q: Did you have a teacher that influenced your life?

A: I doubt it very much.

Q: There wasn't any one particular teacher that you admired especially?

A: No, I didn't find any fault with any of them, really. You're talking about younger.

Q: Well, just during your school days.

A: No, I don't think so.

Q: Well, what did you think when your parents decided to move from that area that you grew up in?

A: Really didn't know or realize. Going to Illinois was like going across the world to a kid my age, and really didn't think too much about it. We just knew we was going. We rode into town in a wagon. Then the first car I ever rode in, they had a--the station was I guess a mile from downtown--and we rode to the station in an open car, didn't have a top on it, and that was quite a thrill. First car I'd ever ridden in. But it was like a taxi would be, well it was really, but it took passengers to the railroad and brought them back.

Q: Did you take all your belongings with you or did you have to have some of them shipped?

A: They were shipped. That had already been taken care of.

Q: Your father had already found a place?

A: Oh yes.

Q: So what was your new home like then? Were you on a farm?

A: Yes, and it was just an ordinary farmhome, two story, lots of room, big rooms.

Q: This was in Taylorville, Illinois?

A: No, it was in the country. We lived in the country.

Q: But outside of Taylorville?

A: Between Taylorville and Sharpsburg. Sharpsburg's about say ten, fifteen miles north of Taylorville, next to Edinburg.

Q: Where did you go to school?

A: Sharps was the name of the school.

Q: Was that a one-room schoolhouse also?

A: Yes. And we had, I guess, the teacher had about every grade. I'm almost sure, I don't remember when there wouldn't have been all eight grades in that school.

Q: Went to eight grades and what grade were you in at the time that you moved?

A: When I moved out there to that school, I would have been in the fifth grade. We were there three years and I was in the eighth grade when I came down here.

Q: What kind of games did the kids play during recess?

A: Oh, depending on the weather, course if there was snow on, they played . . . oh they had that ring, you know, what did they call it? Some kind of a goose thing they called it. There was a ditch close to the school, maybe like this one down here, and we'd all go down there and skate during noon hour and then as soon as school was out we'd head for home. But down in Kentucky, we had a marble yard and marbles was the great thing in those days, you know, and it was a prepared yard, like you would be right out there. It was smoothed off, there was no grass or anything on it, just clay, and we'd play a lot of marbles. One day you'd have a sack full and the next day you'd lose them all. (laughs)

Q: Did you have any close friends during that time?

A: I don't think especially. I don't remember.

Q: This country was rather flat compared to your Kentucky home?

A: Oh yes, that's probably the big change in the farming operation from what it was down there. Everything down there was one and two horse operation, and we came out here, was four and six and like that you know, because you pulled larger tools and worked more ground. So you had to have more livestock.

Q: About how long did it take to put in a crop?

A: Down there?

Q: No, in Taylorville area.

A: Quite a while, but we always managed to get it done. I thought a lot of times this farm down there where Jim farms, there was another 160 that was with that when we moved down here and we farmed all that with mules and horses, mostly mules. And I don't ever remember not getting a crop in, in the spring of the year and most of the work was done in the spring of the year. Rather than like now, they plow it all up in the fall you know. They didn't practice that in those days. The only thing they plow in the fall would be the sod ground. It worked better in the spring if it was plowed in the fall, but the rest of it, we had 24 mules that we would put in the field in the spring of the year, and with decent weather, we managed to get the crop in the whole thing and that's about all you do now even with the big tractors and all that you know. Course, you didn't go to the country club and drink coffee all the time.

Q: But besides putting the crop in, you still had animals to care for, is that correct?

A: Oh yes.

Q: Did you still have the chickens? You gathered eggs?

A: The whole bit.

Q: Did you have a garden outside your house?

A: A big one.

Q: So it took probably from daylight till dark?

A: Well, close to it. We would always get up, start early in the morning, but we always quit at six o'clock at night. We always did and we always took an hour off at noon. And that was a common practice. There was some that would work longer hours than that, but you had to be pressed for time if you did.

Q: How old were you when you moved to Auburn?

A: Fourteen.

Q: You were fourteen. You were in high school then probably?

A: No.

Q: Going into high school?

A: Yes.

Q: Was the new high school built at that time?

A: Yes, that school was opened in 1916, wasn't it? Wasn't that the date that was on the front of that building? I guess the year before the kids were going to Pawnee and some of them to Chatham to school. And then

when this school was opened, Pawnee didn't come, but all the kids from Chatham came to Auburn and all the Thayer kids went to Auburn to high school.

Q: It was like a consolidated school?

A: Yes, but it wasn't, it was a township high school.

Q: Oh, a township?

A: Yes, but Chatham was out of the township, but still those kids came from Chatham. They came on interurban [train].

Q: Did they have to pay tuition?

A: No, because you didn't have the distributive fund then, issued by the state that supported your schools. There was local taxation.

Q: So then you are entering a new area and a new school and it certainly wasn't anything like that one-room school house you were in. What were some of your feelings about going to a big school with a lot of kids?

A: Well, it didn't bother me and I don't think it bothered most kids from the country.

Q: How did you get back and forth from school?

A: Buggy, horse and buggy. I never did ride a horse to school.

Q: Did you ever ride a horse?

A: Oh yes, I had to ride a horse, but I never rode to school. And a number of times, I'd say a lot of times, I walked across the field and catch the interurban over there, just a half mile across to the interurban, and all the Thayer kids would be on the interurban going to school. So it wasn't any problem, really. You get an interurban, they drove through there about every half hour in those days and if it was night, all you had to do was light a match and they'd stop for you.

Q: Is that right?

A: Oh yes.

Q: Well, is this more like a little streetcar or train that we're talking about?

A: Well, don't you know the interurban that was right over here?

Q: Well, I do remember the tracks, but what I remember was freight cars.

A: Well, this was an electric car like a streetcar. It run all the way from St. Louis to Champaign and north to Peoria.

Q: So it would just stop wherever anyone needed a ride?

A: Oh yes, and they stopped at the crossing. You'd take your milk over there and put it on a stand there. Put your milk on there. They'd stop and pick up your milk. It was good service really.

Q: They take it to the market for you?

A: To Springfield to the dairy.

Q: Then all the farmers brought their milk to the interurban and they stopped and picked that up, and what did you have, a label on it, on the milk can?

A: You had a number on it and your name on the can.

Q: They could keep track?

A: Sure, then in later years a truck would come by your house and pick it up and take it into Springfield or sometimes some of the trucks went to Litchfield to the creamery down there, but after that, there was very little milk taken to the interurban, you know, to be taken in.

Q: Did you have time to participate in any of the sports in school?

A: I played football and basketball.

Q: Did they play against other towns?

A: Oh yes, lot more than they do now. We used to go to Lincoln, Pana, Taylorville, Carlinville, Gillespie, Pittsfield, as far over as Pittsfield, and the schedule was longer than it is now. We always played till Thanksgiving, had games scheduled till Thanksgiving.

Q: I'll bet some of those games you had snow maybe and sleet?

A: Oh yes, the ground would be froze hard. We always played Waverly on Thanksgiving Day, either there or here.

Q: How did you travel then?

A: Depending on how far we was going, like we went to Pana, we had a couple of kids in school that had old Model T Fords and we'd try to make it there in them, if they run that far. (laughs) It was quite a problem. Take a can or sack of corn meal along in case the radiator started leaking, we'd pour corn meal in it, water it up again, and go on. But like if we were going no father than Divernon, we'd go in a carriage.

Q: How many could go in a carriage?

A: Six, it'd crowd you, but you could put six in it. Course, you had to have the uniforms and that took up some room. Six was all you could get in a carriage.

Q: What kind of social activities did they have? You ever have a school dance?

A: Well, yes and no, there was some objection to dancing in the school at that time. Helen, they didn't dance much in the school, did they? It really wasn't a common practice. If you went to a dance, well they had a dance hall up over the restaurant on the west side of the square, over the old restaurant there on the west side of the square in Auburn. Then, of course, Irvin Park was out there then and there were dances out there all the time, weren't many kids that went out there.

Q: You were a kid when Irvin Park was out there?

A: Yes.

Q: Can you remember anything about it? Where was it located?

A: Well, you know where Cherry Grove School was? Well, you know where Panther Creek Mine is? You don't know much, do you?

Q: You have to realize that I'm from Missouri. You have to show me all these things.

A: Go out on Route 104 to, I'm sure you know where the Studebaker farm is out there. Well, there's a schoolhouse made into a house that sits right there. Well, Irvin Park was down east to the railroad and back to the left. It was in a woods there and it was just a dance pavilion and then later on they had a, on north of that they had a swimming area. It was a pond, is what it was. They had bath houses and that sort of thing.

Q: You could go out there for a picnic, if you wanted to?

A: Oh yes, and they did allow its use for that purpose.

Q: Did people come from all around?

A: Every place, there were no restrictions.

Q: Did they hire bands?

A: Sure, and the pool was used a lot. They come from all over for that, because it was, you know, just wasn't something that you find everyplace and I don't suppose now a days you could operate it, because no filters, nothing like that, you know, just jump in the water, that was it. They did put a lot of sand and gravel out in an area you know, before the pond was filled.

Q: Well, doesn't Virden have sort of a pond like that right now where kids swim?

A: Yes, but that was a mine watering.

Q: But they did allow that.

A: Yes, they swam out there, didn't they? Then they got a new pool, haven't they?

Q: Well, I think so, I don't know where it is.

A: It's in the west end of town out in the west park.

Q: So, did you graduate from Auburn High School?

A: Yes.

Q: In what year?

A: 1922.

Q: About how old were you then?

A: Eighteen, I guess.

Q: So 1922, World War I was already over?

A: It was over.

Q: But can you remember anything at all about World War I?

A: Well, nothing in particular only that you just knew that it was going on and all the young people around were being drafted and going into the service and . . .

Q: Did you have any friends that were in the service or did you have any relatives?

A: No, I didn't have any friends my age that would have been in, because they wouldn't have been old enough, but it took all of our hired men, I know that. And we had to hire different help. Then when the war was over, they came back and went to work again for us.

Q: I understand that during that time there was a terrible flu epidemic, do you remember anything about that?

A: That was in 1918, I guess. I think it was. Everybody at our house had it but me, I remember that, and had it bad. And I was trapping in the winter and catching a lot of skunks, and the doctor told me that was the reason I didn't get it, because that scent of the skunk on me. (laughs) But I didn't have the flu. The rest of the family did.

Q: But people did die from that epidemic during that time?

A: Oh heavens yes, many, many, many people did. I guess that was worse than any flu they've had since that time, course now they can vaccinate for it which they couldn't do then or didn't do.

Q: What was Auburn like during your high school days, can you remember? Did they have big fish frys then?

A: Well, on the Fourth of July and Labor Day they would have and after I got out of school, while I was on the fire district board for fourteen years, and we had fish frys to raise money enough to buy a fire engine.

Q: When did you first go on the fire district?

A: I was one of the organizers.

Q: You were an organizer. Can you tell me about some of the things that you did then? What was the fire department like up to that point?

A: Pretty near zero. I can remember my dad had a roof fire out there ahead of this time and they had a Model T that had a pumper on it and it started out to the fire and got to the yard fence and died and never did get it started. We put the roof fire out by carrying water up on ladders and pouring it on the house. The old pump just gave out, the old Ford did. That's the kind of service we had at that time, but when we organized the fire district, we had all these different functions, and we had a very low tax rate assessment, but we raised money from the district to buy a fire engine. I don't remember what it cost now, not too much. I'd say less than five thousand dollars. And later on we got a tanker that would take water like to the country. If you went to a country fire, you could take a thousand gallons of water with you in case the well went dry or something.

Q: Who else was with you on the first organizing committee?

A: Well, Fred Harms, Fred Harms and Estle Shutt and I were the first fire member district. We were the organizers of the district. Our attorney was Clifford Blunk from Springfield. He was formerly of Virden. He was an attorney down there for a while, but he handled all of our legal problems. You know it was really quite a problem to organize a fire district because, well, it was like when I was president of the high school board when we organized the unit district. That was another problem, because people, getting people in the country accustomed to the idea of riding a bus and having all the kids transported to town, you know, you had a lot of resentment, but we worked on it.

Q: How old were you then, Bud?

A: I was out of school. I think we organized the fire district in 1946, I believe. I think I've got a plaque in there that they gave me for being on the district for so long, and I think it was given to me in 1965.

Q: You were very busy, then. You were on the school board and you were also trying to organize a fire district?

A: Well, by the time we had the unit district came along we were, we had this pretty well set up. We weren't having any problems with that, but just ahead of that, I was assessor for seven years too in Auburn township. I always found something to do whether it amounted to anything or not.

Q: And at the same time you were farming?

A: Sure.

Q: Let's go back to getting this new fire truck. What were some of the first things you had to do? Did you incorporate some help?

A: To buy it we had committees.

Q: You evidently got several people to join in on this project?

A: Hugh McGill was one of the main ones that really went forward with the movement. In fact, he donated money out of his pocket toward the purchase of that engine.

Q: And who is Hugh McGill? What did he do here in Auburn?

A: Well, he retired here. He was a former senator, state senator.

End of Side Two, Tape One

Q: Bud, you were telling me about Hugh McGill. You said that he was a former state senator and also a teacher, you thought.

A: Yes.

Q: When did he come to Auburn?

A: Well, he came after he retired. I didn't know him in his early life, he was at retirement age when he came to Auburn. He was raised in Auburn, in the Auburn area and the McGills owned a farm northwest of Auburn. That's where Lowes lived all those years.

Q: So he helped with the organizing of this fire district?

A: And the library.

Q: And the library.

A: Yes, he was real interested in both of them.

Q: So, what were some of the first things you had to do before you could get your fire truck?

A: You had to raise the money.

Q: Okay, so what were some of the things you did to raise the money?

A: Many, many different things. Anything that would make a little money, we tried it. We had fish fries and chicken fries and on holidays, like Fourth of July or Labor Day, we'd have picnics and served the whole bit, you know.

Q: The wives came and helped too?

A: Oh sure. We had plenty of help, plenty of help. Always.

Q: And everybody just came and had a good time and contributed?

A: Sure. It was just, well they contributed to the buying of the food, you know. It was kind of a slow process, but it worked out. We made enough money to buy a fire truck.

Q: How long did it take you?

A: A little over a year.

Q: Well, that wasn't bad at all. To raise five thousand dollars.

A: In the meantime, we had some donations too, other than just what we raised from the functions.

Q: Where did this fire truck come from? Where did you have to buy it?

A: At Red Bud, Illinois. That's down southeast of St. Louis.

Q: Did you go down to pick it up?

A: Vernon did.

Q: Vernon McMillan?

A: Yes.

Q: He was on the fire district at that time?

A: He was fire chief.

Q: He was fire chief? He must have been fire chief for many years.

A: He was. Long, long time; and the tanker we bought at Arthur, that's over in the . . .

Q: Amish country?

A: Amish country, east of Decatur. They have a plant over there where they build tanks, fire tanks, tanks for fire trucks and that's where we bought that.

Q: Did you have to have some more fundraising to get that tanker?

A: No, we raised that through taxation.

Q: Through taxation?

A: We raised that through taxation.

Q: Did this have to come to a vote to the citizens of the fire district?

A: Oh yes.

Q: And once it passed . . . I suppose it passed right away?

A: It passed the first time it was voted on, and after it was formed and had been accepted and everything, we were able to levy a tax then. Like you would have on the library board. That way we had a little money. Well, we built the firehouse too at the same time, down there back of Percys, you know where the old firehouse is. We built that. I think that cost thirty-five hundred dollars and I believe they paid eighty-seven hundred for that one, the new one they bought on the east side.

Q: Bud, I don't mean to change the subject; but I did read some old Auburn newspapers and it sort of indicated that there was a tennis court right along in that area somewhere where that firehouse is. Do you remember anything at all about that?

A: Well, the kids used to play tennis in there, right on that corner lot there.

Q: Right there on the corner lot?

A: They had tennis courts there, and they had another court down there, and I believe it was on the lot that Charlie Beatty lives on. They had a tennis court there too at one time.

Q: Well, I don't ever remember seeing the tennis court, so I was wondering if the firehouse was built right on that area.

A: On a part of it. It wouldn't have been built on all of it. We bought that whole corner really, and built the firehouse on the south side of the lot, and then maintained the lot through the years; and I don't know if they've ever sold that lot or not. Is that still vacant? The rest, the lot from the firehouse to the street . . . on towards the school? It's still vacant, isn't it?

Q: Yes.

A: I believe the fire district still owns that.

Q: This was a volunteer fire department?

A: Right.

Q: About how many men did you have when you first got your truck?

A: Twenty-two.

Q: Twenty-two men? That's very good, isn't it?

A: Yes, course they couldn't all be called out at one time.

AUBURN CITY HALL AND FIRE ENGINE

Q: Well, how were they called out? By the siren?

A: Yes, we had a siren and we had a phone system made up through the General Telephone Company that would ring each fireman, you know, at their house, but the first notice was off of the siren that was on top of the old surface building there on the square.

Q: Now, a lot of these volunteers worked right in Auburn. Is that correct? And were able to leave their jobs? They more or less had permission from their employers for instance and they were free to leave whenever there was an emergency?

A: Yes. There was no problem at all, when the fire whistle went off, the firemen took off. Now, some of the volunteers maybe would be working in Springfield or something. They couldn't. That's why you had to have more than just what you would need, you know, to go on a truck. Because there would be times when they wouldn't all be available, and you had extras for that purpose.

Q: A lot of men that worked outside of town, in Springfield, would come during the nighttime probably?

A: Oh yes. They'd be right there.

Q: They more or less just dropped everything and headed for the firehouse. Is that correct? Or did any of them head for the fire area?

A: They had a system among themselves. I believe the chief went first and the fellows on the truck, that manned the truck, would be next and they would be right behind the chief, headed for whatever direction the fire was, and there would be extra firemen that would go to pick up the hose and maybe stretch out the hose or something like that. They wouldn't all be directly involved on the fire truck, because there's a lot of work around a fire besides just that.

Q: They probably had a few fire drills, too, didn't they?

A: Yes, they had schooling and that sort of thing. It was a well equipped fire department really.

Q: Bud, when I first moved to Auburn and had very small children, that lot where the Baker Chevrolet has their used cars, there was a big white home there, and it was scheduled for them to burn that down and the fire department used that as a practice, and they went in and picked up a dummy that had been placed in there. My children got the false impression that firemen set fires.

A: Oh, is that right?

Q: They were very small and they didn't understand, but they remembered that very much, and they got the false impression, but I thought that was a very interesting drill. The townspeople were able to come and watch them in action.

A: Sure. Well, they still do that. I think they're suppose to have a training session like that . . . once a year, if they can find something available, you know. Because they fight fires with so many different things now, as compared with what they did in the early days. They used water and that was about it, but now they've got all different chemicals, you know, that they used on different types of fires, like gasoline, they used foam instead of water. Water will actually spread a gasoline fire. Just the pressure of the water will blow the flames, you know, but foam will kill it right now. It's improved a lot over the years, of course.

Q: Did you hear Pat Ward tell about the latest discovery that the fire department has?

A: I didn't, no.

Q: There is a chemical that will just put it out in a matter of just a few minutes. It's absolutely miraculous, and they're very happy to have discovered it.

A: Does it smother it, is that what it does or how does it put it out?

Q: It is a chemical that is applied, and I guess just smothers it, so it's come a long way, I guess.

A: Yes, it would have.

Q: I guess you saw some pretty tragic fires.

A: I can't remember any big fires in Auburn, during the time I've been around this part of the country.

Q: Do you remember the fire that Dr. Driver was killed in?

A: No, I don't. Who was he?

Q: He lived on Wineman Street, across from Enriettos in that area. I remember seeing the flames at night, when I woke up during the night, and I heard the fire engine, and I looked out and this house was completely in flames and he died in that fire.

A: I just don't remember that.

Q: It was probably about fifteen years ago maybe.

A: Well, you lived there by the home then?

Q: Yes. There are probably many men that are still connected with the fire department?

A: Not too many from back like when it was organized. The Hummels were real active in it, all three of them, all the time that they were here really.

Q: About how long was Vernon McMillan associated with the fire department?

A: Well, he was on the fire department when we organized, he was on when they had the city fire, just the truck, you know, that sort of thing and they didn't go outside the city, but they weren't supposed to; but occasionally they did, but he was on the fire department, God, I don't know how many years. He was on when we organized the district, I know that, and that probably would have been around 1947, 1946 or 1947, something like that; and he had been on a while at that time, in fact he was selling fire equipment.

Q: Oh, he was selling fire equipment?

A: He did for years.

Q: Was that his business?

A: No, he was in the drugstore here.

Q: Oh, he was in the drug business?

A: With Surface. There on the corner.

Q: Doc Surface. Were they kin to each other?

A: No, I don't, I don't think so. He married Surface's daughter.

Q: That was his father-in-law?

A: Yes. I'm not so sure whether she was a daughter actually or an adopted daughter. But anyway, Elsie was the girl that he married and her name was Surface.

Q: Well, Bud, I know you can be very proud of your participation in this very worthy cause, and you've probably seen lots of improvements over the years, in the fire department; but it is still volunteer, is that correct?

A: It is still volunteer, and it is tax supported, which they didn't have until we organized the fire district. We didn't have any authority to raise money for the fire department at that time. What money they got, they got from the city, but after it was organized, then you had to go to the country. Well, of course, naturally, you had to have taxation to support it, and I guess we had, we probably have now as large a fire district as anyone in this south part of the county and I think as good, or maybe better, department. It was always a question about the location of the firehouse. The people on the east side of the track, if they got a fire and there happened to be a long train going through, you know, you couldn't get there too fast, you had to wait for the train to go by.

Q: That could be a very frustrating experience.

A: And they always objected to it, because they were paying taxes the same as they were on the other side, but you couldn't have the one firehouse on both sides, so a few years back they decided to buy that Harris Building, you know where it is now?

Q: That's on Highway 104, east of the track.

A: Right. That gave them access to both sides of the town and the country too, really. It's a lot better. Expensive, but things are expensive that are good, I guess.

Q: The firemen now wear these pagers too, so that they can know which fire truck is going to go out probably, whether it's one from the one department or whether it's one from east of the tracks.

A: I don't know much about that pager system, but it works and it's real great, I think.

Q: Well, Bud, let's go back just a little bit to your graduation from high school. What was graduation like in those days?

A: I guess about like, I don't know how they do it now.

Q: Did you wear a cap and gown?

A: Oh sure. Hell, yes.

Q: And your family came?

A: Well, yes.

Q: And your firends and it was a big deal?

A: Sure.

Q: Did they give you gifts?

A: Sure, the parents did, of course.

Q: So, you're out of high school now and you're going into farming with your dad?

A: Yes, and teaching school.

Q: And you're going to teach school too.

A: I started teaching in the fall of 1922 when I graduated in May, in the spring. I started teaching that fall.

Q: Well, that's wonderful. How did you decide to go into that?

A: Oh, I don't know. Just . . .

Q: Did somebody come to you and say we need a teacher?

A: No, I had a friend and we were undecided on what we wanted to do, and that spring before school was out, we decided to take the teacher's examination. We did and we passed. Then between the time we were ready, we knew we were going to pass, well I had a school located that I could

get and he did too; but we decided we'd take an exam for a railroad mail clerk. So we went to Carlinville and took that examination and we both passed and before we started teaching we got a notice,you know, we had a job as a railroad mail clerk; but our schools were close in the area and the neighborhood, so we just started teaching and we liked it.

Q: Who was this other person?

A Hubert Hatcher and he's dead now.

Q: But he also was a school teacher?

A: Yes.

Q: What were your first days like at your new school, as a teacher?

A: I suspect it might have been a little turmoil, I don't know, I don't remember any problems at all.

Q: You had all your books ready to go?

A: Oh, yes. The program was determined by the county superintendent of schools, at that time and, of course, and before you started, you had to go to Springfield and pick up all the equipment you needed, you know.

Q: Were you responsible for heating the building?

A: Yes.

Q: And how was it heated?

A: Coal stove, a big coal, well, you would almost call it a furnace, I guess, but it was an upright stove that sat in the back of the house and there were no vents or anything like that, it was just, whatever heat you created would float around over the room.

Q: Were there any funny little happenings during this time? Anything amusing?

A: No, I don't remember anything special, of course, I think I said we had school functions at this little schoolhouse. That was the center of the entertainment in the neighborhood, you know. We had dances and dinners and things like that; but I don't remember anything special.

Q: Did you have spelling bees or anything of that?

A: Well, just among the kids at school.

Q: Just among the kids. You didn't compete?

A: I did have a track team at one time, while I was teaching, and took them to Pleasant Plains to a track meet. I had some kids in school that were big enough and pretty good athletes really, and I played with them and helped them . . . tried to, and we had good luck over there really.

Bob MacMurdo was one of those kids that went on that, that's around here that anyone would know.

Q: Did you and Hubert sort of get together and exchange ideas ever?

A: Oh, about every day.

Q: Oh, about every day.

A: (laughs) Yes. He taught down in the county line and I taught right over here back of the farm, and he'd come by after school, and we ran around together really, and we were raised together pretty much. He lived well, you know where the first little house is across the railroad from twelve, number twelve, twelve green, thirteen tee?

Q: Yes.

A: Just across the railroad in the house there?

Q: Yes.

A: That whole family was raised there. There were a bunch of kids. We used to swim down here. There was a dam here, right back of the swimming pool that's down here now and we'd swim down there during the summertime. All the kids in the neighborhood did.

Q: Oh. Talking about that area, Bud, do you ever remember any Indian mounds around here?

A: Well, the only one that I ever, that was ever supposed to be, was right where number fourteen tee is. You know on that high place there by the railroad by fourteen tee. Now I never had any reason to think that it was, but the Hatchers that I mentioned there, lived there all through the years, and they claim that that was an Indian mound,and when we were building the golf course, we found quite a few arrows scattered around in that area. By moving so much dirt, you know, you dug down and one would show up occasionally.

Q: Did you save any of them?

A: Oh, I've got three or four of them in there, I think.

Q: What kind of Indians do you think lived in this area?

A: I really don't know. I suppose maybe the Illini, I don't know. Would you think? Most likely. I don't know any history that would point out what Indians would live in this area.

Q: Bud, when did you meet your wife?

A: Helen, when did I meet you? It was 1924 or 1925. When did I meet her--I went to school with her.

Q: Oh, you went to school with her?

A: Oh, yes.

Q: What was Helen's maiden name?

A: Sudan.

Q: Did you date Helen while you were in school?

A: No, no, I never did date Helen until after I was out of school, and I guess she was out of school. She was working in Springfield.

Q: Where did she work in Springfield?

A: I don't know the name of that insurance company now.

Q: For an insurance company.

A: But, she worked for an insurance company. She'd know. But she drove back and forth. I guess we started going together around Christmastime in 1924 or 1925, maybe 1925 or 1926. I'm not sure which.

Q: How long did you date before you got married?

A: About a year.

Q: About a year? And when did you get married?

A: 1927.

Q: What time of year was that?

A: June.

Q: In June? Where did you get married?

A: In the Methodist Church at Auburn.

Q: Can you describe that day?

A: Oh, that was a lot of fun.

Q: Was it a hot day?

A: It was hot. I'll guarantee you, it was hot, and it was a small wedding. We had the wedding there at the church, and then Helen and I and my sister and I don't believe she was married. It was Ralph Easley. You remember him. That was her husband. Well, anyway we went to the St. Nic for dinner after the wedding. Then, Helen and I went on a trip down South. We went to Kentucky and through eastern Tennessee.

Q: Did you stop and see your relatives down there in Kentucky?

A: Oh yes. We stopped on the way through.

Q: And then you went on down into Tennessee?

A: Yes. We were gone about a week, I guess. Something like that.

Q: When you came back, where did you live?

A: The first place we lived was . . . you know where Mason Snow lives? Right south of the Standard Station there in Auburn.

Q: Oh, yes. On Fifth Street?

A: Yes. We lived the next house south of them.

Q: Well, you lived on South Fifth Street. Now were you still teaching school?

A: No. I quit teaching when I got married.

Q: You quit teaching when you got married? What did you start doing then? Full time farming?

A: Farming, farming, right.

Q: But you lived in town. You didn't have animals maybe. Were you able to take care of your animals by . . .

A: Oh, sure. I had to come back and forth to work everyday anyway.

Q: You must have had to get up pretty early.

A: But we didn't live in there more than two or three months. Then we moved south or east of Thayer, in that house as you come out of Thayer and all the way up to, almost to the corner on the south side of the road. There's a house there. We lived there, I guess until the next spring, and then we moved in the house that is torn down now, on the farm that Jim farms; on that 80 there. We were there until 1935, and then we bought this farm and moved here and just stayed here. We moved three, four times, didn't we, Helen? She probably doesn't remember either.

Q: What were some of the social activities for young married couples? Did you run around with some other young married couples?

A: Yes. We had plenty of social life. We went to Springfield an awful lot to shows and dances.

Q: Speaking of the shows, Bud, do you remember going to your very first movie?

A: Yes, I don't remember anything about it; but I remember going. It was at Taylorville and it was a nickelodeon.

Q: Just a nickel?

A: Just a nickel.

Q: And they had someone who played the piano, did they?

A: They had music, yes.

Q: And when things got more exciting, the music would get louder and faster?

A: Yes. But that's the only picture show of that type that I was ever in. I did go with the folks one Saturday afternoon.

Q: Did Auburn have any movie houses?

A: Yes. There was an old movie house between the A & P and Faust's. I don't remember what they called the darn thing now. Bijoe, I believe. Then, I guess the next one was the one Ora built, Mrs. Searles. There on the corner, across from the tavern. That was real nice for those days. It was operated for a long, long time. Then, Mitchells built the new one, and Ora closed hers up and it's still sitting there.

Q: Bud, you were probably just a teenager when prohibition was voted in, became a law. Do you remember how it affected any of the people in Auburn?

A: The only thing that I would remember, and know about, is that was when the bootlegging started.

Q: Was there quite a bit of that in Auburn?

A: Oh yes, yes.

Q: Most people were just making their own at home, homebrew then?

A: The foreigners did all the time. Wine and homebrew.

Q: So you could get it any time you wanted it?

A: Oh, yes. It was there. You might have to sneak around a little bit.

Q: But the saloons had to close down?

A: Right.

Q: And there used to be a lot of saloons in Auburn.

A: I think seven or eight. Maybe Howard told you, but there were a bunch of them. There were seven in Thayer on Main Street, right down through the middle of town.

Q: Bud, did you ever hear any rumors about some Chicago gangsters hiding out in this area?

A: Well, the only thing I knew about that, Shirley, was a group of Chicago people, supposedly Capone's hinchmen or whatever operated a big still over here where Gravits live. A big still, one of the biggest in this country. They had negroes in there doing the work, and they had vats built in the basement. I don't know whether you've ever been in that house or not, but the vats are still there.

Q: No, but it's a big house built way back in a wooded area. Is that correct?

A: Yes. The vats are still there. The basement was divided up into different vats and that's where they had the mash. They made White Mule . . . Alcohol. That's what they made. The truck would come in at night and haul it out. They went to Chicago, or that's the word we had around here, and I'm sure it's right. They hauled it in five gallon cans. It was a big operation. They had the water piped up from the creek to use in their mash and that wasn't too healthy, but that didn't make any difference, they were making alcohol out of it anyway.

Q: Was there any violence during that time?

A: Not there.

Q: Did the police get involved with any of this?

A: The only time they were ever involved in it, that I know anything about, was when I was teaching school. Jim MacMurdo was on the Board of Directors. He lived there where Jim [Nuchols] lives. His brother was county sheriff, deputy, not sheriff. The deputy called Jim MacMurdo and said the still would be raided late that evening. When I came home, Jim MacMurdo called me and said they were going to raid the still; to come down and I did. When we got over there, the raid was over and everything had been cleaned out. The deputy told us that anything we wanted around there to take as everything was going to be confiscated anyway. So we carried a lot of stuff across back of where you live, across that branch and across where the golf course is now, and brought it to the farm down here and stored it in the barn. It was copper pipe and just things laying around that would be used.

Q: Do you have any memoirs of that? Anything you could show?

A: No, I wouldn't have. We carried a lot of coke. Coke isn't very heavy. We carried it in burlap bags. We carried it to the fence and we had a team there, put it on that and carried it over to his [MacMurdos] place. Of course, that would have been burned up. No, I don't have anything that was in that. That was the end of it. It never started up any more.

Q: Bud, what is coke?

A: It's like brickettes. They used it in blacksmith shops all the time, instead of coal. There's no smoke to it. It's real hot burning. It's processed from coal. It would be like brickettes you use in outdoor cookery.

Q: Did they have a blacksmith shop in Auburn?

A: Two of them.

Q: Where were they located?

A: One was where Gyorkos garage, west of the elevator, between there and the locker. Bill Hedrick had a blacksmith shop there and Ben Lewis had a shop where Oscar Lane built his new house in Auburn, down from the Methodist Church. There on the corner. Lane bought it, tore it down and built his house.

Q: Did you ever go and watch the blacksmith at work?

A: Well, yes, we had occasion to take different things to be worked on.

Q: You took all your horses and mules in to be shoed?

A: Yes, and the sharpening of tools, plow shears and that sort of thing.

Q: How often does a horse need to be shoed?

A: It depends on where it's used and how much it's used. If it's used on soft ground, like farming, they don't wear out very fast; but, if they're used on the road, they do wear out pretty fast. We didn't always have our horses shoed that we used on plowed ground.

Q: Do mules have to be shoed just like the horses?

A: Oh, yes.

Q: Does that hurt them?

A: No. That old hoof's just like driving it into a tree, the nail.

Q: This road out here that we call the Cemetery Road, was that the road that you traveled back and forth to town on?

A: Yes.

Q: What was it like? Did you ever get mired down?

A: Oh God. Right there at Isabelle Drive was the worst piece of road between our place and Auburn, by far. In the spring of the year, I remember a lot of times, it took four horses to pull an empty wagon through there. It was just like a sump hole.

Q: Have you noticed in the real bad, rainy weather how that yard still fills up with water? In the same area?

A: Well, in later years, on the east side of the road there is a tile that was put in there by one of the road commissioners, 30 or 40 years ago and ran tile across my field down to this pond area and they drained it pretty well, but that's still low ground in there and it's seepy. That used to be the worst place that I know of for roads.

Q: You don't suppose there is a stream down under there?

A: Maybe a spring, could be.

Q: So you had some experiences trying to get your wagon out of that?

A: One spring we were helping a neighbor move from across the road, from where we lived down south of here, to Loami. He'd rented a farm over there. We'd load up the wagons in the afternoon and put four horses on and pull it through that mud hole and then leave the team of horses and wagons there, where Jim lives now, and begin again the next morning. If we did it the afternoon before, we always knew we were out in the clear the next moning.

Q: What were the streets like around the square in Auburn? What did they do to keep them more or less solid? Did they ever add rock and bark or anything like that?

A: I don't remember what time they started oiling the streets in Auburn. I can remember when they oiled in Taylorville, and I suppose they were oiling in Auburn about the same time. That would be the only thing they would do . . . put a coat of oil on them. Then they got the hardroad through there and I guess the pavement. That was the year we were married, I think; because they had a street dance downtown when they opened it. I'm not sure if that's when they opened the pavement or opened Route 4. It used to come through Auburn on the west side, and it still does. It was either the opening of that or the pavement around the square.

Q: Did they still have hitching posts then?

A: Oh, yes. They haven't been out of there too many years. Well, more than you think too, because time goes by so fast. It's been several years . . . when they redid the park.

Q: Do you still remember the old bandstand in the park?

A: Yes. It was quite different from what this one is. It was a two-story kind of thing.

Q: Did the band play on the upper story?

A: No, not that I remember.

Q: What did they use the upper story for?

A: I'll be darned if I know. Seems like they had a fire alarm up there or something. It doesn't seem it was used for anything. Maybe Helen would know.

Q: But it was kind of pretty?

A: Yes, it was the way they did things in those days, built things.

Q: Do you remember one of the first cars you ever saw in Auburn and who might have owned it?

A: Not really. The first car that I remember very much about was a car owned by Workman that lived down close by Helen. He had the first car that I remember anything about. It was a big darn car. It was a Hupmobile or something like that. Right along that time the Model T came out. (snaps fingers) And they went just like that. Just about everyone had a Model T for $500.

Q: Five hundred dollars. Did that come with a top on it?

A: Yes, and curtains, side curtains.

Q: Running board?

A: Sure. Acetylene lights. A tank that set on the running board that ran the lights.

Q: Did you have to crank it up to get it started?

A: Yes, that was the only way on the early ones. I got an arm broke cranking one, one time.

Q: Some of them were rather reluctant to start?

A: Well, most of them were and they kicked, kicked like a mule. You had to be very careful. You could pull up on the crank and if it kicked, it would fly out of your hand. If you pushed down on the other side and it kicked, it would kick you "right out of the park." They were kind of treacherous. It was something you just lived with.

Q: Then, the filling stations started up then?

A: Yes, filling stations and garages. Kesslers had the first, or that's where we bought our first Ford I remember. That were there in the Pennington Building, there on the corner, across from Nicholl's Store.

Q: Where Beatty's Implement used to be?

A: Yes, Kesslers owned that at one time, and had a funeral parlor there and the car business. The funeral parlor was back in the east side of it.

Q: They were running all those things at once?

A: Yes. Then later they moved the funeral parlor to where Rua's Store is now. Then, that was the funeral parlor for awhile.

Q: Right on the northeast side of the square, then?

A: Right.

Q: Is there any of that family left?

A: The Kesslers . . .

Q: Is Jane Dufour a descendent of this Kessler family?

A: She is a Kessler. Jane was Morris Kessler's daughter. Arthur and Morris were the two boys and the old man's name was B. K. Kessler, B. L. Kessler I believe it was. One of the boys is at Champaign, a brother to Jane. He had an article in the paper a couple of weeks ago about the reduction in the legislature. He had an article or a letter to Joe. That was one of the Kesslers.

Q: What did you think of Franklin D. Roosevelt?

A: I thought he was great.

Q: Before you were married, the women were not allowed to vote. Do you remember when that law came through? Did your mother go to vote?

A: She wasn't too excited about it. I think she probably did go to vote; but not ever having voted, it didn't excite country people. It might have people in the city, I don't know. There was no big stir about it out in the country. We always voted at Thayer.

Q: You were old enough to vote for Franklin D. Roosevelt?

A: Oh yes. Sure, that was in 1932 that he took office. The election was in the fall.

End of Side One, Tape Two

Q: Bud, I would like to talk to you a little bit about the community of Auburn and the fact that there were never any black people who settled here to my knowledge. Do you remember if there were any black families who lived in Auburn?

A Not to my knowledge, no. If there were, I didn't know anything about it. There was in Virden, but here, I don't think so.

Q: Even today, I don't know of any black families who live here.

A: There is, isn't there? I thought there was one black child in school.

Q: Perhaps there is. What do you think Auburn's feelings are now toward black people? Do you think this would be an accepted thing? If suddenly a black community developed?

A: What do you mean by a community?

Q: Just an area of Auburn where they set up homes and moved in. Do you think anyone would be upset about that?

A: I don't know. I don't think they would be upset about it, but I don't know how they would be accepted. Really, for one or two families to move into any area, I don't know how they would be happy being there, because they would be alone and they don't mix that well. But as far as being resentful towards it--I don't think so.

Q: Have you met the new Vietnamese family that lives in Auburn?

A: No, I haven't. How long have they been here?

Q: They've been here about a year and a half. They seem to be accepted pretty well.

A: Were they sponsored by some group or someone?

Q: Originally, yes, they were sponsored by a couple of people, and that didn't seem to work out too well. He worked over here at the farm where they have the horses, right behind you here.

A: Oh yes, John Harmons.

Q: Then he started working for the county supervisor on the roads. He's now employed at Dickey-John. He is an intelligent person, but he has a language problem. They've been taking English, and he's adjusted pretty well. The Baker family, the Patterson family, and several other families have helped them along.

A: Well, I remember that fellow being over there. In fact, he painted the fences over there last spring. I saw him doing that. But, I didn't even know they were still here. I didn't know anything about the arrangement or anything.

Q: They live where Mohlers used to live.

A: Out here in the country then?

Q: Well, the point of the conversation is--do you think there is any racial discrimination?

A: I wouldn't think so, Shirley. I don't believe there would be. I don't know why there would be, if they were decent people. Surely there's a place for them.

Q: Okay, let's talk a little about--do you remember what you were doing and the way you felt the day of Pearl Harbor?

A. I remember what I was doing. I was shucking corn . . . in the field. I heard about it when I came in at noon. I don't remember any special reaction to it, because it just seemed rather far-fetched. . . . You know, being that far away. It was unexpected, of course, with all of us. It wasn't too long until there was a lot of excitement about it, and people were starting to get involved, being drafted and all that sort of thing. It soon had an effect in the community.

Q: Did Auburn have a ration place? A place where you had to go to get ration coupons? Anything of that nature?

A: That was done through the supervisor's office.

Q: What kind of things were rationed?

A: Sugar and flour mostly. I don't think canned goods were. Sugar was the big thing, really.

Q: Were tires hard to get?

A: Oh, yes.

Q: How did it affect you on the farm?

A: Not too much. It would depend on the condition of your equipment at the time it happened. You had to go to the ration board to get permission to buy a tire--for a car or for an implement either. Of course, everyone had to do it, so we didn't think too much about it.

Q: Did the government provide for the farmers . . . you probably had high priority, didn't you?

A: We would have, for certain items, yes.

Q: What about gasoline? Was that hard to get during that time?

A: Yes. It was rationed too. You had gas stamps. Of course, there was a lot of trading and that was possible. If I didn't need all of mine, I could give them to you and you could use them. It may have been some hardship, but everyone lived through it, so it wasn't that severe.

Q: What about help on the farm? Did most of the young guys go to the war and leave you short handed?

A: Yes, but some were exempt for that reason . . . because they were employed on the farms. Many, many of them volunteered and went because they felt it was their duty.

Q: Did the government ask anything special of the farmers . . . such as, to plant more of one crop than another?

A: No. The thing they were most interested in was that you do the best job you could and raise everything you could, including vegetables and the whole bit. There was no special crop they've dwelled on. as being the one needed most.

Q: So did you have a vegetable garden then? Like a victory type garden? Did everyone have a victory type garden?

A: Everyone in the country did. Probably in town too. That's always been the history of the foreigners. They used every inch of ground, their backyards and all to grow vegetables in. And they still do. They

have beautiful gardens . . . more than they do on the farm any more. It's easy to go to the grocery and pick things up.

Q: I think it is the trend, isn't it? The farmer has plenty of work to do, without taking care of a garden, also.

A: There aren't too many big gardens in the country any more. I don't know whether it's too much trouble to take care of, or that it's just so easy now to get anything you want. Everything is available now and it wasn't at that time.

Q: Did you know anyone personally who dealt chiefly in truck farming?

A: No. We don't have the type of soil for that kind of vegetable gardening.

Q: What kind of soil does it take?

A: You have that kind in Auburn, that is good for that. The black silt loam that doesn't pack like this out here, when it gets wet or real dry. It takes a real loose textured soil to grow vegetables in.

Q: Your soil looks very black to me. Is that because of years and years of fertilization?

A: This soil varies so much in this area. Now, you go to the black gumbo soil and it gets just as hard as this clay out here. It wouldn't be good for vegetables, but it will grow good field crops. Then you move on to higher ground like the brown silt loam right over there and it doesn't pack like the black soil or clay does. It's a lot easier to farm.

Q: Back in the olden days, before they went into the technology of testing soils and so forth, what means did you have of testing the soils for your different kinds of products?

A: We could test for lime. It wasn't too hard to do that, but for some of the other chemicals, we would take to the Farm Bureau or to someplace like that which had a laboratory to test it. To test lime you used a litmus paper, to test how much lime was in it . . . not how much was in it, but if there was sufficient lime in it.

Q: It's important that the soil is acid?

A: Non-acid.

Q: What did you do then if the soil was too acid?

A: You bought a few loads of limestone and spread it on the field. It wasn't an easy job then. It was usually sent in on cars and you had to scoop it out of the cars into a wagon. You usually used a flatbed wagon with boards in the bottom that you could turn up to let the lime run out in piles. Then you had to load it again, and put it in a spreader, and spread it with a team, with horses, you know.

Q: You didn't want to do that on a windy day?

A: No, you wouldn't get good coverage if you did, but now with the trucks they have and the equipment, it's no trouble to the farmer. All he has to do is pay for it. It does cost more, of course.

Q: But it's faster? Less time consuming.

A: And you get better coverage too. I don't know of any farmer anywhere, who has a lime spreader anymore. They do have a small one over here at the golf course, but most of that is put on with a truck and spreader.

Q: Do they use liquid or dry?

A: Dry.

Q: I have seen liquid spreaders. What is that? A fertilizer?

A: That's ammonia. Most of the chemicals are put on that way now, not the herbicides and insecticides.

Q: What did you do back in the days before they had herbicides? How did you control the weeds?

A: You raised a lot of weeds, because you didn't have any control, except cultivation. It wasn't easy to do, because if you happened to have weeds in your cornfield and it rained two or three weeks, you had weeds bigger than your corn. There was no way to get them out really. So you had to contend with a lot of weeds . . . and poor crops would be the result of it.

Q: What were the first corn pickers like?

A: The first one we had was a one row and that was about the way they came out. Within two or three years, they came out with a two row. It was a pull type deal. You had a tractor on a picker and a wagon swung out to the side for the elevator to put the corn in, and then in a couple of years, they came out with the mounted picker, which was a picker that fit right over the tractor, and it was two row. You just hooked the wagon behind the tractor and the corn went right back. It was a big improvement over the pull type, but still they weren't too easy to operate.

Q: But before then, you had to pick by hand?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you have to hire extra help during corn picking time?

A: Sure.

Q: Because it all had to be picked at the same time. Is that correct?

A: No. The picking season would have to start--we didn't have the driers then, as we have now, so you let it dry in the fields as much as

you could, but it was all picked in the ear instead of being shelled like it is now. You would start maybe in late October and it might go on into the spring of the year. I've seen it happen many times. Depending on the weather conditions . . . the condition of the fields. It was an all winter's job mostly. If you had any amount of corn.

Q: And you had to be careful the animals didn't get out there before you did?

A: In those days you had fences every place. We had no trouble in that way, especially in the winter. You kept your animals in around the barn, feedlots and so forth. But after the corn was picked, you would turn your animals out into the cornfield to pick up the extra corn or nibble on the stock. Most everyone did turn their livestock into the cornfields, after they had been shucked.

Q: If this was all done into the spring and you're turning your animals out into that area, what did you do for the next planting season? Was the ground all plowed under?

A: Yes, the next spring.

Q: But now I see farmers turn the ground right after they get the corn out.

A: That's right. At that time, every 40 acres had a fence around it, either a log fence, a hedge fence, or a woven wire fence. You could put stock in any of the fields, because you had the fence to contain them. But now there isn't a rod of fence on that 40 acres down there. So, you wouldn't use it for livestock.

Q: I would like to talk a little about hedge fences. I'm a city girl, and don't know a thing about them. Hedge fences are from hedge trees, is that correct?

A: They're from hedge apples. They start from hedge apples.

Q: Why did they choose that particular type of tree?

A: Probably you wouldn't loose as much ground from shade, as you would from any other kind of tree, because it didn't get that tall.

Q: They're bushy, right?

A: Right. And when they set out the hedge, they would put a woven wire in with it and when the hedge grew up, you had a livestock type fence, because they wouldn't go over the hedge. You kept it trimmed, like you would the bushes around your house.

Q: Did they plant them close together?

A: Yes.

Q: Are hedge bushes thorny?

A: Yes, they're thorny, I guess they are like a locust tree.

Q: Now I've read this, but maybe you've never practiced this. Where they planted hedge trees, and then cut them so they would all fall the same direction and form a fence. Have you ever heard of that?

A: Many times a gap would develop in the fence and you were trimming the hedge or cutting it, you would slice a hedge and push it over to follow the hedge to close up the gap.

Q: There aren't many farmers still using that type of fence, are there?

A: No. McNaughts the only one I know of around here, and they have miles of it.

Q: Have you ever tried pulling those out?

A: Oh, yes.

Q: They're tough?

A: You're right, they're tough. They use to pull them with a stump puller. Right back of your house was all pulled with a stump puller at one time. They had a drum with a big cable on it; they had two horses hooked on it. They would throw a clamp around a bunch of hedge and just start winding the cable around the drum and it would come out eventually. But, that was hard work. You had to clean it all up by hand and no chainsaws. You used an axe and a cross-cut.

Q: Were the fruits of the hedge tree ever good for anything?

A: Not to my knowledge.

Q: The animals didn't eat them?

A: No.

Q: Let's go back a little. We started to talk about insecticide and also what you did about insects way back when.

A: We seem to have a lot more different kinds of insects these days than we did then. The thing that bothered us most as I remember, would be the chinch bug. They would eat up a cornfield, if you didn't do something about it. When the bugs came in on one side of the field, we would plow furrow down the edge of the field--the bugs wintered in the hedge rows--and put tar in it. Either that or we'd drag a log up and down with one horse up and down the trench and keep it real dusty, and they couldn't climb out of the trench. About every 20 or 30 feet you would have a posthole--the bugs would fall in the postholes and you would pour some coal oil in there and set it afire. That was the only method you had to get rid of them.

Q: What year did insecticides come out for farm usage?

A: In the forties, I'd say.

Q: Right after the war?

A: Some before and some after the war.

Q: Was DDT one of the first things used?

A: We had DDT in the early forties, in the dairy barns and places like that to kill flies. It wasn't too many years until the old fly got so tough he could just eat it and it didn't do any good.

Q: Then what did you do to get rid of flies? Did you start screening any areas?

A: No. I guess one of the first things developed was an electrical device that you would hang up in the barn and a fly would hit it and it would kill it like. (snaps fingers) And then they would use fly strips and different things like that--to hang up. But, they got to where DDT didn't affect them too much. I suppose their bodies built up so that it wasn't effective.

Q: About what year did you start innoculating your animals?

A: I think that's always been. I wouldn't say always, but for hog cholera back as far as I can remember in this area. That was the main thing you did vaccinate for.

Q: So you did have professional veterinarians back in those days.

A: Oh yes, definitely.

Q: Who was the veterinarian in this area?

A: Doc Laird was the first one that I remember in Auburn. Perc could tell you all about him. He was involved in just about everything. Every small town had a veterinarian at that time. Right now I think you'd have to go to Springfield or Waverly to get a veterinarian. There was one in Girard, Doc Hammond, but I don't think he's there any more. Every small town had one at that time.

Q: It must have kept them pretty busy.

A: Well yes. In the early days when they moved around in horse and buggies, it was pretty slow, but there wasn't as much livestock then as there was a few years later. But right now a vet would starve to death in this area, because there's not enough livestock. They do more work with pets than anything else. You take a situation like Dowsons over here, I think they do their own veterinarian work.

Q: They can get their own vaccination serum?

A: Yes. That's something that can be done very easily by the farmer himself.

Q: Have they always had an FFA in this area, Bud, or was that something that developed?

A: They didn't have it when I was at school. They had an Ag Department at the school, but FFA wasn't connected with it. Of course, when Jim was in school, they had it then.

Q: What kinds of things does the FFA do? Do they actually make studies of different kinds of things on a farm?

A: Well, they study livestock and soil, and how to improve it. They have projects of their own--like a few acres of ground of their own that they put in and they keep track of every penny that's spent on it and take the harvest and see if it comes out as a profit or loss.

Q: Sort of a little venture in business farming?

A: Yes.

Q: And I suppose they show some of their projects at fairs?

A: That and animals too. They have animal projects. Our kids, the girls, had sheep, lambs, course they were easy to handle, you know. Jim had calves, cows. Yes, they were suppose to show their projects at the fair.

Q: And it was judged by people who had a lot of experience?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you belong to any farm organizations? Such as the Farm Bureau?

A: I joined the Farm Bureau when it was organized. I don't remember the date.

Q: About how old were you then?

A: I was just out of school. It would have been in the early twenties.

Q: What were some of the first things you did?

A: People weren't as close together then because of transportation--getting back and forth. You would go to the Farm Bureau with problems, such as insects, crops or livestock and they would come down and look at it and try to tell you what to do to improve it.

Q: In other words, the Farm Bureau was a panel of experts? If you were a member, you were entitled to their services.

A: That's right. The head of the Farm Bureau was called the farm advisor and he had another man under him. They were university people graduated

from the Ag Department. The University of Illinois or some other college. They were suppose to have expert knowledge on whatever farm problems might come along. You had access to that by belonging to the Farm Bureau.

Q: Your dues, in other words, paid their salaries?

A: Yes, and they got money too, from the state, for the Farm Bureau and from the extension service at the University of Illinois.

Q: Did every town have a Farm Bureau organization?

A: It would only be for local people. Every county had a farm advisor. Each township had a Farm Bureau group. Later, perhaps due to small attendance, townships would go together and have just one meeting.

A: And you probably had state conventions and national?

A: Oh, yes. Those were usually in Chicago at the stockyards in December. I think the national is at Kansas City--has been through the years.

Q: That's a good way to meet other people who have the same problems you do and to find out what's new in the farm machinery line?

A: Well, it covers the whole scope of farming. It's gotten very political though. I don't think that's too good myself, but that's the way things are, so you accept it.

Q: Did you ever belong to the Rural Electric Association? It hasn't been too many years that the rural people have had electricity. Were you in on that at all?

A: I definitely was. I was one of the first to sign up down this road. I was very interested in it, because we were moving from down south, one quarter of a mile to this place. We wanted electricity, if we could get it, so . . . and we did, by the time we moved there in 1936. They had people going around to take applications and when they had enough to justify the loan to get the thing started, it started. The first office was in Divernon. A little store building there. From that, it grew to the big new building out here. I think we have another building up by the Lampliter. That might be a state building up there. Our local REA, of course, is out here now.

Q: How does that work exactly? Did you buy stock in it?

A: No. It's a corporation. Being a member, you are a part of the corporation.

Q: That must have been a wonderful thing to suddenly have electricity?

A: It took us out of the darkness really. It was a great thing.

Q: So, the first thing you did was to put lights into your home and into your barn?

A: Yes. It was good for the whole country really. People started buying refrigerators and electric irons and all that sort of thing. They all had to be manufactured, of course, because up to that time, you had no use for them. It created a real great market for that kind of merchandise.

Q: It made life easier for the lady of the house too?

A: Sure. Just imagine taking your lights off. You know what it's like. You had them off before.

Q: Yes, I did, ten days!

A: It's no fun.

Q: We could talk a little about that terrible ice storm we had here. That was just like "The Little House on the Prairie," wasn't it?

A: Let's not talk about that. Yes, that was history.

Q: After having all these luxuries it was very difficult to do without again.

A: Well, you just got used to what you had and accepted it and didn't think anything about it, because it was there for you.

Q: I think in our neighborhood it brought people closer together. We all shared what food we had. Everything defrosted in the freezer. So we had to eat it, and we invited all the neighbors. Fortunately we had heat, because we have gas. Many of our neighbors have all electric heat.

A: We have gas heat, and we have a counter-flow furnace, and that furnace would come on without electricity. It would run for two or three minutes. It wouldn't work off of that thing there, because that runs on electricity. It would automatically come on and run three minutes or four minutes. In the meantime, we had the fireplace. We were comfortable all the time really.

Q: How about cooking? Did you happen to have a gas stove too?

A: No, we have an electric stove, but we had a gas grill out in the garage. I just got a big tank of fuel from the hardware store and it lasted all the time. We weren't short of anything to cook on at all.

Q: A lot of people had to have generators right away.

A: Jim did--mostly to keep his deep freeze. It would keep the lights and the deep freeze. By running it a certain length of time each day, it would keep things from thawing out. Then he would bring it here and run our deep freeze and two or three other places. It was a small thing. It wasn't hard to handle.

Q: A lot of people had trouble with water seepage during that time also, and they had no electric pumps to get it out with. They had to use gas operated pumps. If you've never been through it, you can't realize how terrible it can be.

A. No. And being that late in the season, it's something you would never expect.

Q: It happened just before Easter, didn't it?

A: On Friday, before Easter on Sunday the 26th.

Q: It was in April?

A: The 26th.

Q: After a miserable winter, that was the final blow, wasn't it?

A: Yes, it was.

Q: That was 1979 or 1978, which was it?

A: Wasn't it earlier than that? Hasn't it been three years?

Q: Has it been three years? 1977 maybe?

A: I wouldn't want to be nailed down on that, but it seems to me it's been three years.

Q: Bud, maybe you could tell me a little bit about government subsidizing? As I explained, I was a city girl, and I don't understand all about that.

A: Subsidizing of what?

Q: Well, all I can remember is the farmers were asked to either plant or not to plant certain crops. How was that considered? Were you told in anyway what to plant and what not to plant?

A: In the early thirties, we were asked to reduce corn acreage and wheat acreage.

Q: And why was that? This is what I don't understand.

A: Shirley, that was at the time following the depression, and we were raising more food than there was a market for.

Q: But people were starving at this time?

A: That's true. And even in Auburn, I can remember two soup kitchens that were there all the time. If you were downtown, you could stop at the soup kitchen and get free bean soup.

Q: Was that paid for by the government?

A: Yes. That was subsidized. There was one where Rua's Store is, and another one where Narmont's Market used to be. It kept a lot of people from going hungry. Even though the things we had to sell were cheap, there still wasn't any money to buy them. The banks were closed, and everything just stood still for a year, at least.

Q: So why did they think if you planted less of what you had, when people were starving, that would make things better?

A: At that time, it would have been a case of distribution. I suppose for example, maybe I have a load of corn I don't need. How are you going to eat it? It had to get some place and get manufactured into something, and get back to you before you can use it. I've taken a big load of corn, 50 to 60 bushels of corn on the wagon to Virden Mine to get one ton of coal. That's all you would get.

Q: You traded directly, did you?

A: No. You would sell the load of corn to the elevator, which would bring maybe $4 and that's what a ton of coal cost. I would go right on by the mine on my way home and take home a ton of coal. The subsidy that you talk about, I think what you are asking is, did they pay the farmers to take this land out of production, is that what you're asking? Yes, there was a subsidy payment, based on yield per acre, and however much you were willing to take out for production.

Q: Well, how did you personally feel about that? Is that better for the farmers? It's less work and if you're getting paid for not doing something, it sounds like a good deal.

A: If it was an emergency thing, I wouldn't object to it, today or tomorrow or in the past . . . but as a continual ongoing thing, I don't think it is good. Everything else that you can think of, the plane industry, the ship industry, all of those things are subsidized by the federal government. The fact that we were growing food, which is what people live on, it wasn't too attractive. There was a lot of resentment to it, but they could subsidize some large company a million dollars, and there wasn't too much thought about it, because there wasn't any food involved in it.

Q: Like the Chrysler Corporation? But I think people did get a little upset about that.

A: Well, they did, but it didn't affect anything. They did it, and I think people finally just accpeted it, as that's the way it's going to be. I'm not sure, but the government only guaranteed that loan, didn't they? They didn't give them the money?

Q: I think there was something about it, yes.

A: And if they made money, there was a possibility they would pay it back. If it is a success, that really isn't too bad. If the taxpayers don't have to shoulder all that loss. And when you talk about the money the government has to give away, they only have the money we give them through taxation.

Q: Let's go back, just a little bit. Tell me what the first tractor was like. The first gas-driven or diesel-driven tractor.

A: The first tractor I have any remembrance of was in Christian County. They had an oil-burning tractor. It was a huge piece of equipment that pulled nine bottoms.

Q: What's a bottom?

A: A plow. The tractor was an oil burner, a Case.

Q: That's the name of the tractor, a Case?

A: Yes. It was so big and hard to handle that they didn't plow fields like we plow now, up and down. They would start in the middle of the field and go around and around until they got to the outside edges and then take a four horse team and a plow and plow out the corners. You couldn't manipulate it, it was such a huge thing. That was the first tractor of any size I remember anything about. They used it for several years and then junked it, because other tractors were coming along then. The newer ones were more versatile and easier to handle, but smaller. They didn't plow as big a strip of ground, but they were smaller and faster, so you could get along with the smaller one a lot better and do a lot of things with it. All you could do with the oil-burner is plow.

End of Side Two, Tape Two

Q: Bud, we were just talking about the three-wheeled tractor.

A: Well, the first three-wheeled tractor that came out was for doing the things that a four-wheeled would do plow cultivating. You know it had a wheel that would go down between rows instead of running on the rows. It came out through demand, really, for something like that. Until that time you didn't have a tractor-cultivator to cultivate with--to cultivate corn or beans, whatever. You had to do it with a team. But when they came out with a three-wheeled tractor then, your front wheel would run down the middle of the row and you could cultivate two rows at a time and then later four and then six and a lot of them got twelve now. Jim's got a twelve-row cultivator. We went from one to twelve.

Q: But it still has the one wheel on the front, is that correct?

A: No.

Q: How does that work?

A: The rows are gauged different now, to what they were then. At that time, everybody planted on 40 inch rows. That's what your planter was set up for and your equipment. But I would say 90 percent or maybe more than that of the corn is planted on 30 inch rows now. And unless your back wheel or your front wheel has the different gauge in the width of the row it lets your wheels still come in the middle of the row so you can cultivate without a three-row tractor now. In fact, I don't know of a three-row tractor that is being used in this township, any place. I didn't say that there aren't some, but I just don't know of any. They all use four-row tractors now.

Q: Well, Bud, advance me a little bit along as the tractor improved. Tell me what improvements that you've seen up to date.

A: Well, I think--you mean how they were changed and why they were changed?

Q: Yes.

A: Well, like I say, they went from the old plow tractor to the versatile tractor that would cultivate and plow both and could be used for more different things. And there was a lot of tractors coming on the market all the time. Different machinery companies, you know, were building new tractors and different designs and all that. Of course, the teams of horses--they just faded out of the picture and it became just a tractor farming industry, that's all, and it's still that way. Seems to be getting--the equipment seems to get bigger every year. I don't know, they've got some huge tractors now, too. You've probably seen them on the road. They would make the tractors that we had to start with--well, there'd be enough equipment in one of them to build two tractors, like we had in the old days. You know, they're just that large and they do a lot more work and do it better. They really do.

Q: Okay. So you buy what I would call a basic tractor, then you had to buy parts for cultivating and parts for plowing and parts for insecticides?

A: With a tractor all you get is a tractor.

Q: You'll get the tractor, but the extra is extra?

A: All accessories are just like what you'd put on your car. You know, an air-conditioner or whatever. Everything is a separate entity in itself. In different areas where they raise different kids of crops, of course, they have a demand for implements that would take care of that area, whatever it is. But here we use--everybody uses about the same, because we raise the same kind of crops.

Q: Is every farmer expected to purchase their own equipment? Or can you rent or can you lease it or how can you do this? When it's time to get into the fields everybody wants in at the same time.

A: That's the problem with leasing, unless you have a lease company that caters to that kind of work. Now there was an ad in the, I believe it was in the Journal yesterday, of where at Berry, Illinois--that's on Route 29 between Rochester and Taylorville--there was a machinery dealer there that would lease equipment and a tractor, a Steiger tractor, I think. It leased at $1400, no $14,000 a year. Just to lease it. And I suppose that a tractor would, I am guessing now, I don't know, I've never priced one of them, but I would say around $60, $70, maybe $80,000, up that high on big tractors. But, now, Berle Beatty would--there's been times when he would lease out combines, you know, or he'd have a lot of trade-ins and some in good shape and if you'd wanted to lease one he'd lease it to you by the acre.

Q: It can be a real problem for a farmer, if you have a breakdown during the time that you need it.

A: It's good to be able to pick up a tractor or a combine in there and you can do it. He's good that way. If you got a problem that's going to take a week's time during harvest time, when you really need to be in the field, you can lease equipment off of him. Of course, you pay for it, but you expect to, because it's worth something to go ahead with whatever operation you're in. It's never gotten to be a common practice in this area to lease equipment. I understand that in the East, most of the farm equipment is owned by leases and that the farmers don't fool with it. They just lease it for the time that they need it and take it back and they figure that's a better deal than owning it.

Q: Do they have to buy some sort of maintenance contract do you suppose?

A: I really don't know how they would do that. I would suppose that they would. Now, I think with Berle, if you had--this would be off the record because I'm not sure--I think that Berle would, if the equipment broke down through no fault of your own, would accept the responsibility. I believe he would.

Q: Well, perhaps his company also feels that same way?

A: Well, he wouldn't normally lease new quipment, I don't think. I think it would be equipment he would own himself. If you go by there, you see all kinds of equipment on the lot and a lot of it is good equipment. It's used but it's still good and, you know, there's a lot of service in it and that kind he would lease out I'm sure.

Q: So, in other words, if you have a pretty good piece of equipment and you see something you like better you might get a trade-in. You can trade what you have?

A: Yes. That's the way it works. Because you trade one in doesn't mean that it's worn out or no good or anything--just that you want something a little better maybe.

Q: Not too many years ago Dickey-John developed some sort of counter for planting. Can you describe to me the principle behind that?

A: Not the principle. That's a technical thing that only an electronic engineer could tell you about, but they do work, I'll say that.

Q: They do work?

A: Oh yes, definitely.

Q: It will plant so many seed in so much area. Is that correct?

A: What it does, it gives you--you got a box in your tractor right in front of you--it hangs up in the ceiling. It has these lights on it, like would be on that scanner over there. The real advantage of it is, that if one row would stop planting that light would quit flashing so you

know right away you've got a problem with your planter. Always before if something went wrong with the planter back there, you'd just go on, you know, and maybe you wouldn't notice it for two or three rounds or something like that. Then you'd have some missing rows. But this tells you directly, right now, if your planter stops dropping corn or beans, either one for that matter.

Q: So, in other words, how long does it take for a seed to germinate and to sprout up to about an inch or two? Corn?

A: There's a lot of things that control that, Shirley. If you've got the moisture and you've got the right ground temperature possibly five to ten days and you would see some sign of the corn coming through.

Q: So, if you don't have one of these electronic devices that counts for you or lets you know that you are not planting, you farmers would have to wait that many days to find out if they've missed some rows?

A: Yes.

Q: And they can get back in there again and replant those rows?

A: Well, there too can be a problem, because the big equipment you have now and the many rows you plant at one time--you take a twelve-row planter for example--and go out and try to plant one missing row you can see where the problem would be.

Q: Yes. It wouldn't be worth it to try it?

A. Depending on if you could do it at the right time or not. There is a way that you could plant two rows. You could drop two rows down there and plant two rows. You could plant the missing row and replant the one that's already there and wouldn't be too far off. But it's just better to know while your planting.

Q: So, most of the farmers then have bought these?

A: I don't know of anyone who doesn't have one.

Q: Are they standard equipment on a tractor any more?

A: No, I don't think so.

Q: Still optional?

A: I don't believe International or John Deere either one brings their equipment out equipped with one. Now if they do, it's something that's happened in the last two years. They have them available, but they would be a separate item. They're a little bit expensive; but considering what they do, I don't think they're expensive at all.

Q: So you're out planting twelve rows of corn seed. Are you doing anything else at that same time? Do you have fertilizer that's going on at the same time the corn is going in or is this completely a separate process?

A: Normally a farmer doesn't put on fertilizer at planting time. The only thing they would use, and most of them do, is insecticide for corn root boar and worms-things that affect the roots of the corn. That'll be put on at the time of planting. You have extra boxes on the back of your planter to put the insecticide in.

Q: Bud, I've seen planes fly over fields. Now are they dispensing insecticide or what is that they're doing, when they're dusting the crops?

A: They can give you most any kind of service you want.

Q: Oh, is that right?

A: Oh, yes.

Q: It's just more expensive than getting out there and doing it yourself?

A: I think so, and depending on the wind, you know. I think you get better coverage--now it's my thinking, maybe others think differently--but I think you get better coverage on the ground than you do from up in the air. But if your crop is up and you can't get to it any other way, you can definitely use a plane to kill weeds, or to spray for different insects like grasshoppers or things like that, that would affect the corn.

Q: Bud, I know that many farmers still use teenage kids to go out and get corn out of beans. That's a big thing. Is that the cheapest way of handling that problem?

A: Well, up until just recently that's been the only way to handle it. They have a deal now--it's a plastic pipe that you put on the front of your tractor and it has loops of rope on it, it's like wick--and you put a certain chemical in this tube. It's a four-inch plastic tube is what it is--holds I'd say maybe five, maybe ten gallons, I don't know. But anyway, this rope or--that's what it is, a type of rope and it's in loops across the front of that--and you drive through the fields and [whenever it] touches a blade of corn, it will kill the stalk. That's only been developed a few years. The thing about it is the corn has to be taller than the beans to work right--to work at all--because if it touches the bean plant it kills it too. Usually volunteer corn that comes up will out grow the beans, you know. You can see it sticking up above the beans. So it works pretty good. It's pretty effective.

Q: What else grows there in the bean field, that has to come out?

A: Every kind of a weed you can think about. The worst thing is foxtail, grass, you know.

Q: Does this same method kill that?

A: They have different chemicals for that. Actually you put on a chemical at planting time that's supposed to do that, but to do it we have to have certain weather conditions, certain rainfall, or something, you know. And if you don't get it, it isn't as effective as it should be. It'll

control it to an extent, but to get good coverage on grass, it's the hardest thing in the world to do. It just about wins every time.

Q: Bud, what's the worst farming year you can remember cropwise?

A: It wasn't too good this year, but we've had lots worse, I'm sure. The worst one that I really remember--have reason to remember--would have been in 1931, I believe. It was the year that we had dry weather, like we had this year, and we had chinch bugs and they ate the corn up. How I can remember it so well, Phyllis was born that winter and I was shucking corn the day they took Helen to the hospital. I was really glad that the time had come because to get out of that corn field--because it was flat on the ground--and it had rained on it, and it had frozen, and it was a total mess. It wasn't worth going through, really. I think that's about the worst year--one of the worst years--1954 was another real bad year. Well, there was a lot of corn that wasn't harvested that year.

Q: Mainly, because there just wasn't the water? We just didn't get the rain?

A: That's right--dry weather and insects. At that time we weren't too far along with the spraying and all that. Those were two real bad years and we've had others, I am sure, maybe about as bad. But some years there's something that happens that you remember that year in particular.

Q: Were there any real bad storms that just really tore into your crops?

A: I don't think we've had a much worse storm than we had that Saturday night over here as far as damaging crops are concerned.

Q: That came up so suddenly. It was just like a tornado, I guess.

A: It almost was--just close to it. In different years we've had hail damage but normally that doesn't affect a whole large area. It will be in strips across the country. We've had fields that have had hail damage but we never had corn go down like it did this year from that storm.

Q: Your equipment isn't set so that it will pick up any corn that's laying on its side, I guess?

A Well, yes, if it's laying on the side you can get a good portion of it, but if it's laying on the row, if it blows over that way, there's no way to pick it up. You can't save it. They have different gadgets to put on the header of your combine that helps, but they're not a total success. You lose a lot of corn regardless of how you go about it.

Q: Do farmers have any kind of insurance against hail and storms?

A: Yes. You can get it. It's available.

Q: Is it terribly expensive?

A: Yes. It is. I think over a period of ten years probably, what you would put into premiums would pay for your loss. Because over ten years

you wouldn't have hail over once, maybe twice. See it isn't something that just happens every year. If it did, then you would want insurance all the time. Some still have it on corn and beans both, but more people have hail on beans than they do on corn, because you get more damage--lots more damage.

Q: The insurance companies don't squabble, do they, about how much you've lost and how much it's worth and all that?

A: Sure. You'd better believe it. Just like if you had a house fire. They don't just give you the whole thing without a lot of investigating fields and counting the number of beans that's dropped out or whatever, and they'll determine how much the bushel per acre loss is. They don't give anything away. I guarantee you that. I guess they couldn't stay in business if they did probably.

Q: Bud, you used to have animals on your farm. How many cows did you have to milk in the mornings?

A: I never milked a lot of cows. We shipped milk. A truck would pick it up at the door. About eight or ten cows would be the most I'd ever milk.

Q: You had to milk them twice a day?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you have one bull or did you have to use the neighbor's bull?

A: No, I always had a bull.

Q: How many calves did you depend on each year?

A: Besides the dairy cows, I had stock cows. At one time I had 40 head of black angus. They were on this golf course over here all the time. That's where I kept them. Of course, they'd have calves in the spring of the year and then usually I'd keep the calves and feed them during the winter and maybe the next summer, and sell them the next fall. Stock cows were really good to feed on an area like this, because there was plenty of grass. That's where you keep them during the summertime.

Q: In other words, how old would a stock cow be when you sold it?

A: Oh, it's depend on the condition of the cow. If it was a good brood cow, ten years.

Q: Does that affect the tenderness of their meat? If they're old?

A: I'm sure it would. Normally you'd sell a stock cow. She wouldn't be fed like you'd feed calves or steers that you were fattening for market. You'd get your better meat from the ones that was corn fed and whatever you fed them to make them fat. A dairy cow or a stock cow either, is normally pretty thin. They've had a calf hanging on them all summer and if you want to sell them that fall--if you were trying to make good meat

which you wouldn't do--you'd just send it to market and they'd--I don't know whether they'd make hamburger out of it or weiners or something. I don't know.

Q: Did you ever have any butchering done right on your farm? Can you tell me anything about that?

A: Just the neighborhood butchering would be all and that was a common practice.

Q: Really? Tell me about it.

A: Usually early in the fall about the time you were about ready to start shucking corn, you might butcher one hog so that you'd have fresh meat when you had hired men. And you'd have fresh meat during shucking season and then later on--late December or January or maybe up into February, you'd do your butchering for the year. It was a neighborhood thing.

Q: You helped each other, in other words?

A: Yes. There wasn't anything unique about it. It was just the fact that it was common practice.

Q: But you went from one farm to another to help in the butchering?

A: Yes.

Q: Because you had to do it quickly? Is that the idea behind it?

A: No. You just needed help.

Q: You needed help?

A: Yes. Depending on the size of the family or how many hired men you had to feed and that sort of thing, would tell you how many hogs you were going to butcher. It would be from maybe four, six, eight. The most I ever knew--a neighbor that we had over here, had a large family, and he butchered twelve at one time. That's the most I ever had anything to do with. That's a lot of work.

Q: You talked about fresh meat for the hired hands. Did you mean that the meat could be eaten just almost as soon as it was butchered?

A: Oh, sure.

Q: You didn't smoke it or salt cure it or anything of that nature?

A: You could have it either way. If the weather was warm you would have to salt it, at least the hams and the shoulders and that sort of thing. Tenderloin and ribs and the different cuts that could be served right away, you didn't have to do that. But if you had a large amount like you were butchering a number of hogs, they would grind the sausage and they'd fry it down. They'd fry it and put it in stone jars to cover the grease

and they'd do ribs the same way and then you could eat them the next summer by just taking them out of the containers.

Q: Now what kind of salt was used? Just regular table salt? Sodium chloride?

A: No. It was a meat salt. It's the same salt--it wouldn't be table salt because it wouldn't be that fine, it would be coarser salt than table salt--like you'd throw on the sidewalk to melt ice.

Q: Would it be the same kind of salt that was used in making ice cream?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you rub it on the skin or just sort of lay your meat in a bit of it? How did you go about this?

A: You usually put it in a box. If you weren't going to smoke it, it was taken care of in a wooden box. You'd put down a layer of salt, then meat, then you'd rub the salt in both sides of the meat.

Q: Did you have gloves?

A: No.

Q: Wouldn't that be a little hard on your own skin?

A: No. I don't think it would unless it would melt. As long as it was dry salt it didn't bother. But that's the way it was handled. Of course, if you was going to smoke it, you'd just rub the salt on and they had a sugar cure salt on the market. I don't know how far back it went. But it would give it a different flavor than if you just used the plain salt.

Q: Not as salty?

A: Your meat wouldn't be salty. Now I know that in the South--in fact, we bought a ham down there one time when we were down there on vacation--you know, you've seen them hanging along the road down there advertising--and some of those things are so darned salty you can't eat them. Now I don't know how they manage that unless they put the salt on there and it melts some way or other and goes into the meat but if you handle it right at butchering time the meat won't be salty. Just scrape the salt off when you get ready to take the ham or shoulder out of the box and it's all right.

Q: Did you have a regular smokehouse on your farm?

A: All farms did.

Q: All farms had smokehouses? Are there any left anywhere?

A: No.

Q: What did they look like? Were they just a small . . .

A: Just a normal shed. Just like an outhouse really only larger and had two by fours across to hang your meat on. You put a hook in the ham or shoulder or whatever you were going to hang up and just hang it up in there and put smoke underneath it.

Q: Right on the ground? You built a fire on the ground for the smoke?

A: No. You had a container. Either an old kettle or something like that. You confined your fire to either. It would put smoke instead of flame.

Q: You had to be in there and fan it?

A: What?

Q: Someone had to stand in there and fan it?

A: Oh, no. You'd leave it on overnight and however long you wanted to smoke it. When you thought it was all right why then you'd take it out.

Q: Did they require a special kind of wood like hickory?

A: We used hickory. They was the best really. It burned slow and made a lot of smoke and then put a little flavor to the meat too. It was just like a picnic kind of a deal, when butchering time came along, because the farmers came in early in the morning and helped build the fires and carry the water. It took a lot of water to butcher. You had to scald the hogs you know and you had to keep hot water ready to refill the barrel and then later on, the neighbor women would come in and they'd get to cooking, you know, and they'd have a big dinner. Just kind of like a picnic.

Q: Did you ever eat pickled pigs feet?

A: Oh, yes. I don't know anything about how they were prepared, but I've eaten them. They're not bad.

Q: What other delicacies can you get from hogs that an ordinary person may not know about?

A: Oh, I don't know.

Q: Did anybody in your family make kielbasa?

A: No. All we would do--and any of the neighbors in our neighborhood--would be, to make head cheese.

Q: How do you do that? It's not really cheese, is it?

A: No, but they call it that. It sets up like cheese. For a recipe for it I don't know. I know they'd throw parts of the head and the feet and the ears and all that in the kettle and boil it and cook it you know. Then they'd take it out and slice it. How they treated it I'm not sure.

Q: Are you talking about when you say they'd take it out, you eat the broth part or you eat the meaty part?

A: No. Just like you'd buy--you can buy it at the store today, head cheese. You can see the different strips of the different kinds of meat in it--in a slice of it. Of course, on the farm it isn't a practice any more. About I'd say the first quarter of this century most of the butchering was done on the farm. And then the locker plants came along and there was a few--well, commercial butchers really. Well, you wouldn't know I don't think, but Neuman out there, you know were Del lives, his dad used to butcher hogs there. I expect he'd butcher maybe a hundred or more a year. It'd be custom butchering, you know. If you wanted to butcher one hog or a half a dozen, you'd take them in there and leave it and when you picked it up, you'd have the lard and the sausage and the whole bit done.

Q: Already processed. Did he also make head cheese to sell?

A: No. I don't think he did that at all.

Q: But you say you can buy it somewhere?

A: Yes. You can get it at the IGA store. It's tasty. I like it. I always did like it. Other than the regular meat the brains is the only thing I can think of and usually on butchering day you'd have--if you got enough work done--you might have brains and scrambled eggs for dinner. You know, mixed up; and that's good.

Q: It is good?

A: It sounds terrible.

Q: It sounds terrible.

A: Yes, it does, but it's good and you can buy brains at a meat shop too.

Q: Did you eat more hogs than you did beef? Was that a practice?

A: In my lifetime we never butchered a beef on our farm. Never did. During the early years you couldn't preserve beef like you could pork.

Q: It would just get too salty? You just couldn't do it the same way?

A: Most of the meat of that type was probably dried in some way and I don't know how. Well, you know what jerky is?

Q: Yes.

A: Well, that's the way beef was dried.

Q: You can buy that in the store. I've seen that. That's what cowboys used to use, wasn't it?

A: Sure. They'd just carry it in their saddlebag. It doesn't sound very appetizing to me, but you'd survive on it, I guess.

Q: Well, Bud, let's go back a little bit to milking cows. I am curious. Did your daughters ever milk a cow?

A: Never.

Q: They never did?

A: Jim never milked a cow. Never milked a cow. Never pulled a . . . (laughs)

Q: Did you have cows when the electric milking machines came out?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you buy an electric milking machine as soon as you had electricity?

A: No, because what I was milking didn't justify it.

Q: Oh, I see. That was an expensive operation?

A: Well, that and you needed to milk a lot more cows than I was milking.

Q: About how long did it take to milk ten cows?

A: About an hour--something like that.

Q: How many gallons could you expect if it was a good yield?

A: Maybe you'd get a can and a half, about fifteen gallon or two cans, about twenty gallon would be pretty good. You'd put your night's milk--like if you'd milk tonight, you'd put it in a cooler and the cooler was nothing more than well water pumped out--you had a sump to set your can in and you pumped the cold water out. Then the next morning the truck would usually come by eight o'clock and pick that milk up and it would get into Springfield before it had a chance to sour or anything like that, you know. Then your morning milk you'd do the same process but it'd stay overnight. When they used to take it over to the Interurban to ship it, you cooled it and set it on a platform over there--the platforms were built to where the train came along, they could just stand in the door and reach out and get the cans. It was built right close to the track.

Q: There was a set schedule so that it wouldn't sit out in the sun for a long time?

A: Not unless the train was late or something. You very seldom had any sour milk.

Q: Did you make any buttermilk or your own butter or anything?

A: My mother made butter, but we didn't. You'd have to separate your milk and get the cream to do that. If you were shipping milk, you just shipped the whole milk.

Q: Did you ever save any of the cream for ice cream in the winter?

A: Oh sure. You'd go out and dip it off the can. It might make it test a little less at the dairy, but if you wanted cream you went and got it. It was available.

Q: You probably had more ice cream in the winter then?

A: I don't think so, Shirley. We could get ice and freeze ice cream during most of my memory in this part of the country. In fact, we had ice delivered to the house before we got electricity. The truck would go through the country delivering ice.

Q: There was an ice plant here in Auburn?

A: No. It was out of Springfield. It was shipped out. Then there'd be an ice house, like there was one in Virden and there was one in Auburn out there where Deheves sits--it's all torn down now. Out there where the shopping center is now. There was an ice house there and the ice would be shipped down and they stored it in the ice house built for that purpose. The partition was lined with sawdust and they'd cover the ice with sawdust and it would last pretty good. It didn't melt. It worked pretty good.

Q: Did they dig down into the earth and set the ice down in there or . . .

A: No. Both the ice houses of these two that I know about, they were up about three foot up off the ground. I don't know whether it was for ventilation or why that would be but they were up off the ground.

Q: Did they have daily delivery?

A: In the country?

Q: Yes.

A: No. Once a week.

Q: Oh, my. How much ice did you have to buy then to . . . and how'd you get a place big enough to store it?

A: Your ice boxes--they weren't refrigerated, they were ice boxes--they'd hold 100 pounds, a 100 pound chuck of ice, and it would just about last a week.

Q: Did you devise some system of piping that water out that would melt and drip?

A: No. You just had a container underneath and you had to keep it empty.

Q: You had to remember to empty it?

A: Oh yes. It would be on the floor and you'd be reminded of it. But before we made manufactured ice, a lot of ice was cut, sawed, and taken to the ice house and stored that way, and I know there was a lot of it done around Auburn.

Q: From the water, ponds, and so forth. They'd just cut it out?

A: Yes. They had a regular ice saw. They just cut it out in chunks and fished it out and take it and store it. Howard [Herron] could tell you all about that. He probably been in on some of that.

Q: When I was a little girl, we used to get milk delivered to our porch in bottles that had narrow necks and the cream in the wintertime would pop the lid up and it would freeze and expand and we just thought that was delightful--having ice cream on the top of the milk.

A: That was the best part of the milk. You had the cream on top.

Q: What I want to know is what it was like when it was extremely cold out and you had to go out and milk those cows? Like zero weather.

A: It was just a chore that you had to do and you really didn't think too much about it.

Q: You just dressed for the occasion?

A: That's right. It got as cold then as it does now and you'd do whatever you had to do. Maybe you didn't like it, but no one ever froze to death.

Q: What about the cattle? Was there any protection for them in the really bad storms? The ice storms . . .

A: Well, you didn't keep them confined if that's what you mean like day and night. All they needed was really a shelter or a windbreak, and most farmers had that provided for their stock. The milk cows you'd leave in at night and let them out in an area to exercise in the daytime. You didn't have to keep them in, no.

Q: A windbreak would be built so that it would protect them from the north and the west?

A That's right. A shelter like that would be open on two sides like on the south and east or something like that but the windbreak would be from the northwest and the shelter would go out that way too. In those days you had straw stacks. You thrashed. You didn't scatter your straw on the fields like you do now and you had plenty of straw to bed them and all that. They didn't get any colder than we did fooling with them, I guarantee you.

Q: You said you didn't scatter the straw like you do now. Why do you scatter straw now? I don't quite understand that. Don't you raise that for a purpose or not?

A: Well, not really. Because it is a useful thing to have, of course, if you've got livestock. If you don't have any stock you don't have any use for it. Now Harmon over here will buy all the straw he can find during the straw season, but he has a use for it--just a tremendous amount of it. The reason you scatter it is because your machine is built for that purpose. Now, the old stationary thrashing machines you just sat in one place and you thrashed 40 acres or whatever in that one spot. You had a blower on the back end of the separator and it just blew it out and made a stack of it--a huge straw stack. Then you'd go in there in the wintertime and get straw whenever you'd need it or if you had it in a field where you had livestock why they could winter around it too. You don't see any straw stacks around here any more.

Q: It must depend on what kind of baler that they have. I've seen bales of hay that were square, rectangular. Then I've seen them stacked up in stacks, and I've seen them in rolls. Is it just a matter of what kind of baler you have or is there some reason for those different shapes and sizes?

A: The rolled high bale is the most recent type of baler. Up until not too many years ago, we had a square baler--the oblong bales. And you could stack them outside or you could put them in a barn either one, but the rolled bales--a lot of farmers that use them they just leave those bales out in the field and let the cattle run to them and they don't spoil. By being wrapped like that water doesn't soak into them like it would if it was a compressed bale like the other type. That was, they don't have to move them, they can just leave them there or they can roll them around and take them any place they want to. Now Jim Stockdale over here rolls all his bales in that field of his, you know there down the lane there where Jim's got that . . .

Q: No, I really don't know. I knew he had some cattle, but I didn't know where he kept them.

A: Well, he's got I think 40 acres, something like that, but it's down Fletcher Lane. But you'd come in from the hardroad and there's a building up and on right across from Dambackers . . .

End of Side One, Tape Three

A: . . . so he keeps it in grass and mostly in alfalfa and rolls that into bales and I understand that they pick that up and take that to Missouri--that far away. If you don't have livestock, you don't have any use for it.

Q: Jim [Stockdale] just keeps livestock?

A: He doesn't have any now and he hasn't had for two years I believe. I really don't know why. You see when he had the livestock, he didn't have the hay. The livestock would keep the hay down and there wouldn't be anything to bale. I guess he thinks this is a better way probably--easier--he doesn't have to fool with taking care of the cattle at least.

Q: He has bees. Did you know that? Honey bees.

A: Yes. He's got them over there at that farm where that shed is.

Q: I've had some of that honey.

A: We haven't.

Q: I have, it's real good, of course.

A: I imagine it is. He's got that alfalfa patch and I understand that makes good honey.

Q: Well, Bud, when did you decide to give up keeping animals? Did they get to be expensive to keep?

A: No, not really. After I sold the ground for the golf course, I didn't have room for them. I quit milking ahead of that, though. After I sold off this land where I'd always kept them, I didn't have places for them.

Q: So about how long ago was that?

A: 1963, nearly twenty years, eighteen, I guess. We finished this golf course in 1963, didn't we? Isn't that what the book says. I think it was opened in 1963.

Q: Bud, what was the most undesirable chore you had to do as a farmer? Was there anything you just didn't like to do?

A: Nothing in particular that I can think of. You just didn't think about the things that you had to do. It was just a common practice to go and do what had to be done. You didn't think too much about it.

Q: What kind of thing gave you the most satisfaction as a farmer?

A: Freedom.

Q: The freedom to do as you pleased.

A: Yes. If you wanted to go some place, you didn't have to ask somebody, if you wanted to take the day off. I was my own boss.

Q: Somebody had to feed your animals everyday.

A: Yes, we either hired someone to take care of them or had a neighbor take care of them for you. You would exchange things like that. It wasn't a big problem.

Q: When you were a teacher did you have all these animals and the farm work besides?

A: No. I just helped on the farm then. I was not married then. I took care of some stock at the south place, but I was not that far along into farming yet.

Q: Before you had electricity to your farm. Can you remember what your evenings were like? What did the family do in the evening?

A: We were without lights for about five years after we were married. But we had radios and we listened to the programs. The reception was good. The first set we ever had was Natwater Canton. I think that is one of the early ones that came out. It was battery operated.

Q: Did you go to bed early, do you think, because it was dark?

A: Well, maybe you went to bed early because you worked harder. We had gas lights then. They were good lights. You have seen the kind that you pump up, you put gas in them. They have mantles. We had those all over the house. We had no problem with lighting. We didn't go to bed early for that reason, but because you had to get up early.

Q: What time did you get up?

A: It would depend upon the season. During corn shucking time, you got up early. Normally the corn shuckers were in the field by daylight. Ready to shuck corn. If you had milk to get ready for a truck at a certain time, then you had to get up early for that.

Q: Bud, now that we have more conveniences and have more modern equipment, do you feel that the farmer is working as hard and as long as you did when you were younger?

A: Do you mean physically?

Q: Probably it wasn't physically, but I see some of these farmers out after dark, working later with lights on their tractors. I think you told me it was a custom for you to quit at a certain time of the day, that you didn't work on into the late, late hours.

A: Well, the difference is the work is more mechanical and at that time your work was, of course, horsepower, and you had to give your horse rest and you had to rest yourself. You are not abusing a tractor by running it at night. You are going to run it so many hours to do a certain amount of work anyway whether you do it at night or daytime. If you are behind in your work you will do it at night, because you have the lights and the air conditioner and the heater on the tractors anymore.

Q: The modern farmer has the advantage. If there is a good spell of weather, they can get out there and work the extra hours.

A: Oh sure. You couldn't do that in the horse and buggy days, because your livestock had to have rest. You didn't work the long hours then.

I never found anything distasteful about farm work. I enjoyed it and took a lot of pride in my work. You could look back and see that there was something that you had done yourself and if it was good, okay and if it was bad, then you knew who did it.

Q: If you had ever had a choice that you could be anything other than a farmer, was there anything that you can think of that you would rather have been?

A: Well, there was at one time, but that didn't last too long. I wanted to be a dentist, when I was in school. But then I got involved in teaching, and this went by the wayside when I got involved in farming. I liked it. I never had any regrets or any desire to do anything else really.

Q: Bud, I am going to ask you a question that I asked your son one time. If you had a choice to live anywhere in the world, where would you choose to live?

A: Right here.

Q: That's exactly what Jim said.

A We have talked about that over at the club quite a bit. We would be bitching about something and we would always wind up saying, "Where would you go that would be any better than here?" I think that is true. There are some things, I think, that could be made easier, but you can't control the weather and I think that is the only thing that you could change that would make it better.

Q: Back to the electricity. Do you think you started reading more books or did it change your evening activities.

A: No, I don't think it did. It was just the convenience of having it and all the accessories that went with it to lighten the load, such as pumping the water or ironing or whatever you could apply electricity to instead of using manpower. That was the biggest advantage. I don't think it changed our night life any.

Q: How about T.V.? Did that change your evenings activities?

A: Oh, I think it changed everybody's.

Q: For the better or the worse, do you think?

A: Well, a month ago I would have said for the worse. [speaking of the presidental elections] Listening to all those darn politicians. I think that is detrimental to television, really.

Q: We don't need so much of it.

A: Well, it goes on . . . starting last spring, in April, and it was continuous all summer long. I get sick of it. I think most people know who they are going to vote for and why they are going to vote for them. All that lingo they put out . . . you can't believe it anyway. You know if they are elected, whoever, you know it isn't going to be like they say it is. But it is there and the only way is to shut it off. It is on all the networks.

Q: Don't you think it is very hard for any president to be his own man?

A: Oh yes, he is bossed before he is a contender. I don't care who he is.

Q: It seems that you can't get that far without a lot of money.

A: True, the fat cat has got it. That isn't the way this government was supposed to be. From this point on, I don't think it will ever be any different. I don't know what is going to change it.

Q: Basically, do you feel T.V. has been a pretty good thing for the people?

A: Oh, I think so. In a way, it is educational, you certainly get the news a lot faster, the good and the bad both. More bad news than good, but yes, I think it is a step forward.

Q: Just the fact that we were able to witness things like the men landing on the moon. That was a wonderful thing to be able to see.

A: It's a great big mystery, isn't it?

Q: Did you ever think that anyone would go to the moon?

A: Well, no. You never gave it a thought.

Q: Even when you read Buck Rogers?

A: No, that was fiction to me. But it was pretty close to what has happened. It is a mystery how they can take pictures and send them back to us. I will never understand how they did that.

Q: Probably because communications moves so much faster than it used to, there is so much more knowledge available and ways to get to it. Another thought provoking question, Bud, would you like to have lived during any other time in history?

A: No, I don't think so, Shirley. There has been a lot of things happen in my period of life. You wonder what could happen in the next period that could even come close to it, but I'm sure it will.

Q: It's almost scarey.

A: It is. With all these computers and the things they can do.

Q: Well, do you think with all this technological knowledge that people have now, that they will find some other means of travel other than gas driven? By nuclear pills or anything of that sort? Drive up to a drugstore and say put a pill in the tank?

A: Well, there is no use to say that it can't be done. They have done so many things that we could never conceive or think that they could do. I don't think that there is any limit to what can be done. Certainly we

are going to need something to supplement this power shortage that we have got, if it is really there. I'm not so sure that it is. It's possible that they will harness the sun or the wind. I don't know.

Q: I think the solar energy developments are going to be good for us, don't you?

A: Well, I don't think they are going forward with it fast enough. At least, it is not being applied. I don't know of any of that around here, do you?

Q: Well, Sam Snell has a solar heated hog house. Have you seen that yet? It is the first one in the whole world. And it will be featured in National Geographic.

A: No, I haven't seen it yet. But if it is successful and evidently it is or Sam wouldn't have it, why aren't they moving ahead with it? I wouldn't be surprised if we don't all have it in years to come.

Q: I'm looking forward to it myself. I'd like to think that I could have my own indoor garden and just pluck a tomato whenever I wanted to, and know that I was going to stay warm at the same time.

A: That would be nice.

Q: Bud, let's go back a little. What was your first phone like?

A: Well, we have had telephones back as far as I can remember, even in Kentucky. We had the kind that you crank on the wall. You could call direct to that neighbor or just by the number of rings. You would crank a number of rings. And you listened for your rings whether they were long or short. They didn't have systems like they do now. The lines were just put upon poles cut out of the timber, stick it up in the fence and wire it, and put a wire on it and run it to your house or the neighbors. It would be a neighborhood project. When we came here, about the same system existed.

Q: Did you have a lot of people on your line for quite awhile when you were in the country?

A: Yes. High as a dozen.

Q: Did you ever have any trouble getting the line when you wanted it?

A: You were lucky if you ever got it.

Q: Is that right? It was probably a good source of entertainment in those days.

A: Yes, sure. If the old hen laid an extra egg why she would call and tell her neighbor about it, that was a problem, really. If you needed the phone real bad you could cut in and tell them it was an emergency and if it was a neighbor, they would get off the line. Otherwise you might have to wait and wait until they got through visiting.

Q: So it was more a means of entertainment than for emergency.

A: Especially for the women, yes. Of course, the men didn't.

Q: They would go and have coffee, I understand, if they wanted to talk.

A: Yes, that's the bare way. You don't improve anybody's conversation that way.

Q: Bud, let's talk about when you were on the school board. What year did you go on?

A: Well, you are talking about the high school board? I was on the school board twenty-two years in the country and in town, too. I was on the board when we organized the unit district. And that, I think, would have been 1946 or 1947, the date I am not sure of. I was on the board possibly three years before that and about three years after that.

Q: What are some of the problems that you came across during that time?

A: We didn't have any real problems. We had some in the administration. We had one real bad session. We had a principal that we hired that was just back from the service. He was in the marine corp. And it was just about the time when they started to force physical training in the schools for all kids. Some of the parents--he [principal] took care of this, he had a lot of experience in it, which naturally he could, but the parents began to think that he was too regimental and that sort of thing and oh, we had parents come down to the school, to the board meeting, just raising the devil. We had quite a bit of problems with that. But during that time, while he was still here, we organized the unit district. The year after we got it organized, he went to Marshall, Illinois. That was his next assignment. He was a good superintendent, really, but he just didn't fit the community for some reason. Outside of that, we didn't have any real problems.

Q: Did you do any building during that time?

A: Only the bus garage. Of course, up until the time that we formed a unit district, we didn't need a bus garage, because we didn't haul the kids. But after that, we did have to, and we bought some buildings over in Illiopolis that they used during the war. That would be the extent of the building while I was on the board.

Q: Did you do any consolidation studies while you were on the board?

A: Yes, all the time. It was just an on going thing for committees to be meeting between Virden, Girard, and Divernon to try to come up with some kind of solution to put the schools together for a lot better system.

Q: What kind of opposition did you run into?

A: Parents did not want their kids to go out of town to go to school. Just like when we organized the unit district, the parents in the country didn't want their kids to go to town to school, the same type of thing,

you know. It looked like at that time that legislature was going to take public aid away from the schools that were not of a certain size, populationwise. We thought it was important to get these schools together, so that you could have a school that you could know was going to last. So far they haven't done that. Divernon is still hanging on. But they don't have much to hang with, I don't guess.

Q: Their enrollment is not increasing and they don't have room to expand their town, since all the surrounding area is farmland.

A: It has been a town that I don't think has grown in size since I can remember. Now Pawnee has grown, house after house, built over there.

Q: Well, I think schools are a big attraction.

A: Yes, schools and churches are the two things that you would look at.

Q: Do you think there ever will be a consolidation?

A: I don't think there ever will be, unless the legislature takes school aid away from the small population. I firmly believe that consolidation could offer a better curriculum. I think that they could have a good technical teaching program that would benefit a lot of kids who would drop out of school and they don't have a chance to be exposed to different things that they might be able to do. I think there would be a great advantage in consolidation.

Q: Even the more advanced students get a little bored, I think, because they don't have the stimulation that they could have, if there were more and better subjects offered.

A: Well, there is less incentive in a small school than there is in a large school, you know, there would just have to be.

Q: Do you think people are more concerned that there would not be a football team that can play Virden or that their kid wouldn't be good enough for the team, if they were at a bigger school? They kind of overlook the advantages.

A: Yes. I think that they look at the wrong advantages. After all, the school is there to educate, and all these other things are important of course, but secondary. But I think that is exactly what people think, that my child won't have the progress that he would have if he were in a small school because he is closer to his teacher and closer to the kids because it is a small group, but I don't think that is necessarily good.

Q: That might work out all right for grade schools. They could still have their grade schools and then they could join in a larger high school. That was the idea behind it, wasn't it?

A: Yes.

Q: That closeness that they need, they would be getting in their early years.

A: Yes, by the time they are in high school, their attitudes are different and they are ready for another step in life by then, I think. (tape stopped)

Q: Bud, we are going to talk about Edgewood Country Club. How did it get started?

A: Well, there was a group of fellows that played golf in Springfield, Girard and Jacksonville for years and there was always a problem of getting on the tee, and they talked about the possibility of getting a golf club started in the community. I think it was in July of 1962 that we had the first meeting at the Auburn Grade School. It was just between Auburn and Virden at that time.

Q: How many people attended?

A: Twenty-five probably. There was quite a group. There was a lot of discussion about whether it was feasible or not, and there was always a question of water and that sort of thing. We did decide at that point to go on with the investigation and find out what the interest would be and that sort of thing. We definitely decided to include all the small towns around in the Charter Member Group. Virden, Girard, Pawnee, Farmersville, Divernon, etc. We formed a group of forty charter members and we pledged a note of $3000 each. We hired an architect who built the course.

Q: Who was that?

A: Charlie Maddox. He was from St. Charles, Illinois. Up around Chicago.

Q: Had he done this type of work before?

A: Oh yes, he was a professional. He built Lincoln Greens and he was in the area when we decided to build this one.

Q: Was he terribly expensive?

A: No, I don't think so. He laid out all the groundwork. There was a lot of work donated. Farmers with tractors and that sort of thing.

Q: What were some of the areas that they looked into?

A: Well, the one directly west of Thayer was the only one that I knew anything about. That area down by Sugar Creek. They were looking for a water source and a good terrain. After several meetings and investigations they finally decided on this. [Edgewood in Auburn] They got their first loan from Nokomis Savings and Loan and that was $120,000. That was enough to get us started. That would build the course. Then we got a loan from Rural Electric--we had eighteen lots up on the north side and down the east side. We pledged seven of those lots for $35,000 and borrowed that much from them. And then we went ahead and got the clubhouse built. Nelson Fernandez was the architect for the clubhouse. We met at the Fiesta in Virden every Thursday for a year on the plans for the clubhouse.

Q: How long did it take to complete the clubhouse?

A: I don't think we did anything on the clubhouse in 1962. We started it early in 1963 and by the Fourth of July the golf course opened, but the clubhouse and the pool were not quite finished yet. We postponed the opening until Labor Day and then we had the grand opening.

Q: Nine holes of the golf course were completed and ready to play on. How did they do that so quickly?

A: Well, they had a good fall to work. After they started in the fall, they seeded most of the greens with those little cuttings of grass, you know, and they put sacks over them. They weren't good the first year, it was rough, the fairways and the whole thing. But there was a lot of volunteer work. People would, maybe one or two families, would take one green and take care of it. They would work during the year to take out any weeds and grass that would come in a new seeding like that. It took three or four years to get the greens in good condition. That is something that you can't build overnight.

Q: Was the area very wooded?

A: Most of the wood was along the creek in the clubhouse area. A lot was taken out there. Over in the other part it was just small stuff, brush. This was mainly pasture land.

Q: You owned this pasture land, is that correct?

A: Yes. When the back nine was built. There was more brush and trash and whatever, than there was on the front nine, because it had not been cultivated for quite some time. But with the machinery that they had, they could just clean it off real easy.

Q: Did you use the same architect that drew up the front nine?

A: No, he had nothing to do with the back nine. The board drew up the back nine. The architect said it couldn't be done. He looked at some plans that we drew up and said there just wasn't enough room. It's built on . . . around forty acres. That isn't enough really for a nine hole course, to have the length of the holes you want.

Q: Well, I think it is more challenging than the front nine.

A: It worked out real good.

Q: Do you think there was more enthusiasm and cooperation of the membership in the beginning?

A: Oh definitely. It was just like one big family, really. You could go over to the clubhouse any night in the week, and maybe there would be a dozen or two dozen people over there, and you would pull up one big table and everybody would have fun together. It doesn't happen anymore and hasn't for several years. A lot of the members who took part in the beginning have moved or have lost interest. But it was a real social club at that time.

Q: We still have a very nice club, but I think a lot of people that have not worked really hard to get it going, tend to complain and pick at some of the things that are going on. I think that hurts the club.

A: Don't you think that is natural? There are always some that will find fault with the schools or churches or whatever. There are always some people that are dissatisfied for one reason or another and just have to pick at it. It does hurt the club. The feeling today, I don't think is as good as it was when we had forty charter members. Now we have ten people who are financially responsible, and I think the atmosphere is totally different. But it is still a nice club and a good place to go. It is quite an asset to our town. You would have to go quite a ways to find one quite as nice in an area like this.

End of Side Two, Tape Three