PREFACE

This manuscript is the product of tape-recorded interviews conducted by Mrs. Bobbe Herndon for the Oral History Office in February 1972. Mrs. Herndon transcribed and edited the transcript. Mr. Gray Herndon reviewed the transcript.

Gray Herndon was born in New City, Illinois on June 5, 1885, near which village he received his early schooling and grew to manhood. His reminiscences of these days provide a wealth of information on turn-of-the-century farm practices and rural life. As a young man, he entered into the practice of law. He tells of getting started and of involvement in Springfield area litigations. His memoir sheds invaluable light on the growth and transformation of life in and around Springfield during his lifetime.

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.

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Gray Herndon, February, 1972, Springfield, Illinois.

Bobbe Herndon, Interviewer.

Q. Let's start, Mr. Herndon, with when you were born, and any recollections you have of your early childhood. I understand that you lived on a farm.

A. Yes, I was born June 5, 1885, out at what was then New City. It's just a crossroads out in the southeast corner of this county [Sangamon]. The first that I remember we were living on a farm, in what was known as the Forest Grove neighborhood, southwest of Rochester. On our farm . . . the house was new and it stood on part of the land that my grandfather owned. In 1890, my grandfather died and we moved over on what my folks referred to as the Old Home Place in which my grandfather had lived until he died. Then about 1892 or 1893, my father bought a farm back in the New City neighborhood, and we moved back there.

Those were the days of the chinch bugs; you might have heard of the chinch bug. Those bugs were so bad that they ruined entirely some of the crops. One of those years my father had wheat on part of the land. The wheat crop made eight bushels an acre, and for the wheat he got 55 cents a bushel. By the time he got through paying taxes on the land, and the cost of seed and operating, and the interest on the mortgage, there wasn't a whole lot left to live on. That continued for several years. Then the seasons

changed and the chinch bugs became scarce.

But so far as the methods of farming go, they were entirely different from present methods and operations. You know, in order to plant a crop they plowed the land with an ordinary plow--the only kind of plow that was in use then. They used a team--usually a team of two horses or mules--to pull the plow, and the man walked along behind the plow in the furrow that the plow had made and simply held the handles of the plow to keep it from falling over.

Q. Was this a metal plow?

A. Oh, yes, the plows at that time were made of steel. The bigger part of the plow was what we call the moldboard, and at the bottom of the moldboard there was a separate piece they called the plowshare. It was bolted to the plow and fit up against the moldboard so the moldboard was a continuation, upward, of the plowshare. The plowshare had to be sharpened on the bottom of the blunt edge so it would cut through the ground, cut off the roots of any plants that extended that far into the dirt, and then the dirt slipped up the moldboard. It was made with a twist so that when the dirt was turned over to one side, it fell into the furrow made by the preceeding round and landed upside down. So the trench that was on the surface before the plow came along was then buried four, five, six inches or maybe more, under the ground.

Q. What were your major crops? You mentioned wheat.

A. Well, probably the major crop in Sangamon County was corn. But the fact that the farmer had to depend on horses or mules for power meant that every farmer had to keep quite a few horses and mules. In addition to that, every farmer, in those days, kept a few milk cows. Then he had some cattle, or some colts or younger animals--all of them had to be fed. In order to keep enough horses to work forty acres of land, he usually had to keep one or two horses and feed them year round. So, the farmer didn't get to take to market nearly all of what he raised on the farm. He had to set off a good percentage for pasture for the cows and horses and other animals, and in addition to that, he had to keep a good share of the grain that he raised to feed the horses and other livestock to operate the farm. So, the farmer could market only a fraction of what he grew on the land.

In this part of the country, most of the farmers raised hogs, and to raise hogs they used the bigger part of the corn crop. Some farmers kept so many hogs they used all of the corn they grew and had to buy some corn from neighbors. But they marketed practically all of the hogs. Of course, everybody in the country in those days butchered a few hogs in the wintertime to provide meat to run them through the year. Once in a while, a family would kill a steer for meat, but most of them depended on butchering a few hogs in the wintertime to provide meat to run through the year. Once in a while, a family would kill a steer for meat, but most of them depended on butchering a few hogs.

Q. How about poultry?

A. Everybody kept some poultry; mostly chickens, a few ducks and geese and, less often, some turkeys.

Q. Were any of these fenced in or did they all run loose in those days?

A. No, livestock, in my time, was allowed to run wild.

Q. I mean the poultry. Did they run loose or were they fenced in?

A. Oh, just about as often one as the other. The poultry had a place to roost, and they would come there to roost every night. But, if you had a flock of chickens you were raising to put on the market, you very often penned them up and fed them extra grain. The others, the rest of the poultry, just looked after themselves. Of course, part of the year they all got fed some.

Nowadays, a big percentage of farmers don't keep any milk cow--they buy their milk. And, of course, some of them don't have a horse or a mule on the farm. I'm not sure, but I imagine that most farmers these days that keep a horse at all, just keep a horse to ride around as a sport.

Q. You had several brothers and sisters.

A. Yes.

Q. Could you describe the chores you had to do? What time, for instance, did you get up in the morning?

A. I was the oldest one in my family and I had three brothers and a sister. We children didn't have to get up in the morning until we got old enough to go to school. We had to get up to get ready to be at the schoolhouse before nine o'clock every morning. When I was about ten or twelve, I started milking a cow or two, the milk cows. I didn't start helping with the farm work until I was about twelve years old. At that time, I was big enough to handle one of those plows.

To get the best feed for the livestock on a farm, everybody raised a good-sized field of oats. To get a good crop of oats you have to get them planted early in the spring. So, one of the first jobs I did, in the way of farm work, was plowing some of the land for a crop of oats. I stayed out of school a few days and plowed with an old team. The weather was cold and it was snowing hard. There was snow on the ground and snow falling, and I plowed several days through that snowstorm to get the ground ready for oats.

Q. How many acres could you plow in a day? Have you any rough estimate?

A. Oh, it's so long ago, I've forgotten. It wasn't very many acres.

Q. I was just curious. When did soybeans come in?

A. Oh, soybeans didn't appear in this country until along about 1930.

Q. And by this time you had left the farm?

A. Oh, I left the farm in 1903.

Q. Did your family move from the farm in 1903?

A. No, they moved from New City back to the Old Home Farm, where my brother lives now.

Q. This is the one near Rochester?

A. Yes.

Q. This perhaps is an unfair question, but do you have any idea how much land was worth per acre about 1890 to 1900?

A. Yes. Good, flat, black land was worth around eighty dollars an acre. As I remember it, my father sold that land at New City along about 1900 and got ninety dollars an acre for it.

Q. This is good land through here, isn't it?

A. Oh, this black land in Sangamon County, it's just the best there is.

Q. Did you have hired help at any time on the farm?

A. Oh, yes, though not the same one all the time. For several years, one man that we hired came up here from Kentucky. He lived near Covington, Kentucky, and made a trip up here every spring to work until fall as a hired man on the farm. He got eighteen dollars a month, plus his board, of course. And [he] paid his fare up here and back and thought he was making more than he could have made down in Kentucky. I guess he was, maybe, but that's all he was getting up here--eighteen dollars a month.

Q. Did he eat with the family?

A. Oh, yes.

Q. And your mother did all the cooking?

A. Most of the time.

Q. What sort of fertilizer was used in those days? Was there anything beside the animal manure?

A. That's all.

Q. How would you spread it?

A. Well, most farmers just took the old farm wagon with the wagon box on, and loaded the manure on the wagon with a fork and hauled it out across the field, unloading it as they went. All done by hand.

Q. How about harvesting crops? What machinery was available then?

A. Well, of course for the corn crop, all you did was take the farm wagon and start the team going down a row of corn. You walked along the side of the wagon and moved the team up from time to time. You took the corn off the stalk by hand. You used what we call a shucking peg.

Q. Peg?

A. Yes, shucking peg.

Q. What was that like, a knife?

A. No, no. It had something like a glove in which your hand fit, and the peg was usually flattened a little bit and would stick

up above or in front of your hand. You'd take that and you walked up and took hold of an ear of corn hanging on the stalk, and stuck that peg through the shuck on that ear of corn--the corn shuck that covered the ear--so you could get hold of it and pull the shuck off till you could get a grip on the ear itself. Then, you held the shaft of the ear of corn with one hand and gave the ear a twist with the other. If you were strong enough, the ear would break off and you threw it in the wagon. That's all the machinery they had to gather the corn crop.

Q. I've seen corn huskers' gloves with double thumbs so that you can spin the glove around. Were those used?

A. They had different kinds of things. Nobody bought very many of them because they wore out in about two hours or they weren't any good to start with. Some farmers used gloves because their hands would get sore and such, but if you're used to that kind of work and know how to do it, you got along without anything of that kind.

Q. We were talking about gathering the corn. How were the wheat and oats gathered? Were there threshing machines?

A. The wheat and the oats, in my time, stood in the field until the grain was formed and almost dry. Then, the farmer had what he called a binder. It was a machine pulled by horses or mules, of course, but it had a sickle bar extending out to one side. As the team pulled the binder along, it was geared so that sickle would operate and cut off the wheat or the oats, oh, four or six

inches above the ground. It was adjustable, and you adjusted it the way you wanted it, depending on how tall the grain had grown and what the condition was.

The binder had a reel, located above the sickle and as you went along the reel turned and the bottom--the slats on the bottom of the reel--swept the stalks of the wheat or oats back across the sickle, so when they were cut off they fell on a platform just behind the sickle. That platform had a canvas on which the grain fell, and that canvas ran over pulleys. They moved that canvas behind the sickle bar, and at a right angle to the sickle bar, up into the rest of the binder machine. As the wheat or the oats moved up there, they had fingers that would gather them until they had enough to make a bundle.

The machine was equipped with two or three big balls of binder twine, that was made of manila fiber, like most of the rope that was common in those days. The binder had been perfected so that when the bundle in the binder got big enough it would put enough pressure on one side to operate a trigger, and there'd be a threaded arm or a needle come around and tie that bundle with binder twine, tie it tight, and kick the bundle off to one side.

Sometimes they operated the binder with a kind of a carrier along one side that would catch the bundles and hold them until you had several of them--four or five maybe--and then you pressed a lever and that would trip the carrier and it would dump all those bundles in one place. The bundles had to be picked up and set up in shocks,

because if they were left on the ground they'd get too moist. Even if it didn't rain, they'd collect moisture on the bottom side and some of the grain would get wet.

After the binder had cut the grain and dropped the bundles, other farm help came along, pick up the bundles and set them up in shocks--set the bundles on the ground, on the blunt end of the bundle with the grain on top. Usually, a shock of wheat or oats would have perhaps two dozen or more bundles, all in one shock.

Then, to keep the rain from soaking all of them, you'd take one of the bundles and you'd break the straw on each side of the binder twine and spread it out fan-shape and put two or more of those spread out across the top of the shock. And if it was well done, they would shed practically all of the rain that fell on that shock, so that the grain would dry out in a short time if the weather was right. Then, the grain stood there in the shock until the threshing machine came around.

Every neighborhood had one or two men with a mechanical turn that would buy and operate a threshing outfit. The outfit included a steam engine and a threshing machine, and for many years, what they called a straw stacker. The steam engine had gears so you could put it in gear and it would pull itself along from one farm to the other, and would also pull a threshing machine and a straw stacker that would be hooked on behind it. Then, when they got to the farm where they're to start threshing that farmer's crop, they would set the outfit, as they called it.

The straw stacker and the threshing machine were operated by belts from the engine. Some of these belts would be about a hundred feet long from the engine to the threshing machine. The fly wheel on the engine and the pulley on which the belt operated the threshing machine had to be lined up pretty accurately or the belt was run off of the pulley. The same was true with the straw stacker; it had to be lined up with a belt that ran from the threshing machine. So, they lined up the machine and were ready to start the job.

Sometimes the threshing machine outfit would move from one farm to another late in the day and by the time they got to the next place and got lined up, it was time for the neighbors to go home and start doing their chores. So they wouldn't do any threshing. They'd quit for the day--or maybe they'd thresh a little bit--then overnight, the wind would change and instead of blowing from the south, in the morning it might be blowing from the north. That was bad because when they set the machine, they tried to set it so that the wind would blow from the steam engine towards the threshing machine--and then the straw stacker would be beyond that--and a fog of dust that the threshing machine put out would be blown back toward the stack of straw at the tail end.

In my time, the threshing machine had a platform on the front end. The man operating the outfit hired two or more men to take turns and stand on that platform and feed the grain into the threshing machine. These men were called feeders. They would take one of these bundles that had been hauled in from the field out of the

shock, and they would push that bundle so that the heads went in against one or more cylinders, they called them, that were turning--they were rotating at high speed. They had pins or prongs sticking out of them, and when those prongs hit the head on a stalk of wheat, they'd knock it to pieces--they'd knock the grain out of the shaft.

Then the straw would be pulled on through, and back of that were sieves and the equipment that separated the grain from the straw. The straw went on through, out the back end of the separator into the straw stacker that lifted it up to the top of the stack. The separator also had big fans in it that blew the fine chaff--separated from the wheat or the oats--and the grain came out of the chute down to the bottom of the separator into a basket or tub or into a sack.

Years ago they used to sack a lot of it, but they got tired of doing that. The newer brands of threshers were mixed separators that would have a pipe, or an elevator, that would take the grain from the chute at the bottom, where the clean grain came out, and elevate it high enough so it could just run down into a farm wagon. Then all they had to do was drive the wagon up there and get a wagon load of the threshed wheat or oats.

On each side of this feeder's platform, there was another little platform where a band cutter--who they called a band cutter--stood. In front of him there would be another platform or level place. When a wagon load of wheat or oats--in the sheaf--came into the

threshing machine, they'd drive the wagon up alongside that machine and the man that was operating the bundle wagon would unload it, a bundle at a time. He operated with a pitchfork, of course, and he'd throw a bundle down there in front of the band cutter. The band cutter had a good sharp knife and he'd cut the binder twine to let the bundle entirely loose, and then shove it over to the feeder who fed it into the threshing machine.

That was one job I had. I went with one of those crews. I acted as a band cutter for several years. And one year, one season, I went with a crew from one place to another. That was my business, a professional band cutter.

Q. How many people worked in one of these crews? How many men would it take?

A. Well, I'm not sure that I remember. Let's see, there were at least two feeders because they spelled each other. One fellow couldn't work up there; it was a dirty job. All the dirt would fog out of that cylinder right in his face. There'd be two feeders, there'd be at least two band cutters, there'd be the engineer that operated the engine, there'd be a man with a water tank to haul water for the engine, and there'd be two men down here at the separator. Before they got the mechanical elevator, there'd be two men down there. There'd be two men on the stack. Now that's ten, right at the machine. And to operate, they usually had six bundle wagons, and out in the field, they usually had at least two, sometimes, more, what they call pitchers.

Pitchers stayed on the ground, took a pitchfork and pitched the

bundles out of the shocks--you'd pitch those up on the wagon. And the guy that operated the bundle wagon would load them on. They had to be placed so that they would stay in place while you drove the wagon across the field. Six men on a bundle wagon and at least two pitchers, that's eight more--eighteen. It'd take eighteen or more men to operate an outfit.

Q. Would you exchange labor?

A. Oh, yes, yes.

Q. These men weren't hired then?

A. Some were hired that went with the crew. The two that operated the engine, of course, were hired. The feeders were hired, and the two that measured the grain as it came out behind it, those were hired regularly. The straw stacker was usually somebody that went along that would take that job, but as I remember, he wasn't part of the crew.

I stacked straw myself. When the crew came to our place and there wasn't anybody along that would take the job, why, I was the one that got the job on the straw stack. It wasn't such a bad job. That is, at times it wasn't as bad a job as some of the other jobs around the threshing machine. At least you were up there where you could move around and you got out of a lot of the dust, got out on the side towards the wind. The band cutters and the feeders that worked right there at the mouth of the threshing machine, they had the worst job. If the

wind shifted, and the wind blew from the tail end, it blew all that dirt right back towards them.

I've cut bands out there on a job where the creek had been out of bank and flooded the land before they cut the grain with the binder. So when the creek went down and the water went away, they took that field of wheat, put it in a shock, and then the threshing outfit moved in there. All that grain came in with a coat of dry mud, or dirt, on every straw. And when the feeder fed that into the cylinder on the threshing machine--it happened that we stayed overnight on that job, and in the morning the wind was blowing from the tail end--there were times when I was standing on the band cutters' side and I couldn't see the guy on the other side. It was that dirty and dusty.

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Q. How was grain stored? Were there elevators in those days?

A. Oh, yes, there were grain elevators at shipping points, pretty much as they are now. On the farm, the grain was simply hauled in and shoveled into a big bin that would keep it from leaking out; it was stored in bulk.

Q. Would you keep these bins on the farm?

A. Oh, yes.

Q. More so than today?

A. Yes.

Q. To go back to the threshing just a minute, do you think that operation was more dangerous to the workers than the tractors are today?

A. Well, I don't think so, it was all machinery. It had lots of belts and a lot of it was in motion, but no, I don't think it was much more dangerous.

Q. It seems to me that I've read somewhere that farming is one of the most dangerous occupations.

A. Well, it is, because they use machinery in so many different ways; so many different machines, there's just so many things that can go wrong.

Q. As the thresher moved from farm to farm, was there ever any rivalry to get the thresher to your farm before your neighbor, particularly if the weather was threatening? Did this ever create bad feelings?

A. Oh, sometimes there was some competition, but nothing came of it. So far as the weather goes, these threshing machines could operate clear up into winter weather, so long as the grain in the shock wasn't wet or damp or had snow on it--of course then they couldn't do anything. But cold weather didn't interfere with that operation.

Q. Which kinds of fruit were most commonly raised?

A. Well, most farms had a few apple trees, usually a tree or two that would bear apples that would get ripe about August. We always had fruit trees, and some years, we'd have wagon loads of winter apples. We stored some of those down in the basement at the house, and took some to the mill somewhere within driving

distance. There was usually someone operating a cider mill, so we'd get a barrel or two, maybe more, of apple cider.

We usually had a few cherry trees, of course; we picked what we wanted to use, or can to preserve for use during the rest of the year. And we usually had some peach trees. On the Old Home Farm we also had plums, and I remember we had some quinces, and some raspberry bushes. Some folks had blackberries. On the Old Home Farm, we went out to the timber pasture and got our blackberries, wild blackberries.

Q. How about vegetables? Would you raise most of your own?

A. Everybody had a big garden, raised vegetables, lettuce and peas and radishes and beans and cabbage and tomatoes.

Q. Would you raise just enough for your family or would you raise them also to sell?

A. Oh, no, we didn't raise any to sell.

Q. When, in this part of the country, did the use of tiling for drainage begin? Were your farms tiled, or wasn't it necessary?

A. Yes. The land wasn't tiled when my father bought it, but that's the first thing we did. That's the first thing he did, was hire a man to tile the land. At one time we farmed some land that belonged to my mother's father, my grandfather on that side.

Q. What was his name?

A. His name was Hatler, Granville Hatler. He was brought to this

county when he was just a small kid. He had an older sister and they came to this county, I think, in the 1830's. Anyway, when they came here most of the land had been taken by the earlier settlers. Most of the land along the creeks--around Horse Creek, Brush Creek, and Clear Creek and the South Fork of Sangamon River--had been purchased from the government by the earlier settlers because the earlier settlers had to have wood.

They had to have wood for a number of things. In the first place, there wasn't any fuel available except the wood. They had nothing with which to make fences, except rails split out of the forest trees. The houses of the early settlers were all log houses, made out of logs they cut down. So the early settlers always picked a piece of land with fine timber on it. It must have been magnificent timber. I've seen some patches of old timber, tremendous trees, just growing straight up, you know, way up.

Well, anyway, when my grandfather's folks got here, the good land had already been taken and they went out in the south part of the county and settled on some land out there. It had a little roll to it; that is, it wasn't perfectly flat, but most of the land around there was almost as flat as the surface of water itself. And it was swampy.

After I got the money to buy anything, I bought a piece of land up in the north part of the county. I had one of the engineers from the Public Service Company go up there one Sunday and we ran a level across that land. There wasn't one spot in half a mile that was more than eight inches higher than the lowest spot.

That land was just that level, and that's the way a lot of this prairie land was.

That's the way most of the land was around the farm that my grandfather's father had picked out and settled on. It was all covered with prairie grass, coarse grass that threw up a heavy growth. Some of it would stand higher than a man's head. They had to get that broken before they could plow the land with an ordinary plow, and they had special kinds of plows to do that. Anyway, he moved on the land and I don't know how he got him a house or what kind it was, but anyway, they started living there.

The mosquitoes were bad; the country was full of malaria. It might have been a little over a year, as I remember it, it was less than a year, in less than a year he had died of malaria. His wife had died, my grandfather's sister had died; they were all dead but my grandfather and a younger brother of his. The boys were taken by some relatives that lived down in Greene County. They were taken down there and the folks down there raised them until they were big enough to go to work. So that's what happened out in that prairie country.

Q. Did you ever see prairie grass?

A. Yes. Not very much of it, but I've seen just a clump or two in the old fence row. My grandfather said that in those days, if they had to travel far across that flat country in the summertime, they usually rode a horse. They went on horseback--they could

get through it better that way--and they went at night. Well, why did they go at night? Because that prairie grass and those swamps were full of different kinds of bugs besides mosquitoes. One thing that was common out there in that grass was what they called a deerfly.

Only once I've seen deerflies. I was a kid. It wasn't on my grandfather's first farm, but on another one my grandfather bought in that neighborhood. I had my old team; the kids got the team of old mares that you couldn't scare with anything. But anyway, I was plowing with a team of sad, old mares and along came a couple of these deerflies. They were a little bit bigger, as I remember it, at least they were longer than the common housefly, and they were green, at least most of the body was green, and they were slimmer. But one of those flies would bite one of those old mare's hips. The fly'd light there, and bite that old mare and she would jump and squirm, and where he bit her he'd go through the hide and the blood would run out of that horse from that fly bite. Course, I got out there and killed them as soon as I could, as soon as I could get a good swat at them. That's the only time I ever saw any of those flies, but my grandfather said they were common. And those flat stretches of land--some of them were really swamps, they had water in them most year around.

When my grandfather got big enough, he came back from Greene County. I don't know whether he got married before he came

back, but anyway, he came back to that same farm out there, same land. But by that time, lots of things had changed; all the land around there had been bought up and the prairie grass mostly had been plowed up and a lot of those pests disappeared. There were still rattlesnakes--full of rattlesnakes--but the people still lived out there.

Several of my aunts were born out there. My oldest aunt, in that family, was living out there until she was old enough to go to school. I don't know where the school was, but of course in those days, the kids had to walk to school. Nobody ever thought of such a thing as hauling a kid to school. So, she walked with some other kids to school, and going home one night a rattlesnake bit her. They got her to some neighbor, he hitched up a team and hurried her to the nearest doctor and she got over it. She lived to be an old woman, but she got bitten by a rattlesnake, all right.

Q. When did your father tile his land? I take it your grandfather never tiled his?

A. No, but on that New City place. . . . We were there in the 1890's, 1890-something, and then we moved back to the Old Home Farm. . . . I don't remember whether that was the end of 1900, or 1901.

Q. It takes a tremendous capital outlay, I understand, to tile.

A. No.

Q. No?

A. No. There used to be little brick and tile factories here and

there, and those little plants usually got equipment with which they could make tile of the size that was used around here.

Q. About how big in diameter is that?

A. Oh, that ran up to ten or twelve inches for the bigger tile. And that tile, of course, cost a whole lot more than a little five-inch one, because it took more clay, they were harder to handle, they were harder to burn. I'm not sure that I remember what the tile did cost, but at one time, we had several carloads of tile shipped in from some plant over in Indiana. They were mostly ten-inch tiles, and instead of being the ordinary length--as I remember, the ordinary tile was ten or twelve inches long--these tile were twice as long and they were hard burned. Lots of the drain tiles that were used were made of ordinary Illinois clay, and they were burned about like an ordinary building brick in those days. They were soft burned.

I'm not a bricklayer, I don't know, but as I understand it, you can hard burn clay by simply increasing the heat when you burn them. And, if you want a brick to use in pavement, you get a hard burned brick, they're hard. But a drain tile, you take it out and you bury it in the ground, and a soft burned tile will let some of the water seep right through it. Otherwise, the water gets in only at the joint, where one tile is butted against another.

So most of the old drain tile, in those days, were not hard burned,

and a lot of them were made in a little plant--there used to be a plant out at Rochester. I don't remember about Pawnee, but nearly every little town like that had a brickyard or a tile plant. The old settlers even had pottery works around in some places in Sangamon County, way back there before drain tile became common. There used to be a crossroads--that isn't even a crossroads today--out here in the south part of the county, Sangamon, that used to have several residences right there in a group, and it went by the name of Pensacola. It had a little pottery works of some kind. They made jugs and jars for the settlers. The early settlers didn't have such things as glass jars; glass bottles weren't too common. If you wanted a jar of any size, it was pottery. All the farmers, the early farmers, had jars; they had two-gallon jars, three-gallon jars, five-gallon jars, bigger jars.

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Q. We were discussing tiling.

A. Pottery works out in Pensacola. Of course, it's gone years ago. It was gone before my time.

Q. You say there were pottery works scattered throughout the county? Were they using the natural clay?

A. Yes. I don't know where any others were located, but I'm sure it wasn't anything very uncommon.

Q. Did they make brick also?

A. They didn't out there. They just made jugs and jars. You see pottery, the ordinary pottery, to be useful is salt glazed.

Q. Salt? I'm not familiar with pottery.

A. Well, you shouldn't have been able to grow up without knowing that much about pottery. (laughter) But jars and jugs and crocks, you know, they have a shiny surface on them, that's the glaze. How to make glazed pottery was discovered over in England, not too many hundred years ago. As I understand it, the ancients didn't know how, and the story is that they had works in England where they had good clay; they worked the clay and they made vessels of different kinds, and burned them in a kiln like you burn a brick.

Somewhere over there, there were two fellows that were competitors operating kilns to burn this stuff. They got mad at each other, and one of them took a box of salt to the other fellow's kiln while it was operating. He had a fire going in there; it was burning whatever he had in the kiln, and this fellow threw the box of salt in there on the fire to destroy that kiln full of whatever it was they were burning. Well, the kiln was operating, it was already hot as could be and it vaporized the salt and the fumes went through the kiln. When it cooled off and they took the stuff out, it all had a first class glaze on it and everyone was surprized. This fellow either figured out, or he told somebody what he had done, and of course they put two and two together, and that's the way they learned how to salt glaze crockery. I

guess that's the way it's done today.

Q. You said earlier that tiling was not dreadfully expensive. Where did I get that mistaken idea from, do you suppose?

A. From what they have to pay today. As I remember, those tiles that the folks shipped in from Indiana--those big ten-inch ones, two feet long--cost about a dollar for a two-foot tile. I could be mistaken about that.

Ordinarily, to tile a piece of land, you didn't put in too many lines, or what they call strings of tile. [If] you have a field that doesn't drain very well, but it has some slope to it when you have a big rain the water runs down to the low place, and then just meanders down, follows the low place onto the lower ground, gets away. If there's enough slope there, that the water gets away in just a matter of a few hours, [and] it hasn't hurt anything. Of course, the ground all gets soaking wet, but then you want it soaking wet, now and then. Where the fall is so slight that the water doesn't run away--it stands there, maybe there will be spots where it will stand for several days--that's bad, that kills the crop that was growing there.

So in most cases, to tile that field, you got enough tile to run a string up that swale, up that low place. You followed it with your tile and you put the tile underground, sometimes three feet. Sometimes you put it a whole lot deeper because you had to put it deeper in order to get drainage. A string of tile has to slope downhill or it doesn't do any good. [In] some

places you might have to put your tile down six or eight feet or even deeper than that.

In a few cases . . . I don't think I know of any cases except one. Out here on the flat land, south of New City, there used to be a well-to-do farmer named Babb. He owned quite a bit of that level land and had a good income; that's what he did with his money, buy some more level land. Some of those farms he bought had no tile in them and were too wet. He hired a man to put in a line of tile right straight along from one end of his field to the other, connected up with some outlets. He laid another parallel with the first one, just four rods apart--just one surveyor's chain--there'd be another one. Four rods further over, there'd be another string of tile. He tiled some of that land out there, south of New City, with that much tile. It's doubtful whether he had any big advantage by putting in so much, because you can get your land too dry as well as getting it too wet.

Q. Were most of these farms owner-operated?

A. Well, most all of them were. (Phone rings.)

Q. We were talking about whether the farmers owned their own land. In other words, were there lots of sharecroppers or people leasing land at this time?

A. Sharecroppers were not uncommon and perhaps when it's added up more land was leased than was farmed by the owner himself. That would be more of the situation in the level part of the country, because

the early settlers along the creeks, most of them, had smaller farms and lived on it themselves. They didn't rent them out because usually it was rolling land and timber soil; if you rented it out, in a few years the land would be ruined by the way the tenant operated it, and you'd lose the bigger part of the value you had in the farm. So, most of the larger rented land would be out in the flat country, where the farms were usually larger and there wasn't much that the tenant could do to destroy the land itself. But along streams, where the timber grew, the soil was what they call timber soil. It was different from the black prairie land and it was subject to erosion. You'd plow up the side of a hill of timber soil and a big rain would come along and wash a lot of it down into the creek.

Q. Who were the owners of the large level stretches? Were they town people or were they other farmers?

A. Well, nothing uniform about that either. Babb lived out there on his land, built himself a big house. There used to be a family named Brainard, some of them lived here in Springfield, some lived up in Lincoln, in Logan County, [Illinois]. Now, some members of the family lived out in the country. They built themselves a nice house, but they didn't farm the land themselves. They rented it out. There wasn't any rule or uniformity about it, anymore than there is today.

Q. How large was the size of the fields?

A. Oh, fields were all sizes.

Q. Are they larger today, do you think?

A. Most of them are larger, because back prior to the 1890's, one man with a team of horses could operate about thirty or forty acres of cultivated land. That would include his corn, it usually wouldn't include a field of wheat, but oats that were sown in the spring, oats and corn.

Q. So as machinery came into use, the fields even in this part of the country grew in size, as did the farms.

A. Oh, yes.

Q. Did they plant wheat in the fall?

A. They did in this section. It was what they call winter wheat and that's mostly what's sowed around here now. I don't know of any case where a farmer in this section of the country planted spring wheat, they just didn't do it. They planted wheat in the fall, it came up and made some growth in the fall. But spring wheat was what they planted out in Kansas, or up in Nebraska and the Dakotas.

Q. Were grass waterways used at all in the 1890's?

A. Very few, very few people used a grass waterway. I put in a grass waterway in a piece of land out there near Pawnee. It joined some of that land that Babb owned and it had a swale that came down. When it rained, why the water ran down that, there'd be enough water that if the field had been cultivated, it would

have washed some of that soil right off. I had the tenant put grass in that low place where the water ran. We got a good stand of grass and just let it grow--Timothy. It'd grow a foot or two feet high and a big rain'd come and wash down over it and lay it down flat, maybe, and fill it with mud that had been washed off the field. I believe that's the first waterway I know anything about.

Q. What year was that?

A. That was since 1900, of course. That could have been as late as 1914.

Q. You were one of the early ones to use it, weren't you?

A. It may have been common in other places, it wasn't around here. But I knew they had it in other places. So far as this timber soil and this rolling land is concerned, I don't know of anyone that ever put in a grass waterway. Some places, the speed of the water would be so fast a grass waterway wouldn't do what you had to accomplish. There'd be so much water come down so fast, it'd even wash off the grass.

Q. What did you use to divide fields way back in 1890? Was a hedge-row used?

A. Oh, yes. In that flat country there were lots of hedge.

Q. Osage Orange?

A. Yes, Osage Orange. You know, in order to make a fence out of Osage . . .

for years they took the Osage sprouts and planted them and they waited until those grew up, until they were ten, twelve, fifteen feet high maybe, just straight stems. Then they'd go in and start at one end of a fence, and they would cut each one of those hedge trees. They'd cut it down close to the surface of the ground, half a foot above the ground, maybe. [They'd] just take an axe and hack it; they wouldn't cut it in two, maybe they'd cut it halfway in two. Then they'd have to trim off some of the bushy top, of course. They'd bend that tree back as flat as they could get it to the ground. Then, of course, you came along to the next one, it was laid on top of the first one and [then] on to the next one. That was what they called laying the hedge. In that way, they would get a fence that was close enough, the openings were small enough, that it would turn cattle or horses or sheep and most hogs.

After they got the hedge laid, these limbs that had been laid would send out branches, and those shoots would grow straight up. The lower ones might send a branch up through what was above it, and eventually, if it didn't die out, you'd have a fine thick hedge that'd turn anything. Of course, every year, or almost every year, they had to go along those hedge fences and trim the new growth. Otherwise, they'd grow up fifteen feet tall again. That's the way they got hedge fences until along in the 1890's.

There's a man lived down here at Chatham. He went to work and he fixed a machine made out of wood. It was held together by thick wooden beams and he had rollers, wooden rollers, fixed in

that machine so that he could pull that up and start it in at the end of one of these hedge fences. He'd get his machine to straddle that fence even before the fence had ever been laid, when it was growing up to fifteen feet and had a lot of brush on top. He'd put enough horses on each side of the hedge that he could pull that machine along. And it was heavy enough and those rollers were big enough, that when they hacked those hedge trees at the bottom a little bit--if they weren't too big they didn't even have to hack them at all. They'd pull that machine along and it would mash that hedge down to say four and a half feet, some such height, what you wanted. The rollers on the side would crowd the brush in then when the machine went by, it left behind it a hedge fence that was thick.

Before the machine released the hedge, he would wire it together, here and there along, so it couldn't spring up again, it stayed there. That machine was used pretty extensively and, matter of fact, the only real good hedge fences that I ever saw were ones that had been laid with that machine. They didn't have holes in them, they didn't even develop holes because there was too much brush.

END OF TAPE

A. These days a farmer has machinery and equipment to do a lot of things that he used to have to do by hand. The old farm wagon that they used on the farm was moved around by hitching a team of horses to it. The horses pulled it around where you wanted it. The wagon had a box--or a bed we called it--that fit on a

part of the wagon that was removable. If the wagon bed didn't hold as much as you wanted to haul and the load wasn't too heavy, you had sideboards, they called them, that you put on top of the side of that wagon box and that made the box just that much deeper. Most farm wagons had enough of those sideboards that by putting more than one of those sideboards on each part of the wagon box, you could build it up until that box was four feet deep or deeper and, of course, [it] held just that much more grain or whatever you were hauling.

But if you were hauling something like fence rails or lumber or poles, you took the wagon box off entirely and what you had left were just the wheels with the axles and the connecting parts. They constituted what we called the running gears and you loaded the poles or rails right on the bolsters on those running gears without any box or bed, piled them on there. To get the box off of the running gears, you had to just lift it off and it usually took at least two people to get that box off. It was pretty heavy, and the only way they had to get it off was to just get enough manpower to lift it.

When I was out to a farm at Athens just about ten days ago, the farmer out there had a heavy metal water tank that must have weighed at least a ton and he wanted to load that onto a truck. Instead of getting enough men to lift it onto the truck he put a chain under it, hooked that chain under it, hooked that chain onto a lift device on his tractor and the tractor just lifted

the tank up in the air. They ran the truck under it and let it down on the truck. Nobody had to exert himself at all and they had the job done.

Q. Did you use windmills on your farm for water?

A. No, we didn't have any windmill on our place. There were windmills here and there through the country. They worked all right except that usually, before they wore out, there would be a severe windstorm come along and damage them so they had to have repairs or they wouldn't work.

Q. Where did your water come from on the Old Home Farm?

A. In Sangamon County and most of Illinois, for that matter, if you dig down about 25 feet on this level prairie land you strike some kind of formation. Maybe it's nothing but loose dirt instead of tight clay, but you find a formation that has enough water in it that you can make a well that will take care of all the water you need for a household and for the livestock that you would find around an ordinary farm.

Lots of places you won't find enough water to keep a large herd of cattle, if you're feeding a lot of cattle; they use more water than any other animals do, at least it seems that way. Some places they have trouble finding a well that will take care of a herd of cattle. Sometimes, you had to go more than 25 feet. Up in the vicinity of Athens, we dug a new well and went 45 feet. But we got enough water from that well to take care of two houses, the ordinary livestock, and a pretty good herd of milk cows and

feeding cows.

Most of the water that you get out of wells in the country around here--an ordinary farm well--comes from limestone or shale, in one form or another, and has quite a bit of lime in it. It tastes all right and it works all right but it fills your tea kettle full of solid lime.

Q. What effect did the introduction of barbed wire have in this country?

A. Well, barbed wire became a necessity because in order to make the rails for a fence, you had to have a pretty good-sized tree, and it had to be a certain quality. They cut down the trees to the length of the rails. I don't remember if there was a standard length of a rail for a fence, but that log was split apart to make the fence rails. And, of course, to make a fence rail in a field of any size, it took a lot of rails; that meant a lot of trees. With time, the trees were all gone, there just were no more trees from which they could make more fence rails, and the old rails, of course, in time rotted. The broken rails were hauled up to the barn lot at the house and chopped up--usually chopped into pieces with an ax--and made the fuel that they used in the cookstove in the house. Most of the old cookstoves burned wood for fuel.

Well, of course, when the fences began to fall down and they didn't have new rails to repair them, the livestock would break through the fence and get into the field of grain, the cornfield, so some concerns started manufacturing wire. The first wire was not what afterward became the common barbed wire for fences. The first wire was a plain ribbon metal. Along the side of the ribbon they would

cut a prong to stick out--stick out from the side of the ribbon--maybe a quarter of an inch or maybe a little more. Every six or eight inches along the side of the ribbon there'd be one of these barbs sticking out, and the same way on the other side of the ribbon. In between the two, on the opposite side, there'd be a barb at regular intervals along the length of the wire. Those barbed wires were too dangerous; they never became common.

The other barbed wire came on the market and it was formed by taking two or more plain wires--just plain, small dimension wires--and twisting them around each other between the long wires at regular intervals, maybe only four inches, but the interval was varied. You could get barbed wire with barbs about four inches [apart] or you could get barbed wire with barbs as far apart as you wanted them. Of course, you didn't want them too far apart or they wouldn't serve their purpose. But the barbs were a good, short piece of wire cut off at each end at an angle so that the end was sharp, and those were inserted between the wires that were to be twisted. They were given a turn that made them stay in place, and you had a barbed wire fence that became common.

The first old ribbon wires would turn the larger stock like horses or cows, But as I've said, they were really dangerous because if the wire came loose or drooped down too low and a horse, for instance, got a foot over that ribbon of wire and got tangled up in it, in trying to get loose he'd fall and the animal had to be killed. Lots of them were ruined.

We had a good horse that got tangled up in a piece of that ribbon

wire that was in an old fence down in the river bottom. Before anyone found the horse, that wire had cut the mare right in front of the front leg, not enough to cut the horse's throat, but deep enough that the flesh hung down. Well, my father found her, got her out of the wire, got her up to the barn, and bound that cut together so the bleeding stopped and the mare got well eventually, and lived and did a lot of work for years after that.

Anyway, the other newer barbed wire wasn't so dangerous, although it was still bad to have a fence made of it. The barbed wire was strung close to the ground. If you didn't string it close to the ground, you didn't have a fence that would turn the pigs or the small hogs.

So, it wasn't many years before the manufacturers developed some kind of woven wire fence. At first, most of the woven wire fencing was woven in widths of perhaps thirty inches or something like that, not all the same, but you could put thirty inches of that woven wire fencing along the bottom of your fence. It would turn pigs and the smaller animals, lambs, and sheep. Then you put two or three lines of ordinary barbed wire along above the woven wire and you had a real good fence, it would turn farm animals, big or little.

Before that became too common, some farmers who still had timberland would take a good-sized block, cut it off into blocks about thirty inches long, and strip those blocks into staves or pickets almost an inch thick and maybe two inches in width. And by taking

a plain wire or two wires and weaving them back and forth, putting in one of these staves between the wires every time the wires were crossed, you could make a fence that had pickets at the bottom, close enough to turn any small animal and [it] served the purpose that was afterwards served by the woven wire fence.

Before the wire fence in widths of fifty inches or so became common on the market, my grandfather, maternal grandfather, bought a machine to make woven wire fence on the farm. The machine was made by a concern called Kittselman Brothers, someplace over in Indiana. To use that machine, you got rolls of number nine wire, just plain galvanized wire. Wire is numbered according to size; I don't know how big the largest wire would be, but number nine was a good-sized, strong wire. To make the wire fence, those wires were strung along the bottom, six inches apart; they're what gave the fence its strength. When you bought the wire it came rolled up in big rolls.

My grandfather had a rail fence that had gotten bad along the road on one side of the land where he lived, about three-quarters of a mile of it. I was big enough then to do a lot of things, and he needed help to make this fence, so I got the job of helping him. We took those rolls of wire and put them on a bracket or a wheel at the far end of the fence line, and one job I got was to take one end of that wire and pull it along the fence row to the other end. This fence row went down from sloping ground and up over a little mound and then leveled off to the south end. But before we started making this, the woven wire part of the

fence, the fence posts had already been set in place.

You know you set an ordinary fence post by simply digging a hole in the ground big enough to drop a post in there. Then you held the post in position straight up and down where you wanted it, and pushed some dirt back in the hole, tamped it back with a tamper around the post until you had that hole filled up with tamped dirt.

Well, for this woven wire fence it took some five or six, maybe more, of these number nine main wires. After we got the wires pulled along the fence row, we took wire staples and fastened these wires to the fence post, not every post, but about every fifth or sixth post. We'd fasten those wires where they would be when the fence was complete, to keep them from tangling up. When we got that all done, we fastened this fence machine to the number nine wires at the end of the fence.

The machine had large metal spools on it, and on these spools we'd wind a smaller wire, a number sixteen wire, much smaller than number nine and easy to bend and handle, and we'd wind that number sixteen wire on those spools just like you'd wind cord on a big spool, until we had the spools full. There were a number of those spools fastened on the machine. Then, when you turned the big crank to operate the machine it would turn those spools, each spool would go around one of those number nine wires and then hit a trigger and it'd fall on a groover and go around the number nine wire next to the bottom. Then you pulled your fence machine along, and as you went along, you had the mesh woven and had a

good wire fence that'd even turn chickens.

The trouble with that fence was that number sixteen wire is too small and number sixteen wire was not well-coated. The coat of zinc with which it was galvanized was poor quality and poorly put on, and the small wire, in the course of a few years, would rust out, and you'd have nothing left but a ragged fence with a lot of number nine wire on it. So, the manufacturers when they marketed their woven wire fence soon learned to weave it with their machine and use a much heavier wire.

Q. Were these kinds of machines common in this part of the country?

A. No, that was the only one that I ever saw.

Q. Was it used just on your farm or did the neighbors borrow it?

A. Others borrowed it and made them some fence, but it wasn't particularly cheap because the farmer himself had to pay a lot more for wire than the manufacturer and so it never became common. The machines themselves cost more money than the farmer wanted to spend just to get a machine with which he'd have to do a lot more work to make himself a fence.

Q. When you mentioned your mare being hurt, was there a veterinarian around in the early days?

A. Not that I know of. There probably would have been in a city like Springfield, but not out in the country.

Q. Did the animals receive shots or injections the way they do today?

A. Oh, no. No, farmers used to have home remedies of one kind or another and they used to doctor some of the animals, just like they doctored themselves, with some of those old remedies. The chances are they did the animal more harm than they would have if they'd let him alone; he'd [have] gotten well, in time. But there weren't any veterinarians handy that they could send for like they do these days.

Q. How much purebred stock was there?

A. Well, the farmers tried to improve the breed as much as they could and they developed better breeds, better animals. Now and then, some farmer would import an animal, more often a hog than any other. Of course, they did import horses from Scotland or England, different breeds, like Clydesdales, but this country developed good breeds with horses and importing any animal from some foreign country was not common.

Q. Were your fields allowed to lie fallow?

A. No. This land, the good land around here, was never left uncultivated. On some of the old hillsides, erosion washed the soil away so that it wasn't profitable to try to farm it any longer, it was put back into grass or a meadow or just abandoned entirely. There was plenty more land so the fellow would abandon that side of his hill and go and get him a better one.

Speaking of the old rail fences, the most common old rail fences, when they were plentiful, was what they called the stake and rider

fence. In a stake and rider fence, the rail fence was laid up with one rail on top of another until they had a fence built up of six or eight rails. Then they would take a stake--sometimes a stake was just part of an old fence rail that had broken off at the end, had something happen so that it wasn't long enough to make a rail in the fence.

They would dig a hole about fifteen or eighteen inches deep at a corner of the rail fence and stick one of those rails in the ground and lean it up against the corner of that rail fence after the rails were laid one on top of the other. Then they'd take another similar stake on the other side of the fence, at the same point, and put one end in the ground and lean it against the fence so that the two stakes were leaning, and across each other, just above the rails.

Then they'd finish the fence by putting the next fence rail in the fork where those stakes crossed. They put the rail in there so that so long as the rail was in place it locked those two stakes together. The other end of the rail just sloped down and they put it on top of a rail that had already been laid up. Then, they did the same thing with the next corner on the rail fence, the two stakes crossed above that slanting rail, one end of which was up above the stakes at the first corner. They did that on down the length of the fence. Next, they took plain rail again, plain fence rail, and they laid it across from the top of one of these fence corners to the top of the other. So they had their

fence built up about fourteen, sixteen inches, and they saved themselves three or four rails, or maybe a little more. They saved themselves three or four rails in each panel of that rail fence.

There was a gap between those top rails that a little pig could go through but he couldn't get up that high, and the horses and cattle were too big, they couldn't get through the fence, they couldn't even stick their heads through that crack. Usually they had two rails on top of these stakes, because they needed the weight of those top rails to hold everything in place and to keep some of the livestock from trying to crowd through.

If a big, old cow learned that she could get her head through and push hard enough, she could push that corner of the fence over and get out of the field. It usually happened where the fence had become run down to some extent. The old cow was in the pasture that had been eaten off because of dry weather, didn't produce grass very fast, but on the other side of the fence there was perhaps a roadway or maybe a field and along that fence row the grass grew up tall and lush. They'd push through that fence, if they found they could do it, just to get to that fresh grass.

Up here at what they call New Salem, whoever is in charge of that put in some stretches of rail fence, and some parts of that are built with stakes and riders. But no farmer, no settler, ever built a rail fence like they have theirs up there; now, that is wrong.

Q. In what way?

A. They put in the stakes and just put rails across from the top of one cross stake to the other. They didn't put a rail sliding in between to fill up that space and the fence they got up there was just made to order for an old cow to stick her head through there and walk off with the rail fence.

Q. Did this fence zigzag?

A. Oh, it had to because nothing else held it up. To build a rail fence in a straight line, you drove a stake at the far end of a stretch where you wanted the fence. Then you came back some distance--and you had to have help, it took two people to do this--and somebody at the back end of the fence would sight down the line and you drove your second stake in the line where the fence was to be. You put a white rag or something, so you could see those stakes.

You took a stake and you cut a point on the end of it so you could stick that down in the ground and hold it in place. You nailed a slat or a strip of wood at right angles on that stick, you nailed it at one end and you cut it off out here at a certain distance. I've forgotten what that measurement was, but with a standard rail, there was also a standard distance for this zigzag. So, you had that slat nailed to your stake, you had what they called a "Jacob's staff." You started to lay up your rail fence; you laid down a rail to find out how far out the end of that rail should be from the center line on which you wanted to build a fence.

You took this "Jacob's staff," and you stuck it in the ground and

lined it up with your other stakes, so you got it right in line. The end of the slat sticking out on your "Jacob's staff" fixed the place where the end of that rail was to come. That fixed that corner. You took your "Jacob's staff" and stepped back about opposite where the next corner was to be and the man ran that rail; he put it down right. You'd turn your "Jacob's staff" around the other way and sight down the line again, that's where the next corner was. And in that way, all the corners of that rail fence lined up on each side, and the fence itself was on a straight line, a quarter of a mile long if the fence extended that far.

Q. Was the "Jacob's staff" more than just a stick of wood?

A. Yes. You could split a piece off a board--you wanted a stake about seven or eight feet long for the upright stake. For the other slat, you took any kind of a slat, you could split a slat out of a chunk of wood, if you wanted to.

Now, this rail's already in place. (Demonstrating with two pencils.) We put this one across the rail that's already there and you bring it up here. Now then, if the "Jacob's staff" was here, and you put this rail in here, it'd be sticking way too far out. So, the rail tells you where it's got to be so that this rail, the end of it, is at the end of this slat. The rail's just so long, you can't make it any longer. This end's fixed because it fits across the other rail that's already there. That point is determined and the next job is simply to turn this rail one way or another so that it's under the end of that "staff." The next rail goes

across here the same way.

Q. I see. And that's called a "Jacob's staff"?

A. Yes.

Q. That's a new word for me.

A. I don't know where it came from.

Q. What kind of records were kept in those earlier days?

A. Very few, very few. I didn't help keep any; I don't know just what they did do.

Q. They didn't keep accounts the way our farmers do today?

A. No, no. There wasn't any reason for keeping accounts like they do today. Most of them didn't even buy any seed; they kept their seed from one year to the next. They wanted seed corn, they went out in the crib, picked out a good-looking ear of corn--good-sized, well-filled, especially corn with an ear of a uniform size, well-filled at the outer end of it--and they shelled the corn off of that for their seed for that year's crop. They didn't buy any DDT. or fertilizer; they didn't even buy limestone in those days.

My father subscribed for some farmer's magazines or papers. He used to read those and he learned that after a field had been planted to corn several years, his crops should be rotated and he learned that clover was a good thing to grow. Timothy, while it made good hay and the farmers raised a lot of it because it

was good feed for the horses, didn't help the soil, at least it didn't help like clover would.

One year the Twist brothers, that operated the grain elevators and lumberyards in several of the small towns in Sangamon County, in some manner or other had on their hands quite a quantity of lime that had been manufactured, burned and put in barrels for use as quicklime to make mortar or plaster. But this lime had become slaked, either air slaked or got wet someway, and was all ruined for plaster or cement purposes. He, my father, went in to buy that at some low figure--I don't have any idea what they wanted for it and I don't remember whether he bought it--but at that time, the farmers that kept informed already knew that some fields needed limestone to help grow clover. Alfalfa was a thing they hadn't heard of yet.

Q. About what year was this, that lime came into use?

A. Oh, that was along in the 1890's. That was along in the 1890's because after the 1890's I left the farm and I can't tell you how things developed from time to time. What they did before then, I don't remember except things that were told me by the old people.

Q. You mentioned walking to school. I'd be interested in learning something about the first school you attended.

A. Well, the first school I attended was at what they called Forest Grove. It was a little schoolhouse on the west side of Horse Creek in the southwest corner of Rochester Township. The school-

house was a mile from the Old Home Place where we were living at that time. When I started school in the fall--six years old--the old bridge across Horse Creek, just below the schoolhouse, had broken down or washed out, at least there wasn't any bridge there. More than half of the schoolchildren lived on the opposite side of Horse Creek from the schoolhouse. So, the neighbors got together and built a little footbridge across Horse Creek with logs high enough that we could cross on it. Unless the creek got out of banks we used that footbridge. I went to school there only two terms, or most of two terms because we moved away in April of my second term at that school. When we moved to New City, our house was on the corner of a farm, and the schoolhouse was a two-room schoolhouse just across the road. From that time on, we never had any excuse for not getting to school on time. (laughter)

Q. Were you sorry?

A. Well, sometimes we had other things we'd rather have done. But for the most part, all the kids enjoyed going to school. Some of them didn't like the way they had to work when they got there, but that was the only time that a lot of those youngsters ever got together. Some of them had to walk almost two miles from out in the far corner of the district, but they usually made it all right. It didn't hurt them any.

Q. How many children were in the school?

A. I'm not sure, but there were two rooms in that New City school-

house because there were too many children in the district for one room and one teacher. They built an additional schoolroom and had two teachers, one teacher taught grades up to three or four. Then the pupils that had finished in that room moved into the other room. That school was the same as the other country schools, they taught only lower grades. As a matter of fact, in most of the schools they didn't have grades up to eight. They'd have two or three of the lower grades. By the time a child reached grades seven and eight for instance, the classes would usually be combined because, at that age, there were so many children that stayed out of school a big part of the time to help with the work on the farm that the classes in those grades were rather small.

The schoolteacher got a license to teach school by taking an examination, which was held by the county superintendent each year. After a person had passed what they called the teacher's examination, he or she got a license, and that was good as long as they wanted to keep teaching.

When I was sixteen years old, I had gotten to be in the upper class there at our school, and we had a schoolteacher that liked to have some of his older pupils study to take this teacher's examination. If they passed the examination, why that was a good mark for him, he got credit for being a good schoolteacher. That winter, he had two or three of us read some books that ordinarily we wouldn't ever have seen. One book that we had to read was a book on pedagogy, how to teach. And then there were some other things that we wouldn't have studied in the ordinary course--only two or three of us--on

subjects that we wouldn't have gotten in any good eighth grade school. The only subjects on which this examination for teachers were made were the subjects included in grades up to eighth grade. They were examined though on pedagogy, and maybe one or two others, but I don't remember.

Anyway, comes spring and time for the annual teacher's examination. It was a two-day examination; we stayed overnight here in Springfield. That was something unusual. I think that may have been the first time I ever stayed overnight in the city of Springfield.

Q. Where did you stay?

A. I don't remember, but I remember that we ate in one of these restaurants. We ate at one of these restaurants--we could still get oysters--and we got oysters at night, and the next morning we got more oysters for breakfast. We didn't get oysters in the country very often. But anyway, when they examined the papers there were two or three of us that passed that examination. The county superintendent was a man named Van Dorn and he wrote me a letter and said that I had passed the teacher's examination. But the application that I had filed showed that I was only sixteen years of age and he couldn't issue a teacher's license to anyone that wasn't at least eighteen years old. He said when I got to be eighteen years old, I could have a teacher's license if I wanted.

Well, that's the way it worked out. We moved away from that farm the next year. One of the teachers that had taught at New City was still teaching school and was the principal of the high school over in Chatham. The folks said that if I wanted to go to school

that winter, to this teacher in Chatham, I might do it. I could have a horse, and as long as the weather was good, I could ride the horse. When I wanted to, I could find a place to board over there and go to school in Chatham. And that's what I did. I found some friends of the family over there named Harmon. The old man was retired, he didn't do any work any time of year. His wife had a room or two or three, two as I remember it, that she could rent out. She had a grown son that was part of the family. She had two daughters that were still in school. I could board there with the family. The old lady, she was a very good cook, and I had a room there. I had a bed in the room with this grown son; we roomed together. This teacher had never had any work, in advanced subjects that is; he himself had never studied any of my high school subjects except what he picked up on his own, which didn't include very many subjects. He was inclined to be a good mathematician and he could teach first year algebra and perhaps one or two other subjects. The year I went over there, I did get a little algebra, and in addition to algebra, I studied geography, history, a couple of other subjects, I don't remember what they were.

Q. Were you seventeen years old at this time?

A. I was seventeen, the next summer I became eighteen. I don't know who suggested it [teaching school]. Both of my parents had gone to school in their time. Anyway, the chances are, it was my mother; she was always urging me to try something else. She told me, "You, you can do it, if you try." Anyway, I got the job of teaching the country school, it was called the North Cotton Hill

School, one room, out in the country. So I taught school a year, one term. I had beginners and I had some pupils that were a lot bigger and older than I was. Altogether, I had 45 [pupils], all the way from first grader on up. It wasn't hard. I didn't have any trouble except one time. The families out there, they were nice people. They wanted their kids to behave and usually the kids did behave. You interested in what happened in that school?

Q. Yes, I am. What happened the one time they didn't behave?

A. Well, there was one little boy, one little boy--I don't remember what he did, something he never should have done and he knew it. I had to give him a whipping. I had laid up on a table in the corner a little switch I'd cut off of some willow tree, and it'd been there until it'd gotten dry and brittle, you know. Anyway, I took him by the collar and got that little old switch and it just broke all to pieces; I gave him a whipping. He was the only one I had any trouble with until towards the end of the term.

Monday, after the noon hour, there was a bell--I had to ring a bell at the end of the noon recess, the kids would all march back in and take their seats--so the time came, I rang the bell. Three of those bigger boys weren't there; they'd been there in the morning. A teacher always had a book and he had to keep a record of how many got there every day. Well, they didn't show up until the next morning. So, the next morning they were back in school and I found out from some of the other children that one of the farmers in the neighborhood was driving a few cattle that he had

raised and sold to the purchaser.

During the noon hour I hadn't seen him go by, but he had gone past the schoolhouse and these three boys had gone off with him and with these cattle. Well, I called the boys in when they got there the next morning and I said,"Now, you boys played hookey yesterday. You may have your choice. You may take a whipping, or if you don't want to do that, I'll tell your parents. If your parents don't want me to give you a whipping, they'll probably do it themselves, and you know that." One of them in particular, I know if his dad had found he'd played hookey, he'd of just tanned him with a good leather strap. "Well," I said, "you've got until noon to decide what you're going to do." So at noon, two of the three came up, said they'd take a whipping if I didn't tell their parents on them. The third one said, well he didn't want to take a whipping because he had told them what he had done and if I wanted to verify that, that was all right, I could talk to his parents about it, but he'd already told them. So I let him off. I gave the other two as good a whipping as I could with anything I had there. That was all the trouble I ever had.

Q. How old were these boys? Were they bigger than you?

A. One of them was. One of them must have been about my age, I'm not sure.

Q. What did you use to write on?

A. Oh, in those days, everybody had a big slate that they used for

figuring or anything, where you just erased it when you got through. But, otherwise, we had pads, just coarse paper you know, and usually they used a lead pencil. But the school board furnished a small supply of ordinary writing paper, foolscap. Foolscap, it used to be called, I don't know why, maybe it still is. It was made with a finish that took pen and ink.

Q. What were the school hours?

A. Nine o'clock till four, with an hour for lunch at noon and a ten or fifteen-minute recess twice a day.

Q. What were some of your pupils' names?

A. Well, one of the two that got a whipping was named Baugh. One was named Beam. And he was a relative of Harvey Beam who's now a judge on the circuit court, here in Sangamon County. By the way, this judge's father, I'm pretty sure he was one of the big boys that went to school to me there that winter. His name was Emmanuel.

END OF TAPE

A. His younger brother came to school one day, and was telling about their father finding Emmanuel's chewing tobacco out in their barn; Emmanuel was learning to chew tobacco. This brother of Emmanuel's could imitate the father pretty well. He told that when the father found Emmanuel's tobacco, he said to Emmanuel, "Why, Emmanuel! Is this your tobaccer?" (laughter)

Q. Where did you live when you were teaching at North Cotton Hill?

A. My folks lived on the Old Home Farm.

Q. They'd moved back to Rochester from New City?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you commute to work every morning?

A. No, part of the time I boarded up there in the neighborhood. In those days, the roads were all dirt roads and they really got bad in the wintertime. That's all the school teaching I did.

Q. Wasn't your first law office in the historic Lincoln-Herndon Building?

A. Yes, I had my office there and those rooms at the south end of the floor of that building were also offices, used by Aaron Colean who was an agent or representative in Springfield for a large Indiana real estate outfit, and was selling land in northern Indiana and southern Michigan. Colean is a common name around Pawnee. His family lived down in the Pawnee neighborhood.

There was one other tenant back there for a time, another lawyer, named William Brinkerhoff. Brinkerhoff's father had been in the insurance business here in Springfield and I think, at one time, may have been Illinois Superintendent of Insurance. At least he or his father had been in some office in the state of Illinois Insurance Department. William afterwards quit trying to practice

law and got a job in some other line. I think he got a job with the state of Illinois. At any rate, he didn't care for a law practice. Some of the others in the office back there said that at one time or another somebody had come to him with a piece of law business, but he was timid for some reason, he wouldn't take the business. He explained to them that he didn't practice that kind of law.

Q. Did you think of the historical connection of William Henry Herndon and you, a great-nephew, practicing in the same building where he had practiced with Lincoln?

A. Oh, no. I didn't think of the connection at all. The old man Keyes then owned the building. He had taken it over from the Farmers Bank; he was looking for a tenant and we were looking for a location.

Q. You didn't even think about the fact that you were practicing on the same floor and almost the same rooms as your great-uncle?

A. I'm not sure it was the same floor. I may be mistaken but isn't it here that the Federal Court was on the second floor in that building and the Lincoln and Herndon law office was on the third floor?

Q. Have you been down since they've redone it?

A. No, I haven't been to it since they finished it. They changed the stairway from the exact place where it was located at the time we were in the building. I don't know why they did that.

At that time there had been another building enclosure to the south of this old building--it really didn't belong there--that was open and may have been the part of the public alley at one time. It had just been taken over by somebody that took and held possession of it without any good title. Of course, by this time, I guess it's ripened into a good title, but at the time we had an office in that building, that was open space.

Q. That would be another trip for the springtime. You and I'll go down to the Lincoln-Herndon law office and see if they'll let two Herndons in free.

A. Oh, they charge there?

Q. Fifty cents.

A. Oh, that's all?

Q. But it might be interesting for you to see it.

A. Oh, yes. I intended to look through it, but always had something else to do.

Q. Did you have a secretary when you were a struggling young lawyer?

A. Not until I moved into the Booth building with Mr. Stevens. Then, we had one secretary; she did the stenographic work for us and Otto A. Elliott, who was in those rooms with Jenkins and me. Otto A. Elliott had rented space on the opposite side of our waiting room in the Booth building and the three of us together had a

secretary. As long as we stayed in that building, I think we only had one girl, that is, one at a time. I could be wrong about that, but at least for several years, we only had one.

Q. Where is the Booth building?

A. The Booth building is the eight-story building on the south side of Monroe Street, just west of the Ferguson building. There was a driveway, an alleyway, between the Ferguson building and the Booth building. They changed the name of both buildings, I guess. Some building and loan society owns the Booth building, I think. The Ferguson building was on the corner of Monroe and Sixth. The ground floor of the Ferguson building was occupied by the Lincoln Bank, which afterwards consolidated with the State National Bank. Then we moved out of the Ferguson building.

Q. Where were you living when you first started law practice? Your family was in Champaign, is that correct?

A. I don't remember what year they moved to Champaign, but when Jenkins and I moved to Springfield, we rented a room in a house on the north side of Capitol Avenue, west of Ninth Street. The house was then occupied by a man and his wife, no children. The man was the proprietor of the barber shop in the St. Nicholas Hotel, and they had several rooms on the second floor that they rented to roomers.

I stayed there a year or two until Dr. Zelle came to Springfield to open a doctor's office. He found a vacant apartment of six rooms on the second floor above John Scanlon's saloon on the north-

east corner of Eleventh and South Grand. He figured that would make him a good place in which to start practicing medicine; so he rented the flat, fixed up the front two rooms for his office and his waiting room. We were introduced by Harry Southwick, who was an old friend of mine for years.

Harry Southwick and I grew up down in the south part of this county. We had gone to school at Chatham one winter and we hunted squirrels and rabbits and went fishing together until we both went off to school.

Harry Southwick had started in to study medicine in the Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia from which Dr. Zelle had just graduated. So Southwick introduced me to Zelle, and Zelle said, "Well, I have extra rooms out here and no use for them. Why don't we get some furniture and fix up the extra rooms for living quarters. The back room has a kitchen sink and some other accommodations." And he said, "It's all ready, except we have to have some furniture." Well, we made a deal. We got a bed, in fact we got two beds; before long we got equipped up there. Dr. Zelle's brother came to live with us and attend high school here in Springfield. The three of us lived there. Zelle's brother was old enough to be starting high school. His family lived at Lake Forest, which didn't have any high school, so Doc's brother came down to live with us there in the flat and went to high school here in Springfield.

At that time, there was a Mrs. Miranda that operated a little dry goods or general merchandise store just two or three doors north

of the Scanlon saloon on the east side of Eleventh Street. For some reason or other, there were several changes at that little corner of Eleventh and South Grand. The storeroom at the south side of South Grand Avenue, on the southeast corner of the intersection, was vacant and Mrs. Miranda rented that vacant storeroom and moved her store into it. The same property included the adjoining dwelling which had ordinary baths and bedrooms on the second floor. I guess Mrs. Miranda died, at least something happened, and her boy--then just a growing young man--became the owner and operator of the store and was living by himself in the adjoining residence.

The next change, as I remember it, was made by Dr. Zelle who had built up enough practice that he felt he must have an office downtown in the business section. [He] found a place that he rented on the west side of Seventh Street, just south of the Prince building, which was then used by Dr. Penick and some others. Dr. Prince may have died. Anyway, Dr. Zelle made a deal with Miranda, and he and I moved over to the second floor of the residence and occupied rooms on the second floor with Miranda.

I had met one of the typists that worked in the offices of the Abstract Company and at that time I was calling on her about as often as she would let me. And Dr. Zelle, through her, had met the youngest daughter of old Judge Kane who, at one time, was county judge of Sangamon County. Doc was calling on her just as often as he could arrange it and I guess the next thing that happened--Doc talked his girl into it--they got married.

That split up the party out at Miranda's house. But, in the meantime, the big Presbyterian church[1] on Walnut Street had a vacant space west of the church and had built in this space two or three tennis courts equipped with backstops, posts and nets. For some reason, nobody was making much use of them.

At that time, there was a Mrs. Berry who ran a rooming house. In the rooms that she rented there were living Edgar Sampson, a lawyer, Harlington Wood, another lawyer, Amos Richardson, who held a job in the office of the Secretary of State, and at least one other lawyer also lived in the rooming house.

Q. Was Mr. Melin living there too?

A. No. He never lived anywhere except home until the time he got married--his folks' home. The other lawyer living there at Mrs. Berry's was Ben Boynton from Pleasant Plains. That group and perhaps one or two others had gotten together and arranged with the church for the use of one of those tennis courts during the summer and fall.

After I had met some of them downtown, they told me about their arrangement and asked me to join the group, and I was glad to do it. We went out there after office hours and on holidays or whenever a group of us could get together and played at what we called tennis. None of us were really any good at the game. Amos Richardson and Jim Melin were usually in the group when I

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[1] Westminster Presbyterian Church. [Ed.]

got out there because both of them had regular office hours and could get away promptly when the time came.

Most often when four of us got together, Harlington Wood and I played the other two. Harlington was tall enough, he could reach high into the air without having to jump. Anyway, he took the back end of our court and put me up close to the net. It worked out pretty well. We managed to hold our own about half the time until somebody like Joe Bernard showed up and played as one of the other players. When that happened, all Harlington and I were good for was to go get the balls.

Jim Melin found that on the far side of Glenwood Avenue was a residence in which a girl or two about his age resided, and another girl or two were frequent visitors. When we were playing a game on the tennis courts and a ball came towards Jim which he decided he couldn't return properly over the net, he took a swing and knocked that ball as far as he could over into the yard where those girls were visiting. Then he had to go and get the ball. So Jim got acquainted with the girls and as the season went on he had to go chase the tennis ball more and more often. Eventually, he talked one of the girls into marrying him.

A big percentage of students in the law department [at the University of Michigan] were older; they were men that had taught school, some of them were already married. Some of them could teach the high school subjects just as good as the professor, but lots of them hadn't been able to accummulate enough money, even if they

taught school, to put them through law school, so they had to have some kind of work, some kind of job.

Of course, they worked during the summer at whatever they could find to do. Some of them sold encyclopedias from house to house, some of them sold cooking utensils--any kind of a job they could find to make some dollars during the summertime. When they got down there to school, some of them found a job waiting tables at a boarding house, maybe washing dishes, and one waited tables down at the hotel in Ann Arbor and one of them, I remember, had a laundry route. He got the job of caring for all the laundry that he could. The other students let him take their laundry and he'd gather it all together, put it in a big box or basket, and ship it to some other town where the work was done. Then it'd come back and he'd distribute it; that's the way he paid his way through law school. There was just no end of queer ways that those students would work to make their money. But they were all there for business, with very few exceptions.

In the first year up there, I had a fellow that sat next to me, who belonged in a frat house, he was a member of some fraternity. He only lasted one semester; at the end of the semester, he didn't make the grade. That was the end of him. But most of them up there were there in earnest. They knew what they were trying to do.

Q. What did you do during the summer?

A. I went back and helped on the farm. One summer, my father wanted

a new barn--the old one was very old, he needed most of it for hay--he needed a barn for livestock. He hired a country carpenter that was good at building barns. I don't think he would have been any good at building a house, but anyway, he hired this carpenter and I had a job of helping the carpenter build that barn. One thing a farmer needed in a barn, in those days, was a large loft or a hay mantle, and the trouble with some barns was that they didn't build the side of the barn too high, and from that side they'd just build a loft with a straight pitch up to the roof, up to the tree. And, of course, they'd put a floor in the loft high enough so that they could use the lower part of the barn for storage or stalls for the horses and other animals. But that roof was in the way if you tried to fill it with hay and had to get up there on top of that hay you bumped your head on that roof all the time and on the rafters. You couldn't get the haymow[2] full, because the hay would settle itself down.

So, we started to build a new barn and we figured out that the thing to do would be to build a mansard roof on her. The lower part of the roof isn't as steep as the other; it goes almost straight up part of the way and then it makes a jog or two and slants in more each time, so really, it's not exactly round, but it makes an arch. So we built a new barn and put a mansard roof on it, the first one I ever saw out in the country.

I think it was the next summer when I got home, this carpenter

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[2] A hayloft. [Ed.]

had a job building another farmer a barn. He wanted me to help him build that. So the folks let me go and I helped some with the work at home. But for two or three weeks when the corn crop was taken care of at home and the wheat was out of the way and it wasn't time to start shucking the new crop of corn, I worked with this carpenter and we built another barn. That's the way I put in two summers while I was at the University of Michigan.

Our house got a little bit small, so my father decided to build a couple of rooms. We built two or three new rooms on the house, and to get that done, we hired another country carpenter that was something like a forty-second cousin of my mother's. (laughter) Maybe not that far, but a distant relative, anyway. He could have been a second cousin. He was already an old man, but he took this job and I got to help him. He'd teach me how to do this and how to do that, and between us, we got the three rooms built, all enclosed, and a shingle roof put on. I don't remember how it got plastered, but I think they had another farmer that did plaster work. Anyway, it was all done, but it wasn't painted, and it needed to be painted. So, the old carpenter got the oil and the lead and mixed the paint to paint the outside white, like the rest of the house. I forget what color we painted inside, but anyway, he showed me how to mix the paint; so much lead, so much oil, and inside we used so much color. He showed me how to brush it--start at the bottom and brush it until the brush marks don't show. You want to paint a coat perfectly smooth. So we got the house painted.

Q. Is this the house where your sister and brother are presently living?

A. No, this is another house.

Q. We'll have to go look at all of these houses sometime. Will you go out and drive around with me some afternoon and point them out to me?

A. Most of them are gone. The double schoolhouse at New City is gone; the one down in Forest Grove is now part of a man's house. The old house on the Old Home Farm in Rochester is still there. Outside it's just about as it was; but it's been changed quite a bit inside. Another house that was on my grandfather's place on the Rochester farm has been moved. Whether it's been torn down or not, I don't know, but it's gone; it's not where it was when I painted it.

After painting that addition to our house, the next summer comes along, and I got some spare time. The old two-room schoolhouse across the road had been painted white at one time, but that was so many years ago there was hardly any paint left on the oldest part of it, just enough that you could see at one time it had been painted. So my mother suggested I could paint that schoolhouse. She or some of the folks spoke to the school directors and they said, "Well what do you want to paint that schoolhouse with two coats of white paint?" So I said, "I'll do it for fifteen dollars." "All right," the director said, "We can get you the paint," and they did. They bought white lead and the

oil that they figured would be enough to do the job. I didn't know enough about it to make dependable figures on it at that time. I mixed up the white paint, painted that thing once and started around, painted a second coat on it. By the time I had given one side of the building a fresh coat of paint, up comes one of these little summer thunderstorms. I don't think it rained much, but the wind blew the dust off of that dirt road west of the schoolhouse against that fresh paint. It was terrible! I had to paint it again. Anyway, before I got near done I'd used up all the paint, and the director said to go and buy some more paint so we could finish it. But I got it finished and got fifteen dollars of my own money.

That's the first money I had earned except what I got helping out in some neighbor's hay field carrying water for the threshing crew in the summertime. I got fifty cents a day in all, working in the hay field.

Q. This was before you had taught?

A. Oh, yes. I wasn't more than fifteen years old. But I guess it was the next year the directors in the adjoining school wanted me to paint their schoolhouse. I forget the name of the school district. Anyway, it was out there in the prairie, and it was just one very big room. By that time, I'd figured out that I wasn't getting paid what the work was worth, so I asked them [for] $25, and I got $25 in real money for painting that little schoolhouse, two coats.

Q. How were the schools supported; how were the taxes levied at that time?

A. They were just levied as a part of the ordinary property taxes. In every township, they had what they called the town assessor. He went around and looked at your property and put a value on it. The county clerk took that evaluation and he took a report that had been made to him showing how much money this school district, or this road district, or public body, had to have out of the tax money for the next year. He added that up and then spread that total over the evaluation that had been turned in by this assessor. Then those figures were extended on a tax roll and the tax collector got those every spring. He'd come around and give you a bill for your taxes. So that's the way the schools got the money.

Q. Was livestock included?

A. Everything, even your pots and pans were supposed to be included, too.

Q. When you added your new rooms to the house, was there electricity at that time.

A. Oh, no, that wasn't heard of. They didn't have electricity even out at Rochester. They were proud of Rochester because it was on a telephone line. It was on a line of the Bell Telephone, a real telephone line!

Q. What year did they get telephones in Rochester?

A. It was a few years before my time, because as far back as I can remember, the telephone had been put in. But, when we were still living out there near the two-room school in New City, the Twist brothers got together and bought poles, and they built a two-wire telephone line from Rochester clear through New City down to Pawnee, so they could talk from one of their offices to the other. That was quite an enterprise.

A few years later the old Dr. Southwick, that had his office out in Beamington--he was a cousin of Harry Southwick, that was the doctor that settled here in Springfield--bought him some poles and put in a telephone line with one wire from his house in Beamington, about three miles across country, to the grocery store in New City. That wire was grounded so they had a circuit to operate it. They had an apparatus that they fastened on the wall, and you turned a crank as fast as you could. If you were lucky, that would ring a bell at the other end of the wire and someone would answer it there. Most of the time the circuit was so poor that they could just make out what each other said by yelling as loud as they could. Somebody said, "If they just opened the window in the grocery store when they're going to telephone, Doc could step outdoors at his house at Beamington and hear a whole lot better than he could hear over the telephone wire." (laughter)

Q. When did you first get a telephone in your home?

A. About 1905 or 1906. They put what they call a farmer's line out through the country from the little towns like Rochester. A long line was built down our road. I'm pretty sure it ended about two

miles south of our place, but anyway, it got far enough out there that we got a telephone.

Q. So they got a telephone while you were in college?

A. I was away at college then, yes.

Q. Now, when did they move to the present farm in Rochester, where your sister and brother live now?

A. They moved from New City down there, I'm not sure now, about 1900. It's possible it might have been the year before or it might have been the year after.

Q. Did your parents build that house?

A. No, that was on the Old Home Farm. That was my grandfather's place. A part of that house, was built before the Civil War.

Q. You started life on that farm in Rochester, then you moved to New City, then you went to school in Chatham, taught school in North Cotton Hill, and moved back to the Rochester farm. Is that right?

A. Yes. Of course, the family didn't go with me to Chatham. The first I can remember, we were living in a house on my grandfather's farm. He owned several hundred acres, I don't know how many. Then he died and in a year or so after that, we moved from that house into the house in which he had lived, the old house on the Old Home Farm. It was from that house that I started to school

at Forest Grove when I was six years old. Then, in about two years, my father bought the land up in New City, and we moved up there. The family lived there in that house until about 1900.

By that time, my grandmother, who had continued to live on the Old Home Farm, had died. An aunt that had lived there with her had moved to Springfield, an uncle that had been there had gone on to Iowa, and my father bought part of the Old Home Farm, not all of it, but a good part of it. We moved back there, on the Old Home Farm, and that's where my sister and brother still live. As soon as the weather gets warm, sort of comfortable for moving around, we'll go out through that section of the country.

Q. I'd like to talk to your sister and your brother, too.

A. Well, my sister was quite a bit younger. She won't remember living at New City. She wasn't old enough [to remember] when we moved away from New City.

Q. When did you move into Springfield?

A. I didn't come to Springfield until after I got through law school.

Q. But your parents continued living on the farm out there in Rochester?

A. For a number of years they did. My brother, who's living out there now, got old enough to operate a farm. He married a country girl, and my sister and youngest brother were the only ones at home there. They gave the land to my brother Jack, and moved into a house down here at Woodside--if you know where Woodside Station is.

There used to be a stopping place down south of Springfield, they called Woodside, on the Interurban railroad. There was a family, that lived close there, named Crow. The Crow family had two boys, both grown. They had traveled back and forth on the Interurban and had gone to Springfield High School. The oldest one was teaching school. He became a good teacher; that's what he did the rest of his life. The younger one of the Crow boys finished high school and studied law someplace, I don't know where. He passed the bar examination--that was DeWitt Crow. He was a lawyer here in Springfield for years. Anyway, the two boys were ready to leave home, and I think that their father, maybe both their parents, died. The house was for rent, and my folks rented it and moved over there. My youngest brother traveled on the Interurban like the Crow boys did and went to high school here in Springfield. When he got through high school, the folks moved up to Champaign. They lived in Champaign until he got through the university there.

Q. Did your brothers and sisters move with them to Champaign?

A. The only members of the family that were home then were my youngest brother and sister, Grace, because when the family moved to Woodside my brother Jack took over the farm and, of course, he stayed on the farm. He's the one that's still there; he's been there ever since.

Q. What were you doing at this time?

A. I had just graduated from law school. I came to Springfield to open a law office with Chauncey Jenkins. He was in my class at Ann Arbor.

Q. This was the gentleman you spoke of that wanted to go to Oklahoma with you, originally?

A. No, no. The Michigan man that planned to go to Oklahoma with me, to open up a law office, graduated the year ahead of me. That fall, as I went back to Ann Arbor, I stopped over in Chicago to visit him. He was working in a law office in Chicago to get experience. He didn't say anything about being too hard up to stay in Chicago, but not many weeks after I got back in school in Ann Arbor, I had a letter from him, written down in Oklahoma. He explained that he didn't have the money to stay in Chicago any longer, and so he had gotten on the train and gone down to Oklahoma, apparently as far as his money would take him, because he only managed to get down to LeFlore County, which is the county adjoining the Arkansas state line.

That is in the part of Oklahoma where the Federal Government had made records of the Indian tribes. The members of the tribes had divided up the Indian land among the individual Indians, and transferred titles to particular tracts to the different individual members of each tribe, and gave them a title to a part of the land which they could keep, or they could sell and convey, the same as any other land. Gave them additional land which was called a homestead, which the Indians could not convey. Well, my friend Cruesus said, when he got down to Oklahoma, he inquired about opening up an office. He had landed in the town of Talihina, which was only a very small place at that time. He was introduced

to another lawyer in the town who was a member of the Indian tribe, and who had a considerable law business that wasn't equipped or trained properly to take care of a lot of it. So, he and my friend had made a deal. Cruesus was already in Oklahoma, had him an apartment and a law office, so that was the end of that arrangement.

When I got through school in 1907, I took the bar examination. On the way home, made a trip out to Iowa with an idea that I might like to start up out in Iowa. But I found that it would be impossible to take the bar examination out there for just about another year, so I came on home.

Chauncey Jenkins, when he graduated in my class in June, took a job selling advertising space for the Mark B. Batchelder firm, which was engaged in that line of business, with offices in Peoria. Jenkins traveled in Illinois with that firm, and made a call on the businessmen in Springfield. When he got in Springfield, he called me on the telephone, and I took him out to the Old Home Farm, where I was living with my brother and mother and sister--my father had died. Jenkins got into Springfield on Saturday and by the time he had called me and I had gotten into Springfield to pick him up, it was Saturday evening.

Well, the next day or so, we got to talking about locating some place, and Jenkins said the best place he had ever seen was right here in Springfield. He said he'd never been in a town where so many people were active, and the streets were so full of traffic, and the sidewalks were full of people, with everybody busy. He suggested that we both come to Springfield and open up.

an office; we agreed on that. A few weeks later that's what we did.

It was the first of January, 1908, when we opened up the office. We found one room for rent on the second floor on the southwest corner of Sixth and Adams. The adjoining room or two had been occupied by a real estate firm, Charlie Edmunds and John Gardner, together with Otto A. Elliott. Edmunds and Gardner had broken up, given up their sitting rooms, and we made a deal with Otto A. Elliott to use all those together. We stayed there a little over a year and picked up what business we could; a big part of that was just collecting the bills that the merchants were having trouble with. At the end of the first year, we had, in gross receipts for the year, a total of $78, less than $80.

Then in 1908, Frank L. Hatch and some of the other Republican Party leaders were looking for a candidate on their ticket for justice of the peace in Capitol Township, and they persuaded Jenkins to give up his partnership and run for justice of the peace. He was elected and moved into the justice of the peace office in the Springfield Police Force building. That left me alone for over another year, almost two years.

Judge Hands was elected from Henry County, Illinois, to the Illinois Supreme Court and Judge Hands' son--who was a lawyer but had not practiced very long--wanted another lawyer with him. He made arrangements to call me in. At that time, he had an office in the Booth building with Albert D. Stevens. Stevens'

father was Henry Stevens, who had been elected county judge of this county. Carl Melin went to Cambridge, Illinois, joined the Hands' law firm there, continued there until he died. I made arrangements with Albert D. Stevens, and moved over to the Booth building in offices with him, on the fourth floor, and we made a partnership arrangement that continued until Mr. Stevens died, just a few years ago.

Q. Your first office, you said, was on the southwest corner of Sixth and Adams. Is that where the Lincoln-Herndon office was, in the same building?

A. The same building.

Q. Which room did you have?

A. The Pasfield family, as I remember it, had the north two rooms in the building. And, I think at that time, B. L. Catron, a lawyer about the same age as Albert D. Stevens, used those rooms with the Pasfield family. The architect Haynes--Murray Haynes' father--had most of the space on the third floor. And the rooms on the south end of the second floor were occupied by Clinton Good, who was a grocery broker.

END OF TAPE

A. At one of the family gatherings when I was just a kid, the old folks kept talking about Mr. Lincoln. One of them said that William H. Herndon had told them a story which he said Lincoln used to tell and was the type of story Lincoln liked best. As

I remember it, the story went something like this.

When the old settlers came into this country, most of their equipment was rather crude. Some of them didn't have much equipment, but one thing that every family tried to get, sooner or later, was a big iron kettle. Most of the settlers raised hogs for one reason, hogs are quickly grown. One other reason, in this section of the country, was that a rattlesnake's bite wouldn't kill a hog, and the biggest part of the meat the settler used was pork, in one form or another. They butchered their own hogs. Sometimes a settler had to have one or more of his neighbors to come in and help, and they all worked together on the butchering job.

To butcher a hog . . . first, before they killed the hog, they heated a lot of water, scalding, boiling hot, in a large, wooden staved barrel. Barrels were more common in those days because that was the best form of packaging anything of considerable quantity. When the water was boiling hot, the farmer filled the barrel about half-full of boiling water and then they killed the hog and set him in the barrel of hot water. He kept the hog in there long enough, but not too long, to scald him and make the hair remove more easily. And so the hog was pulled out and the hair scraped off. The hog was never skinned as a cow or a calf or a steer would be skinned when they were butchered. The hide stays on the hog and if the meat is cured, the ham or the shoulder of the bacon would still have hog skin on the outside.

So, in order to do his butchering job, every settler had to have a kettle in which he could heat about forty or fifty gallons of water for the butchering job. A good many of the settlers, when they moved in, brought with them a big, iron kettle that was set up on a piece of rock so that a fire could be built under or around it to heat the water.

The people that had no such kettle had to borrow one, and a settler named Durwig borrowed a kettle from a neighbor, Carter. When he took the kettle back, it had been cracked, and Carter wanted settlement. I guess it was dangerous to use a cracked kettle. Anyway, Carter wanted payment for damage to his kettle and Durwig wouldn't pay him anything. Carter reported to Durwig that if Durwig didn't pay him, Carter was going to bring a lawsuit for damage to his kettle, and Durwig said, "All right, go ahead and sue. I have three good defenses." He said, "In the first place, I never had his kettle. In the second place, it was cracked when I got it. In the third place, it was all right when I took it home."

Q. Did William Henry Herndon tell this story, or is this one that was related through your relatives?

A. He's the one that reported it. Of course, I was a kid; I'm not sure that he said that Lincoln told the story but it was the type of story that Lincoln told.

Another thing that the early settlers in this section used to do, at least some of them did, was make a trip down to the Illinois

River, to Beardstown or somewhere along the river, for a supply of fish. I don't know how they preserved the fish--whether they drived them or pickled them--but fish were common. There were slews, and lakes along the river always had plenty of fish. Even in my time, I've seen them take carloads of fish out of that lake to ship to New York City for market.

One fall, my grandfather and three or four others got together and took their nets, and started out to Beardstown to get a supply of fish. The trip to Beardstown took two days and they camped overnight somewhere along the road. They took along something for their meals while they were on the trip. Along the road, now and then, there comes some settler's house.

One afternoon on this trip--the road went by a settler's house--along the road some distance from the house was a nice big chicken. One of the group, a big young man named Harpie Young, jumped out of the wagon and started after the chicken. Well, the chicken headed for the house and before Harpie could catch the chicken, it turned into the barnloft drive. The barn door was open and the chicken ran inside, with Harpie right after it. Before Harpie caught up with the chicken, there was a big man standing there in the barn with a pitchfork in his hand, and the man yelled at Harpie, "What are you doing chasing my chicken?" Harpie says, "It's your chicken?" He said he was in the group who were on the way down to the river to get a supply of fish, and said, "We had the chicken tied up and brought it along for supper tonight when we made camp." So the farmer with the pitchfork helped Harpie

catch the chicken and he walked off with it.

Harpie Young lived out in Rochester. By the time I got through school, and started to practice law in Springfield, Harpie had a job under the Sangamon County sheriff in the circuit court room. The sheriff's office furnished two officers, bailiffs, they called them. It was their job to police the circuit court, and Harpie Young, at one time, had that job. He was court bailiff. He was then an old man with long whiskers. I've forgotten the name of the other bailiff, who was a small fellow. I don't think he was any bigger than I am, weighed about one hundred fifty pounds, but he was a Jew.

When there were a group of lawyers or others around with nothing else to do, some of them would start to tell stories of one kind or another, and Harpie Young liked to talk. This is one of those stories. "Listen," he said, "there was a southern planter that had a colored woman that worked for him all her lifetime. She was middle-aged and had helped raise the planter's family. She went to the planter one day and said she'd like to get off for a day, that following Saturday or Sunday and the planter said, 'All right.' He said, 'Auntie, what are you going to do?' And she said, 'Well, I'm going to get married.' And he says, 'Oh, no! Who are you going to marry?' And the woman said, 'Well, I'm going to marry Ah Sing; he's a Chinese laundryman in town, and we're going to get married.' And the planter says, 'Oh, no!' He said, 'Auntie, what'll your children be?' And she said, 'Oh, I guess they'll be little Jews.'" (laughter)

Q. Last time I was here you were telling me about your different law offices. Your first one was in the Lincoln-Herndon building, and the second one was in the Booth building, with Mr. Stevens--is that correct?

A. Yes, we started up together in the Booth building. I moved out of the other building . . . [the Lincoln-Herndon building]. Stevens already had an office in the Booth building. I think he and his father made an office there before his father was elected judge.

Q. Did you keep your office in the Booth building, or did you eventually move?

A. Before we had our offices in the Booth building--more than two or three years, as I remember it--the Farmers Bank merged with the Ridgely Bank and moved out. The Farmers Bank had been located in a building the bank had built on the northeast corner of the intersection of Sixth and Adams. When the bank consolidated with Ridgely, both of them moved into the building at the southeast corner of Fifth and Monroe. That left the greater part of the bank building at Sixth and Adams and a building or two just north of that, which the bank also owned, mostly vacant.

Mr. Stevens had done some work for the Central Illinois Public Service Company, which, at that time, was being built up by the purchase of smaller utilities around the state--all the way from little towns to big ones as far north as Peoria, south to Cairo. Mr. Stevens talked the officials of Central Illinois Public Ser-

vice Company rented the bank property and moved in at the northeast corner of Sixth and Adams. When they did that, they rented to us the office rooms on the fourth floor of the bank building and we moved from the Booth building over to Sixth and Adams.

The Central Illinois Public Service Company consolidated its properties and bought more property for transmission lines, to connect them up, to serve the biggest mines in southern Illinois. Soon, they needed more office space, and decided to put up a new office building at Sixth and Adams. Before they did that, they bought the ground south of the railroad on Madison Street and west of Ninth Street and put up a large building--three or four stories--that was designed and intended to be used eventually as a warehouse; the rest of the ground was to be used for their own parking lot. When they were ready to tear down the old building at Sixth and Adams, we bought additional space there and everybody, including the law firm, moved over into the new building at Ninth and Madison and operated there a year or two until the new Illinois Building was completed. Then, we got library and office room on the ninth floor and moved back there. The firm continued as successors to the firm that's still using the same office.

Q. Would you tell me about a private alley that was made a part of the Illinois Building?

A. The bank building itself was only about 25 feet wide and it only extended east 100 or 110 feet from Sixth Street. Adjoining that

building and the other building to the north in that block was a driveway. On the east of that driveway, on the north side of Adams Street, was Keltie's Saloon, and east of that, some small business which might have been another saloon--there were plenty of saloons. Those buildings were old and about to fall down. The Keltie's Saloon property was on the market; it was for sale.

We looked into the title of that driveway. The Farmers Bank had, at one time, fixed a gate at the entrance from Adams Street, and the hinges for the gate were still in the east wall of the old bank building before it was torn down. We suggested to the CIPS officials that if they were preparing to build a real large office building, they needed more room than what they had acquired from the old Farmers Bank. They agreed to that, and changed their plans. They bought the Keltie's Saloon property, and bought the next one east of that; I don't remember whether they bought the third one or not. They also bought more property to the north.

They wanted to buy the building in which the Simmond's bookstore had been operated for years. We found that that property was owned by the Hay family. Logan Hay either owned it himself or he was the representative for the other members of the family. In any event, the company had to deal with Logan Hay. Hay wouldn't put a price on the building; he wouldn't agree to sell it at any price. But he finally agreed that he would lease them the building; I think the term they finally agreed on was fifty years. At any rate, they took a long-term lease from Mr. Hay, and included that in the ground on which their new building was constructed.

So, part of that Illinois Building stands on leased ground.

The title to that driveway along the east side of those old buildings was made satisfactory and it's owned by the Public Service Company, just as any of their private property. The Illinois Building was built where the driveway used to be and they opened a new driveway on the east side of the new building, so that they could drive down it to the basement, or sub-basements under the Illinois Building, where it was designed for parking room.

Q. That must have been the finest building in Springfield when it was built.

A. It is today. It's a well-constructed building. It has fast elevator service, four cages operate all day. The floors are terrazzo, marble, ground off, and are finished with a pattern in them; the walls in the corridors are paneled with marble slabs. There hasn't been a crack in any of the floors since the building was put up. I don't think there's any doubt, it's the finest building yet in the city of Springfield.

Q. When was it built?

A. The plans were made before the crash in 1929. But they went ahead with the building and finished it. As I remember, they moved back into it in 1931.

Q. So, the crash really didn't affect the completion of that building?

A. No.

Q. How did the crash, or the Depression, affect Springfield?

A. All of Springfield was just like the rest of the country. Some people had money in the banks that they couldn't get out and, for that reason, they couldn't pay their debts and their creditors couldn't pay theirs. Things were really tough for a while, but most businesses worked their way through. Farmers Bank folded up, it was the only Springfield bank that had to close. It may be that such hard times don't affect a lawyer's business as much as some others, because you lose some kind of work, but hard times make trouble for people and you pick up other kinds of work.

Of course, in our firm, we got quite a little business from the Insull family in Chicago. If you remember, they had bought up a number of public utilities in different parts of the country, probably had controlling interest in Central Illinois Public Service. But, of course, the power plants all kept operating. Coal mines had to put out coal to make power. So far as our firm was concerned, the worst thing about the Depression was what it did to the investments and savings we had made in some of the utility properties.

Neither Mr. Stevens nor I had any large amount of money to invest, but what we had, we had put in bonds, or more often stock, in some of these utilities, not only such as the Insull [Utilities] Company, but companies like Southwest Central and Southwest Public Service and properties in Indiana and Michigan. Anyway, as far as I was concerned, I was wiped out. What I had left didn't amount

to much, but that was true of lots of people. The law business wasn't too bad, though; we were making enough money that we had some income tax to pay, probably it wasn't a whole lot, but anyway nobody likes to pay any kind of tax.

In 1930 and 1931, business, for some people, began to get better. During that spring, the price of stock in companies like Insull Utilities Company began to come back. Up to that time, I hadn't bought any stock in Insull Utilities, although Mr. Stevens had. All spring I saw the price of that stock getting a little higher and a little higher, and finally along about May of that year, Herbert Hoover came out and announced in some conference that the government was going to take additional steps to speed the recovery. Hoover said, "In ninety days, every sign of the depression will have been eradicated."

I thought, if I'm going to get any Insull Utilities stock, I better be getting it. So I took what money I had, I even went to the bank and borrowed some money, and bought me some Insull Utilities stock.

A wave of bankruptcy proceedings went across the country and lots of corporations, which would have been able to work their way through, had their chances cut off by bankruptcy proceedings somebody would start. They couldn't get the financing, so receivers were appointed and lots of them were liquidated which shouldn't have been liquidated.

At that time, I held 600 or 800 shares of the stock of Central

and Southwest Utility Company, which operated down in Oklahoma and perhaps in a part of Texas. The market price for the stock was down to $.32 a share and it looked like it was a company that would be thrown into receivership any day, and wiped out. In order to be able to take a loss on my income tax for that year, I sold all of the stock in that company that I owned, with the exception of just a few odd shares, less than a hundred. I got $.32 a share for them.

As things turned out, Central and Southwest never was thrown into receivership. It continued to operate and it's still operating today. The stocks went up to about $45 a share. I think they were in the Wall Street Journal. So, Mr. Hoover was a little bit wrong when he said the depression would be over, every sign eradicated within ninety days.

Q. What happened to the Insull Company?

A. They were washed out. The Insull Utility Company was just a total loss.

Q. Did many businesses have to close in Springfield during that time?

A. Not in Springfield. A big part of the businesses in Springfield were, as they are now, small affairs, and they didn't have to have a large cash income in order to keep going.

Q. How did this affect the farmer?

A. I just don't remember what farm prices were during those years.

Of course, their prices were affected to some extent, but I don't remember how much. The farmers that had a large mortgage on their farms were out of luck if that mortgage loan fell due during such a period, because they couldn't borrow money. Nobody could borrow money anywhere. One of the merchants had done business for years at the Marine Bank, but, for some reason or other, he had borrowed some money from the Ridgely-Farmers Bank. When that bank folded up, they wanted everybody to pay what they owed the bank. When his note came due, the receiver said, "Pay your note." It was just at the wrong time. He couldn't borrow a hundred dollars.

Of course, you can understand why the banks had no money they were willing to loan. They were all trying to get everybody to pay them, so they'd have the money to pay the depositors. The people that had their money deposited in the bank were entitled to have it any time they demanded it. If the government hadn't stepped in and frozen the situation, all the banks would have been in receivers' hands, because the depositors wanted their money out. Everybody was in favor of getting his money out of the bank; whether he needed it or not, he wanted it out.

Q. I noticed you have some notes there that you made during the week.

A. I made them when you were here last time. One was that Harpie Young fishing trip and the chicken deal story. When Harpie told it, it was my grandfather that got out and chased the chicken into the barn. I kind of think I'd rather believe my grandfather.

When Harpie Young was young, just about the time of that fishing

trip, some boys out in the Rochester neighborhood found a good watermelon patch on some farm near Rochester. In order to raise watermelons, a farmer usually left an open space out in the middle of a big corn field where it would be out of sight and where nobody would find it, because stealing watermelons wasn't a crime; it wasn't even a misdemeanor, there wasn't anything wrong about stealing a watermelon.

Some of the boys in Rochester had found a farmer's watermelon patch and one of them said something to Harpie Young about the watermelon patch. Harpie said, "Well, why don't we go out some moonlit night and get us some watermelon?" That's what the boys were in favor of doing. So, they organized a party and picked a certain night to do this. In the meantime, Harpie went and told the farmer what the plans were. So, when the time came, Harpie--who was a big man--and the boys went out and slipped into the melon patch. They hunted around until they found some big melons that were ripe. In those days, anybody that knew melons could tell a ripe melon in the dark; they didn't need to see it, they could tell by thumping on the melon whether it was ripe. About the time they'd picked up a melon, somebody at the edge of the patch let go with two big shots from a shotgun. The boys started to run out the other side of the patch and Harpie fell down on the ground and said, "Oh, they got me, boys. They got me. Don't go away and leave me." And the kids didn't leave him. Some of them went back. They could hardly lift Harpie to carry him, but they carried him, or dragged him out of the field,

and got him away from the farmer with the shotgun. Later on, of course, Harpie was able to get up and walk home. He wasn't hurt anymore than the boys were, but they didn't know that.

Q. Were the boys caught?

A. Oh, no. Of course, everybody knew who they were. Nobody tried to catch them. The farmer hadn't shot at them. He just went out there with blank loads in his shotgun just to play a joke on the boys.

Q. Did you ever steal any watermelons?

A. Sure! Some good ones! One year we didn't plant any melons. If we did, I can't remember, but the folks needed citrons for preserves and out in one of the cornfields the folks had planted some citron seeds. The citron grows up and makes a vine that looks almost exactly like a watermelon vine, not quite as large a vine. Citrons don't grow as large as watermelon, but they're as big as big muskmelons. Some of the boys in the neighborhood found the citron vine and plugged all the citron. That ruined the crop. They were plugging them to find a ripe watermelon; they thought they were watermelons. Have you ever eaten citron preserves?

Q. I don't believe so.

A. Ever eaten watermelon preserves?

Q. Oh, yes. We used to make those at home.

A. You handle citrons the same way. Only the rind makes a better

preserve. It's more--translucent, I guess, is the word. It's just about as sweet as anything can be.

Q. Did you eat citron as a fruit also?

A. No, not as a fruit. I don't think it would be any better than a raw pumpkin.

Q. Citron is what they put in fruitcake?

A. Yes. Citron preserves are nicer than what you buy at the store to put in fruitcakes, because what you buy in the store is dried out, but that's the same thing.

Q. What other bad things did the kids do back then for amusement?

A. The kids weren't that bad back then! That's the only thing that kids would steal.

Q. Were there hayrack rides or picnics?

A. Not until we got big enough to work. We worked with the hayrack, and when the hay making was done, we didn't want to see a hayrack again during our lifetime!

Out in the country was a fish trap. Back in the early days, the Illinois law was changed to make fish traps illegal. Later on some of the folks living along the rivers fixed them up boxes built of slats which they took out in the river and sank to the bottom--weighted them down with a rock or some bricks, something to hold them from floating away--and they called those fish traps. But the fish traps that I referred to are something en-

tirely different.

There used to be a fish trap on the south fork of the Sangamon River, out there adjoining my grandfather's place, the Old Home Farm. There was a place there where the river made a bend and ran right along at the foot of a bluff; at that place there was a little rock, more or less rock. Rock along these creeks, like Horse Creek out here and most of South Fork--there just isn't any. For most of the length of those creeks, you wouldn't find a rock of any kind or size. But, in places along the South Fork there'd be some rock crop out, and that was true down along the side of this bluff. I don't know when it was first built--before I can remember--but there'd always been a fish trap built there.

That fish trap was made by building two piers or putting in two large posts about three or four feet apart, standing out in the middle of the river. Then, they put a log across from the river bank at one end out to those piers and fastened the other end of the log there so it wouldn't float away. Then, they laid boards, with one end of the board stuck in the bottom of the river bed and the other end of the board was up against this crosspiece. They fastened those boards close enough together and filled the cracks so the water wouldn't go through; they had a dam. In the middle, between the two piers, was a spillway.

In the spring, ordinarily every spring, snow would melt and often we'd have some big rain, and these creeks and rivers would get out of their banks. When that happened, of course, this little

dam that only stood about six feet high, was far under the water and the flood coming down the river ran over that so you couldn't see there was a dam underneath there. At that time of year, the big fish came up these creeks to spawn. The big Mississippi catfish that came up the Mississippi River, up the Illinois, and up the South Fork of the Sangamon, just swam right on upstream, over these fish traps.

In the course of perhaps two weeks, the flood waters had gone down. The water in the river was still running several feet deep right over this dam. As the water got lower eventually, when the water came to the dam, it ran through this spillway--between the pillars in the middle. The man that built the dam would build a sieve out of slats, so that the water coming over the spillway would pour over and fall on this device that had slats on the bottom and slats on the side. The water could go through, but a fish of any size wouldn't go through between the slats. In order to make sure the fish didn't get away--some of them might be able to swim back in that stream of water--when he built this trap, he brought the upper end of it up and then made a step down and below; he built another trap like the first one. The fish flops around the smaller, first part of the trap, finally flops itself over the edge here and into the second one, then he's caught. He can't get back up there; he's out of the water.

One spring that I remember well, it was a rainy one, the river

had been high and the water went down. I was too small to go alone.

END OF TAPE

A. I didn't go along that night, but my dad, Ralph Tobin's dad, Tom Thornton and two or three of the neighbors, all went down one night to where this old fish trap had been. In order to comply with the law against fish traps, some of the boards had been taken out of this dam so the water could run on through. But they took some boards down there with them, and they covered those holes in the old dam. It wasn't very long before the water had filled up above that dam, so all of it was going over the spillway between those pillars in that fish trap. They stayed there until late the next morning, and during the night, a lot of fish that were coming downstream to get away from the lower water upstream went over that spillway into the trap. They brought several big Mississippi cat up to our house.

In those days, our house was equipped with a cistern in which the soft water ran off the house, but it was too small, and we had around here and there, one perhaps at each corner of the house, some big barrels we called rain barrels to catch some more water. They brought one of those Mississippi catfish up there and stuck him headfirst in one of these fifty-gallon rain barrels. He was such a big fish that his tail stuck out of the top of the barrel. They butchered two or three of those big Mississippi cat. Some of them would have a fish inside of

them--what we'd call a big fish--that the bigger one had gobbled up.

Q. I take it this was done in the springtime.

A. Oh, yes! That's because these big Mississippi cat were on their way back down to the Mississippi River. I don't know how far they went up, but they'd come up the river to spawn and they were ready to go back to the Mississippi, they were on their way downstream.

Q. About when did they pass the law to make it illegal to use fish traps?

A. Oh, before my time. I don't know, I never looked it up. Everybody knew it was against the law to have one of those traps. That's the reason the boards had been torn out, so the water could go out through that dam. But of course, our folks figured out what would be about the right time, and they went down there at night. They said afterwards that one of these big fish came over the spillway into that first part of the fishtrap, and the hired man who was working and living at our house climbed down in there to get the fish out without waiting for the fish to flop up over the next step. The fish knocked his feet out from under him, and he'd fallen down under that spillway, and the weight of the water held him down. He was lucky to get out alive.

Q. How far was your house from the river?

A. The farm bordered the river for about two miles.

Q. Did you used to swim in it?

A. Oh, yes. We had a swimming hole, up where the river made a bend and there was a bluff on one side and a sandy, clean bottom. Ralph Tobin used to come over there and go swimming with us. Did you know Ralph Tobin?

Q. No, I don't believe I ever met him.

A. That's Willard's father, a jewelry store owner. He still has a store down there, next to Herndon's. Of course, Herdon's, in my time, wasn't Herndon's; it was Furlong's for years and years.

Q. Herndon's started on the square, didn't it?

A. It was on the northwest corner of Fifth and Adams, north across Adams Street from the bank building that is now the First National, it used to be the State National Bank.

For a number of years after the first settlers came into Sangamon County, there were no bridges across these streams. They'd ford the creek and there's a place out there next to the Old Home Farm where there used to be a ford. Of course, it wasn't used in my time. They quit using them years before, but there was the cut through the river bank that showed where the ford had been.

There were no apple orchards around here when the settlers came. They had to be planted and grown. Some of them planted apple orchards and cherry orchards and the people that didn't have an orchard would take their wagon, in the fall, and go get them a supply of apples.

Sometimes they would bury the apples and some turnips, some Irish potatoes and sweet potatoes. They'd plow them up along the ground, cover them with a thick layer of straw, and then cover that with a layer of dirt six inches thick, and that would keep the produce from freezing. They'd open up a hole in that mound, and fish them out some apples or potatoes or whatever they had in there, close the hole again, and the heat from below would be enough so that the produce wouldn't freeze.

One farmer living down on Horse Creek hitched up his team, and started with a wagon bed on his wagon to go a few miles where he could get himself some apples from an orchard. There had been a pretty good rain the night before he made the trip, especially further up Horse Creek. He went across one of the fords on the way over. By the time he got back, the run-off from the night's rain had raised the water in Horse Creek a few feet, but he thought he could get across anyway, so he tried it. The team of horses got across, whether they had to swim part of the way, I don't know, but they got across. When they got across, they pulled him out across the river. The wagon bed was built tight enough that it didn't let the water in very fast, and before the wagon bed got full of water, the water had lifted it off of the bolsters beyond the standard that held the bed, and his wagon box, with his load of apples, floated off down Horse Creek.

Q. Did he get across all right?

A. He had the reins in his hands from the team, and when the team

went across, they pulled him out of the wagon through the water. I don't remember whether he ever did recover his wagon bed. Anyway, his wagon bed with the apples went all the way downstream.

Q. Where there were natural fords to cross the river, did roadways automatically build up, using these fords?

A. No. The ford was at a place where the flow of the river was steeper and the river had washed a channel wide enough and clean enough that the bottom was solid; it wasn't mud like most of the rest of these streams. When my great-grandfather came and located up on the prairie, these streams, like Horse Creek, had a good flow of water the year around. They never ran dry, because the water that stood in the swamps and lakes and pools or out in the flat country seeped out and worked its way to the end of these water courses, then ran off down into the creeks. A creek like Horse Creek, even in a dry season, had a stream of water going down.

The good, clean, water had fish in it all the time. If you wanted to catch some little fish on a hook, you could go fishing in Horse Creek; but by the time I was old enough to go to school, most of that stuff had been opened up by ditches and drain tile. Creeks like Horse Creek got out of their banks in the spring when the floods came along, but a good part of the year there'd just be a little pool of water here, another one downstream in some place. There wouldn't be any water running downstream at all. It's that way today.

Q. Were there many of these natural fords?

A. Not too many, at least, not that I know of. There may have been a lot that I never heard of. The only ford where the public road went across a stream without any bridge was over on the North Fork [of the Sangamon River]. There used to be a ford somewhere northeast of where the Berry or Breckenridge stations are now. You go northeast from the B & O Railroad and before too many miles, you come to the North Fork of the Sangamon River and there was a place over there that the old folks called the Cold Spring.

It was on the far side of the North Fork of the Sangamon, at the foot of a high bluff, and that spring put out the same stream of cold, cold, clear water year in and year out. It was just grand drinking water. Back in the days when nobody had ice in the summertime, the old folks used to get together and drive over there for a picnic--at Cold Spring. I don't know who owned it, but apparently the public were welcome over there.

A few years ago, I asked a farmer that lived out in that neighborhood about Cold Spring. He knew what it was I was asking about and he said his folks used to go there once in a while; but he said they all quit, they didn't go anymore. They were over there for a picnic one day and they were there at the spring to get some water when somebody scared up a big black snake. He said that black snake to get away just headed for the spring, went into the water and disappeared in the spring.

Q. I can see why they weren't too interested in drinking from the spring! Do you think that spring is still there?

A. Oh, yes. Back before the country got too well settled, there used to be dams in some of these streams that operated little mills. There used to be a mill operated by water power on the Sangamon River, out where

the main road north used to cross the river. They changed the road entirely, but you can still see out there a cut in the bluff where the old road used to cross, and right at that point, for years, there was a mill operated by water power. In my time it was known as Torrence's Mill, out on a bend of the South Fork of the river, at what was known as Cascade. One time there was a post office at Cascade. Anyway, this Torrence's Mill, of course, had to have a dam, and it had a pretty good dam. I don't remember how high that dam stood, but the top of the dam was way above my head, and when the water in the river got down within the banks, they could operate that mill by water power.

It was an unusual mill for this part of the country because it was equipped so it could not only grind corn for corn meal, but it ground a lot of corn for the feed that people fed their chickens. It even had equipment with what they called bolting cloth in it, with which they could make ordinary flour from wheat. That part of the mill hadn't been used when we were kids. When the folks went over there to get some corn ground for meal and for feed, we'd climb around upstairs, up to the top of that old mill, where the bolting equipment was. That old bolting cloth was so old that it was then rotten, it would just tear like real old cloth. But when it was new, bolting cloth--I don't know, do you suppose it was linen? Well, it had to be fine cloth, of course, because when the flour was ground as fine as you ground ordinary white wheat flour, it could be sifted through this bolting cloth.

Another peculiar thing about that mill was that it didn't get its power from an ordinary water wheel. You've probably seen water wheels and you've seen pictures of them; some of them were a wheel that was a big diameter and that had buckets. I don't know what

they called them, but the water flowed into the top, and the weight would turn the wheel around until the buckets got to the bottom and were tripped so they emptied. Other wheels operated in a chute and had paddles and as the water at the top ran into this chute, it operated against those paddles to turn the wheel. But this mill, the water from the dam went in at the top, into a big chute, and in that chute, they had a turbine. The shaft would have slats, on the side of it, at an angle; it operated just like steam turbines do. When the water went down and hit those blades that were fastened to the center shaft, it'd turn. I never saw another mill with a turbine. I don't think there were any more around this part of the country. But anyway, that's the way it operated. So much for Torrence's Mill.

Q. When did it stop operating?

A. I don't know. After I left that neighborhood, I don't know how long it did operate. I think it's entirely gone now. It could have been burned down or maybe it got washed away, because when the river got out of its banks, the old mill stood out there in the middle of the high water. I could show you where it used to be; there might be some sign of the dam, I'm not sure.

Q. Were there many mills in Sangamon County?

A. No, there were not many mills. There used to be a mill out east, I don't know how far. There used to be a mill out on the North Fork of the Sangamon River. I don't think that there were any mills out at what we call Riverton. Riverton used to be Jamestown, and in the early days, Jamestown had a plant of its own, Jamestown

had a distillery.

Q. What were they distilling?

A. Whiskey! This is a story a classmate told me. Down in southern Illinois, on the Illinois side of the Mississippi River, there was a young mountain, mostly rock, and at that point the Mississippi River narrowed down, there was a good current. A little village south of this mountain was named Grand Towers. Below Grand Towers, the Mississippi River spreads out more and by the time it gets down to Cairo, it's a pretty wide stream. Then it picks up the water from the Ohio, but it's still a sluggish stream, clear down along Missouri and Arkansas, for miles. This classmate came from that section on the other side of Cairo and he said a lot of those river bottoms, at this time, hadn't been drained yet. The government went to work years ago and built high levies up and down the Illinois River, down along the Mississippi River; they put in ditches and they drained those bottoms. But at this time, the levies hadn't been built and those swamps and those ponds and lakes, where the water wasn't too deep, all grew up in brush and cane. Further south, they had the same thing; they were called cane breaks, acres and acres of them.

There used to be a swamp south of Beardstown that had little lakes in it. That swamp, we were told, covered 28,000 acres. Anyway, down here on the Mississippi, in a big cane break, one native built him a still, and went into the moonshine business. He had his still out there where it could be reached only by crossing water--a lake

or a swamp. He knew where to go. He could wade across, but any stranger that tried it might find himself up over his head in a good, big mudhole. Anyway, he built him up a pretty good moonshining business, selling corn liquor.

Of course, the revenue agents heard about it and started looking for him. Some of them found out that he had his still somewhere out in this cane break. So, once in a while, some energetic revenuer would try to find his way through there and catch the guy, but the moonshiner had him an old hound dog named Nellie. Of course, Nellie had a good nose and could smell a stranger a half a mile away, and Nellie had good hearing. So time after time, when the revenuer started through that cane break, Nellie would give the alarm and the moonshiner would get away. The revenuers as I remember it, they said the agents would find his stills now and then, but they never caught him.

By and by, Nellie got too old and died. Then the guy was in trouble, but he kept operating a still. He was out there at work on it, making some good corn liquor one day, and heard a noise at some distance, and here were some revenue agents already in sight. He jumped up and started off through the cane break, the revenuers right after him. He could gain on them a little bit, but he wasn't able to circle around and get away. By and by, he came out on the bank of the Mississippi River, the revenuers still after him. To get away, he just jumped into the Mississippi River and headed for the other bank, a mile or more away. He kicked off his boots so

he could swim better; he was a pretty good swimmer. The revenue agents got to the bank and sat down there and just watched him go. Well, he got almost across, maybe within a hundred yards or so of the bank on the far side, but by that time he was worn out and knew he couldn't make it. The only thing he could do was turn around and swim back. (laughter)

Q. That's almost a shaggy dog story.

A. Of course, the revenue agents picked him up when he got back. They were waiting.

Q. Did we have any moonshiners in Sangamon County?

A. No, I never heard of any. I don't doubt that there probably were some. It isn't hard to make liquor of almost any juice. You don't have to use corn and make whiskey--you know, you can take blackberry juice, apple cider, or any kind of fruit juice. You let that ferment. Of course, if it's cider you start with, by the time that ferments you've got what's commonly known as hard cider. It has enough alcohol in it for people to get drunk on just as quick, maybe quicker, than they could on beer. Anyway, you take a juice like blackberry juice, and let it ferment, and you have a form of wine. Now you take that and run it through a still, you distill it; a still is a very simple piece of equipment. After you distill that, you come out with apple brandy.

Q. Is that what is known as applejack?

A. I don't think so. I don't know, I'm no expert. I said you come

out with apple brandy; you'd come out with blackberry brandy, of course, if you started with blackberry juice.

Q. You had me fooled, too. I was coming out with applejack. Did you ever do this or did you make wine or beer at home?

A. No. Most of the time our family didn't have a bottle of whiskey or any other alcoholic thing, not a bit.

When this country voted in Prohibition, a lot of the people that didn't think about drinking any kind of booze before, started making some kind of alcoholic drink. Of course, the revenue agents caught up with a lot of them, in this section of the country.

Speaking of Prohibition, [during Prohibition], one summer, vacation time comes and Jim Melin and I arranged to get away at the same time he had to take his vacation. We threw the tent, the big air mattresses and a bunch of blankets, and other stuff, in the back end of an automobile. The rest of my family, as I remember it, was then out in California. As I remember it, Jim's wife was going somewhere else in Wisconsin, so Jim and I head west. Jim had never been to Colorado so we go out across Kansas. We left the main road out there in Kansas or Colorado or somewhere, and took a crossroad across the Pike's Peak that's sticking up over there in the Rocky Mountains.

After taking in Pike's Peak, we headed south or southwest a little ways, and picked up an east and west road that went west clear across Colorado. I forget the names of the towns out there, but we went down that road west until we came to a road that branched off to the north, and went clear north to the north line of Colorado.

We went through two or three little towns and then came to Leadville, which was a pretty good-sized city.

It wasn't nearly as big as when it was a booming mining town though; it was kind of a ghost town. When we got there, lots of the buildings were empty; there was one of the old-time saloons there. I don't remember whether it was in the old Opera House building, but it was right in that vicinity--it may have been next door. Anyhow, it was an old saloon with swinging front doors, and when you got inside of those, here was a bar reaching back to the far end and a room out there with tables. Back of the bar were all kinds of liquor bottles, big and little, whiskey, everything you could think of. The place was in business; wide open.

We didn't go in the bar and have a drink, but asked about where we could get a place to stay all night and somebody in there said, "Well, what kind of place do you want?" We told him we had a tent and would like to camp out somewhere; we had a bed and bedding and we'd be glad to find a place out in a grove of good pine trees, and that's all we needed. Well, they said, "The boss isn't here." But they said that the boss had a dance hall up the road north about two and a half miles and they said, "He spends his time up there. He has a big ranch out there and he has plenty of room and he has a big grove in his front yard that runs up to his dance hall building."

They said, "You go up the road until you see a little sign on the left hand side of the road. And there's a track leaves the road

there and goes off to the pine forest. And the sign says Airport." He said, "You take that drive, it'll go in through the woods and finally you'll come to an open place and you'll come to this dance hall and the boss' house there. He'll fix you up."

Well, that sounded pretty good. We got in the car, bought some gas and headed north up the road. It seemed like more than two and a half miles before we came to the sign but by-and-by, on a stake at the side of the road was a little sign about four inches wide and it had painted on it, Airport. There was a drive all through the trees which we took. The guy was 100 percent right.

Before long, we came out into an open space and there was a dance hall and the owner's ranch house, a pretty good-sized house, with a porch on two sides of it, not a porch with a roof, just an open porch. You could drive where you wanted through there, so we headed the car for this ranch house. By the time we got up there to it, some fellow got up, came down the steps and came out to the car. He wanted to know what we wanted. It happened to be the boss himself. I've forgotten his name--it was a long time ago--but we told him what we needed and he said, "Why sure!" He said, "Drive around here in the trees and pick yourselves out any spot you want. Put up your tents and fix your beds wherever you think you want them." And I said, "That's all right." Before we left he said, "When you get fixed up, when you get all set, come back and visit with me." "All right," we said, "we'll do that."

So we picked out a spot over among the pine trees in this clearing

and put up the tent, pumped up the air mattress and Jim says, "Well, let's go back and talk with the guy a while." I said, "Oh, he don't want to talk to us." "Well," Jim says, "we aren't doing anything anyways, let's go on over there."

So we went over and he was up on that porch again and before Jim and I got to the steps, he comes down to meet us. And he says, "Come on over to the pavilion"--or whatever he called it, he had a name for it--and he headed us towards the dance hall. When we got over there, he pushed the door open, stepped back and says, "Go on in." The door opened and there was another saloon bar, clear to the back. Here was another stock of liquor--in the Prohibition years!

Well, we went in and he said, "Nobody around now, it's too early. People won't start coming in here until maybe nine or ten o'clock, even later than that. But it'll fill up. We'll have a dance floor in operation." And so he said, "Come on over by the old fireplace," and we went down and talked to him some. He told us about that country and we asked him about this stock of liquor. "Oh," he said, "that's easy." He said, "You folks came from back in Illinois. I buy from people in the East. I buy all kinds of labels," he said, "I make most of this stuff and put a label on it and if you want a bottle of brandy, I'll sell you a bottle of brandy. The brandy will be made right here on the place." He said he had pretty good business, but he shipped quite a bit of liquor to other dealers. He said, "If you folks see anything you'd like, I'll sell you whatever you want and I'll agree to deliver it to wherever you say

in Illinois. You don't have to take it with you."

Well, Jim and I didn't buy anything, but we asked him how come the sign out here said Airport. "Well," he says, "I have a place cleared off back here, a level place on top of the mountain. That's what we call our airport." He said, "No plane lands there except now and then, one that's in trouble and is looking for a place where he has to land." And he said, "When the plane lands there, we have to take it all apart and haul it down the mountain because the runway isn't long enough or smooth enough for the plane to get into the air again. The elevation here is so high that most planes just can't make it." Of course, in those days, planes weren't half as good as they are now. But anyway, that's what he told us.

He told us a lot of things and when we got away we never satisfied ourselves as to how much of what he told us was the truth, but we're plumb sure that 80 or 90 percent of it didn't have a grain of truth in it. But I think he was telling us the truth about his liquor. He said, "You folks have your own outfit. You tell me you're just out here on vacation to spend the time. There are lots of nice camping places, good streams and so forth, glaciers if you want to go high enough, right here on Mount Massive and Mount Massive is a tremendous mountain." He said, "Let me make arrangements for you folks to take a camping trip over on Mount Massive." And he says, "I'll get you two women to go along and they'll do the cookking and they'll know where to go. You can go over there and have yourselves a good time."

Well, we decided we didn't want to take him up on that, so the evening wore away, and he told us some more along that line, and we said, "Well, it's time to turn in." He said, "Well, all right." So we got up and headed for the front door again that was right up at the end of that big bar. We got up to the front door, and there was a great big guy about thirty years old back of the bar. This boss stepped outdoors, but the bartender said, "Hey! Wait a minute, you're from Illinois; I came from Chicago." And he told us how long he'd been out there and he said, "The boss will want you boys to have a good drink on him. So what'll you have?" I don't know whether Jim took the same thing, but I said, "I believe I could handle a brandy." Anyway, he got us a drink, and it was good, I never have drunk very many different kinds of alcoholic drinks. Up at school, we used to go once in awhile and get some beer or some gin fizz, but this brandy, there's no two ways about it, it was a nice drink.

While we were there inhaling these drinks, the bartender asked, "You don't know the boss?" We told him no, we just got in that day and we stopped here because we were told we could fix our tent and camp there overnight. "Well," he said, "the boss operates that saloon in Leadville, and he operates this place out here. But," he said, "he's had hard luck, only had one child; that was a boy that's now grown. After the boy had grown up, a few years ago, he made a big mistake in his life, because he had shot and killed a deputy sheriff and that was wrong. You shouldn't kill a native deputy sheriff--a revenuer, that's something different. But they put the boy in the penitentiary and he was still in the penitentiary. That went hard with the old man."

We got through our drinks and the old man was waiting for us outdoors. That's all that happened that night, as I remember. The next morning, we got up, packed the tent and headed north. It was fifteen years, maybe more, before I got down that road again.

Whenever I got a chance after I was grown, I took a trip. After I got married, at least once a year when I could get away, sometimes more than once, Fanny [my wife] and I would take a trip. Often we went out West, sometimes we went down South or out East. But anyway, we went to Colorado again and we went down that same road to Leadville, except we went from north to south. We got down there where the sign had been that said Airport and we made a careful look all along that road to find a drive that headed off to the woods. The woods were still there, but there wasn't any drive. We got down to Leadville and spent the night there in the little hotel. I inquired about this man and his saloon and his dance hall and resort up the road. I found somebody that remembered all about him and the setup, but they said, "He's been gone now for a number of years and the place up the road, it's all abandoned." I don't know whether they told us anything about the boy or not. I never met the boy so I wasn't interested in him anyway.

END OF TAPE