Q. Would you tell the story of the beginning of your college career?

A. Nobody told me what to expect and it was a little different from what I had expected. I hadn't planned on going anywhere, as a matter of fact. I taught school one year after the county superintendent of schools gave me a license to teach, here in Illinois, and I didn't have any plans with respect to what I would do later except that I was quite sure I didn't want to stay on the farm out in the country. They didn't have anything out there that was very interesting.

I had saved some of the money from the winter I taught school and before that next fall came around Dad had talked to an old schoolteacher, and he had talked to one of the young men from Sangamon County that went to school at Ann Arbor, and I think he had also talked to Doug Cummins, who was a lawyer practicing here in Springfield, who at one time had also been a schoolteacher out in our section. So he finally told me one day that if I wanted to go to law school, he'd help me get the money I had to have and that's all there was to that. I hadn't considered studying law particularly, but I would have studied anything to get out of putting in the rest of my life out on a farm in the country. So that settled that.

No one in that neighborhood had ever gone to a real college. Some two or three of the younger people had gone to school at some summer school, up at the edge of Chicago, over the line in Indiana. It taught a lot of people short courses.

I assumed that if you wanted to go to law school, you went to the school when it was time to start classes, paid the tuition,

enrolled, and went to work. Well, when fall came, about two or three days before classes were to start, I got on a train and went up to Ann Arbor. Of course, I had to inquire when I got up there at the Administration Building who it was I should see in order to enroll and they sent me over to one of the rooms in the Law Department Building where there was a committee of four or five representatives of the school.

They were receiving the applicants; there were several waiting, so I had to wait awhile, but finally it came to my turn. I went up and sat down at the table with the representatives of the law school. They, of course, asked who I was, what I wanted up there, and then they asked me if I had brought credentials because they hadn't received them ahead of time--I didn't know what credentials I was supposed to have. They explained that in order to be admitted to the school, I had to have proof that I had finished four years of high school work in an accredited high school and two or three other things. But the high school work finished me off because I didn't have any high school work, except I had a little algebra at the school out at Chatham [Illinois] which was not accredited anyplace so far as I know. At least, it wouldn't be acceptable up there. So I told them that's all I had and I didn't have proof of that. They said they were sorry, but I couldn't enter that school without having the credits.

They suggested that the Ann Arbor high school was a very good high school and what I should do was simply go over to the high school, enroll over there and take four years. Then I would be

able to enter any of the departments in the university. I told them I couldn't do that. In the first place, I didn't have that kind of money and I didn't feel I could spend four years at that time, starting on high school subjects. So that was that and I was dismissed.

After I walked out in the hall, one of the men from the committee table got up and followed me out, stopped me and explained that he was the secretary of the law department. He said that at times and under certain circumstances, they accept what they term "special students" and they're permitted to attend classes regularly, the same as regular students. He said that if they admitted me as a special student, I still couldn't get a diploma, I still couldn't graduate from the law department and get credits from the law course unless, before the graduation of my law department class, I made up, in some way, the high school credits that I lacked. He said that in the university there were a number of students that had high school work and had even been teachers in high school. They were there attending the university to get credits in some higher course and a few of them had to earn a part of their money to pay their expenses in school. They would take students short on some credentials and would teach them. I could [take] some of their courses. [. . .][3]

END OF TAPE

---

[3] Segment of tape which follows is blank. [Ed.]

Q. You told me earlier about some of your first law offices. Can you remember any of your more interesting or historic cases? How was it to be a lawyer?

A. Oh, it's particularly nice for this reason: every matter that you handle, every case that comes in, is different from anything else that you ever had before. There just aren't two exactly alike. It's always something different.

Q. Did you specialize at all in a certain type of law?

A. No. We just naturally got more cases of one particular line than another. For example, we had one lawsuit with respect to a tax levy for school taxes. Some landowners refused to pay the taxes because they said the levy hadn't been properly made. We got that cleared and collected the taxes for the school district.

Then, within a year or so, there was a high school district organized down in Pike County, what they call the Griggsville District, and for some reason, there was always some hard feeling between the residents of the Griggsville neighborhood and the people in the Pittsfield neighborhood--Pittsfield was the county seat. The first we heard of it, the Griggsville people had circulated a petition, held an election, and organized a high school district. Their district included all the territory around Griggsville and extended out so far in every direction that it was an enormous school district. On the side towards Pittsfield, they went so close to the city of Pittsfield that you could stand out there on one of those farms and see the Pittsfield high school

building, but the farm was in the Griggsville school district.

Well, the Pittsfield people started litigation to have that school district declared invalid and the Griggsville people came to us with the job of defending their district because of the school case that we'd had when we got the tax levy validated for Ashland out here. Then, the village of Chatham, here in our county, organized a high school district and they did pretty much the same thing. They took territory way over into Cottonhill Township, miles away from the schoolhouse.

The Griggsville district and their organization had a real defect in their proceedings, but the attorneys that were attacking the validity of the district overlooked it. The Chatham people made the same mistake. In the case of the Chatham school district, it was the people that were fighting the district that came in and they gave us the job of contesting the validity of the Chatham district. So you see, one case brings up another one and out of the Chatham litigation, we got the job of organizing what became the school of Ball Township. There's Ball Township high school district out here; they organized a district and built a schoolhouse.

There isn't enough work of the same kind in a town like Springfield; you couldn't really specialize in any narrow line of work. There isn't enough of it. But one piece of business tends to bring you another one of similar character.

Q. Could these school districts just draw arbitrary lines on the land

maps?

A. In those days they could, because they had to get up a petition and then there was an election on it. If the majority in that territory voted for a district, they could organize one. There wasn't anything to prevent having a school district forty miles long, if the people wanted it. If the majority wanted it, why that was the law.

There was a movement all over the state of Illinois to organize high school districts, because others had the same experience as I did. If there wasn't a high school available, they had to go somewhere else or they were in trouble. And what high schools there were in the little towns were usually just a school maintained by the little rural school district and it didn't have enough property to support a real good high school. There wasn't any other way to get it except to take in more territory and have a higher total assessed value so the taxes could support it. The high school could be accredited.

That resulted in litigation all over the state. As a result of the school litigation in this part of the state, we had a suit in which we sustained the validity of a district up in northern Illinois--I think it was Kane County, right up close to the Wisconsin line. They gave us the job because the people that had bought the bonds issued by one of these other districts to put up a new building, those people had reported to the people in Kane County that if they'd hire us, we'd done a pretty good job,

and we'd get their district established and handle the election for the bond issue. That was more work for the schools, you see. They couldn't put up a big high school building without issuing bonds; they all had to borrow money.

Q. Now, what year was this--the Griggsville-Pittsfield fight, for instance? After World War I?

A. Oh, yes. Now wait a minute, the Pike County litigation, I think, was several years before 1918, but how long before I can't remember now. I don't have anything home that would give me a date on that.

Q. Was this a legislative action that precipitated the consolidation of schools?

A. No. There was some change in the law, though. The change made it easier to organize a high school district as a separate entity, a separate district that could levy taxes for its own special use. There are lots of such districts. That's one reason taxes are so high, because we have sanitary districts, airport districts, school districts, road districts, all other kinds of districts. Each one has its own taxing power, not only taxing power but borrowing power, the power to issue bonds.

That was important under the old [state] Constitution, because the old Constitution limited the amount of bonds that any legal entity could issue to 5 percent. Lots of cities and villages and road districts got limited to 5 percent, which meant as long

as they had that much debt, they couldn't issue any bonds. They simply had to levy the taxes and get the money before they could spend it.

Q. When these larger high school districts were formed, would they take in a certain number of the smaller grade school districts? I assume that each grade school had a district to support it. They'd take in ten or twenty or thirty of these?

A. Yes. As a result--for the situation in which the school district couldn't levy enough taxes or couldn't borrow as much money as they wanted to--the oppostion finally got pretty well organized, the opposition to these large high school districts that were being formed.

In Rock Island County, there was a lawyer that took an interest [in] and may have had some litigation relating to these large high school districts. He was opposing them and he became a candidate for judge of the Illinois Supreme Court in his district. The Supreme Court of Illinois was composed of seven judges, one judge elected from each district; the state was divided into districts. So this attorney based his campaign for office on the contention that these big districts were unconstitutional and got elected to the Supreme Court. After he became a member of the Supreme Court, another one of these lawsuits was started and the people attacking the district contended that the district was too large and was unconstitutional. This judge got the other judges convinced that they should hold that that is the law, and

the Supreme Court held, in that case, that any school district that was so large that a student couldn't attend the district schools, without inconvenience, was illegal and void.

The decision was clearly erroneous in my opinion, because there was nothing whatever in the Illinois Constitution that said that you couldn't have a district as large as the state itself, or a county, or any city. As a matter of fact, the city of Chicago isn't a large district and instead of saying that a big district is illegal, the court might have held that a big district is obligated to furnish enough schools so that a pupil can reach the school conveniently from any part of the district where he lives. But to say that the Constitution prevented you /from/ having districts of any size was without any real foundation whatever in the Constitution; there's not a word to justify it. They just wanted it that way and they made it that way.

Q. Did that opinion hold?

A. Yes. There's no higher authority. When the Supreme Court says that's the Illinois law, that's the Illinois law. There's nothing you can do about that.

Q. It appears that some of our districts are large today. Lots of children are having to be driven to the schools by bus.

A. Well, of course, there are other reasons that enter into that.

Q. Springfield has had a high school district for years, hasn't it?

A. The Springfield school district operates the common grade school and the high school. It's all one school district. The Springfield school district was originally created by an act of the legislature. It wasn't voted into existence by the voters or the inhabitants of the district. The legislature passed a law which created the district and it's still a special separate entity; it's not an ordinary school district. It's a special district by virtue of the law passed by the legislature itself.

Q. Are the districts we were speaking of earlier, where they consolidated large areas for high schools, under different boards? Are the high schools under one board and the grade schools under another?

A. Yes, absolutely, and they're separate entities entirely. They have their own organization, they make their own contracts, they construct their own buildings, they make their own rules and limitations on attendance, levy their own taxes, borrow their own money; and in doing those things, they don't affect any other district except the district itself.

Q. When did they start consolidating the grade schools? We were speaking of Ball-Chatham earlier.

A. What Chatham did was organize a high school district, in addition to their grade school; their common school district wasn't involved in this. They voted in a high school district that took in a number of common school districts and parts of districts. They didn't even have to take in <u>all</u> the common school districts. They just took what territory they wanted regardless of whether the

lines coincided with common school district lines--it didn't make any difference.

Q. Crow's Mill school was in existence for quite a while, wasn't it, the grade school out on Toronto Road?

A. Yes, that district was in existence for years and years. I don't know how long. I think my father taught [at] that school one time when he was a young man. One of my aunts also taught at that school one time, but that's been a hundred years ago now. (laughter)

END OF TAPE

Q. The part about your law cases is fascinating, the way you point out how one case leads on to the next.

A. Yes, it does. It may have been through some of the school work that we got our first business from [the] Matheny-Dixon Company that was in business here buying and selling bond issues of different kinds. Or it may have been the fact that my partner was city attorney for the city of Springfield for a number of years after the commission form [of government] was adopted by the city. Anyway, we got some business--I don't remember what was the first--from Matheny-Dixon Company and, in the course of time, they gave us quite a bit of pretty good business.

Their firm had bought a bond issue put out by a drainage district down in Oklahoma. In order to get money to dig the drains and do the other work for which the drainage district was organized,

they issued a large amount of the drainage district's bonds. Matheny-Dixon bought the entire issue and sold it to William Fetzer, who operated a plant here in Springfield at that time. The district got the money and let contracts and dug drainage ditches to drain the territory, the farm land that was included in the district.

About the time they got everything completed, some of these bonds began to mature--the whole issue, as I remember it, was payable serially, so much this year and so much year after year. So in order to pay these bonds, the district had to levy taxes. The taxes had been levied at the time the bonds were issued, but they were not due and payable until the bonds came due. So, in the course of time, one year's installment of these bonds came due and the landowners down there got together and refused to pay the taxes.

They hired lawyers and said the district was illegal; it wasn't legally organized and the bonds were void and the taxes weren't collectable. Well, Matheny-Dixon, to start with, hired a firm of lawyers from down in Dallas, Texas, which was not far from this drainage district, although the district was across the line in Oklahoma. But, anyway, the Texas attorneys tried to sustain the tax levy and the Oklahoma court held against them, held with the objectors, [held] the district was illegal and the taxes were not collectable. The Dallas attorneys appealed, took an appeal from that decision to the Oklahoma Supreme Court and that

court also held that the tax was invalid.

Matheny-Dixon then came to us with the problem of what to do--and it was all new to us--so far as they could tell us, it looked like the thing was all finished, the door was closed. We told them to have the Dallas attorneys apply for a re-hearing in the Supreme Court to keep the case alive until we could find out what the facts were. And we went down to Oklahoma and looked into the records of the organization of that drainage district and then looked into the Oklahoma law and concluded that the Supreme Court was wrong, they weren't justified in holding that the district was illegal. It was a perfectly legal district; so was the tax.

We also found out that in the litigation down there, the only people who were made defendants in that litigation were the officers of the drainage district and Matheny-Dixon. In other words, they hadn't made the owners of the bonds defendants or parties to the suit. Now you can't get a good judgement against me by bringing the suit against somebody else and not making me a party to the suit. But that's what they had done. So, we took the matter and started fresh in federal court, the federal court down there, and we had to take it to the federal court of appeals in Omaha, but we finally got the district sustained. But you see, you just get one case because you had one something like it somewhere. If it wasn't like that, you might sit down in the office the rest of your life, I guess, because people don't just hunt you up because they think maybe you're a good guy or a good

church member or something like that.

Q. Who would have had to stand the loss, Matheny-Dixon Company, or this Mr. Fetzer that you mentioned?

A. Oh, the bond holder, William Fetzer.

Q. You mentioned that he was the manager of a local plant. Do you remember what plant that would have been?

A. Yes. It was . . . you're not old enough. (laughter) You're not old enough. You remember one time there was a place out southeast of town here they called Mildred and they built a long building out there in the country to manufacture some kind of farm machinery. It went into receivership and was changed into something else, and it changed another time or two, and finally, I think, that's the one that Fetzer got control of. I don't know where he came from. He came to town here, though, and got control of it. And he operated it as a kind of a foundry, that is, a place where they made castings, where they cast the different forms for parts of machinery.

Q. Was this out near Bunn Park?

A. The other side of Bunn Park.

Q. A big stone structure?

A. No, it wasn't stone.

Q. I heard that there's still an old stone factory-type building back

there.

A. I'm pretty sure it was just brick, but it was brick.

Q. Well, brick is what I meant.

A. Oh, yes! (laughter) That's different.

Q. Sorry. Instead of wood is what I meant.

A. Yes. That's the one.

Q. Well, he must have been quite a wealthy man if he could take the--you said he took the whole issue himself?

A. Well, somebody else may have gotten part of it, but anyway he got a substantial part of that and he was the one that was raising Cain about it. He was kicking Matheny-Dixon all the time, you know, threatening them about what he was going to do to them. That's the reason they were so active.

Q. Is this firm the predecessor of Dixon, Bretcher and Noonan?

A. Yes.

Q. I thought so. I was putting names together. (Tape turned off.)

Q. I'm interested in mining, and of course since this is John L. Lewis' home, we feel there are still people here that would remember him.

A. Well, we didn't have much mining business. Offhand, I can't remember any litigation in which we represented an ordinary coal mine, such as the mines in Sangamon County. We did, at times,

have claims for personal injuries some of the miners suffered, but there wasn't anything out of the ordinary about those; they were just cases of accidents of one kind or another. Some miner got hurt and couldn't agree with the company on how much damage he should get for his injury.

Q. Could you collect from the company?

A. Sometimes. Sometimes the company had already paid as much as the jury thought the man was entitled to. We did represent one of the strip mine companies. The Truax-Trader Coal Company decided to come into Illinois to operate. We got their business. I don't remember that they ever had a personal injury claim that they didn't settle themselves. I don't think we ever had a suit of that kind with the strip mine company. Of course, in their ordinary operation, they don't hire very many miners. They have big machines or big shovels that are operated by the engineers and they don't hire the ordinary coal miner to go down underground and mine coal through a tunnel. They just strip the dirt off of the top of the coal and scoop the coal out with a big power shovel.

Q. Where were these mines?

A. Strip mines?

Q. Where were these strip mines?

A. Well, they bought two or three locations down in the neighborhood

of Murphysboro, southern Illinois. They also bought two or three locations up in Fulton County, across the Illinois River.

Q. Near Peoria?

A. Southwest of Peoria. What's the name of that town up there on the railroad? They had one big operation near Canton. At one time, they even put some barges on the Illinois River and loaded them with coal from the Fulton County strip mines and shipped coal down to Louisiana on those barges.

Q. As a farmer, how did you feel about strip mining?

A. Well . . .

Q. As someone who loves the land?

A. Well, I like the fees from the strip mine company so well that I wasn't opposed to strip mining. But, as a matter of fact, most of the land that they used for strip mining is not good land for farming. In Fulton County, it'll be the land usually along a creek valley or maybe into the hills. In addition to that, in Fulton County, they restored to farming a large part of the land that they had stripped for the coal. They put enough of the soil back on that land to grow pasture. If it'll grow pasture, it'll grow almost anything else. But, of course, it usually isn't leveled out perfectly flat, so that it is more suitable for pasture than for anything like corn, where you have to cultivate it several times to get a crop. And down in southern Illinois, a

considerable part of the land that they bought for strip mine purposes was flat land. It was level enough to farm, but the soil down there is not black prairie gumbo[4] or even good loam. It's real tight clay. Most of it will hold water like a jug and all it was worth, all it would sell for for farming purposes, was about eight dollars an acre; farm land at eight dollars an acre doesn't add up very fast.

Q. Compared to what? For here in Sangamon County?

A. Eight hundred dollars.

Q. Did we ever have a mine disaster in Springfield or in Sangamon County?

A. Not any large one.

Q. Did we have a small one?

A. Oh, they had accidents when they were operating. Once in a while, somebody would be killed. I don't know of any case, but I assume there were cases when more than one got killed because the mines in Sangamon County are all shaft and tunnel mines, and safety in those mines depends to a great degree on the character of the rock that has been formed above the strata of coal or the vein of coal. Some rock is faulty. Either it is soft or, for one reason or another, it's been broken, and maybe it's of the character that just tends to slough off when it's exposed to the air. And the big

---

[4] A fine silty soil. [Ed.]

part of the injuries in these ordinary coal mines, like the Sangamon County mines, is a result of a large chunk of that roof coming loose and just dropping on the miner.

Now, in southern Illinois strip mines, some of that coal down there had no more than twelve or fourteen feet of dirt on top of it. Ordinarily, you find more dirt than that on top of the coal vein. But in most of those cases, the coal can't be mined in any other way, because there's no layer of stone there to form a good roof. So, they scoop off that layer of dirt, and with the big shovels that they have now, they can lift off thirty cubic yards at one scoop, or even more. And when they get the dirt off the top, they have a layer of coal there, sometimes the layer of coal will be twelve feet thick. These ordinary mines around Sangamon County think they're in good luck if they find a vein of coal down there that's six feet thick; most of it is less than six feet.

Q. Mining was big business in Sangamon County, wasn't it?

A. Yes, it was. I don't know how many mines there were operating in this county at one time, but there were dozens of them. Some of them put out a lot of good coal, some of them just put out a little bit. Some of them were even what they call wagon mines; they put out only such amounts of coal as people could haul away from the mine in a farm wagon.

Q. Do you think the mining industry in Springfield attracted lots of

new inhabitants? By that time the farm land was pretty well taken up, wasn't it?

A. Oh, yes. Farm land had all been entered. The government didn't have any more. Of course, when the mines were operating, they furnished a lot of jobs for people. All these little towns that grew up along the railroads, all of them that were of any size at all, used to have a coal mine.

Q. What were the names of some of them?

A. Well, there used to be a mine in Chatham. Seems to me there used to be more than one mine at Chatham. There used to be a mine at Edinburg. There were mines up here at Cantrall. Rochester is the only village in the county of this size that didn't have a coal mine, as far as I know. Of course, some of the mines in Sangamon County were opereated in a vein that wasn't worth very much, and some wells--just an ordinary well that they dug for water around Sangamon County--some of them struck a vein of coal before they got deep enough to furnish water. Some of the foundations for buildings here in Springfield went deep enough that they struck a vein of coal before they got as deep as they wanted to sink the foundation. Of course, those veins sometimes wouldn't be perhaps more than a foot thick. And out here in Rochester Township, there's a vein of that kind that crops out at the foot of a bluff on the South Fork of the Sangamon River.

Q. Has coal on top?

A. Yes. The vein comes to the surface out there. And years ago, people used to go there to get a little coal because in the old-fashioned threshing machine outfit--for years the threshing machine and the pertinent equipment was operated by a steam engine. The first threshing machines were operated by a power--what they called a power--which was simply a pole to which they hitched a team of two or more horses. The horses went around and around and around, and furnished the power to operate a threshing machine. But it wasn't long before they developed steam engines. The steam engine operated the threshing machines until the gasoline engine came in. By that time, the threshing machine was on its way out. But it used to be the rule that when you engaged the threshing outfit to come to your place and thresh your grain, wheat, or oats, whatever it was, it was your obligation to furnish enough coal to operate that outfit while it was on your place. So the farmer engaged the operator of one of those threshing outfits to thresh his grain for him and he came to Springfield and went to the coal mine and got him a small load of coal for the threshing machines to use. He didn't need any coal himself; in most cases, he burned wood for his own needs.

Q. Did the earlier machines use wood before they switched to coal?

A. I don't think so. You know, when the settlers came in to this part of the country, these prairies had no timber on them. What they called the prairie was an open place; it had prairie grass, weeds, but it didn't have timber on it. And a settler came into

this country so late that he couldn't get him a piece of land along the stream with good timber on it and he had to take what was left. Sometimes, he didn't have any timber at all on the piece of land that he had to take and to take care of such settlers as that, some parts of the timber section of the country were split up. I don't know whether the government agency did it; anyway, they got split up into what were called timber lots and some fellow living out here miles from any timber, on open prairie, he'd buy a timber lot and go up there to cut timber for his fuel when he had to have heat.

Q. The out-cropping you spoke of, of coal, along the South Fork, did that have a name, a local name?

A. No.

Q. Everyone just knew where it was. (laughter) Did you play around it as a kid?

A. No. The more I think, I doubt if it could be found. It was probably all mined out--all that they could get out--without having it cave in. It'd probably cave in and cover it over, what's left there. I could come pretty close to locating it. Maybe there'd be some sign of it there yet. I've never been there. I don't know.

Q. When the unions started to organize, was Springfield right in the heart of that, particularly the Mine Workers' Union?

A. I wouldn't know anything about that. I'd just have to guess. But

I remember that they had strikes here in Springfield and they had strikes out in Chatham. The miners out in Chatham went on a strike and I don't know how long it lasted, but I remember that an old man had been loafing around the saloons there in Chatham all day. He said that the miners had been on strike so long that they were getting mean, and they were telling each other that if the mine owners didn't agree to what they wanted pretty soon, they'd have to go out and take some of the farmers' stock and butcher it to get them something to eat. Strikes in those days were just like strikes today.

Q. But I'm not sure that the worker got strike benefits in those days, the way they do today.

A. Oh, no!

Q. You mentioned . . . oh, I shouldn't switch topics. I want to go back to the fair in St. Louis sometime, that you mentioned, the St. Louis Exposition. Did you ever see John L. Lewis when he was in town or did you ever know his family?

A. I didn't know him, and I don't know that I ever saw him. If I did, I probably didn't know who it was.

Q. Where did most of the miners, the miners that worked the Springfield mine, live?

A. I didn't live in Springfield, I probably wouldn't know.

Q. There were lots of them here, though, when you moved in. You moved in in 1908?

A. Let's see. I got out of school [in] 1907. Yes, there were a lot of them around here, no doubt about that. At that time, a lot of them lived out on the north side, because the big mines were out north and there were more of them. There was one, there was the Woodside Mine, they called it, just on the south edge of town here, on the Wabash railroad. And there had been another one out south and there were two west of town.

When we were starting up in our [law] office, we did collecting; we collected bills for one of the clothing stores. Most of the coal miners' bills that were reported to us, most of those coal miners lived out north. Some of them were pretty hard to get money out of. In fact, a lot of them spent their money before they got home. A lot of them had the idea that when they went on a strike, somebody ought to support them until they got what they wanted. The grocery store with which they did business was expected to carry them, give them credit. There's a man named Good, [who] ran a little grocery store--I think it was on North Grand Avenue, it was out in that neighborhood--and in a few years, he accumulated over $40,000 of bad debts carrying such people.

Q. Was this because they were on strike, or was this because the company had laid them off, and they couldn't find another job?

A. A good part of it was the result of a strike, because if it wasn't a strike and one man was laid off here, he has a chance to get a job at some other mine. If this man doesn't sell coal, business is bad and he lets a few miners off, but that coal that he would have sold, it's being furnished by some other fellow.

The total amount of coal used--and it's true today--the total amount of coal used one year after another, one month after another is pretty constant. They may buy a little more from this guy, or the guy across town, but somebody's furnishing that coal. And when one mine has slow business, why, very often it happened because his competitor over here has sold some of the coal that he otherwise would have been selling.

Q. Were the strikes ever extensive enough that the whole town was aware of them and that the miners themselves were becoming destitute?

A. No, I don't think they became destitute. Those things were usually settled before very many people became desperate. You know, no matter what times are, there's always some folks that are in trouble, are having hard times. Not because times are hard generally, but because they themselves just don't want to work, or they're not capable of doing the work right, or they're not well to do the job right when they get one. There's always a certain number of them. They're hard up no matter what turn business takes. Of course, you know that coal miners' wages were the wages of any other laborer. They weren't enough to make anybody rich right quick. I don't remember what they did get, but a coal miner could have steady work and still he couldn't live very high.

Q. They probably pushed for higher education for their children, don't you suppose? Hoping that their children could advance more than they did?

A. There's all kinds of people among the coal miners; there's all kinds just like there is in any other kind of line or any business. There's good ones and there's bad ones; there's honest ones and there's crooked ones.

Q. Weren't the Wanless family originally coal miners?

A. I think they were at one time. But they were pretty well fixed before I came here. I don't know much about how they managed to make themselves a lot of money.

Q. Were most of our Sangamon County mines owned by people who did not live here?

A. I don't know. I don't know what percentage would have been owned by non-residents. Of course, a substantial number of them were owned by local people. But mines like Peabody mines were owned by a corporation. I think that most of the mines that really put out any quantity of coal were really owned by some corporation, even though one family may have owned the corporation. They'd have the mine ownership put in a corporation for their own protection. Things might go bad and the corporation might get deeply in debt, but they could just put the corporation through backruptcy and kiss it good-bye. But if they had the property, the title in their own names and operated the business as individuals, they couldn't go through bankruptcy without losing all they had.

Q. Can you think of some other names for me that were prominent in mining?

A. Mining in this part of Illinois?

Q. Yes, particularly Sangamon County. Or do you know of some people who were miners that we perhaps could talk to?

A. Well, there was one of the mines west of town here on the old C. P. and St. L. Railroad, one of those mines was operated by a man named Elshoff. Another mine out there in the same neighborhood was operated by Billy Ryan.

Q. What does C. P. and St. L. stand for?

A. Chicago, Peoria, and St. Louis. You remember when it was still running?

Q. Not really. My problem is that I'm not from Springfield. Did another railroad take it over?

A. No, it just faded away. The railroad was torn up and the rails were sold for old iron and there wasn't anything else, the ties were already rotten.

Q. When did it fold up?

A. Since 1918.

Q. Was this because the mines had been worked out, do you think? Was that its main business?

A. Well, I'm not sure. It just didn't have enough business to pay

to maintain it and operate it. If the railroad had kept going, maybe the mines would have kept going. But there wasn't any question about it, when the railroads quit, the mines were done. They couldn't operate without a railroad.

END OF TAPE

Q. I was asking you about the Mississippi Valley Traction Company which went from Springfield to Rochester.

A. With an old man named Melick. These were both companies that he promoted.

Q. The one to Rochester and also the one to Jacksonville?

A. Yes. I don't know where you would go to find exactly where they got right of way. They did a little construction work, but they started over towards Jacksonville. I don't know whether they started at Jacksonville. The only part of it that was built, that I can remember, was just about in the middle; about half-way between. They had done some grading and they had built a little short bridge across the branch or creek out there.

Q. You mean they started the Springfield-Jacksonville Traction Company in the middle?

A. Yes. (laughter)

Q. Where was the Mississippi Valley Traction Company, the one that went from Springfield to Rochester?

A. It started at Clear Lake and they raised enough money--I don't know anybody that had so much money that they bought any stock in either of these companies--but some of the farmers donated [a] right-of-way, not a very wide one, but Melick didn't require a very wide right-of-way, he didn't have any use for it, as a matter of fact. He had very little use for any right-of-way. Some of the farmers either donated the right-of-way, or took some stock in his company, in payment for his right-of-way.

Q. Are you speaking of the line that went to Rochester?

A. Yes. You know they used to haul picnics out at Clear Lake. Have you ever been to Clear Lake?

Q. Yes, I have.

A. It was a nice little lake and it had been used more or less as a public picnic ground. I don't know who owned it.

Q. Wasn't it owned by the Jess family?

A. No. I guess I never inquired who owned it.

Q. Do you remember when the Rochester Traction opened for business?

A. I don't remember the opening. In fact, I guess I wasn't here. It opened during the school term. As a matter of fact, Melick started as soon as he had some money that he could use to do anything, open up his right-of-way, build a bridge across a four foot branch, something like that. He went ahead and as soon as he got a car and enough track to run it on, why, he had a railroad. And when they started building out towards Clear Lake, whether

they started to build from here to Hillsboro, I don't know. I don't think he started that way. I think his idea when he started was that he'd make a resort out of Clear Lake and he'd get enough business to make the little railroad pay. As soon as he got the railroad built out that far, I think he opened it up. His car-- I'm not sure whether they owned a work car of any kind.

Q. You mean a work railroad car?

A. Yes. When he finally got the railroad built as far as Rochester, he got a car somewhere, or he already had a car, and so he opened up the railroad that far out. You could get on it here somewhere in Springfield and if you were lucky, you could ride as far as Rochester. But that was the end of the line. He did no construction work beyond Rochester.

Q. You say he didn't get the line built to Clear Lake? Clear Lake is north, so it would have been out of the way?

A. He branched off when he got out. Let's see where we are here-- this is the Wabash. (Looking at an Illinois map.)

Q. The one that goes through Illiopolis, Lanesville, Buffalo.

A. It ran up through these towns, but it falls along the side; most of the way it ran alongside the Wabash railroad.

Q. Was that line to Clear Lake completed?

A. Yes, as I remember it. I never rode out to Clear Lake on it, but it ran towards . . . The Interurban came into Rochester from . . .

It came into Rochester along this road.

Q. Oh, it came in from the north.

A. It came into Rochester from the north, made a swing around old man Waters' hog lot (laughter) and stopped up here close to the main street. That's all the farther it ever got. And to get there--I lost my place--here's Clear Lake, this is Sugar Creek and that's Clear Lake; it came out and crossed Sugar Creek on that line and came out here, crossed South Fork and then came south along here. I'm not sure about some wiggles here, but this fork got up here to Clear Lake. Now, just how it got across there, I don't know. I don't know just whose land that was.

Q. So the branch that went to Clear Lake had to cross Sugar Creek twice? Is that right?

A. No. When Sugar Creek--this is the south fork of the Sangamon River coming down here, that's the South Fork and this is the Sangamon River. Really, it's the north fork of the Sangamon River.

Q. I see what you're saying.

A. The North and the South Fork and Sugar Creek, they come together at just about the same place out there. And that's the end of Sugar Creek, right there. But to get to Clear Lake, they did have to cross the north fork of the Sangamon River before it struck the other fork and joined. Now, across Sugar Creek, they

just got them some long poles and sank them in the ground as far as they could and made a kind of wiggle in the rails, you know, and got across Sugar Creek and they did the same when they crossed the South Fork. And from there on, they didn't have to cross anything larger than a branch that you could jump across.

Q. Just below the junction of the north and the south fork of the Sangamon?

A. Above it; the water's running this way. There's a farmer named Kalb and a Dr. Kalb lived on Park Avenue--I'm not sure whether the doctor was one of his boys, but they were related. It's Dr. Kalb's father or his uncle that lived on the place and had what he called Glenwood Park.

Q. Glenwood Park?

A. Glenwood Park. One time, he had a big picnic out there. I think it was the Old Settlers' Picnic for Sangamon County. It was held out there and Kalb owned a steamboat.

Q. Steamboat!

A. Yes. He owned a steamboat and ran a steamboat up and down the river. When he had a picnic there, of course, he sold people rides. I forgot what they charged people for a ride. I never got to ride on the steamboat. I had heard of it through a blacksmith that ran a shop at New City. Yes, there's New City

down here. The blacksmith's name was Keyes.

Q. K-E-Y-E-S?

A. K-E-Y-E-S, I think. Same as the George Keyes of the bank; Ed Keys was the president of the Farmers Bank. I think they just spell it K-E-Y-S. But anyway, through the wives in the families they were related and this blacksmith's boy at New City, he was about our age, went to school with the rest of the kids. The boy that was about my age, and used to be in my class there, he was always telling us about how he'd been over to his uncle's, especially after vacationtime. When school started up, he'd have some big yarns about being over at his uncle's park, Glenwood Park, and rode in the steamboat. He never explained how big the steamboat was until the Keys had moved away and went to North Dakota. We moved right onto the Old Home Farm and they had the Old Settlers' Picnic over there in Glenwood Park and we went to the picnic and we saw the steamboat. It was a little bit longer than this table and that's about all.

Q. Five feet?

A. By the time he got the pilot and the engineer in it, it didn't have room for more than two or three passengers. It had a little, old, steam engine and it did get enough to crank the propeller and it'd run the boat. Of course, there's never enough current in the South Fork in the summertime or in the Sangamon River itself, there's not enough current to call for a lot of power in

order to force the boat upstream. Coming downstream they could make it all right. I didn't get a ride in the boat. I don't know what became of it. I guess it just rotted out on the Sangamon. But at any rate--I forget what that man's first name was, George, I believe his name was, George Kalb. Oh, yes! The name of the steamboat was the Lalla Rook.

About the time Keys got the steamboat, there was a novel published, the title was Lalla Rook. It was supposed to be some girl's name. That's where the name came from. This was the Lalla Rook. And young Keys lived in my high school district. There was a flock of Keys, but this one was Ed Keys. Most of the boys, in those days, had a pocket knife of some kind or another, even if he had to buy a secondhand one. He didn't amount to anything if he didn't have a pocket knife. So all the trees in this city were marked up with initials. E. K. and N. K. Yes. Ed Keys and Nelly Kalb. I don't think I ever met Nelly. At least I didn't meet her at that picnic over there, I know that. I don't know what became of Nelly.

Q. I wonder if her initials are still on the trees of New City?

A. No. Those were mostly soft maple trees. They don't live long; they're all gone, I'm sure of that.

Q. You said Glenwood Park was on the North Fork, is that right?

A. No, it was on the South Fork. It'd be somewhere above this junction (looking at map). This road along here heads north,

this is the road, you see, with the double line. But it doesn't go up to the lake. I guess you could get up by going around.

Q. Well, this map is 1881 also, so they might have built another road since then.

A. Well, I don't know what's out there now.

Q. Or even the time you're speaking of, when Glenwood Park was there. Did our Glenwood Street in town have anything to do with Glenwood Park?

A. No, not a thing. And to get out--this is the old Mechanicsburg Road, but when this interurban was built out here, remember it ran along the Wabash Railroad out through Illiopolis?

Q. Which interurban was this one, that ran through Mechanicsburg?

A. The McKinley system.

Q. The McKinley system. On its way where?

A. Decatur. It ran right along the railroad.

Q. So it ran right along the road? And the railroad ran along the road?

A. Part of the way. Wait a minute, I got the wrong road here. Here's the Wabash Railroad.

Q. So, it went through Buffalo.

A. Yes. The Wabash Railroad went out through Buffalo, Lanesville,

Illiopolis and . . . oh, what's the next one on the other side of Illiopolis? It's bad when you get old and can't remember.

Q. Well, I don't know now. But anyway, it went straight along there?

A. Yes, it went straight on out north to Decatur. And then somebody built a spur line from Buffalo up here, it came south.

Q. To Mechanicsburg?

A. Yes. It came right on this road into Mechanicsburg.

Q. Well, what I found is that one was built in 1900 and was pulled by two horses. There's a picture of it in the library.

A. It could have been built then. You see they were working on these on this Rochester Road. They were probably working on it by 1903. It was finished out as far as Rochester by about 1903 or 1904.

Q. Was that the normal way you came into town then, once it was built?

A. No, it wasn't. For one thing, I don't remember when was the first time I rode on it, but about the first time I ever rode on it, you could get on here and you could get out as far as Rochester. But, when you wanted to come back, there was a place out there when the road made a dip down at a little creek. You see this road wiggles a little bit along here (pointing to map).

Q. What's the name of this? Rochester Branch, this is labeled. There's a little creek along here.

A. Yes, that's a branch. The wagon road comes down here. If it stayed on the section line, it would probably run into Rochester Branch. Anyway, it makes a little jog over here and heads north again. But along here somewhere, it went down across a little valley, and up on the other side. In going out, there was something about it that the grade uphill wasn't so steep, they could get enough power--they got the power from the Springfield Power Plant--and going out the grade wasn't so steep [and] they could get up. But going back you came to this valley and there was a place where the grade was so steep that the car wouldn't pull itself up. All the passengers had to get out and walk up that hill and the ones that were able--usually it was everybody because nobody else got on it--everybody had to get out and push; push that car up the hill. It had a little power but not enough to pull itself up. And it depended on the weather, too, because if it was damp weather, there'd be a leak in the line. The floor insulation would leak a little bit more and by the time you got out as far as Rochester, it was the last gasp as far as that railroad was concerned and it never got any farther.

Q. Everytime you rode into town you had to get out and push? (laughter)

A. No, I think that there were times when the weather was pretty dry and maybe they didn't have too big a load. If conditions were right, you might be able to get by without pushing the car up, but I think more often than not you had to get out and push. I got out and pushed a couple of times and I didn't ride it very often.

Q. How much did it cost to ride? Can you remember at all?

A. I think it was fifteen cents if you wanted to ride all the way out. It should have been more to come back, but I don't remember. (laughter) It was some little fare like that.

Q. Maybe they should have paid you to come back and push. Was it just the one conductor or one engine man?

A. Yes, it was an electric line so--I almost had his name, but it got away. One man was the conductor, motorman, engineer, brakeman. He was the whole works.

Q. So one man ran it?

A. One man operation. I can't remember, my guess is that the motorman just turned the thing on and got out and pushed with the rest of us. He wasn't afraid of it getting such a start that he couldn't keep up with it. (laughter)

Q. Was there a junction up here at this fork near Glenwood Park where one branch went off to Clear Lake and the other turned west to go to Springfield?

A. Yes, it was north of the park a little ways, not far from Glenwood Park.

Q. Was there a switching in the line there or were there just two little branches that went off to either side?

A. They had to have a switch there in order to turn the car one way or the other.

Q. Did the same man hop off and do the switching?

A. Oh, yes!

Q. Oh, he did! He'd stop it, and hop out to switch?

A. Oh, yes. They couldn't afford one man just to ride out there and turn the switch.

Q. Were there certain stations or could you stop the little train anywhere you wanted to?

A. I think if you held up a dime, he'd stop where you wanted to.

Q. Hold up a dime? (laughter) Would you have to wave a flag or a hanky or anything?

A. I don't think so. I think that if the motorman saw anybody within hailing distance he'd stop for them.

Q. Did it run in the night hours, too? In darkness?

A. Yes.

Q. Were there any problems with hitting people or animals?

A. I don't remember if they ever had any. It could have been, but it wouldn't have hurt an animal. It'd just give him a little nudge, that's about all.

Q. What did the car itself look like?

A. As I remember it, it looked like a little old streetcar that had

been one of the first that the street railway company put out. I think it was one that they picked up at a junkyard somewhere and made into an interurban. I can't remember, they could have had a turn-around.

Q. Did it hook to power lines overhead like streetcars?

A. Yes.

Q. Well, maybe the driver just changed ends like they used to do in the streetcar and put his other wand up.

A. Gee, I don't remember.

Q. Did the benches all face forward or were they along the side?

A. I can't be sure about that. They must have had seats that faced forward though. Otherwise I would remember it if it operated at either end. I don't think it did. To get the car turned around, they came into Rochester from the north and headed into town and in order to get the car turned around, all they'd need to do would be to run up the street here. There was a switch there so that when the car came back, it would turn the car around there and switch right up to the other end and they'd have the car turned around. There's one little place--oh, that's getting back too far. Of course, another way, if they wanted to turn the car around, would be simply to make a loop and keep on going.

Q. Where did the Rochester Traction Line end in Rochester itself? Was it near the town hall? The street that you have it coming in on, I believe, they still call Main Street today.

A. That's the east and west street.

Q. Yes. So it would have come in right by the little old school there, that's still in use today?

A. Yes. I don't think they had any building of their own. I think they ran the track in there and when the car got there, why, it had the motorman, the conductor, and also the ticket agent, as well as baggage man--he was all the same man.

Q. I was just trying to place the turn-around of the route. That town hall is quite an old building there. I wonder if it had come in near it. That's just about a half block west of the school? About a block west. I wonder how many years it was in operation.

A. Well, that'd be kind of hard to find out, probably because the first four or five miles of it was in operation quite a while before they got out as far as Rochester.

Q. Oh, so it started in Springfield and then what?

A. It went out towards Clear Lake. There's nothing in between except farmers' houses.

Q. So it actually didn't get to a town before Rochester?

A. No, it just didn't go anywhere until it got to Rochester. The Clear Lake line--there wasn't any business at Clear Lake except when somebody had a picnic out there.

Q. Well, he must have expected big business from Rochester.

A. Well, by the time he got out to the junction and headed north he was already talking about Hillsboro, going right straight south to Hillsboro. I think probably the old man didn't have any maps that showed him where that [would lead] if he stayed on the course. He didn't have a map that showed him where it would take him.

Q. Why do you say that?

A. Well, he was willing to build a railroad in any direction if somebody'd furnish enough money to build it. Just like the Jacksonville branch--he would have had a railroad from Springfield to Jacksonville if he hadn't run out of money before he got to either place. Maybe he figured out himself that if he started at either end he'd never get to the other end, so the thing to do was start in the middle. I don't know that that's where he started. He could have started something in Jacksonville, because it's fairly level land, if you stay away from the creeks.

Q. Well, this map is of 1881. If all these railroads were in existence then, I don't quite see why he would want to build one to Rochester. What's this--the Mississippi and P.P. What's that? It goes right to Rochester from Springfield.

A. That should be the Mississippi and Ohio. Springfield Division, O&M Right there. Springfield Division, the O&M. And it ran from Beardstown to Flora. I believe the junction was there.

Q. Was this Mr. Melick a local person?

A. I can't tell you. I don't know where he came from. He could have originated in Springfield.

Q. Well, you had quite a walk once you got off the tracks to get out to the farm, didn't you? Would they have a horse waiting for you?

A. No. But by the time I got through school and used the Interurban from Rochester, that would have been 1908. To get from the town of Rochester to the Old Home Place . . .

Q. Which is down here, near--what lake is that? Keys Lake?

A. Keys Lake.

Q. These were the same people you were mentioning earlier.

A. Relatives, yes.

Q. I didn't know there was a little lake down there. Is it still there?

A. It's still there, but it's part of Lake Springfield now. It's just an old loop of Sugar Creek. Sugar Creek once went around something like that, but some high water came along and cut a new channel across the neck and went straight across. This was just a shallow lake. It was a bigger lake when there was water in it. When it was a lake at all, it was a bigger lake than Clear Lake, but there wasn't anything clear about it!

Q. So it really was the mother of Lake Springfield.

A. I don't think that more than one out of twenty people in Springfield ever knew there was a lake out there.

Q. I didn't myself.

A. Well, the banks were all mud and the bottom was mud. Some years they raised a crop on the bottom of it, some years they didn't. It wasn't much of a lake, it was just an old slew. But in the wintertime it'd get some water in it, depending on the weather. It was pretty good skating if you caught a cold spell and there was water in the lake, because it was long enough that you could really get some skating done over there.

Q. So the Jacksonville Line was never completed, is that right?

A. Yes, that's right.

Q. Did the company go bankrupt?

A. I don't think they ever filed any proceedings in bankruptcy, they just had nothing and everybody knew it, and nobody tried to compel them to pay. They had nothing to pay with. The way the old man had it planned, it would have come into Springfield on the Old Jacksonville Road. The Old Jacksonville Road would be this one. (Referring to a map)

Q. Yes, it goes out to New Berlin.

A. Yes. The hard road came out through Bates on this road.

Q. Oh, it did, to Jacksonville?

A. Yes.

Q. And this was still a dirt road then at that time?

A. Still is today.

Q. The Old Jacksonville Road?

A. Yes.

Q. It's got blacktop on it.

A. Yes, but that's not a pavement.

Q. (laughter) I consider that better than dirt.

A. Yes, a little bit.

Q. What's the difference between hard roads, then? I thought hard roads would be Macadam. You're saying hard roads would be more like concrete.

A. Some blacktop isn't even two inches thick.

Q. So that's not really a hard road?

A. No.

Q. I see. I didn't realize that difference.

A. Once [in a while] a blacktop road is a real hard road, because it may have six or eight or ten inches of crushed rock for a foundation. But lots of blacktops have no foundation under it. Sometimes they put oil on this summer, next summer they put

some more on top of that, until they have three or four inches of dirt mixed with road oil. If they filled up the holes as fast as they start forming, it makes a very good road. But it takes a lot of work to keep them in good shape.

Q. When you traveled to Jacksonville, would you come down south here to go across on the hard road? It's a little out of the way isn't it?

A. Little bit. But it would depend on the weather which road we took. Weather like we've had here this fall, why the old road . . .

Q. Rainy.

A. The old road is all right.

Q. It was kind of rainy this fall. Would you dare try the old road?

A. Well, rain that falls and runs off doesn't do so much damage. It's the freeze and thaw in the wintertime. The oil road, when it freezes up, it's a good road until it thaws. Then, if it has no foundation under it, when it thaws, the top layer or two will break off, and you've got practically no road except your old dirt road with a lot of chunks, some of them as wide as that pencil, some of them even wider. They are all sizes, depending on how thick the coating was. It was maybe just an inch or so thick, maybe three or four inches thick, but no strength to it. It won't carry any load.

Q. Did you get stuck in the mud often?

A. No. But we would if we'd get in the mud. In those days, if the weather was such that you know the frost was coming out of the ground, you didn't try to get over the roads with a big load of any kind. Lots of these dirt roads you could get stuck with two horses trying to pull an old-fashioned road wagon or buggy--no weight to it, no weight to any of them. But that mud just got so deep, those buggy wheels would fill up with mud, especially if there's some stretch where you had to get off the main traveled track.

In the summertime you know, they'd wire the roadway out; they'd wire the tracks out so everybody followed the same tracks. Your wheels ran in the track made by the wheel ahead of it. That would make it a little deeper and it kept getting deeper as the ground got softer. But some of these dirt roads would really have no bottom. When the frost went out in the spring, and it rained and water filled up every hole, the next team that came along would work that water into mud. Farmers with a two-horse team and a light wagon could get stuck in some of the country roads without any load in the wagon.

Lots of the roads would have weeds and grass growing on the side of the tracks, along the side where the traffic had worn the weeds and grass off so it was bare dirt. The rest of the road would grow up in weeds, especially grass that would leave some fiber. And that fiber would get mixed up in the mud and you'd get a lot of that wound up on the wheels. Sometimes you'd get

so much that the wheel wouldn't have any spokes, it would just be a solid clump of dirt with the spokes on the inside. But people that lived in the country in those days, they knew those things. Nobody tried to haul a wagonload of grain, for instance, over a road that had been frozen and thawed out and hadn't settled yet. The wheel would trip through, clear down to the hub and the madder you would be.

Q. Who took care of the roads?

A. Oh, they had road districts in those counties where they didn't have township organizations. They had commissioners that did that job. Sangamon County was one that had a township organization, like the townships of Cotton Hill, Ball-Chatham, Loami, Rochester. [In] those townships and in Sangamon County, each township elected a highway commissioner for that township. It was the highway commissioner's job to find someone to take care of the roads. Usually, the highway commissioner would be elected at the spring election when they elect the village clerks and members of the board of supervisors, but I'm not sure about that, I could be wrong.

Q. Were the country roads ever paved with brick?

A. No.

Q. Were any of the roads in the city of Rochester paved with brick?

A. No.

Q. It seems to me you told me they did have a brick factory in Rochester at one time.

A. Yes, they did have. They burned brick and burned tile. The brick factory at Rochester was south of town, out there on what was level land. They had to scrape something like six or eight feet off the top; they had to scrape off several feet before they got down to the clay. This black soil, it was real clay, what we used to call gumbo--that's what they call it now for that matter--there's just more rotten vegetables there of one kind or another. Lots of stumps, leaves.

Q. Making up the black earth, you mean.

A. Yes. It's built with it. You get over that, most anywhere you tried, you'd find a layer of pretty good clay. That is, it was pretty good for bricks or drain tile, or anything like that. It wasn't quite as good as what you find further down. In places you find near the top, you'd have what they call fire clay or just ordinary clay. It would not have too much of this rotten vegetation in it, wouldn't have very much of that and it would be a different color. Good clay is always lighter.

Q. Would they use most of the bricks there in Rochester or would they sell them in Springfield?

A. No, I don't think they'd sell many bricks in Springfield. For one thing, Springfield probably had a better clay. The factories here in Springfield, most of them were on a section that was hilly,

it wouldn't have any of this black soil on it at all. That black soil all washed off long ago. But below that, there'd be a different kind of clay. There would be a shale which is nothing but a clay that is a little bit further along in the process of turning from ordinary clay to stone. You mix too much sand in with the other dirt and you get sandstone . . . converted to stone. Sometimes it'd have so much sand in it that you could cut out a block of it and make youself a grindstone. But Springfield had brickyards all around here.

Q. Oh, they did! They had more than one, then?

A. Oh, yes. Good and bad, big and little; there was probably a dozen at one time.

Q. Was Poston always the largest?

A. Oh, no. There were some bigger than Poston. I don't remember the names, I wasn't interested in that. But I remember one outfit, UTT. That's all they had on their brick, just the letters. Whether that was all one word or whether that was made up of initials, I never did know. I don't know where their brickyard was, but they used to be around Springfield. There were a lot of bricks that had that mark on them, UTT.

Q. Were these brickyards located in the same place, out here east of town?

A. No, no. Out here--let's see now, where's that--(refers to map). I hadn't looked for it, but this doesn't have the Illinois Central, south of town.

Q. Maybe it wasn't there in 1881.

A. Well, it was getting imminent; it was on its way. It may not have been here. This is the C&A. It's not on here, the Illinois Central. It just isn't on here, that's all. It doesn't even show the Pawnee Railroad, it isn't on here either.

Q. The Pawnee Railroad? Where did it go?

A. It ran from Auburn to Taylorville, through Pawnee.

Q. Was it a steam road or electric?

A. It was a steam road. I guess it's still operating today.

Q. You mean it just began in Pawnee and went to Taylorville?

A. No, it began in Auburn. Really, it may have begun in Pawnee.

Q. Would there be that much traffic between Auburn and Taylorville or Pawnee and Taylorville?

A. No. Really there wouldn't be that much traffic, but you know things build up. They're not naturally that way, but they get built up. Now here's a railroad.

Q. Which one is that?

A. Oh, that's the one that cuts through Jacksonville. Well, anyway, the railroad up here in Jacksonville, it has a grain elevator up there that handles the farmers' grain. That corn eventually may get sold to somebody down in Alabama or it may go to Alabama or

South Carolina to be shipped across the ocean. This little railroad up here doesn't get much closer to Alabama than it is right here. It may go down here a hundred miles and stop, but if they get some business, up here at Jacksonville, and they can make a good deal with the Illinois Central that comes down over here in the Old South, they can get a bigger percentage, a bigger cut, out of the total freight that's collected for moving that down to Mobile. They'll make a deal with this railroad over here. That puts this railroad in business.

Q. So what you're saying is they're feeder lines?

A. That's right. It just happens that way that some short railroad, they originate the business and they can send it one of two ways. They send it whichever way will give them the biggest cut out of it. The only limitation on that is the power that's vested in the Commerce Commission, Interstate Commerce Commission.

Q. Do you think there was one back in 1881?

A. Well, I don't know when they started. Yes, there could have been, even back that far.

Q. I think it's amazing the number of railroads we have going through Springfield even back then. At least four. (refers to map) Here's the T&WRR, coming from Bates up into Springfield.

A. Toledo, Wabash and Western. I didn't remember it ever had that name.

Q. It probably was absorbed by another line.

A. Yes, the same line changes its name. Springfield Division.

Q. Ohio and Mississippi?

A. That's the same railroad we looked at before. That became part of the Baltimore and Ohio. This is the Wabash and this is the C&A.

Q. We'll have to draw the Illinois Central in.

A. Yes, they haven't got it built yet, have they? Here's Springfield. Is this more of the same?

Q. No, this is a different map. This is 1970; one on the rural highway numbering system. It's hard to get a good map that shows what you're looking for.

A. It is hard to get one that shows what you're looking for without showing too many other things.

END OF TAPE

[The following section of the memoir was taped in a car as Mr. Herndon pointed out various points of interest in Sangamon County to the interviewer. "D" in the transcript refers to the driver, C. Christopher Patton.]

Q. Can we pass the place today where the old schoolhouse was?

A. Well, let's see. That road is still there. I don't know how long

it has been since I've been down that road. Lots of the old schoolhouses are gone.

Q. This is something else we're hoping to do with oral history, get more accounts of the one-room schools, both from people who taught in them and the students.

A. Well, they were all right.

D. Was this a one-room schoolhouse?

A. Yes, yes. Just one room. Most country schools were just one room.

D. Painted red?

A. No, not very often. Painted white.

Q. As a matter of fact, Chris, you're talking to the champion schoolhouse painter. (laughter)

A. That's right.

Q. Two summers he painted schoolhouses. We're passing Allis-Chalmers now. What used to be on this corner?

A. Cornfield.

Q. Was there a name for this?

A. No. The main road into this section of town was the Sixth Street Road. It ran straight out south here for several miles and the people that lived in what we called the Cotton Hill section, in

the south part of the county, mostly used Sixth Street Road to get into town. But the Rochester people came in on the Rochester Road past the old brickyard hill and hit Fifteenth Street.

Q. Where was the old brickyard hill? Would that be where Poston Brick is?

A. No.

Q. Well, from Rochester to Springfield, would it be like coming in South Grand Avenue and that extension today?

A. No. When the city built the dam that created the lake, the city changed a lot of the roads. In fact, they changed most of the roads in that section where the lake was formed.

Q. Yes, we've been told where we live that there used to be a road going through there and we can still sort of see evidences of it. And one of the old original farmhouses is still there on Linden Lane.

A. Well, we turn right here. [the junction of Stevenson Drive and West Lake Drive]

D. Do you want to go down the east side of the lake?

A. No, we want to go to the west side.

Q. Down Sheppard Road.

A. Well, yes.

Q. We'll turn here then, from Stevenson Drive to Sheppard Road.

A. Yes. The old road, this is a section of the old road. This has been a road for years and years and years, this section here down to where you turn off on what we call Sheppard Lane, just the other side of the Hazel Dell School. But this was the Fox Road [now West Lake Drive] from town clear out beyond Sugar Creek.

Q. Fox Road?

A. Yes.

Q. Was it Fox Road until it hit Sheppard Road?

A. Yes, all the way.

Q. I see. So we're on Fox Road. We're crossing the lake right now, but when we hit Sheppard Road, then did Fox Road turn left?

A. Yes.

Q. Now we're passing the Hazel Dell School.

A. This side of the building is different and the wagon road went down this hill. It's pretty steep here.

Q. Do you remember the Hazel Dell School when it was a one-roomer?

A. Oh, yes! This is like the old road, this section here. Fox Road came down here and I don't know if this is exactly where the old one was, but I think it is. It could have been over there where those trees are. Some of these roads they just relocated a little

bit. It came across here. Now this is like the old road used to be; it has been relocated a little bit, I think. But it angled across here and the McClelland family owned this farm across this draw.

Q. That's right. I believe the McClelland land starts right here with these woods.

A. Yes, somewhere here.

Q. And the old McClelland house is still here. Chris, if you'll slow down, the McClelland house is up on the right.

A. I think this is where the old road was, but I think it went straight ahead there instead of changing angles. But this part, I believe, is the road used in the years before the lake was formed.

Q. So this was an original. Now here's the entrance into the old McClelland house. They've taken the house down, just reeently though.[5]

A. Up here from this turn, the road's been changed. Originally it went straight across this draw. I don't know, let's see. It ran across here, it went straight across there.

Q. Down the draw. Right opposite from the Mason's house.

A. Across the draw. Along the west side of Sugar Creek. This is

---

[5] The McClelland house was razed. SSU's president's house was built on the site. [Ed.]

all new. The city put this big curve in and ran the road around that draw and closed the old road.

Q. Why do you suppose this road was called Fox Road?

A. I don't know.

D. Did it go out to the Fox Mill?

A. No. This is all new. There wasn't any road like this.

Q. But up until that turn it was the original Fox Road?

A. Right.

D. Do you want to go across the bridge?

A. Yes, across the bridge.

Q. Where did the name Fox Mill come from?

A. I don't know. Probably from the name of some early settler; that's where most things got their names, you know. Slow down here.

Q. We're coming up to Vachel Lindsay Bridge.

A. The old road came in just about here and there was one of these little highway bridges across Sugar Creek. The creek came right along the foot of this bluff and the bridge was right down here. I imagine if you walked across there you could find some traces of the old road. But that's where it went, it came across from the east and swung off at an angle down there along the west side of Sugar Creek.

Q. And that was the original Fox Road?

A. Yes, and this was the Fox Bridge.

Q. What did this bridge look like then?

A. Well, let's see. They just tore down the bridge across Horse Creek that looked like it. . . . It was just one of those big iron highway bridges, just a big iron truss, you know. This was all farm land. It's under water now. That part of the lake was all farm land, and good farm country.

Q. Did you come out when they were constructing the lake? Would you come out to see what it looked like?

A. No. Now this was part of the old road.

Q. So we're on the original Fox Road again now.

A. Well, I think the Fox Road quit there at the Fox Bridge. Of course the old road went down here and made a square turn when it hit, it didn't angle off here.

Q. It went through what today is the Children's Zoo [Henson C. Robinson Children's Zoo]?

A. Yes.

Q. I take it you used the Fox Road many times.

A. Yes. It was the nearest way into town from the Old Home Farm out here.

Q. Now we're back on East Lake Drive. (driving south)

D. There's a road that went down here. See that old road down there? There was a bridge down there.

A. Yes, there was a wooden covered bridge across Horse Creek down there and the road went across there. As soon as it got across Horse Creek, it jogged south again and then jogged east; it just had one jog after another all the way out to New City.

Q. So that was the New City Road that took off there.

A. Yes.

Q. But we're still on the Fox Road.

A. The old wagon road came out here. This is just about where the old road was, they didn't change it much.

Q. Was the old wagon road ever paved or did it ever have gravel on it?

A. Oh, no! The first paved road in this part of the country was a short section of Macadam road. The first one was on South Sixth Street, just south of the city limits. The government built that to show what could be done. We want to turn left here, where this side road turns off. This section of road has just been rebuilt, just this fall.

Q. We're turning by Honeywell Ranch now. Does this look like it used to?

A. No, not very much. This was a narrow road. There used to be a big old barn there; that house has been there as far back as I

can remember.

Q. This little house right here?

A. Yes. That's an old house. The worst piece of eroded land that I know of is this land right out here.

Q. Right to our right.

A. You see those trees there? One time that was a field just like this field next to the road. It was a little steeper and more hilly and they plowed it up year after year until there's gullies up there; you could drop that house in some of those gullies. You see that hill there with the gullies washed in it?

Q. You told me about timber soil. Would this have been timber soil originally?

A. Yes. There's the old schoolhouse. That's not the one I taught in, this is the Forest Grove School District. That's the old schoolhouse.

Q. Now which schoolhouse was this?

A. Forest Grove.

Q. This is the one you went to for your first school. You had trouble getting over the creek when it was flooded.

A. Anytime! There wasn't any bridge here, the road went across but there was no bridge. You couldn't drive across. You see, when

they rebuilt this road, they changed the channel. The channel in Horse Creek came right up here--under here where we are--made a loop down there where those trees are and went over there and came back up here. When they rebuilt this road they cut that channel straight across. But there's where Horse Creek used to go. It came around here.

Q. Now when you were tiny, where would you have to cross Horse Creek?

A. Right there. The people that lived on this side got together and they built a kind of a suspension foot bridge so you could walk across Horse Creek there and we crossed on that. You couldn't drive across it. The white house over there in the background is our old . . .

Q. The white one? Now this is the Old Home Farm?

A. Yes. This brick house was built of bricks that were made there on the grounds. I can remember seeing the old wooden mold that they used to make the brick. Of course the bricks were burned after they were made in those molds, but it was just pieces of wood with partitions the size of the bricks. You fill those with the clay mud, took them out and burned them.

Q. Whose home is that brick one?

A. Well, that was the Thornton farm.

Q. That house was rather close to your house.

A. Yes, half a quarter.

Q. The Old Home Farm, I know you told me before, but it was built when?

A. Well, it was all built before the Civil War. Part of it stood farther back and they moved it up closer to the road and built the front part on, but it was built before the Civil War.

Q. And this is land that your grandfather had?

A. Yes.

Q. And his family died and he went south, is that right, to be brought up and then came back up here?

A. No. Where did you think he went?

Q. I thought you told me that it was your grandfather whose family died from malaria.

A. Oh. That was the other side of the family.

Q. Okay. What was that name though?

A. Hadler.

Q. Is this where you milked the cows?

A. Well, I milked up at New City more than here and by the time they moved back here, I was leaving home. See, the back end of that house was built quite a while before the front end. I think originally it stood back here, I don't know how far. There was another house, at one time, back here--just drive where that draw

runs down. There was a house there at one time.

Q. Those are beautiful woods back there.

A. All this country had fine timber on it originally.

Q. There's a vestige of something.

A. That's just old junk.

Q. Was that a barn at one time?

A. There was a barn here.

Q. With a brick foundation.

A. Nobody uses a barn anymore.

Q. Do you recognize any of these buildings at all?

A. No. They were all built later. This old shed that's ready to fall down, that was built about 75 years ago, maybe a little more.

Q. What did you use to use it for?

A. Oh, that was the old buggy shed. That's where the family carriage was kept.

Q. It's a pretty building. How about this building on my left?

A. It's been there eighty years or so. Neither of them is used anymore.

D. Is that a milk house?

A. No, that was what they called a smokehouse because every farmer butchered his own meat. They'd hang part of it up and smoke it with smoke from, usually, hickory chips. If they didn't have hickory, then just any kind of hardwood would do. That cured the meat so it would keep through the summer; hams and the bacon, they all were cured in a smokehouse. Everybody had, somewhere on the place, a place where you could smoke the meat.

Q. Did you have a root cellar on this farm?

A. No.

Q. I see that there are entrances to the basement area.

A. Yes, there was a cellar under there, but it wasn't used for a root cellar. It was too cold, there was no insulation under that porch floor.

About 45 or 50 years ago, maybe a little more, I left home before it was done, but my brother was living here and they excavated the basement under the entire house. It's separate from this old one and they put a furnace in there and they dug a cistern out east. It doesn't show, but they dug a cistern and put in a water plant so they have water in the house; bathrooms. They had a big basement under the whole house. But's that all something new. There's my brother Jack.

Q. Oh, is it? He'll wonder what we're doing. (Tape stops and starts.)

Q. That old Thornton house is pretty, too.

A. The original Thornton house didn't have that addition on the west side. It just had what's now the front part. When they built the house--we better turn back here and go back across Horse Creek--they built the walls, good solid walls, a nine inch brick wall. They plastered the inside of the walls, no insulation at all, you know, and a brick wall doesn't keep the cold out. Four inches of insulation will stop the cold or retain the heat as well as fourteen feet of solid masonry, so that house was always cold inside in the winter.

The kids years ago at that schoolhouse back there, in the lunch hour in the wintertime, if there was ice down at Horse Creek, why, they slid back and forth on the ice. Some of them had skates but most of us didn't. When the weather got a little warmer and the ice got rotten, we all went down and the ice broke through and I got wet. I broke through the ice, some of the older kids took me back to the schoolhouse. The schoolmarm moved her chair back by the old heating stove and kept me there the rest of the day getting dried out. (laughter)

Q. Did you tell your mother?

A. This is the old Nave farm. It'll be Nave on the map you have there.

Q. It's pretty. That's an original house, isn't it?

A. I suppose so. It's been there as long as I can remember. Now this subdivision, of course, that's all new, there wasn't anything here but a cornfield when the lake was built.

Q. That's Brunk's Cemetery?

A. Yes. We will turn left up here where the road branches out.

D. That's the old Brunk house there.

A. Yes.

D. That little barn is the one I was telling you about. It's an original.

Q. Oh. Here comes a Morgan [horse]. Look at him!

A. Feeling good, huh?

Q. Yes. Oh, they just let him out. Isn't he handsome? A stallion, isn't he?

A. Now, you know, a horse is just about the prettiest animal there is. Now, of course, none of this was here.

Q. This road we're on, did it have a name?

A. No.

Q. The Brunks were early settlers. Is that true?

A. Yes, I think that's true. They were here long before I got here.

Q. Do you remember the quarry?

A. Yes.

Q. When was the stone used from the quarry?

A. Well, some of the old houses would have stone foundation and some of the old wells would have stone walls in the well. There was one old well on the Old Home Farm there that had an old stone wall.

Q. How do you like this bridge? This is more like it, isn't it? [Referring to narrator's earlier comment that there was only a foot bridge when he was a child.]

A. Yes.

D. There's a ford to cross the river down here.

Q. Ford? Could that be the ford you were telling me about?

A. No. . . . Now that's a new house, it wasn't here.

D. Now, the house I was telling you about is back there behind that barn. You can just see the roof of it.

A. That's the Pasfield land.

Q. What do you remember about the Pasfields?

A. Well, you know when the creeks got out of bank, this was all going to be under water. So one year we had some heavy rains and the creek came out of bank and there was a wheat field down here, and the water got into that wheat field, but it didn't get high enough to destroy the crop. They went in and cut it and tied it into bundles and they stacked the bundles up in wheat shocks like any ordinary wheat crop. When it got dried out, that old thresh-

ing machine came through and they set up down here to thresh that wheat. I was with the threshing machine crew as a band cutter. They usually had some kids for that job because the kids could do it and I was a band cutter.

They'd haul a wagon load of that wheat from out in the field and every straw had a coat of dry dirt on it. The muddy water had settled on that straw and every straw had a coat of dried dirt. And you know that old threshing machine--at the end of the machine where you fit the grain into it--had what they call a cylinder with pegs on it to knock the grain off. They pulled in there late one day and didn't thresh any and the next day we were ready to start up. The wind had changed and had what they called a tail set; the wind was coming from the tail end of the machine and when they fed the rest of the wheat into the cylinder, there was such a fog of dust you couldn't see the back end of the machine! That was the dirtiest job anybody ever had. You just had to take it. You stood there and breathed that dust and spit out mud.

Q. This house, that we're parked next to, wasn't it in danger of being flooded?

A. No. The water wouldn't get very many feet deep out in these bottoms. [In] most of the bottom land, maybe two or three feet is about as deep as the flood ever got because for one thing the narrow places in the valley would hold it back. See those dead weeds standing out there: those are horse weeds. They're a variety of ragweed; ordinary ragweed only goes a foot or two high at the most.

Q. Those must be what? Five to six feet.

A. Oh, some of them grow fifteen feet in a place where no wind ever gets to them.

Q. Would they look a little the way the prairie grass looked?

A. No.

D. Do you remember this old house?

A. I don't remember anybody living there, who lived there. I don't remember.

Q. It's lovely.

D. Roy [Brunk] told me this was a stagecoach stop at one time and that the ford across Brush creek was just ahead of us here.

A. I don't doubt it because the first settlers had to use fords, they didn't have any bridges. There used to be a ford across the South Fork, there on the Old Home Place. Oh, we didn't get down to the bottom to show you where the fish trap was.

Q. Oh! We didn't!

D. Let's go there.

Q. We just came from there.

D. Let's go back.

A. Let's let the fish trap wait. We'll go by there some day when we go to Chicken Bristle.

Q. What's that? (laughter) You haven't told me about Chicken Bristle yet.

A. That was the name of a little settlement over there on the other side of the river. We'll go up to Chicken Bristle and go up to Cascade where Torrence's Mill was for years. It was quite a mill. Torrence's Mill, at one time, even had equipment to make flour and they had machinery with woven cloth on it.

Q. Do you want to go to the New City Farm?

A. Let's go the other way on this road.

D. We're on the road to the KOA camp. Roy [Brunk] said there used to be a brickyard down in this bottom here, too, and a sawmill.

A. Well, they had sawmills everywhere. I'm trying to think of the name of the old man that lived by the road up here on this side for a number of years. Darn it, I can't get his name back. It'll come to me tomorrow when I won't try to remember it.

D. Green?

A. No. . . . On some of these country lanes you can't get lost--there's only one way to go.

Q. This is some of your good flat land here.

A. Yes. Some good timber soil.

Q. Is this still timber soil?

A. Oh, yes.

Q. How far away from the river do you have to get before it turns into prairie soil?

A. Well, there's nothing regular about it.

Q. We're at 5 East and 7.5 South.[6]

A. This turn, this corner here was Pensacola, right here. And there's still several houses here yet. There were houses here years ago and I never tried to locate the ground but right here somewhere, west of this corner, there was a pottery works at one time. The clay was good enough to burn and make clay crocks and things like that. Crocks, the early settlers had. Does that look like kind of a pit dug out right here?

Q. Yes, it could have been.

A. I'm not sure, but right here, somewhere in that ten acres, they had a clay pit and they burned--they didn't burn drain tile, that was before they used drain tile--they had a pottery works there. Pensacola. This was all in timber. That's a new house, it wasn't there before.

Q. This house looks older.

A. It is old. It was rebuilt with my uncle. . . . Lou Hadler rebuilt what was an old house there and built that front part on--

---

[6] These are county road markers. [Ed.]

bay windows, all fancy. That was quite a trick back in those days, to get a house with lots of windows, especially bay windows.

Q. Now, Hadler was your relative, is that correct?

A. He was an uncle. Several summers I came down here and helped him put up hay.

D. We're at 5.5 East and 7.75 South.

A. This is an old road. I don't think there's anything on it. That oil derrick wasn't there, I can tell you that. I don't know whether my uncle owned this but if he didn't own it, he rented it. We put up hay on that forty acres.

Q. This was your uncle Hadler? What was his first name?

A. Louis. This was all timber here. There's about forty acres there [that] belonged to one of the Funderburks, and we used to have a hired man named Liederbrand. Liederbrand married Funderburk's daughter and built him a little house on that place and cut most of the timber off of it. That was a common name around here--there were lots of Funderburks.

Q. Here's a handsome house.

A. It was there as far back as I can remember. A man named Haines owned that land. That was his house. The barn is old, too. It's about as old as it's going to get from the looks of it. (laughter)

D. Here is Sixteenth Street.

A. Let's turn right. Another Liederbrand owned this place and lived in the house there. Well, we don't have time today, but someday maybe we'll go down this road here. It crosses the river down there about a mile and a half. Used to be what they called a low-water bridge. I think they've got a regular high-water bridge down there now.

Q. What was a low-water bridge?

A. Well, it was just a wooden bridge built across a river near the bottom of the creek.

END OF TAPE

[The car is now parked outside the blacksmith shop/garage at New City, Illinois.]

A. . . . Anyway, the Hadley boys reached down and got an egg out of the crate of eggs right where you're sitting, hauled off and threw the egg at Emmanuel Beam and hit him right in the face, right between the eyes. (laughter) It smashed and just flew all over everything. Emmanuel Beam looked around and there were a crate of eggs right in reach of where he was sitting, so he helped himself to a few eggs and threw them at the Hadley boys and they had an egg fight there. They used up the first layer of eggs before they quit. Anyway, they finally stopped it and they had eggs all over the place. Old Man Snodgrass was operating

the store at that time, and he tried to get the boys to clean up the mess but they wouldn't do it--they went and walked off and left him with his place all covered with broken eggs.

Q. Were you there watching this?

A. No, I missed that one. One of the Spindler boys was there and he was telling me about it.

Q. You were telling about the competition between the . . .

A. The blacksmith's shop at one time was operated by a family named Keys. I think they were distant relatives of Ed Keys that became president of the Farmers Bank there in Springfield, but anyway they weren't too fond of hard work in the blacksmith's shop. Eventually this Keys' blacksmith moved to North Dakota for some reason or other, and so the town, the community, was without a blacksmith.

My father knew someone that lived with his family. I think they lived up around Cornland. Anyway, he got one of the Zemery family that was in the blacksmith business to move down here and take over the shop. So Zemery ran the blacksmith's shop. I don't know how many years, he was still operating it when we moved away. Zemery was a Republican and the people that operated the big store across the road here, they were Democrats. So they didn't agree on anything. Finally, Zemery built a little building and opened up a little tiny grocery store. He added to it later, but it never became much of a store as long as Zemery had it.

But in 1896, when McKinley got elected President, Zemery applied to the government to have the post office moved over to his little store. The government moved it over and gave Zemery a post office and what little business went with it. I don't think it amounted to a whole lot, but in those days nothing in New City amounted to very much. (laughter) Anyway, he got the post office moved.

Q. What was the name of the people that had the store on the opposite corner?

A. At that time, that store was operated by two brothers named Crowder. One of them lived in the house that adjoined the store building on the corner here. The other one rented farm land a quarter of a mile down the road to the east, and lived there in a house.

At that time, on the southeast corner of this road intersection, there was another building that was the town hall for Cotton Hill Township. That's where the town meeting was held and whenever there was an election, that was the polling place for Cotton Hill Township. And on the southwest corner of the intersection was the schoolhouse for the New City School District. It was an unusual district because the schoolhouse had two rooms and they had two teachers. One room took care of the lower grades and the other took care of the grades up to the eighth grade. Nothing went beyond the eighth grade you know. Most of the country schoolteachers had never gotten any further in school than the eighth grade themselves; they weren't

qualified to teach anything beyond the eighth grade.

Q. Was this the school that you attended? The one that you mentioned was right across the street from your home.

A. Yes, it was just across the road. Couldn't get away from going to school every day of the term. (laughter)

Q. Certainly that tree we see today was there. That's a handsome fellow.

A. Looks like a wild cherry tree, I'm not sure from here, could be an elm.

Q. Did you attend this church that's here on the corner?

A. It's just over the fence--you couldn't help it. We had to go to Sunday school and then church.

Q. That's the New City Methodist Church.

A. There's a house there. That's one of those movable homes. There was a small house--I don't know whether it had two rooms or just one--and an old bachelor named Barry lived there. He had a basement under his one-room house and spent most of his time down in the basement.

Q. Doing what?

A. Well, he was kind of an odd-job man as far as business went. He claimed that he could do anything. He did some tiling; that is, the business of putting drain tile in farm land. He did

some of that work--he wasn't capable of doing surveying or running levels. I don't think he had an instrument with which to run a level, so they said that some of the tile he laid had to run uphill to operate at all. The water had to run uphill. (laughter) They used to say that he'd take a job of building something and he'd saw off a piece of lumber and get it cut too long and say, "Oh hell! If I had cut it too short I could splice it but what am I going to do now?" (laughter) They had a few stories to tell about him like that.

Q. Was this barn here, when you lived here?

A. There was a barn that stood out here nearer to the road, not right on the road.

Q. There's another small building back here that looks perhaps like a smokehouse. I wondered if that could be an original building. See that darling little white building back there?

A. I don't think that was there.

Q. Aren't you pleased to see how nicely they've kept it up?

A. Yes. They did pretty well.

Q. Now, this is the new house that your father built on the edge of his father's land, is that right?

A. No. I forget who built that house. We moved away before that was built. That's been built since 1900.

Q. I meant the house that you lived in. This house that we were just looking at.

A. What about it?

Q. Wasn't it the one that was a fairly new house that was built on a corner of your grandfather's land?

A. No. My grandfather never owned this farm. He owned some land further south here.

Q. Well, you lived right in the middle of town.

A. Oh, yes!

D. How did it happen to be called New City?

A. Well, somebody way back there wanted a post office established there. That house, that's not the house that was here, that's a later house. A family named Haines lived in that house. Now this road is new. The road used to jog north.

Q. We just passed an intersection; should we go back to it?

A. No, it doesn't go anywhere. You see where the road turns here. This is the old road. It went north and then turned west in front of that house over there, in front of those buildings, and came down here and turned south to this corner and went west from here.

Q. Why did it do that?

A. Well, because those houses were built way back there and this

was all timber. There was a branch to the east there that cut across that corner and when they cut the road straight across, they filled it in. But the early settlers didn't have very good tools to do such things. They made the road go around a bad place like that. Now that we called Wall Street. There was a family named Wall that lived down on that road. Several families--the Funderburks and one branch of the Cargrove family. Now this place up here used to belong to a man named Rusk, Lock Rusk.

Q. Lock?

A. I don't know what his name really was. Lock was the name he went by. Lock Rusk owned that.

Q. There's a pretty place back here on the left.

A. That's the old Boyd farm.

D. There's a Cecil McGeath lives there now.

Q. This must have been quite a showplace, the Boyd farm.

A. I don't know these folks out here, but the Boyd farm was in the Boyd family for quite a long time. They finally died out, and Ralph Tobin--I think Ralph Tobin's wife's father--bought it. Ralph and his wife got it and they built this little house out here because the big house was rented to the man that farmed the farm. Ralph and Lina built this little house and used it for kind of a summer house.

Q. Now this was the son of the man that went with you to trap fish,

is that correct? It was Ralph Tobin's father that trapped fish with your father?

A. Wait a minute, I don't get connected up, here.

Q. It seems to me that you told me once . . . maybe it was Willard Tobin, that went and trapped fish with your dad, on the river, trapping for catfish.

A. No, that would have been Ralph's father, Willard Tobin's grandfather. Lina Tobin, Ralph's wife, was named Jones.

Q. Were the Joneses from the Rochester-New City area, too?

A. Yes. There's a lane down here about a mile that goes across Brush Creek and the Jones family lived down on that land. This is one of the old Funderburk houses.

Q. It's a handsome place.

A. This is a newer one. That one's only about sixty years old. That one, I don't know.

Q. We don't want to bother with those. (laughter) Now the road we're on presently, is this a new road or is this approximately where the old road went?

A. This is the old road.

Q. These corn pickers are a little different from the way you used to do it.

A. Oh, yes! This is Beamington.

Q. Right here? Great scott, now this is 3 East and 9 South.

A. If we went down that road it would take us back to the lake.

Q. Was there ever more to Beamington than this? There's nothing here.

A. Yes, there used to be a store there and there used to be a doctor.

Q. Dr. Southwick?

A. Yes, that was his name. But it wasn't the Harry Southwick that you would have known.

Q. He's the one that you told me had the first telephone.

A. Yes. He was a relative of Harry Southwick but he was just a country doctor.

Q. Whose home was this? That's a beautiful old place.

A. I've forgotten the name.

Q. That's all right. You can jot it down sometime when you think of it.

A. You know down in this section we're getting into some more of the Bolt family.

Q. Was Dr. Southwick the only doctor in this area?

A. Yes. There was no doctor east or south. You had to go all the

way to Edinburg before you'd find another doctor. Now this is some of the Bolt family. This place is where Harry Southwick's folks lived, that little house back there.

Q. Were his folks related to Dr. Southwick?

A. The Beamington doctor, you mean?

Q. Yes.

A. They were some kind of cousins. It wasn't any closer than that, but they were related.

D. That road was 1.25 East.

Q. The one we're on?

D. No, the one we passed.

Q. Is this schoolhouse new, too? Wasn't this an old schoolhouse here?

A. No.

D. The Stouts lived up here to the south, Sam Stout.

A. This is the Ball Township school.

D. Old Sam Stout lived just south here on this road. This was the old [Route] 66.

A. Yes. Some more Stouts lived north of here, too.

D. Silverman.

Q. Silverman Stout?

A. Yes. Silverman and Joab Stout.

D. That's old Sam Stout's farm. Beautiful place.

A. Oh, yes! They have a grain drying outfit back there. The natural gas pipeline goes across here somewhere. Do you suppose they got natural gas to operate that dryer?

Q. I doubt it. The company probably cut them all off.

A. No. I don't think so. The ones they cut off were the ones that had contracts that permitted them to cut off. Now some of these small users that paid a higher price for gas, they didn't have any shut-off provisions. On that place we have up near Athens, we have a natural gas pipeline and we ran gas in to operate the grain dryer outfit, but they haven't cut ours off.

D. Where do you want to go from here? Do you want to go on west?

Q. Why don't we stop by my house? Are you in a hurry to get home?

A. No. Got no date tonight. (laughter)

Q. This road that we're on must have been quite a highway in its day.

A. Well, it was the main road.

D. It's old U.S. [Route] 66.

Q. There's a windmill for me.

A. Looked like it's all there.

D. We just passed 6.25 South.

Q. Was this part of East Lake Drive also a part of Fox Road?

A.. No.

Q. So Fox Road cut over to Pawnee where we did. Is that right? Where we cut off the Lake Road, were we still following the Fox Road?

A. When you passed Sugar Creek, the Fox Main wasn't a part. (Tape stops.)

[This part of the interview was conducted at the interviewer's home.]

A. I was in the hospital one time and they got me a nurse--she was an old woman, but she was a registered nurse. So around the hospital, you know, they get yarns that they tell about this one and that one, and they had one they told about this nurse's father. She came from down in Pike County, and he was a big man, and he had the job of running the water tank with the threshing outfit.

Down in a good part of Pike County, there's no big stream of water going down those water courses. They all have a pretty good fall and the water runs off, and the stream had a rock bottom. About the time to do the threshing, about that time of year, it was just a little trickle going down. So this man

had to hunt over the neighborhood to find a place where he could get his water tanks down to the water, if there was any in the stream; he had a pretty hard job. One farmer set up the threshing machine--he started out after a tank of water and he was gone so long they'd used up a barrel full that he'd left there for the engine. They had to send somebody to hunt him up and see what had happened to him.

They finally found him down one of those little streams. He'd found a place where he could get down where his hose would reach the bottom of the creek, but his hose was too big in diameter. The water wasn't deep enough and instead of getting water it'd just suck some air up through his pump. So when they found him, he was down there in the bottom of the creek bed with his clothes off; he laid there in the bottom holding the water back so he could get a little pool deep enough so he could operate the pump on the water tank. (laughter) He just dammed it up himself. (laughter)

D. What did he use to power the pump?

A. I don't know. I don't know whether they had some way that they'd draw with a team of horses or whether they had some outfit so the horses could operate the pump. I don't know.

D. Well, he stayed cool anyhow.

A. I guess so. I don't know though, the water in August or September over those rocks ought to get pretty well warmed up. (Tape stops.)

A. Any lawyer had to do business with the abstract company before he practices very long. But in addition to that, when I went to Springfield, Jim Melin had a brother, Carl, that was a lawyer. About the time I went to Springfield and opened up an office there, there was a judge from up in Cambridge, Illinois--Judge Hand--got elected to the Illinois Supreme Court. Hand had practiced up in Cambridge, Illinois and had a son that was a lawyer and the two operated the office. The son had just been out of school a few years and didn't want to try to practice, to keep the office going by himself. So his father came down to join the Supreme Court and they were looking for somebody else to go in the office with his son in Cambridge. I think maybe the big trouble was that old Judge Hand's son didn't believe in working very hard. (laughter) Anyway, they picked up Carl Melin and had him go up there; he went up and stayed there the rest of his life. But I had met him and we got to be pretty good friends before he went to Cambridge. Through him and through the abstract work I met Jim, or Frank [Melin]. The family always called him Jim, that's the name I knew him by.

Well, before we got married, neither Jim or I had any money and we took our vacations together, several years. Through my grandfather I got acquainted with some people that live at Virginia [Illinois], down in Cass County and they liked to fish. But they also had a shack down on that big swamp south of Beardstown, Fish Lake. And they used the shack to shoot ducks; duck shooting was good down there. So Jim and I figured that we could use that

shack for a vacation and they said, "Sure!" They weren't using it at that time of year and there'd be boats there and fish nets if we wanted to fish and we could have the place anytime we wanted it. So we started taking vacations down there on Fish Lake. That had the right name--that was one place where you could really find fish, anytime. See, they built a dam down about . . .

D. Just about Meredosia, wasn't it?

A. No, the dam was north of Meredosia. It had a name but I've forgotten. Anyway, the dam was two or three miles south of this Fish Lake and when they built that dam, it flooded twenty-some thousand acres of land above the dam. It raised the water in Fish Lake two or three feet, something like that.

There were several farms that had been cornfields before they built the dam and when the dam went in, why those fields--even at low water--they flooded two or three feet deep--deeper in places, but all of it had about two or three feet of water. The bushes would grow up through that and the weeds and the bullfrogs--just full of big and little frogs--and of course, frogs made good food for the fish. Along the shore there'd be some kind of water grass growing along there about a foot high, some of it would grow up the bank.

In the summertime, when Jim and I took a vacation, that grass would be full of little frogs, two inches long, maybe not that long. We had a dip net in the shack that they'd use to pull in the fish when they got one on the hook. We took a mosquito bar

and put [it] over that net--it had a long handle--and just went out there in that grass and slapped that right down and you'd have two or three of those little frogs. We'd fix us a bucket with a little lid on and we'd use them for bait. Just set one of those little frogs on a hook and swing him out there where there had been timber in the swampland--where the flood had killed the trees, the stumps were still sticking out of the water--drop that frog down there alongside the stump and here'd be a bass climbing out on top of the water to get the frog before he hit the water. (laughter)

Q. That sounds like good fishing.

A. Oh man, yes! We sure had fish. And frogs! (laughter) Jim liked frog legs. He ate more frog legs than fish. The game warden never got down in that swamp.

Q. It must have been buggy?

A. Along the bank for part of the way, that swamp had timber along the side and brush. This shack was on one side of the barbed wire fence, on the other side was just timber and brush. In the daytime it wasn't so bad, but soon's the sun went down the mosquitoes came out of that brush and weeds. So many millions of them they just made a roar. You could hear a million mosquitoes. The first year we went down there we took a mosquito bar along, bought it in Beardstown and brought it because we knew something about what we'd find.

Well, it didn't work, because those mosquitoes, some of them, are small enough that they could work their way through the mesh of an ordinary mosquito bar and by morning there'd be a swarm of mosquitoes there in bed with you. So we went back to Beardstown, went to the store, and bought cheesecloth, just yards of it. We asked someone in the store where we could find someone to sew that together--we wanted one big sheet that we could make a tent out of. They told us and we found someone that sewed it together, and we took that back down to the camp and used it for a tent. We had canvas because it was too hot sleeping in that shack--my it was hot in there. Anyway, that cheesecloth, it was big enough and we just covered the tent with it. Where the cheesecloth came down to the ground--that was sandy soil, Sand Hill was next to Fish Lake--it was just pure sand, so we buried the edge of the cloth in the sand and that took care of mosquitoes getting in. We didn't have any more trouble as long as we stayed inside. But if you went outside, they were just waiting for you.

One night we fixed our bed on one side in that tent and Jim was sleeping on the side next to the wall of the tent. While he was asleep he rolled over against that cheesecloth and you should have seen his back the next morning. The mosquitoes couldn't get through the cheesecloth but they could reach through far enough to get him! They sure did have him red. (laughter)

Anyway, Fish Lake itself was deep water. The rest of that old

farm land, most of it was just very shallow water. Fish Lake was twelve or fifteen feet deep I guess, and of course that was cooler water. In the summertime especially, the fish would come to that deep water, and the commercial fisherman would come down there. They'd seine that Fish Lake and they'd take fish out of there by the carload. Of course, most of it was carp and a lot of buffalo. I guess they were watched some by the game warden. They were not supposed to ship any bass; there were two or three varieties of fish they were supposed to put back in the water. They had these long seines working that Fish Lake. Those stumps were in the way and there was trash in it. They tied a long rope to one end of the seine and they had an outfit, I forget the name of it, it had a drum. . . .

D. A winch?

A. A winch with a drum operated by a gasoline engine. They'd run that rope over there and pull that seine in and they got the fish all right. They scooped the fish out into the barges to Beardstown to be shipped; most of them were shipped to New York, I think. But these big bass in there, they'd throw them out because they didn't dare ship them and they always threw them far out enough that they'd land on the bank, and then they got them. (laughter)

END OF TAPE