

PREFACE

This manuscript is the product of tape-recorded interviews conducted by Rosalyn L. Baker Bone for the Oral History Office during the summer of 1975. Rosalyn Bone transcribed the tapes and edited the transcript. Mr. Jack Sarff reviewed the transcript.

Mr. Jack Sarff was born on a small Mason County farm near Chandlerville, Illinois on June 10, 1911. Mr. Sarff has lived and/or worked on a farm for most of his life. He is presently farming and living on the farm with his wife, Evelyn, whom he married in 1932. He is very interested in farming and watches the different farm methods that his neighbors use. He is willing to experiment with his own methods and use what is best for him.

Mr. Sarff's narrative ranges widely over his full and interesting life. He tells of vacationing in the western states, of hunting jackrabbits, and of interesting jeep trips roughing it. As a young boy he earned spending money by trapping rabbits and selling them. From his school days in one-room country schools in different areas of Mason County, Mr. Sarff remembers some humorous incidents. Mr. Sarff also remembers going to town on Saturday night, the dime shows at the theater, seven-gallons of gas for a dollar and the trip back home under the starlit sky in the back of a wagon pulled by a team of horses. Mr. Sarff has lead a full life.

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

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Jack Sarff, June and July, 1975, Havana, Illinois.
Roselyn L. Bone, Interviewer.

This is the first interview with Mr. Jack Sarff. It is taking place at the Sarff picnic in which Mr. Sarff and his wife, Evelyn, are the host. Today is June 29, 1975. This is Rosalyn Bone for Sangamon State University.

Q. Could you tell me a little bit about your background, like where you were born and your parents' names?

A. Where I was born. I was born in Mason County, Lynchburg Township. Post office address at that time was Saidora and the town is still there, but there's no store. At that time there were two grocery stores and a post office. There weren't any gas stations there then. Parents were Louis Henry Sarff, my dad's name, and my mother's name was Elsie Kathryn Pierson. I was born in 1911 and things have changed quite a bit from then.

From Saidora we use to have a rural mail carrier. He drove a horse and a little covered buggy, wagon, mail wagonlike, you know, and that was a big thrill, too. We lived about a quarter of a mile, which seemed like miles (laugh) up to the mailbox, to get up there and wait for the mailman. Once in awhile he would let us, you know, one or two of us kids, climb up in and stand in his buggy for a minute and, if we'd get to go down the road, we'd go to the neighbors, once in awhile, just at mealtime and the mailman would let us ride a quarter of a mile in his buggy and that was quite a thrill.

Q. Do you remember the mail carrier's name?

A. I don't know. I think Evelyn would know what his name was. (Mr. Sarff asked his wife, Evelyn, the mail carrier's name.) George Friend was the mail carrier. We lived there for, oh, I don't know how long. Well, I started to school there, at Daniels School, which at that time seemed like miles from where we lived but now, in later years, it's just across the field. Wasn't, oh, probably a quarter and a half, maybe half a mile, from home but seemed like my legs were awful short when I was about that age. (laughter)

Q. How far did you live from town?

A. It must have been, probably, I think, about six miles from Chandler-ville but we never got to Chandler-ville very often. I do remember one time when the water was up and the road was covered with water and my dad walked to Chandler-ville to get groceries and—I don't remember, I suppose I had gone to school before then—I went with him and I was never so tired. I think my legs were worn clear down to my hips by the time I

got home. We walked over and then we crossed the river on the railroad trestle and, of course, I'd heard them talk about this and I had seen it before, but to walk that distance with all that water under us was quite an experience. Then coming back, I had to help carry the groceries, you know, a little bit, run into quite a chunk before we'd gone very far.

We moved around to different places. One time we went down by Beardstown for a little while. We were down in the bottom¹ and my mother's health wasn't very good and she couldn't stand that damp air down there. So we didn't stay there very long.

Q. Did you always live on a farm?

A. No. One time we lived in Bath.

Q. Right in Bath?

A. Right in Bath. Right beside the railroad track. I try to find that old house when we go through Bath once in awhile, but it's—I don't know, I hunt around awhile. Seems like the town is turned around than what it used to be. I'd go in a different direction trying to find that house. It's still standing.

Q. Are the railroad tracks still there?

A. No. The track is gone. Has been for quite a while, but you can see where the tracks were. We were a short distance from the elevator there in Bath.

I went to school just a little while in Bath. But there was really only one boy, one kid that started. I think it was the first year I went to school, in Bath. Johnny Darling, you've probably heard of Johnny Darling, he was about the only boy I remembered that I went to school with. Of course, Johnny has been gone now for probably, oh, I don't know, three, four, five years and other than that I just don't remember any of the kids that I went to school with there. Down at Daniels School is where I started.

I believe there were 42 kids, went to school in a little one-room country school. And well, there was always some good boys and some ornery devils, you know, that always picked on little boys. I could remember some guy that would soak a snow ball, you know, and get it all wet—soggy snowball and just knock the little kids. There were big guys, you know, that would pick on little guys. And then, I could remember a couple of big guys that were always looking for some big guy to rough up when they would see him pushing around a little guy and I always remembered those guys. You knew Raymond Finch. He was one of the good guys. If he would see some big guy picking on a little guy, ole Raymond was in there roughing that (laughs) big guy up pretty quick.

¹The rich bottom land along the Illinois River, near Chandlerville, Snicarte and in that area, is referred to as "The Bottom." [Ed.]

We lived there, around in that area, until I was about, I was going on nine, I guess, and we moved to Havana, then, out south of Havana about three miles where we lived on a farm. We lived there and I went to Bowman's School and there were quite a few kids there. There must have been around twenty, twenty-five kids that went to school there. It seemed like up until that time I was just a little guy and I was just sort of mixed up and maybe everything was mixed up. We moved so much and I couldn't keep things straight, while we were doing that. I don't know, I guess, I just grew up. Seemed like from the time we moved to Havana I could remember about everyday, everything that happened. But before, a lot of things happened, you know, a kid just can't see. You wonder, "Why?" After you get a little older, why you can understand why you were doing this or your parents were doing it.

Well, while we lived down below, before we moved to Havana, Mother died and Aunt Frieda was the oldest one of the kids—I think she was fourteen or fifteen—and she quit school and kind of looked after us little guys. Little Joe was a baby. He was five. I was seven, then. It was a pretty rough deal. Dad worked out. And then, after we came to Havana—Frieda was still with us for a couple of years—well, things were just better for us, then. Probably two years after we came to Havana, she got married and left home, maybe three years afterwards.

Q. What year did you move to Havana?

A. We moved to Havana, I can't remember whether it was 1919 or 1920. I believe 1919. That's been quite a while ago. Well, we lived at Havana then for four years and a half, something like that. Then we moved back below Bath and that was the first time we lived right on the farm. We always lived in the tenant house before. This time we lived right on the farm and I never forget that first morning that we woke up there on the farm. There were cows, pigs, turkeys, chickens, and a billy goat and a couple of sheep. To wake up that next morning and the chickens were crowing, the turkeys were hollering and these sheep, we had never been around them. I might have seen sheep but never were close to them, you know. And this old turkey gobbler, there were just two turkeys there, I think, because the old gobbler if you didn't watch him he'd jump on your back. We had a little hole to crawl through the fence when we went to the barn and he'd watch and when you'd get humped up to go through that hole, well, then he'd jump on your back. (laughs) But he took Joe and I. . . . And then this old goat, he watched. He'd slip up behind you.

But it was quite a thrill, that first morning when we woke up with all these animals. They were out in the lot, of course, but we always before had lived, you know, a half, a quarter [of a mile] away from the barn and we weren't right with them.

We lived there two years. We went to Union School, then. It's still standing over there but somebody lives there, I believe, at this time.

Q. In the school?

A. Yes. Then we moved back to Havana. It was probably within a couple

of miles of where we had lived before, but we went to White Oak School. We went to that school two years, I believe, and then the next year when we went back, why Evelyn was there. So we went to school [together] the last year we were in grade school.

Q. Did you go to high school?

A. No. I didn't go to high school. Our other sister, your grandmother, Ina was at home then. Then she got married and left home. So my dad and Joe and I batched the last two years that I was in school. Of course, Dad had to work for another man and it was up to Joe and I to keep house, fix our lunches and do the washing and cook the meals. It was just a pretty hard life. So, when I got out of grade school, Dad told me I could go to high school but I couldn't see how, to live out there I'd have to walk—oh, I don't know what it was, ten mile or something like that—to school and I was just pretty anxious to get out of school. So I got a job and worked. I stayed where I worked and Joe and Dad went to live with Frieda, our older sister, and Louie Dierker. Joe went to school but not the full year.

Q. Where did you work?

A. Well, I worked on the farm for this man or that. Finally, I guess about the next year, then our dad died.

Q. About what year?

A. That was in August, 1929. So, of course, Joe was already living with Frieda and Louie and then they wanted me to come there and live with them and work for Louie, which I did. I was with them, I think about three years. And Joe, of course, finished school. He started high school.

Well, I guess, Evelyn and I started going together about her second year in high school and I knew what I had missed. I saw too late that I'd missed a lot by not going to high school. It would have been a hardship on me but a lot of kids, I suppose, did do it. It was high school, you know. Maybe walked . . . It just depended on whether the kid wanted to go or not. I didn't want to. So it was easier for me to quit.

But in other ways you look at it—I worked out and I had a Model T Ford. I had a paycheck. I always had money in my pocket. But a lot of these other boys that stayed at home—went to high school, you know—and they had to beg their folks for their car, get a dollar once in awhile. Ever month or week, whenever I wanted to draw money—while I was working—I had money. It looked better to me that way, than if I had just been going along going to school yet. But, they were having fun when they went to school. Then on Saturday night and on the weekend, you know, kids about that age would want to get out, really have fun. Why, these kids, that were just staying at home, they never had much money to spend and they'd get a thrashing if they took the dad's car and brought it back. So, I thought I was doing all right by working.

A lot of kids at that time . . . grew up, most of them thought that they

had to work and they were willing to work. But I think they've changed their laws now, The kid can't work until they're sixteen. They've got to have permits and all of that and by the time the kid gets old enough that he can work, legally, why, then, he found out that he can live without working. But anyhow, after Evelyn got out of high school, that next fall then, we got married.

Q. What year was it?

A. That was in 1932. October the first, when we got married. I was working for twenty dollars a month that summer. Can you imagine a salary like that? And you know, I had money saved up. I had my Ford paid for. When we started housekeeping we didn't have a lot like kids do now. Well, she washed on a board and we had a new cook stove—I don't remember what it was. Nobody had a refrigerator in those days. You had an ice-box, you know. Every once in awhile you'd buy a chunk over the weekend or something like that. You'd buy a chunk of ice and put it in the ice-box, if you're going to have some special dinner or something, you know. You'd put your milk in a bucket and lower it down in the pump well, pump pit. It would be cool down there. That was where you kept your milk instead of in a refrigerator.

Q. You had your own milk cows?

A. No. I worked on a farm, then. But I got milk each day, you know, and we had chickens. We had a pig to butcher. We had a garden.

Q. What kind of things did you grow in the garden?

A. Oh, we . . . about the same thing we do now. We had green beans and onions, potatoes, carrots, sweet corn; anything we could get to grow. You raised more. (bird chirping) We made a bigger effort to get things canned then we do now. Seems like more people are going back to canning now. People who have forgot how to can. (chuckles)

We lived at different places. We finally went down south of Chandlerville, southwest between Chandlerville and Beardstown, one time, to work and we were down there at the beginning of World War II. Things got rough, everything was getting so high in comparison, just like now, and the farm wages weren't very good so we decided we were going to try to live in town. We went to Alton. I worked in the factory.

Q. What did you do in the factory?

A. Well, I helped the shipping clerk. Worked in the shipping department. It wasn't bad, at first. They were expanding (baby in background) and we were in a new part and it wasn't a bad working place until they begin to move more machinery and furnaces and one thing and another, crowding us, and then it got hot and noisy. I didn't like it. I had tried before. I worked in a factory at Canton years before. I didn't like it. When spring came I went back to work on a farm.

So I stayed there, I think, about six or seven months [at the factory] then

we got a chance to go back to the country. So we just gathered up the kids and went back to the farm to work.

Q. How many children did you have?

A. We had three. They were Norma Jean, Robert and Joann. Joann was about four years old, I guess. Robert had just started school before we moved to Alton. The kids didn't like school in town. There was always a bunch of kids around, seemed like they all came to our end of the street to play. (people talking) But we got the paycheck every two weeks when we lived in town and every two weeks we had to buy all three of the kids new pair of shoes. (laughs) They could go through shoes fast. Playing on the pavement, you know. Nothing like it was in the country. Evelyn or I, neither one, liked it in town, so when we got a chance to go back to the country, why, we high-tailed it back.

Then, let's see, in 1943, I believe it was, we got a chance to start farming for ourselves and we moved north of Topeka. Put out our first crop. So that was a new experience for us to own our own equipment and I was my own boss. It was a big thrill, but . . . It was during war time and I couldn't get equipment and we didn't have any money to hire help and you couldn't find help if you had a lot of money at that time. It just about took the desire to be a farmer out of me. The way I had worked it the next two years.

It was pretty good, though. We had chickens, milk cows, and hogs, so we were doing all right. And then later on in the summer we needed a little more income and they didn't have a teacher, so they got after Evelyn to teach the little country school.

Q. What was its name?

A. That was Mt. Carmel. So she taught school. The kids were all there. Joann started to school that year, so the kids would go to school with Evelyn. In wintertime I was the janitor.

Q. What kind of crops did you raise?

A. We raised corn and wheat, at that time they were the main crops. We had quite a few cows. We raised some hay, rusty ole cowpeas and a little alfalfa. We only lived there two years. Then we moved back down here, just this place up here. Do you remember when we lived up here? North, just the next place up here?

Q. I think so, yes.

A. Yes. You were there. I know you were. So she drove back up there the last year and taught school. Then she taught Quiver School two years. So, we started raising soybeans then, instead of the cowpeas. Of course, the kids grew up. Rob got big enough to help and we got another tractor. (tractor goes by)

Q. Did you always have tractors?

A. Always had tractors. When we first started, I had one team of horses but I was one to plant the corn with the horses. First spring was a rainy spring. The horses didn't do any work till I started planting corn. It was hot. By the time I planted forty acres of corn, those old horses were so near all in they couldn't hardly pull the planter (people laughing in the background) so I just cut the tongue out of the planter and hitched it behind the tractor. So I had to have somebody on the planter to raise it on the ends. So Evelyn rode the planter and I run the tractor. And the first year we did that. Rob wasn't big enough to lift the planter. He liked to help but he wasn't big enough to do anything, you know. (laughter) He and Evelyn would feed the cows. I had so much work to do I had to stay out there [in the field]. So they'd get the cows in and feed them and then I'd just stop long enough to eat supper and milk the cows and then I'd go back to the field till dark.

Q. So you didn't use your horses very long, then?

A. No. I just used horses . . . all we used the horses for was to put up hay. We threshed with the old threshing machine for two years, then, we used the horses for hauling bundles. We finally sold one of the horses, kept one of them. Rob liked to ride so we kept it for quite a long while till he got so big and old, listen to that. I think, probably, he had a girl and a Ford at that time and he lost interest in the horse, I ussupose. So the horse was just in the way and he chased the cows and I finally sold the horse.

Q. What kind of machinery did you have? Besides a tractor?

A. Oh, well, back then about all I had was horse machinery. I had a new tractor plow and a new cultivator. That was all the new machinery that I could get at that time. When we started, new machinery had a ceiling price on it and the old machinery was sold for a higher price than new machinery. There was just a scarcity of machinery and it was, probably, about four years before we could buy any other machinery. The next thing that we bought was a combine, a used one, and that fall we bought a corn picker and every year or so we would add a little more. We finally got the second tractor, as I said a while ago, after Rob got bigger. Then, it wasn't just a little while till Rob worked for a neighbor.

END OF SIDE ONE

A. . . . four-row cultivator and, my, it seemed like I was really getting over the ground, then. While now the neighbors, here are using eight-row planters and cultivators and all that. Makes my four-row stuff look small again.

Q. Do you still have the same tractors?

A. I have the first tractor that we bought. It was a new tractor in 1943 and I still have it. It runs and it'll always start in the wintertime.

When some of the newer tractors won't start, that ole scamp will start. (laughter) But I use it some. Oh, I have an end loader on it. Just anytime I want to pick up something heavy, you know, I can grab it. And I use this ole tractor to run the corn dump and mow grass and stuff like that and pull the seed wagons when I'm planting beans. I use it quite a bit. A lot of people don't believe that it's . . . well, they just can't imagine somebody keeping an old tractor around for 32 years and still using it. I have four tractors all together. Once in a while we use all of them, like in the spring of the year when it gets wet. If I have a helper, (birds chirping) we farm more. I have a retired farmer that helps me part-time and then, when we get rushed in the spring, I can get one of my grandsons to help me after school or on Saturday. When we're busy planting, two of us are working ground and planting, have somebody to hoe, and we use all four of them. They're all old but we've got a lot of them. (somebody runs by) We got a tractor for everybody when we need it.

Q. When you started farming, about how many acres did you have?

A. I farmed 365 acres, then. With this little two-plow tractor. Besides that 365 acres, I had a herd of Angus beef cows and my milk cows and we raised turkeys. We had a field of watermelons. (people talking in background) I had to take care of all that by myself. Rob and Norma Jean helped all they could. Now, we farm about 500 acres. I just couldn't ride the tractor now like I did then, when I had to do it with that little tractor. We can get through our work, now.

Our oldest daughter, Norma Jean, and her family live in Loveland, Colorado and we always go out there every summer. Sometimes in the winter after the crops are in. (people talking and laughing in background) I remember once, here awhile back, we made the trip three times. It kind of set a record. Three vacations (laughter) in one year. But we always get to go. We like to go out there. We enjoy the mountains, we really do. We just like to drive. Of course, Evelyn can't go up in the tall mountains like she used to. But, as much as we like the mountains, we still look forward to seeing these flat fields when we get back out of the mountains.

Q. Earlier you talked about threshing. What did that all pertain? What did you do?

A. Well, we cut our wheat with a binder then. It was tied up in bundles and the bundles were kicked out on the ground in rows and then we had to go along and pick these bundles up and set them in shocks. Then, when the threshing machine came we would take the rackwagons (grandchild yelling to mother)--the neighbors all worked together then . . . one of those big threshing machines and we would haul these bundles in, pitch them through the threshing machine. Of course, the grain came out in wagons. It was hauled to town with the teams and wagons.

Q. To the elevator?

A. To the elevator. Which, nowadays, one man goes up with his truck and his combine and he cuts it and shocks it, hauls it in. (laughter) Threshes in all one operation and comes in every thirty minutes with a

big dump of wheat and puts it in the truck and drives to town with the truck.

Q. Did you shell your own corn?

A. Yes. We still do. I didn't for a long time but now Uncle Louie and I have a sheller and we're about the only two around in the country, I guess, that shell corn anymore. Almost everybody shells it with a combine, but we pick our corn on the ear and we have a sheller, so we shell our own corn. Haul it in.

Q. Did you use some of your corn to feed your animals?

A. Oh, yes. Yes. When we . . . we used to feed a few hogs, not a great lot but we had a few in the spring and fall so that we had that extra money, you know; and, of course, when we had our milk cows, we fed them corn. Later, when we got rid of the milk cows, we got beef cattle. We fed them corn and hay. (people talking and laughing)

This picnic, I don't know, I guess that was probably before you were born. You don't remember. I don't remember. My golly, that's been a long time. It was started on my birthday. The first one we had was a surprise, on my birthday the tenth of June, and Evelyn and I went to church. Of course she knew all about it but I didn't know a thing about it—and we came home and here were all the cars in the yard and the picnic tables all spread out. Dinners all on the table. It was a complete surprise to me. And we've had it every year. I think, about 63 or 64 people is the most we've had. It was just a pretty good turnout . . . They were my brothers and sisters and their wives and husbands and their children. Now, it's got to be their children, their children's children and theirs. I believe we had about 45, something like that today. There were several that didn't make it.

Q. Do you remember what year it was when it started?

A. No. I don't remember that. I don't remember what year. But I do believe it's been twenty years. I know we see the picture once in awhile we took at that time and we all look much younger than we do now. (laughter)

I always remembered what I said about Aunt Julia Force. [She] was county assistant to the county superintendent. She was always a strict, crabby old gal, I thought. When the county superintendent would come, she would sit down and talk to the teacher. Miss Force would get up and she would just browse through the schoolroom, you know; pick up a kid's book and turn way back and ask questions. She caught me one time. It was in English and I didn't know the answer. Seemed like I missed a lot of school, maybe I didn't study. So, this time she gave me a good talking to. Low and behold, we moved just shortly after that. They were making their rounds visiting schools, you know, and the next place where we went, there I was a little ole scared kid and they came to visit that school—we just moved ahead of their move, you see. She redognized me. She grabbed my book, turned back to this same page. I don't remember what it was, but I didn't know it then anymore than I did the first time. So, she jerked

me out of the seat, stood me up and told the whole school, you know, about how she had questioned me on this work, whatever it was. I didn't know it then and I didn't know it now. I remembered her for years about that. I told her about it later on and I said, "I just married your niece to get even with you." (laughter) She was Evelyn's aunt.

Q. They just came around to check to see if the teachers were doing a good job?

A. They were the superintendents of the county, country schools, you know, and they would visit the schools--oh, I don't know how often--some superintendents did it oftener than others. They were just going around visiting the schools, to see how the teachers were doing and how well--the teacher was doing a good job teaching and that was part of their job. They were all right, but that was what they were suppose to do. But I was just, well, I was behind and she just happened to find me. (laughter)

Q. Do you remember any of your schoolteachers? Were they all ladies or did you have a man teacher?

A. I had all lady teachers. I never had a man teacher. Never did. Some of them were, oh, I don't know, I suppose they were good teachers. But if the kid didn't like the teacher for some reason or other, there were bad teachers . . . back then. The schoolteachers, most of them, would board with somebody in the country and usually the director, the school director . . . (narrator called away and the interview is moved from outside into Mr. Sarff's home)

Q. You were telling me about the teachers you had, in school.

A. Oh, yes. One time when we went to Union School--well, the first year there the teacher was a girl that I had gone to school with when I first started to school. She was, probably, her last year in school and my first year. She was a young teacher. When she discovered that Joe and I or I--Joe didn't go to school with her--I always remembered that. I didn't know whether she meant it or not but she found out who [I] was and she said, "Well, I'm going to flunk you guys just for sure this year." Of course, we had missed quite a bit of school that year and, I think, we did flunk, if I remember. (laughter) I don't know. I just don't remember that.

But then, the next year, the teacher we got was a older lady. That year we had fifteen kids in the school and there was only one girl in the whole school that passed. All the rest of them failed. So we didn't have her. Then the next year we started out with a young beginner teacher. She was a nice girl--I think the kids all liked her--but she just didn't know how to get it across to the kids. She couldn't keep order and there were some pretty good-sized boys. (door opens and closes) She taught for about, I think, two months or something like that. Of course, we didn't know anything about it until one day she didn't show up and there was another teacher there one morning. She told us, the first thing that morning, that the other teacher had left and she was going to take her place and she wanted us all to understand that she was the teacher and she

was going to give the orders and we were going to follow the orders. She was pretty strict. But she was a good teacher. In a little while all the kids liked her just as well.

She was a young teacher. She wasn't a beginner but she really knew how to get to the kids and get the point across to them. Oh, it was a happy school after that. The kids all liked her and they would work for her, you know. I went to her part of one year and then we moved. Back up to Havana again that following spring. When the kids moved, then, they usually moved in March; just before, you know, a month or so before, examinations. Grade school use to be out in April. So moving time was just about a month before examination time, so it always interfered with your school work.

Then, we went to White Oak School. We had Miss Lena Kohrman. [She] was our teacher, then. She was, well, probably, a middle-aged lady but to us she was an old lady then. (laughter) She was an old Dutch gal but she was real kind but she was firm. I think everybody liked her. She only had one fault. She was a little bit slow and nothing was ever slipped. If you didn't get your classes all in today, well, that's where we started in the morning. Finally then, once in awhile, we'd all get behind, so then we would just have to do overtime. We didn't get double pay for it either. (laughter) We just did it on our own, stay after school; and we have had half a day school on Saturday. Just to catch up. But when you got through . . . well, you didn't move on until she was sure that you had it.

Some of the kids didn't hardly think that she was the best but after they got older and got out of school they realized that Miss Kohrman was, I would say, she was about the best. Well, I don't know the teacher that I had before her, I didn't have a chance to know. I think she would have been a good teacher. Probably better than Miss Kohrman. She was just a little bit sharper. I mean snappier. (laughter) Like, you know . . . a little more zip than Miss Kohrman had but she would have been a real good teacher. But Miss Kohrman was good and she was kind. She would just keep drilling over and over and over.

The seventh and eighth grade kids, when they took their examinations, they had to go into Havana to the high school to write their examination test. This one year, that was the year I was in the seventh grade, there were four girls and me in the seventh grade. Well, she drilled us and drilled us in arithmetic and it was dividing fractions, I guess. Do you remember how we did that? Some way you turn something upside down and did this or that and she worked with us and she knew that we were all confused. Yes. We had it.

So, when they seated us up at the high school, they would scatter the kids out. They intended to, but I was placed right behind one of the girls that I was in the class with. And we had our papers ready to hand in, we were checking them over, and this girl scooted around in her seat and looked back. She wanted to check on what I had done on this one particular question. It was where these fractions were. I slipped my paper over so she could see it and she shook her head "no" that was wrong and then she showed me her paper. Somehow she had been passing papers with the other girls

in the class and that was the way they worked it in the school. One got it, then they all four had it all at once, you know. So she showed me her paper. So I grabbed another paper right quick and did this question over—so many problems on the one question—and it was wrong. (laughter) I had it right and I changed it like the girls said and so we all got that one question just a hundred per cent wrong.

Boy, I'm telling you, when we got back to school, then, the next day, and Miss Kohrman got the papers, she just about snatched us all bald-headed. We didn't get out to play with the rest of the kids—we just had a few more days, and finishing up school which is really a play time, normally—but, boy, we stayed right there and we studied fractions the whole day long.

I liked arithmetic and I could do it a little better. Usually, if it was something tough, I could get it but the girls couldn't. Maybe they'd get together on it some way or another, but as a rule I could beat them. Well, she wanted to know, "Why, didn't you do that? Why didn't you get that right?" So, finally I told her that I had it the other way and this other girl had slipped me her paper and she told me that I was wrong; she slipped me her paper the way they did it and I changed it. So, then, she did talk to me because I had it and I would have had a good grade if I wouldn't have lost that one question. (laughs)

Q. Were your teachers married or single?

A. We only had one married teacher of all the teachers that I had, that I remember. One married teacher and that was the one that I went to school to down below Bath. Well, she, I don't think, was a very good teacher. I just don't think she was capable. She was married and she had other interest at home, you know, and, I think, she come to school in the morning and she didn't have her lesson prepared, either. Because our son, Robert, when he was, probably, about the third grade, had the misfortune of having that same teacher one year.

Q. The same one that taught you?

A. The same one that I went to. He flunked. That year his school was just about like the year that I went to her. Just practically the whole school flunked it. Just lost a year. I don't know why they kept that teacher but she went on for years after that and everybody complained about her but, well, there just seemed to be a shortage of teachers at that time.

Q. Normally, what hours of school did you go to school?

A. Why, school took up at eight o'clock in the morning. No. No, no. School took up at nine, I guess. Then we had morning recess. Did school take up at eight? I can't remember. You know, that's been a long time ago. But we had morning recess, probably, from 10:30 to quarter of eleven. Then we had an hour at noon, eat your lunch and play ball and black man and dare base.

I say we, Evelyn and I went there one year together, but I went there two

and a half years to White Oak School. [It] was right on the White Oak Creek. Timber all off to the side and we very seldom ever played in the schoolyard. We were always out in the timber or up and down the creek, usually somebody got in the creek. (laughter) But we boys use to make dams in the creek and we'd put logs across to walk on. We'd try to get the creek dammed up. There were a couple of little islands we could make an island, you know, and get the kids over on there. We'd, sometimes, get the girls over on the island and then they couldn't get back across. What our games was, was to carry them across the water, you know. Once in awhile they would just, rather than be carried across, they'd just wade the water to get back to the shore. But in the winter-time we had our sleds and we'd slide down the steep banks on this creek.

Q. Did you ice skate on the creek?

A. No. Not there. That was an awful swift creek and it very seldom ever froze up. So we couldn't skate there but there was—farther on up the creek run slower and there was a pond in the neighborhood that usually would freeze over in the wintertime. We could skate there. A few of the kids had skates. We, Joe and I, had some old skates that we could strap on. We skated to school a couple of times. We had ice storms in the wintertime and we skated. One time we lived two miles from school and we skated all the way to school on ice. Seemed like the other kids always had better sleds than we did, but we had skates and the other ones didn't.

Q. Where was White Oak School?

A. White Oak is about three miles south of Havana on route 78. You know where White Oak Park is now? Well, it used to be White Oak Park but you hardly notice it anymore. But you go southwest out of Havana, you know, on route 78. The schoolhouse still sits there but they have built on to it two different ways and it looks less like a schoolhouse than any of the schools that they have built over, I think. You hardly recognize it as a schoolhouse.

Q. It's a home, then?

A. It's a home now. That's just north of Matanza Beach. You know where Matanza Beach is. See it's about a half, three-quarter mile north of Matanza Beach. You know where that is.

Q. I know where that is, yes. You had eight grades in the one-room school?

A. Yes. Evelyn, the one year when she taught at Quiver—no, I believe that was up at Mt. Carmel, when she first started teaching. She had all eight grades and she was just a beginner. She was an emergency teacher during wartime, you know, and she had all eight grades. Some kids in all eight grades. But when she started, she had her Aunt Julia Force come and she was with her a week.

Of course, she had to take a teachers' exam, you know. She made a

real good grade on her test and—in fact, there were some old teachers that had quit and they had to go take the exam to get their certificate to teach and they did like the girls and I did when we were writing tests. Some of these old teachers asked Evelyn. She had to help a couple of these old gals with their questions so that they could get credit. But she made a real good grade. Then, as I say, she had her Aunt Julia, which she was an old teacher with years of experience, and she came and stayed with her a week and just showed her how to set up her schedule and to make the assignments. She was always good with kids and the kids liked her. It just seemed like all the kids liked her and they liked to work for her and so she did real well. She often wondered, then, why she wasn't a school teacher; you know, started out earlier.

Q. Did you have school programs, like a Christmas program?

A. Yes. We always did. We always had to have a Christmas program and there was a last day of school picnic.

END OF TAPE

Q. You were telling me how you earned spending money when you were younger. How was that?

A. Well, when we lived at this one place one of the neighbors had a dairy herd and we would herd cattle. At that time, all the fields were fenced—all the farmers had livestock—so the road was fenced in, just like a pasture, too. And there were very little traffic. A few cars. That was back in the early twenties. This one man was road commissioner so he took advantage of the roads in his area. His son would bring the cattle down their lane to the road and I would help him—one would get on one end of the road as far as we could go—and the cattle would graze down to me and then I'd turn the cattle back and he would be at the other end of the road—as far as he was allowed to go with his cattle.

This boy had a horse and a buggy that he drove. His mother would always fix us up a big lunch and we'd get together in the middle of the—usually do this of a morning—and she'd fix these big sandwiches of homemade bread and homemade summer sausage, homemade butter, you know, and I don't remember what we had to drink but she probably had something extra that kids liked, too. But I would usually get, you know, a few days each week.

Then the people that my dad worked for had a little boy and on busy days, wash days and things like that, why, she would have Joe or I to come and babysit for him—I don't really remember if we called it babysitting at that time—but he had all kinds of toys to play with, like we had never had before. He had one of these little miniature farm wagons and toy tractors and things that we had never seen before. It was a pleasure to go play (laughter) with his toys without pay, but they always paid us. I think, fifteen cents a day was a pretty good wage for a kid, then, if I

remember right.

So then, in the wintertime when we were in school, my older brother, Henry, and I use to have rabbit traps or rabbit boxes and we would set these all over the farm. Each morning we'd get up before daylight and—you know, we were going to school—and we had about two and a half miles to walk to school, so we'd probably walk that far checking the traps of a morning. We'd get home and we'd have to skin our rabbits and dress them and clean them all up. We didn't have a refrigerator or icebox, then. Of course, in the wintertime you didn't need it. We'd hang the rabbits out on the clothesline and they would freeze. Of course, they had to be wrapped so that they were kept clean. If they were hung out in the open they would turn black, so dark colored. It didn't hurt them but they didn't sell good.

And our Uncle Will Shirley had a grocery store in Havana. He would buy all the rabbits that we could bring him. He gave us fifty cents apiece for them. And boy, we really made money selling our rabbits. Sometimes—if the weather would change on us, started to get warm—then we would have to get our rabbits to town because he had the icebox, you know, to keep them. He liked to have them on the weekend. And that was the weekend special. He'd give us fifty cents for them and then he would resell them for a dollar apiece. He just had standing orders for all the rabbits that . . . well, I think there were some other boys that brought him rabbits. They liked the kind that were caught in the boxes, because they didn't have dog tooth marks or shot or anything in them like that, you know. They were just a nice, clean, smooth rabbit. And, of course, he coached us on how to clean them up nice, you know, and get all of the stray hair off of them so that they were really nice to look at; clean you know, to look at. But every winter, he would always take all we could bring. Well then, if it would get warm some evening, why, Henry and I . . . after we'd get home from school, we'd have to grab our rabbits and get to town with them that night and then walk back home.

Q. How far was that?

A. I have an idea that it was . . . I don't remember, but I think two and a half to three miles up to town. Up to middle of Main Street where the store was. Well, it was just . . . well, I think Henry could stand it a little better than I. I was just completely bushed by the time I'd get home. (laughs)

Q. Was this in Havana?

A. Yes. That was Havana, yes. Then, we worked for the farmers some who had weed in the wheat. I don't hear anymore about a weed in the wheat. It was a cockle, they called it, and I just don't see that around here. I don't know if that was a weed that grew in that area. But we'd pull this cockle and rye out of the farmer's wheat. There was always somebody wanting boys to work. If boys wanted to work.

And I don't know, it just seemed like we could always make spending money. To us—to me, anyhow, it . . . you wondered about these . . .

boys that didn't work. I don't know why they didn't. You would meet them in town. We had money to go to the show and buy a sack of candy and little things like that, you know, that kids liked to spend money for.

Of course, we had two theaters in Havana at that time. We always went to the show every Saturday night.

Q. How much did it cost?

A. A dime. But there were a lot of the kids from the country--well, town, town kids were the biggest leaches there were. Seemed like the country kids, I think, had more dimes in their pocket than the town boys did. If they could get a hold of a kid from the country, they always tried, you know, to butter him up and try to get him to pay his way. Well, we learned pretty early who was your friend or if he was your friend just for what he could get out of you. I saw that as I got older. I had a Model T Ford roadster, my first automobile, was a 1926 model. I got it in 1929. Let's see, that Ford was three years old and I bought it for a hundred and ten dollars.

Q. Was that a good buy?

A. Well, I think it was all right. That was about run-of-the-mill, you know. At that time, in 1926, my dad bought a new Model T Ford touring car. I don't suppose you know what a touring car was, that was the big old Ford. Had the big top over it, you know, and side curtains on it instead of glass windows. And they used to have just a small, little hard tire, I don't remember what kind of tires, just a regular tire. But then they started putting the big balloon tires on it and they would run over sand real easy. A Ford with balloon tires on it would go over sand where these others would just dig in. [The others had] just little tires like bicycle tires, you know. But this Model T Ford, it had a lock steering wheel, of course, that was something special and a starter, and balloon tires. I think that was about all the extras but it was \$466 for a new automobile. Can you imagine buying a new automobile for that? Of course, well, there was the balloon tires and the starter and the steering wheel. There was \$75 to \$80 worth of luxuries on that car. And just a straight, stripped down Ford, cranked to start and the regular tires and all that, you know, they were a little over three hundred dollars. You just can't imagine buying things like that. So you see, when you could buy an automobile for three and a half to four hundred dollars, fifteen cents for a day's work was . . . it didn't seem so small, back then.

Well, when we were like walking in the fields pulling rye and cockle, I know we got more than fifteen cents. I don't remember anymore just what we got but we could make a few dollars. If you worked a little bit, you always had a little money. Guys that sat around and went fishing or just laid in the shade, why, he was always bumming, trying to get somebody to buy him this or buy him that.

Q. Did you ever go fishing?

A. Not a great deal. I just never had any luck fishing when I was a kid.

We lived right on this White Oak Creek and we had a swimming hole just about a quarter of a mile from the house and we spent a lot of time there in the hot summertime. The hole had bored out as the water came through the culvert, you know. On the down side it was quite a hole there. We had an old bucket set off to the side or something there, kind-of-like a fish trap. Once in awhile we can lift that up and there'd be a nice catfish or something in there, bullhead. We'd get a fish that way. After I got older, I went fishing with different kids and I just never had any luck catching fish. We'd trade poles, they'd bait my hook for me and we'd trade places to sit. They'd take my line and catch fish and we'd trade back again and I just never could catch fish on a line. So I just lost interest.

And I never liked baseball. Was another thing that seemed like . . . well, when we were kids, Dad's younger brothers and some of his nephews, they had a ball team out of Snicarte. They were a rough bunch. They had a good ball team but they were ruffians. We'd have to go to the ball game every Sunday afternoon because "the boys" were playing and, of course, Dad liked to see them play. And these guys, if they would win, weren't satisfied just to beat another team. Then, they just torment them and bully them to get a fight started. That's what they liked, was just to get a fight started with some guys that weren't use to that rough-housing. And that just made me sick. I guess . . . I don't know maybe that's the reason that I . . . I just never did like ball games. It seemed like wherever you went, there was always somebody hollering and booing and I thought they couldn't play a game and have fun without somebody stirring up a fight.

And you watch the ball games today, there is still the same thing. These professionals get into this big ruckuses, you know, there's pictures in the paper just time after time that they have a big fight. There's guys that blow up over the umpire's call. So, I don't know. A lot of people watch ball games but I just can't get interested. Maybe if I didn't have anything to do and just sit there and watch, you know, to have something to do. I might get interested after awhile.

Q. You were talking about catching rabbits, awhile ago. How did you kill them?

A. Well, the easiest way was just have a stick, heavy stick, you know, so you can get ahold, about like a billy club. Just pick him up by his heels and hit one good clop behind his head. For a kid that was—well, about like I was about eleven or twelve years old—a good big kicking rabbit was (laughs) sometimes quite a job to knock him off. Henry was a good deal bigger than me. He was two years older than me but he was [at the] same time a lot bigger than me and that was usually his job. But we had nails on the tree where we could hang the rabbits up by his heels and jerk the hide off of it and just clean them all up in a little while. You know, wash them up until they was ready to cook. That was one job that I didn't like about it, was killing the rabbits. (laughs) Getting ready for them. I was chicken, I guess. (laughter)

Q. What kind of rabbits were they?

A. Why, just regular little ole cottontails, like they have now. But

we would go out into the fields and we knew where the rabbits were and Dad would look for rabbit signs, you know. Maybe there would be a place that we knew there were rabbits in a grove or something, along the ditch bank—but we just couldn't catch them. So, sometimes on a Sunday, Dad would go with us to check our traps and he could tell us what we were doing wrong and how to set our box or how to put the bait in. Well, that was entertainment for him as well as showing us how to get things done, you know. But we didn't have TV's and radios in those days. On Sunday, why, that was his day of rest, though he liked to hunt and get around and to go out with us and run our rabbit boxes. That was entertainment for him.

Q. Was there something special, some special way to catch a rabbit? Did you have bait in the box?

A. Well, in the box, yes. See, this box was just a square tube thing. Have you ever seen a rabbit box, a rabbit trap? I think probably your dad might have had some when he was a boy. This makes me sound older than the hill. But just take a square box about six inches square, you know. And we'd have a trigger on top and a door on the front of it and behind the trigger we would put a piece of an ear of corn or if you had some little apples or carrots or something like that, that a rabbit liked. Put that back in the back of the box and then the rabbit would go in the box, go back to this feed, and he'd bump the trigger and the door would drop behind him. He was just caught in the box. . . . If we'd have a heavy screen over the back of the box he could see right through it, you know, and they'd go in pretty good for that. But if you just nail your box up solid, he couldn't see in there and it was like going in a hollow log, you know. I don't know whether a rabbit could see in the dark or not, but they would go in a box better if you had the heavy wire across the back and he could see right through it. But then he couldn't get out.

They would start chewing as soon as they'd eat up all the feed, then they'd try to chew a hole to get out. Sometimes they would wreck your trap at the top where your trigger hooked. [There was] just a little round hole in the top and he could see a light up there and he'd start to chew around there. And then your trigger wouldn't hook on that anymore. So you'd have to tear your trap apart and put in a new board there.

Q. Can you describe how Havana was? Was it very large? What kind of stores?

A. Well, Havana has changed quite a bit. The old store buildings practically all are here. We've had, probably, a couple of fires; maybe the stores have been done over. They had a big fire in the old theater building—I don't remember who is in that building, what store is in it now—but they had the old brick streets in the main part of town, and all around the courtyard there was a hitching rack to tie horses.

Back then we went to town with the horse and wagon or buggy, something like that. People rode in on horseback. Any way, to get in there, most all was horsepower. There were a few . . . see that was back in from 1919 through 1923. There were several automobiles. The main part down on Main Street there were a few places, hitching posts, in front of the

stores. But I think they took them out because the horses and wagons began to interfere with the automobiles or vice versa. But all around the courtyard and down on Orange Street from, say, the CIPS building going north towards the new fire station, there use to be hitching racks down that street.

Then, in the alleys back of the stores there were places to tie your team. We'd always try to go, oh, just as early as we could get there—I think five o'clock in the summertime was quitting time and seemed like everybody tried to quit about that time and get to town as quick as you could to get the choice hitching rack, you know—well, if we could get in back of Uncle Will's grocery store, in the alley there, then you carry your groceries out. You put them right in the wagon and are ready to go home. Well, if you had to tie up over on the east side of the square, that was quite a ways to carry the groceries out.

But there use to be a fountain over on the northwest corner of the square. I don't remember the year. I just read about it in the "old times" in the [Mason County] Democrat a while back and I don't remember the year that that fountain was put there, but it was a place where the horse could drink on one side and the man could drink on the other side. Of course, there was a bubbling fountain, you know. They didn't drink the same water. But it was a place anybody could water their horse when they came by. That stood there for years after it was out of use.

Q. Was it crowded on Saturday night?

A. Yes. It was. There was from the time I can remember going to Havana there was always a crowd on Saturday night. Havana was a Saturday night town and everybody looked forward to Saturday night. Even after the horses got crowded out by automobiles the people still came. Back when Evelyn and I were young—when we were going together—people always run to town Saturday night, you know. Of course, when we were young, we didn't care too much about getting a parking place on Main Street, at that time, right up town. But you would park wherever you could.

Well, people would just mill around the square, you know. If you went, there were people on sidewalk from Wolters Drug Store corner almost up to what we still remember as the old railroad street, Schrader Avenue, that was railroad street—and there were stores up in that second block, at that time, but down on the main block were the most people. But you would just mill around there, you know, and seemed like everybody that you knew was in town Saturday night. They were shopping and visiting and just everybody was enjoying life and the kids—well, kids and grown-ups went to shows.

We had the Lawford Theater, well, that building is still here. They still have the show there and the Castle Theater was over catty-cornered across the intersection. It was probably about the second door—probably where the Mr. Appliance building is now, in that vicinity. Oh, the kids a lot of times they'd go to town on Saturday afternoon and go to the show, one show, and then at night, they'd go to the other show across the street. (laughter) If he was working, you know, and had a lot of dimes.

But you know when Evelyn and I were going together, it was pretty hard times then for everybody, and if I could get ahold of a dollar and a half a week, we could do all right. Because fifty cents worth of gas in the Model T Ford . . . why we could do a lot of riding on that. And we didn't drive as far as kids do now. Well, there were times that you could buy seven gallons for a dollar. I just don't remember what a Model T Ford would do on a gallon, how many miles. But it would go much farther than these big powerhouses we have now. But you could buy a hamburger for a dime and a big chocolate sundae was a dime, the show was a dime. So, I say if we had a dollar and a half, well, we could really splurge. Oh, there was probably some that spent more than that—I know there was—but there were a lot of kids that didn't have that much money, even.

Back in the . . . well, this was later on, this was in the early 1930's, probably ten years later than when we were catching the rabbits, you know. We were big boys, then. The farmers were getting ten or twelve cents a bushel for their corn, you know. I shucked a lot of corn by hand. Did you ever see anybody shuck corn?

Q. No, I haven't.

A. Take a team and wagon and go out in the field. See, that's the way farmers use to bring in all of their corn. It was picked by hand. Every ear had to be grabbed off the stock and shucked out, thrown in the wagon. But that's . . . I thought you might have seen some of that and . . . well, my gosh, you're younger than I thought. But that was another big job on the farm, you know, to shuck corn. If a man could shuck a hundred bushel a day, he was considered a good corn shucker. There were a lot more that didn't shuck a hundred bushel than there was that did. Back then a cent and a half, two cents a bushel was about all a man ever got. A lot of them—I have shucked corn for a cent a bushel and scooped it off. Now if a man was fortunate to be working for somebody that had a corn elevator, you know, that he could just dump his wagon, why, he got a half a cent less for shucking. But you didn't make a lot of money but a little bit of money went a long way.

Now, we just run on to—while we were cleaning up the Methodist parsonage here a couple of weeks ago, we came across an old record book, 1929.

END OF SIDE ONE

Q. We were talking about the record book that you found.

A. This old Record of Giving. And I thought, well, that would be fun to just be a little snoopy and see what they were giving back in those days. Things were cheap but I don't know how in the world they could run a church and pay the preacher. Well, I'm sure they had electric lights at that time. But the main people in the church, their pledges, run from ten to fifty cents a week. That was the highest any of them were giving. It just seems almost unbelievable. Of course, times weren't good at that time. Up until 1929 things weren't too bad on the farm but I was surprised. Oh, I think there was one person that had pledged, I suppose

he paid it, sixty dollars for the year. We just wondered if he was the chairman of the finance committee and he was setting an example for the rest of them. But there were just any number of people that gave ten cents a week to the church and they are people of the old families that stayed with the church, you know, for years and years and years. I wondered how they got enough nickels and dimes and quarters to run a church on, giving like that.

Q. You were saying that until about 1929 the times weren't too bad. What about afterwards?

A. Well, about 1929 was when things started slipping and they slipped into the big Depression and that was in the early 1930's and the banks all closed. The people that had money in the banks lost their money and people jumped out of the windows and everything else, you know, because it was bad. Well, with the stock market, you know, all closed, or went broke or whatever they did. But everybody—if they had any money in the banks when the banks closed—they lost practically all of it. There were people that were considered well-to-do families, you know, but when the bank closed they were out of money and the only way they could live . . . Well, they went to town. Well, a farmer would have a few chickens and eggs and they made their living mostly right on the farm but there was always some things that they had to buy. They couldn't pay any bills. People that had bought equipment or automobiles or something on time, you know. Things just came to a stand still, virtually.

That was for two years, I guess—that was back when I was talking about this corn for ten cents. The farmers sold their corn for ten or twelve cents a bushel. The year 1932 when—that's when Aunt Evelyn and I were married—and I worked that summer for twenty dollars a month. I stayed with the family that I worked for. And I shucked corn for a cent and a half a bushel that winter. But I might have spent more money if I could have got ahold of it but he couldn't get ahold of it to give me, you know, and he'd try to get me a little spending money each weekend. But when we got married that fall, then I was just fortunate. I had a little money (laughs) to start housekeeping. Then we got a job on a dairy farm and we set up housekeeping. We gathered up a few things here and a few things there. I believe we got \$35 a month and, of course, we got a butcher hog and we got some milk each day and a little corn for a few chickens. So we had our eggs and milk and all that.

But when we'd go to town Saturday night . . . Well, I guess we were there for four years. We had Norma Jean and Rob, they came along while we lived in this first little house. But we'd go to town and buy our week's supply of groceries for two dollars and we had about all the groceries both of us could carry to the car. For two dollars worth of groceries was a big bunch of groceries. So you could get along pretty well on a little bit of money if you didn't have to pay it all out for nothing.

Q. You said you had an Uncle Will who had a grocery store?

A. That was Uncle Will Shirley. I don't know if I told you. Did you know him?

Q. No.

A. Ever know any of the Shirley kids? Do you know Lloyd Shirley? You don't know Lloyd Shirley? Well, he's some of your relation. Lloyd was our cousin. He has been in the Crescent Forge and Shovel Company, Inc. He went to work there when he got out of college. I think that probably in that factory is the only place he ever worked until he retired, oh, probably three years ago, I think. He is Uncle Will Shirley's oldest son. Uncle Will's wife, Lloyd's mother, and my mother were sisters.

Q. When did he get his grocery store?

A. I don't know when they started it. They were running the grocery store when we came to Havana. When we use to come to Havana we'd go to their house. Oh, not often, maybe once or maybe twice a year. When I was just a little kid. Well, before Mother died. Uncle Will and his brother, Bob had the grocery store together at that time and how long they had had it, I don't know, but I'll just say as far back as I can remember, they had the grocery store. But they were one of the big grocery stores and then, finally, the A&P store moved in on one side of it. He and Bob split up, I don't know why, but seemed like Bob got another job someway or another. But he and Uncle Will dissolved partnership. Kroger's store, in a year or two, started on the other side. Well, they could cut prices on him, you know, and they just almost choked him down.

But he used to run a delivery truck and that was a steady job for a man. People would just call up and give their order, see, the people in town, everybody didn't have two cars like they do now and you would just go down the street and there was family after family that had no automobile at all. So they would call their order for groceries. They would fix up their groceries and then this guy would load them. He had a Model T Ford truck, it was just a pickup truck—what we call a pickup. I don't remember what they called it at that time—and this guy would go all over town delivering orders.

Well, then the A&P store and Kroger didn't have this delivery service, it was cash and carry. They could sell it cheaper but people would go there and buy it because they could buy it cheaper. And there were even a few of his old customers who tried to get him to deliver their groceries after they'd go to the A&P store and buy it. They'd want him to deliver it. (laughter)

But he had the grocery store as long as he lived, I think. I don't remember. Then, after Uncle Will was gone, some of the kids tried to run the store. Well, they'd had a pretty easy life, they weren't like us country kids and they just couldn't believe that . . . well, Uncle Will was, you would say, from the old school. He treated the customer right. He tried to give service, you know. The kids got in there and tried to run it. They thought people owed them something and they'd ought to just come in and just buy from them and take their sassiness. But people wouldn't do it. So the store didn't last long after Uncle Will was gone. (bird chirps)

Q. Do you remember what kind of things he had in his store? Was it just groceries or did he have other things like tools?

A. No. I don't think he had anything but groceries. Groceries and house-cleaning, you know—soaps and brooms and mops—and he sold kerosene. That was a household item because most people had kerosene lights then, you know. You'd go to town after your groceries and take your kerosene can along and you had to be careful not to set your kerosene can close to your groceries because potatoes would pick up the odor from it. The flour or anything it happened to get spilled on or just set close to, it would just absorb the odor from kerosene.

He had this great big icebox, like our big walk-in coolers, you know. Well, not like the walk-in coolers but they had the big doors and the cold meats, the big bologna, great big chunks, you know, laid in there and they had this big round block—what did they call that—of cheese. They were about, oh, I suppose, two feet across and maybe seven, eight inches thick. That was put on kind of a turntable and they had a big knife that they just pushed down on the handle and sliced off wedges of cheese. I don't know, they have changed cheese. You can't buy much cheese anymore that tastes like that old-fashioned cheese did. Just like the ice cream has gone down. They can make it cheaper and put out a bulk of something but it doesn't taste like the old-fashioned kind.

The country people, or anybody that could, you know, in the summertime, they would bring in their fresh produce from the garden. They would buy green beans and cabbage and pickles and, I think most of their supply of fresh groceries like that were brought in from the country, each week, rather than getting them shipped in, in crates like they come now. If a farmer raised a lot of potatoes, why, they'd buy his potatoes.

Q. Was this store a place to gather and talk?

A. Yes. The customers as they came in, on Saturday nights. See, you didn't go around, it wasn't self-service like all the stores now. You just walked in there and there'd be somebody at the counter back there to wait on you. He'd have, oh, probably three or four people working in there and they would take your order and then some people would want you to fill their order just as they give it to you, you know, and they'd want to see each item. To see that they got what they were calling for. Others would just give them a list of the items that they wanted and then they would be on their way. Then they would fix up their order, put it in a box for them, you know, and their name was written on it. Then, when they'd come back after it, why, their order would be all boxed up ready to go. But the people would, oh, quite often, get to visiting—and I don't remember what the store hours closing time was but it was pretty late—but quite often somebody would get busy and go to the show or something and forget to go back after their groceries until the store was closed. I don't think that ever happened at our house. But I have heard of other people that did. We usually got home before midnight.

That was another nice thing back then, when we use to go to town with the horses and the wagon and to ride home at night. I always wondered how . . . I couldn't see, but we never made a misturn. The horses knew

the way home, I'm sure, but I sometimes wonder if Dad had eyes like a cat that he could see where he was going. It was just, sometimes, you know, just darker than pitch. If there was moonlight or a little light, I could understand but those real pitch dark nights, I don't know how . . . There would be a few cars on the road, you know, just enough to blind you. If you'd meet a car light, you would just be blinded then for a while.

But as you'd ride along—it was a dirt road—wagons didn't make any noise on rocks or gravel roads, just hear the harness squeaking, you know, and things like that. You could hear the night birds hollering and maybe a dog barking here and there as you went by people's houses along the road. Cows out in the pasture, mooing. We use to listen to Dad, I don't know, he probably studied the stars one time he was a boy, I don't know who started him. But he'd point out to us kids all the stars, you know, the stars' names and the Big Dipper and the Little Dipper and the Eastern Star and all of these, you know. Well, it's been years. We have so many lights, (laughter) it's hard to see the sky at night. But those things way back then and . . . I don't know, it's just . . . you would just like to want to . . . What would it be like to go out and drive down a country road for a few miles at night if it were real quiet and listen.

I once in awhile go outdoors at night and set out there and listen for the night birds to holler like I used to hear. But we have the blacktop road south of here, so much traffic, and about all the noise we can hear at night (chuckles) is the traffic on the road. We did have a whip-poor-will that visited us this summer. He came closer this year than he ever did. I think he sat on the yard fence, right outside our bedroom window. And boy, I was almost tempted to get up and shoo him out of there one night. But then, he would holler and then the one down the road just a little ways would answer. I always liked to hear the whip-poor-wills but boy, that couple of nights he really gave us a fill of it.

Q. Do you remember anything about World War I?

A. No. Only . . . World War I?

Q. Yes.

A. Now I'm not that old. (laughter) No. The only thing that I remember about World War I, we lived in Bath and there was a report that the war was over. There was a bunch of guys got real wild and they made up a dummy and they run up and down the streets pulling this dummy and that was suppose to be the Kaiser and they shot guns up in the air and did a lot of shouting and might have been drinking a little booze, I don't know. But that was just a rumor. It was quite a little while after that before the war was actually over; but I was about six years old then, so I don't remember a whole lot about that. I can remember that. It just, I don't know, it scared me somewhat. I thought the War had come to town, you know, with all this noise. But that's about . . . We had two uncles, Uncle Austin, little Aus, James Oscar and Carl. They were my dad's brothers. They were both in World War I. I don't remember when they came home but they both got back. But I don't remember about that. I mean, I just don't remember any more about World War I.

Q. How about World War II?

A. Well, that was something different. We lived down below Chandlerville at that time and we had come up to Evelyn's folks for dinner and we didn't have the radio turned on and the Japanese had struck Pearl Harbor that day. It was on December the 7th, on Sunday and, of course, we got back down home and we went over to milk the cows and do the chores that evening and the boss and the other man that worked there were talking about it. And I didn't know what they were talking about because we hadn't had the radio on all day. But the year before that, I guess—probably had been expecting this—and we had all had to go register, everybody of draft age. And Uncle Joe was [already] in the army. He had volunteered the year before. You could volunteer for a year. So he had volunteered and his time was almost up. They just held everybody, you know, they just froze them in the army or whatever service that they were in. So he was in for four more years. Well, I had to register. I came pretty close to having to go. I was the right age but I was married, had three children then, and I was working on the farm, which was essential at that time, you know, to produce food and I didn't have to go.

And then, a couple of years later things were going wild then, like they are now, have been for the last year. Farm wages just stayed right at the bottom, so we decided to go to Alton to work. I went to work in the factory in Alton. We hadn't been down there but a little while when a great big guy knocked on the door one evening. And he wasn't a bad man but he was pretty big but he was from the draft board. The fellow that I had worked for had reported me as quitting the farm. I don't know, I guess, he thought he'd get even with me for quitting. He turned me into the draft board right away but it just turned out that this factory that I was working at was making war material and I was in just as good of place as I was as on the farm. But an awful lot of our boys left and didn't come back.

Q. What about here in the United States. Did you have things rationed?

A. Oh, yes. Well, you had to have—oh, what did they call them? Were they food rationing stamps? You could only buy so much sugar and so much flour and, oh, I don't remember what all. Gasoline. About anything in the food line was rationed.

Q. Were they hard to get, even if you did have your ration coupons?

A. Well, if you didn't have coupons, you just couldn't buy it. There were coupons on the black market, you know. People got them this way or that and sold them for whatever they could get out of them. But we always managed to get by. Sugar was one thing—we had three kids then, eating sugar. (laughs) Seems like it took lots. Well, we were canning and it was a job to get enough sugar to can with at that time. About everything that you wanted to buy was rationed. It was sure a relief when that was all over. I wish they could figure out some way to run this world without somebody always threatening another war. (birds chirping)

Q. What did you think when you heard that we were going to bomb Japan? Were you shocked? How did you feel?

A. Well, that was like when Japan bombed Pearl Harbor. We didn't know a lot about it until it had happened. But, you see, it was just radios and they didn't have, I don't believe, the news right up to now like they do quite as fast as now. But, after they'd dropped the first bomb . . . Well, I thought it was all right because that was what they had done to us. I thought if we could just give them one bigger, why, it would be good for them. It might straighten them out a little bit. (bird twittering) I think if we would have just dropped a few more at that same time right on down the line, maybe we would have been the cock of the roost for another hundred years. From my thinking, might have been better off. I may be wrong on that.

Q. You mean, like the Korean conflict and Vietnam conflict?

A. Yes. (bird chirps)

Q. Last time we talked about your school days. You said that you went to school in a one-room school. How was that school heated?

A. Well, they had something called a potbellied stove. I never did go to school where they had the potbellied stove. I know what they mean, but you've seen pictures of the old potbellied stove. But in the schoolrooms were a big stove but they had a jacket around them, you know. Just like, oh, a big can set down over the stove. You know what I mean. It was a metal--well, I think a jacket was what they called it--and that would get too hot for comfort but it wouldn't be like the kids getting right against the red hot stove, you know. Them old big stoves would get pretty hot sometimes. This jacket sort of set on legs and the air current would pull in from the bottom, you know, and go up through between the stove and the jacket and out the top and that was the way that it created a suction and the air would go up through the stove. It would warm it pretty well. They were usually fired by coal. I don't believe I ever--oh, I might of sometimes when I was littler gone to a school where they--I know in the way back they use to heat with wood, a lot.

Back during the Depression I have heard of a lot of schools that burned corn, ear corn, because it was cheaper to burn the corn than it was to sell it and buy coal.

Q. Did it burn good?

A. Oh, yes. You get it started, yes. Dry corn and the big cob inside, you know, the corn will burn; when you get a fire started, the corn would just burn right up.

Q. It didn't pop or anything? (laughs)

A. Well, not much. Well, you get it in open fire like that it probably would. I have burned some, you know, just throw it in a fire. I've seen it burn, but I never did see . . . I do know of schools that did burn corn. If we'd had popcorn that would have been nice to pop it, wouldn't it? And then eat it and burn it. (laughter) One time when I was going to school the teacher wanted me to . . . (tape ends abruptly)

END OF TAPE

A. Old stove was kind of a cantankerous old thing. I don't know, maybe it was the draft in the chimney or what, but it would puff back and all of us kids were scared. But the teacher knew how to handle it. Seemed like when the stove'd get to huffing, she'd get to puffing (laughter) and away the stove would go. I started a fire one morning. Things went all right. The next morning the fire was lower and it huffed back. A few of the early kids, screamed and run outdoors and I slammed the draft shut and went outdoors with the rest of them. So that ended my janitor's career. (laughter)

Q. So the teacher usually started it?

A. The teacher usually started it. Once in awhile there would be . . . well, this was towards the end of when I went to school but earlier . . . some of the schools would, if there was somebody lived close, you know, a man sometimes would come and start the fire. But as a rule the teacher was the fireman. If she would get some of the big boys to carry the coal in for her, get things ready, you know, for the next day and somebody to fill . . . we had a water bucket, you know, that set on the bench in the back and a big dipper. Somebody would fill the water bucket and all the kids, most all of them would drink out of the one dipper. Some kids would have their own cup that they [would] dip it out and pour it in their cup.

But in the wintertime the kids play in the snow, you know, or out in the rain and they'd have their jackets and their mittens . . . mittens usually laid on the floor and their wet clothes hang up over this jacket on the stove, you know, to dry. It was quite a bit different. But the teacher, she just looked after the kids. That was one of her duties, I think, to look after the kids and most teachers were pretty good to help the kids. Kids were just expected to get wet coming to school, (laughter) you know, or when they were out playing and, of course, if it was raining too hard, they didn't get to go out. Once in a great while, if somebody got all wet for just no reason at all, why, he'd have to sit in his wet clothes till he dried.

Q. The school was usually warm by the time the students got there?

A. As a rule, yes. The teacher always arrived early enough to have the . . . oh, in real cold weather, it would be hard to warm all the far corners but then, there would be times like that [and] the kids would hunker up, you know, or move over closer to the stove. And I don't think anybody ever really sit there and suffered a lot with the cold.

Q. What kind of desk did you have?

A. Well, I only saw these in the school that I started to school in. They had a double desk. You've seen these old school desks, haven't you? But then, this one, they had the double desks; two kids sat together all the time. And you had the flat top that you write on, you lay your books on and then the little shelf inside, where each guy had his books and pen-

cils. Then later, they got the single desks where each kid would have his own desk. I don't know, it seems to me like a lot of times, I don't know why, that's been a long time ago, but [it] seems like sometimes a little guy would sit with a big one. I don't know whether there was a reason for that rather than two little ones together, you know, maybe in the same class. I think that part of the time, I know, I sat with another kid my age. We were just little guys. But I do remember sitting with some of the bigger boys and I don't know if that was just a special privilege or suppose to be a treat or maybe, when we got our work done, we could sit over there and aggravate them other kids. (laughter)

Q. Did you have much homework that you had to do? After school?

A. The last couple of years, yes. The teacher we had, then, really believed in homework and every night every kid had an armful of books to take home. And you'd better have your homework the next morning.

Q. What kind of subjects did you have?

A. Well, then we started out with music, in the morning. We always sang. The teacher would play the piano—all the schools had a piano—and most always, I believe, all the teachers that I ever had could play the piano and the kids would sing. Some of the schools, the kids would all gather up around the piano and some of them, I think, if the teacher couldn't play the piano, well, then she would stand up and lead the singing, you know. I really liked that. I always did like to sing. I guess, maybe, [I] just couldn't carry a tune in the basket but I did like to sing. And there were some good singers. Then we had, probably, next would come reading. We had, probably, before reading, we had writing. Now, that is a subject that I asked my grandchildren about and they don't know what I'm talking about.

Q. Really?

A. Yes. Writing in school.

Q. I had writing. (laughs)

A. Did you have writing?

Q. Yes.

A. Well, you might have been in a smaller school. (laughs) Well, no. They never had the writing in school. But there was so many minutes allotted to writing, you know, and you practiced writing and you were graded on your writing ability. Then, on a Friday afternoon—some would have it different, you know, [at] some—you would have your writing regular and then some schools, maybe a busier season, you would just have writing on Friday afternoon. A lot of times it was sort of play. You would like have writing and drawing, art. Some kids could . . . Well, the teachers would have pictures for you to try to draw or you just draw anything that you could think of, you know. Draw a picture of a dog or a bird or a man or a tree or a house. Then we had arithmetic, spelling, and health or physiology and geography and history. Then the last couple of years,

they had it, probably, longer than that, but the last two years that I was in school I had orthography.

Q. Orthography?

A. Did you ever have that?

Q. No.

A. That was spelling but you had, oh, they were big, hard words, and you would have to learn to spell these words and look up the meaning of each word and break that down and what each part of that word meant and use that word in a sentence. Well, I liked it but it was an awfully hard subject. You know, oh, we started several years ago, we tried to find one of those old orthography books. I would liked to had it. I said it helped me, probably more, as much as any subject that I had. Because besides learning these words, well, when you would get out and get around, you would hear so many words that you just didn't hear, you know, in a little school and around in the country. You would learn these words, learn the meaning of them, how to use them in a sentence. But they discontinued that.

Q. Did you have spelling bees?

A. Yes. Yes, we had spelling bees. Each grade had their spelling class and then, so often, we would have a spelling bee. All the classes get together, you know, and just spell until the best speller stood at the head of the line. Then different schools would compete, you know. Of course, we still have the spelling bees, you know. Probably hasn't changed a whole lot since fifty years back. Maybe a lot, too.

Q. Did your parents ever make snow ice cream?

A. Oh, yes. Yes. We did. I know we made snow ice cream, yes. But Evelyn and I made, I think, more snow ice cream after we were married and the kids were little. We made a lot of snow ice cream. Oh, I guess we had clean snow, then. We never thought of the atomic fallout and all this pollution. [We'd] go out and get the nice, white snow after a clean snow, put a little sugar and some milk in it, stir it up. I don't know, the snow anymore seems like . . . once in awhile you see a nice clean white snow but it usually has so much dust in it. I don't know whether it would be safe to eat it or not. (laughs)

Q. Did you make your own sorghum or molasses?

A. No. We never did. There used to be a man in the neighborhood, when I was a little guy, that made sorghum every year. I never did like sorghum. I don't yet. It just wasn't a pleasing taste to me. There's a lot of people that do like it. I know it's all right, but not for me.

Q. Earlier you said you had a butcher hog. Did you butcher it yourself?

A. No. Back when we were working, people used to butcher together, it

was like threshing. Neighbors would get together or friends or whoever, you know, there'd be a crew. One man could, you know, if he got right after it. Of course, you take a big hog that would weigh 250 pounds on up to how big they did get, one man couldn't hardly handle one. They would usually have a crew and they'd scald the hog, scrape the hair off of them.

Q. How did you scald it?

A. Well, they would have a platform made, of course. They'd have a teeter pole, they called it, a big long heavy pole on top of a post, and they would let this short end down and hook it on to a hog and then the two men, or what ever it took, out on the long end would pull down on theirs and lift the hog up and drop it down in a barrel of hot water. Teeter him up and down and then throw him out on the table and scrape the hair off of him, clean him all up, butcher him up, make lard, sausage, bacon.

Q. Did you shoot him?

A. Oh, yes. You had to shoot him. Most everybody shot. Once in awhile there were some that would knock them in the head, you know, with a hammer or an axe, but I couldn't do that. Some would just hang them up by the hind legs and stick them, bleed them. That was a way to do it. The most common way was to shoot him and then stick him in the throat and bleed him, they had to be bled out or the meat wouldn't cure out good.

Q. Did you make blood sausage and head cheese?

A. No. I didn't. I have seen that made. I've tried to eat it but just the thoughts of blood pudding. I never could go for that. My dad use to like that when we lived out there around the . . . well, all those people were German people and they always made blood pudding and scrapple. Dad always said they used everything but the squeal. (laughter) They couldn't find anything to mix it with.

Q. Where were your parents from?

A. Well, they were just down in that neighborhood. My dad was born down on farther down than Lynchburg. My mother was born down in that way because, when she went to school, she went to the old Fairview School. And I didn't know that—I don't know if ever, maybe I never did hear it. But Aunt Julia, she was with us in the later years, she talked about our mother and Aunt Effie and Aunt Molly and they all went to Fairview School. So, I guess, they were around in that same neighborhood. My dad lived down next to the Wildwing. You know where the Wildwing Gun Club is?

Q. No.

A. You don't know where that is? Well, his dad's farm adjoined the Wildwing Gun Club and they lived there, I don't know how many years, but they lived over on the, I think, they lived on Snicarte Island and they lived on—was Burr Oak Ridge another island or what was Burr Oak Ridge?

I've heard Dad talk about Burr Oak Ridge. I still hear of that and what was the other . . . Grand Island? No, it wasn't Grand Island. But down where they used to live when he was young, they use to take a skiff, he called it, and row across the river to Browning. They were about straight across from Browning. Some of the young guys used to go across the river to Browning. They used to have big dances and whatnot over there, on Saturday night.

Q. How long had your family been in the United States? Do you know?

A. You mean generations back? I don't remember when the first ones came here. Why, I've heard the date but it was way back. 1775.

Q. Do you know where they came from?

A. No. I did hear, the one time, that the first Sarffs were brought here as English war prisoners. What country . . . seem like they were captured in the countries over there [Europe] and brought over here as slaves. Now, I could be a little mixed up. I goofed a long time ago when Bert Schaffer was doing this family tree, you know, and he hunted back, I don't remember how far back, but we had a lot of these old . . . well, there's Sarffs scattered pretty well across the country, now. But a lot of them are from other states and they came checking to see if they were relation to these. Which I think they, probably all in the beginning, were pretty close relatives.

Now, when my . . . my great-granddad . . . Now, whether he was one of the kids, I guess . . . They came from Indiana to Illinois. I know my ancestors came to Illinois from Indiana in a covered wagon. Then my great-grandfather had, oh, I don't know how many brothers he did have—but they just sort of drifted away in different directions. Well, that was when they got lost. I mean they really weren't lost, they knew where they were going, where they . . . but they lost track of one and another. Now, Aunt Frieda has a letter that he [great-grandfather] wrote back to Grandpa Jack and he was in Dakota. And one of his brothers was a potato farmer up there. He talked about their crops and one thing and another. Then there was another one [a Sarff] in Minnesota. Uncle Henry had contacted him. One time when Uncle Henry was up there there were some people that came from Indiana and they had . . . just a coincidence that they came at the same time. This old fellow was, oh, he was up in his eighties or somewhat, but he was a nephew of my great-grandfather. But they scattered in all directions.

When Joe was in the army, he run on to a Sarff and he was from Dakota. But they were just . . . knew who he was, what his name was and that he came from Dakota and Joe was from Illinois and they were gone and he never got to contact him anymore, and if he would have been able to contact him . . . Anyhow, we moved one time up to north Topeka and I told my neighbor what my name was and I said, "I don't suppose you ever heard that name before." And he said, "Well, I guess I have. Up in Dakota, where we come from, the timbers are full of Sarffs." So evidently he had met a branch of this old family up there, you know.

But I should have got this record, this family tree, and hunted back to

see where these old guys really came from and get the history of the beginning. I just heard somebody telling about this . . . They use to have this big picnic and there would be . . . They tried there for years to get somebody from these different states to come, you know.

Q. The Sarff family picnic?

A. Yes. That's the Sarff family dinner. That was . . . oh, there used to be a big one. Of course, they still have that but there's hardly any, they say, there's hardly any Sarffs go anymore. They're just descendents of the Sarff family. I have wondered too. I would like to know, for sure, just when did these first ones . . . where did the first ones come from . . . and when. It seems to me that the first ones came here in seventeen hundred something but I'm not sure. Now, that part I would like to get started there. But seems like the Sarffs, if I remember right, were of German descent.

END OF SIDE ONE

Q. Did you go to the circus when you were younger?

A. Yes. Yes, the circus was—oh, it was a big day when the circus came to town. We lived out in the country then, of course. My dad would always make an effort to get us kids to town that day to see the circus. It was just a one-day stand. That's about all they do yet, one day at a time. Of course, we'd have to come to town with the horses and the buggy or wagon, whatever we had. They would always have the big parade down through town with the circus wagons and the elephants and all the big animals, you know. Small animals were always caged in the wagons. You know, like the big lion cages and monkeys. They would have the big parade and the band and the big fancy horses. Back then all the wagons were pulled with big show horses and all decked out in silver trappings, you know, harness . . . you[may] see this [at] the horse shows now. They really had them dolled up and usually four or six head of horses on each one of the big wagons.

Then, after dinner, you go down to the showground. That was down on the old IC railroad, Illinois Central; down where, well, Kruse irrigation outfit has that now and, oh, Willington coal yard and ILLICO bulk station. Now, that area there was all the big grounds, that's where all the circuses and carnivals would always set up. But we would go down there and then we could walk around it and see the animals, but then you had to pay to get in to see the show.

I remember one time we had the neighbor boys—they were the Shirley boys, that was Roy and Merritt Shirley. They were about our age—but it rained that day. We were up on the top step in this bleachers and the old tent was holding water on top of it, just big drops ready to come through. You know, we were going to push the water off before Dad saw us but we had already put our hands up against the tent. Well, any place that you touched it then the water just broke and run right through. People all

around us and we couldn't get away from it. We had to stay right there. And Roy Shirley had on . . . it was a new cap. Boys and men wore these big top caps at that time, you know, a round cap with a bill on it. This was a purple one and when it got wet it was just like a sponge, it just soaked up the water, and he'd turn his head around fast, you know, and the water would sling out of that cap. But everybody close to him that had on white or light clothes, you know, and that purple water would stick on it, really spotted them up. We tried to get him to throw his cap down under the bleachers but he wouldn't do it because it was a brand new cap. (laughter) But he really spattered us up.

Q. How much did it cost to go into the show?

A. I don't remember, but it wouldn't have been very much. It might have been as much as a quarter, I don't know. But then that was the main tent and then they would have other small tents. They tried to hook you. Well, when you'd go in the big tent you'd buy a ticket and that put you on the bleachers and then, if you wanted another seat, why, that was . . . They had other prices, the good seats were all higher. Some of the animals, then, to get a close look at them, why you'd have to buy another ticket to get in the animal tent. But I just don't remember. I think, probably a quarter would have probably took us in.

Q. What kind of shows did they have?

A. Well, they would have the (laughs) flying trapeze, I suppose you'd call it. They had tight-wire walkers and they would always have this act where usually a girl would hold on this leather, chunk of leather, they'd put in their mouth and hold with their teeth. They swing them around and around. You've probably seen that. I seen that on TV here on a show not too long ago. And the trapeze guys jumping from pillar of stone, you know, and jump on a springboard and throw another one over and, of course, they'd always have the clowns and the fat lady. They'd have some kind of . . . golly, I don't know, it's been so long since I was at a circus. I can hardly remember. You know, a few little things like the cap and the big animals and things like that.

Q. Were there any incidents like animals getting out or anything like that?

A. No. I never knew of any to get out. I don't believe I ever knew. Well, I wasn't like the town kids, I couldn't be down in the morning when the circus would unload. A lot of the boys would earn some money by carrying water for the elephants and they'd have a tub of water there, you know, and—they just couldn't run water to it like they do with a hose nowadays—they had to, as a rule, pumped it and had pumps down there, old hand pumps. They would pump water—just pump, pump, pump—and they'd carry buckets of water to all these animals. That was quite a job but it paid, you know, a few cents, which was good money for kids to work. And a lot of times they would get a pass to get in. A free pass for that afternoon. They would work pumping water for a free pass or a little money.

Q. Did you ever get there early enough to see them set up?

A. Yes, we'd try to get in . . . we would see them put up the big tent. That was always something that was . . . well, it was really something to see. I have seen them start—I don't know if they all did it the same way—but this one time they would take this big elephant and they would spread the tent out and they would start him under the edge of the tent and he would just walk through. As he walked through they would stand poles up behind him, beside him, you know. Then, when he'd get in there so far, then they would tie the center pole to him, to a harness that he wore, and they would have this big pole up in the top of the tent, in a place for it, you know, and then he would just drag the bottom end of the pole up. When it got up to the middle, well the tent would be standing. Then they would just lead him off to each side in directions and he would raise the tent and they would stick the poles. That was something to see. The way they could make those big elephants work and just a little old weasley man, you know; usually had a gig or something. They didn't use it too much, just kind of tap them on the trunk or something, you know; but this thing was to gouge him with if he didn't do what he was suppose to. But the elephants were really well-trained.

Sometimes they would load their wagons and all this on the trains—come in on the trains, you know—and a lot of times the horses couldn't pull the wagons up on the train. So they would get—that was on the flat cars, you know, up on the loading dock—so they'd take a big elephant and he would just get his head against the back of the wagon and as the horses started to walk, why, the elephant just pushed the wagon right on up. The horses had to keep going (laughter) or he'd push the wagon right on top of them.

Q. Did you go to any fairs? State Fair?

A. Yes. We went to the State Fair. Oh, I was probably, I think I was about sixteen, I suppose, fifteen or sixteen before I went to the first fair. We had a Model T. Ford, then. We drove from Havana to Springfield. Golly, it seemed like—of course, my dad knew some people that lived in Mason City and we'd start out bright and early in the morning and then we'd get as far as Mason City, 27 miles away, and we'd stop and eat breakfast or lunch with these people. I don't know whether they were retired at that time. Seemed like later on we were there and they had a gas station. I told Evelyn when we were in Mason City here awhile back that little old station was there, I remember. I don't remember what the people's name were that use to run it. I don't know who they were, but they were old friends of Dad. And we would stop there of a morning. They were both there, I know. Whether he was retired or if he was running the station all the while . . . But we'd stop there.

Then, after awhile, we'd journey on to Springfield. It seemed like it took forever to get there. And of course, when you get to the fair, why, that was just like a big carnival and circus and everything rolled into one. We went for the entertainment, you know, just like the carnival.

Of course, there were things like they have at the fair now but, as a kid, we didn't . . . well, I didn't look at the farm machinery then, like I would now. But they had . . . Dad would take us through the live-

stock barns, you know, and look at all the big horses and the cattle and the pigs. It was nice to see some of them but too many of them . . . I thought a lot of times we stayed too long in one barn. But there were always, well, things to eat here and things to eat there. You always wanted to eat some of all of it and usually come home with the bellyache.

Q. What kind of things did you eat?

A. Well. Same ole hot dogs like they have now. I think the biggest thing that ever got hooked on to eat was these candy apples, which they still have. They looked real good. But they'd always just have an old hard green apple and it wasn't fit to eat after the kid would buy it. Of course, they had taffy candy—I don't know if you could still buy that now—well, they made candy, you see—I think they outlawed them, the State Health Department, probably. I believe they have that in Springfield—we haven't been to the fair for a few years now—but I think they pull it by machine, you know, it turns and winds it. You've probably seen that. And they'd show you how they chopped it off and wrapped it and then you could buy a sack of it. Everybody's mouth would water, you know, by the time you had followed it down the line. And cotton candy—oh, I don't know, about any kind of candy; anything was good to eat that day. But there was, I can't remember who it was—seemed like there was somebody's house that we went to in Springfield, that we'd go for dinner. We usually went every year after we got a car to drive.

Q. Do you remember going on rides?

A. Yes. We'd ride the merry-go-round. Finally got big enough to get on the ferris wheel and they use to have the old whip—I don't know if they have that yet or if they call it something else—and had the old caterpillar, that was kind of a scary thing. First time I ever got on the ferris wheel—oh, a bunch of us boys, that was in Havana; and it was Henry, Uncle Henry, and, oh, I don't know who. There were a bunch of us boys got on. Lloyd Williams and I got in one seat and, just the way they were loading it, we stopped the first time around right on top and I was scared. He was a little older than me; he wasn't scared, he'd been there before—so he rocked the seat and I threatened to climb out over the side and go down (laughter) the rail if he didn't stop it; but after I got use to it, I liked it.

Then, oh, a few years later than that, we were at Springfield at the fair one time. That was, oh, I was working for Herman Walbaum then, and his nephew, Julius Stelter—works for the Minneapolis dealer now—and Herman's two boys and I went to the fair that day. Julius and I were the same age, so we just kind of struck out by ourselves looking for rides and things and we got on this big double ferris wheel. Neither one of us had ever ridden on one of those things before. Of course, we wouldn't let the other one know that we were scared, if we were. I don't remember, but you go around the first time and then they get that one loaded, then they turn it and then you go up on the top. I don't know if they have them yet but, boy, that's a long way up in the air. You could just look over the top of the tall trees then. But we really had a ball that time.

Q. What was the caterpillar?

A. Well, that was . . . well, it looked kind of like a bunch of these little coal cars that they run back in the mine. I believe they run on a track and had a . . . When they would get it going you would go up and around and I think mostly up and down. I don't remember if it zig-zagged crooked, but then they would have a top that they would fold out over and cover you over when you got in there, you know, and you couldn't see out. You couldn't see where you were going when you were going up or down. People would really scream and yell.

Q. Did they have spook houses and things like that?

A. Yes. I think they had about everything way back from the beginning. Anything crazy or spooky or scary, why, they thought of it way back then. But you'd get in . . . were you ever in a house of mirrors? Any way which way you would turn there would be a mirror in front of you. You'd just see yourself. There would be ways out. It was just like in these puzzles. What do you call those games, you know, where you start in a spot and you'd have to take the right turn to get out. You could wander through these, but there was just a mirror any way you turned. You'd see yourself in a mirror. That was kind of a thing to get out of. Sometimes they would have to get the attendant to come in (laughter) and get you out, you know. They'd have the oh--what was this crazy house—I think, maybe this mirror and then they'd have the mirrors that would make you fat-looking. You know, one way you would look at one mirror and be fat and the next one would be real skinny. All kinds of crazy things like that. Then finally, you would go up there and each one would have to take his turn, sit in a chair. That was the last thing out. Well, when you sit down in that chair then the man would jerk a lever and the chair would fold up and you'd go down in a chute.

Q. Did they have Happy Hollow?

A. Well, Happy Hollow was on the fairgrounds. It's in the same place that it is today. Yes. That's where all the fun rides of the carnival were.

Q. Do you remember going to any other fairs?

A. Well, they had the county fair. It used to be held at Mason City. We have been there but I don't remember too much about it. You were usually looking forward to the ride to go to some place and a chance to try to eat up everything they had. (laughter) County fairs were a little better, I think. They had a little better quality food to eat than you buy at the State Fair. Well, there again it was just like a fair, you know. The best of everything to look at.

Probably what I missed, of course, some of these . . . Last summer, as we were coming home from Colorado—oh, where was that—that probably was in Minden, Nebraska at Pioneer Village and they had this big museum. Of course, you go in there and it's—oh, a person ought to spend a day in there. But we'd give it a couple of hours and try to hit the high spots. But I got in this big museum of farm machinery and there were planters, cultivators, drills, the old reapers, cradles and things, you

know, that were way, way before my time; and they came clear up to the Model H Farmall tractor. That was the newest tractor they had in there. That was the kind that I started farming with but it was still, you know, a thrill to see one. That was the first one supposedly sold in, oh, I don't know, in that county or around there, I believe. But I said, "Well, that was nice but I had one at home just like it." I told you before we kept the tractor we started with. But they had, oh, these old tractors way back. Oh, I don't know when they did start making them. Probably around 1900, something like that, you know. Some of the big ole tractors . . .

They had one big plow. Now, here in our neighborhood, they're using six, seven, about seven bottom plow is about as big as we use here. But this big plow was an eight bottom plow and I think around 1900 was when that plow was made and it was used out on the prairie to break the prairies up when they first started raising wheat out in Nebraska and the Dakotas. And I thought for them, you know, to come up with a plow like that, and they had the trips on it. When a bottom would hit a rock or stump, it could trip instead of breaking it off or bending it. It had springs and it would knock it out of place, you know, and go on over this rock and then . . . I don't know whether it had to be turned back or if the springs would throw it back down in place. But that is a new feature that I have been reading about the last couple of years on some of the new plows, and they had it 75 years ago. But they just lost it, you see. But that was an enormous plow. There was a lot of bulk there. But they were pulled with big steam engines, because some of those first great big tractors were almost as big as that old steam engine that they use to thresh with.

Q. Did they have regular wheels on them?

A. Well, they had the big iron wheels. Some of the tractors, too, had a big cast iron wheel. Most of them had steel spokes. They had lugs on them, bars across, and then they'd put extension rims on. Oh, some of those wheels would be four feet wide to hold them on top of the dirt.

We use to watch the old steam engines come down the road. About threshing time they'd start tearing up the roads. Every little sand hill . . . they just couldn't pull a separator over sand, you know. They'd have log chains and cables and they would start as soon as they start digging, why then, they'd put a chain on the tractor or steam engine out ahead on that log chain and carry planks to get the separator up on the planks. When they get it up on the planks, why anything could pull it, you know. Men would just move planks ahead to get it over these sandy spots.

I can remember the first rubber tire tractor. Of course, rubber tires had been out a few years. But I was working for a fellow—Chris Beckman, over toward Long Branch—and he had a big combine. The combine was on rubber tires but the old tractor was on steel wheels. And this big hill down below, well, it was right by Ralph Craters who lived there at that time—and it was a gravel road and Uncle Louie had this old Farmall 30. It was on rubber tires and they had an old separator that was on steel wheels.

Chris and I had just taken his combine up this hill—just a short time

before—and we'd just chawed around and tore the hill up and we finally made it up the hill. So, Uncle Joe and Uncle Louie were coming down the road then, with this separator behind the rubber tire tractor. They were running it in well—road gear then wasn't too fast—probably four miles an hour, something like that. But that was pretty good speed for a tractor to go down the road, pulling a separator on that gravel road was—oh, with those steel wheels on the separator really clunking and carrying on.

So we stood there and watched them and Chris said, "Well, they'll never make it. They'll never make it. When they get to the hill we'll just have to go get them. It's no use going to the field until they get over the hill," because that tractor just wouldn't pull it. They didn't even change gears; they went right on over the hill. It was just the difference in the rubber tire and the steel wheel. The steel wheel, when it'd get to pulling, it [would] start slipping and tear up the road, tear up its own road, and then when the separator gets into loose dirt, why, you was stuck. The rubber tire tractor just went right on over the top of the big hill. Chris said, "I don't believe it. I don't believe it. I don't believe they could do it." But they'd already gone over the hill. (laughter) But then later years they started putting rubber tires on, the last of the separators on rubber tires. They could just take them anywhere.

Q. What was a separator?

A. A grain separator. It separated the wheat, the grain from the straw. Threshing machine. Threshing machine. I always called it a threshing machine as a whole rig; tractor, engine and the separator.

Q. Many small towns around here in the last few years have had their centennial. Do you remember going to any of them?

A. Havana had a centennial in 1953. They had a huge parade, food in the park, prizes and many men wore whiskers. Cars lined up out of town for miles trying to get in Havana to be part and to see the centennial celebration. Out-of-town bands came to march in the parade. We took, and still have, movies of the parade. Rob drove our new 1953 tractor in the parade pulling a float. Joann marched with the Havana band.

Well, three or four years ago, we went to Kilbourne when they had theirs. But they, oh, they had a few of the old antique tractors and some of the old machinery that they could rig up. Everybody tried to dress like they did and wore whiskers. It was a hot day, the day we were there. We went for the parade.

Q. Did they have any really old machinery?

A. Well, they didn't have anything there that I hadn't seen work in my time. They had the old binders, you know, (telephone rings) to cut wheat and I think they probably had the old cradle. Do you know what the old cradle was?

Q. No.

A. It was a . . . you know what an old mowing scythe is. You know, like Old Father Time carries over his shoulder. That one there, it's great big and it has a what . . . this cradle was made up of a fine wood fork-like. It was fastened on to this cradle and as they would cut the hay or grain it would fall into this rack and then they would dump it in a pile. They had one of those.

They used to have wooden pitchforks instead of the metal forks like you have seen. Have great big forks [that] were made of wood. I never did use those but--well, I did one time where Uncle Louie lived on the Kramer place. There were two of them in the barn and the one they used for stacking had a great long handle, probably, oh, I don't know . . . maybe ten or twelve feet long, handle, you know. You could . . . well, a man would be up on . . . used to stack oats. It was a bundle fork, three tong fork, and a man could stand there on the ground and jab an oats bundle, you know, and lift it way up on top of the stack, where with just a regular fork, you couldn't do it. We used that at the barn when we were stacking hay and oats up in the barn loft. We used that once in awhile.

Q. When did you start baling hay and straw?

A. Well, they had hay balers . . . they use to call them the "press" years ago. The first one that I . . . well, I don't remember when I saw the first one. They baled some straw but I can't remember where it was. But they just pulled it up beside the straw stack, after they'd threshed it, and pitched the straw in. Then, about, oh, I don't know, the late 1930's, I think, was the first power take-off baler. They just run down the field with it. Down the windrows and picked the hay up and made bales. At first, you see, you had to pitch the hay on the wagons and haul it to the baler, or pitch it off the stack. Then they had the pick up balers with a pick up attachment. Just picked the hay up out of the windrow and smashed her back in a bale. At first, they had to have two men or boys to ride the baler and tie wires around them. Then they eliminated that dirty job. They were self-tying. That was a great step forward, too. (laughs) To get away from that dirty job.

Q. They have a new baler nowadays where it's in big rolls. Do you know how they do that?

A. Well, they had a round baler, oh, I don't know how many years ago, probably thirty years ago. Allis-Chalmers made that round bale but they were a small bale. But this works similar to it, I would guess. I've seen the bales. Of course, they're a lot bigger machine and these bales weigh around, I think, fifteen to eighteen hundred pounds. Of course, they have to have a big tractor and pickup. I don't know what they call that thing they put on the back of the tractor to pick them up and to move those bales. Then they have another baler or stacker that makes an oblong, like a loaf of bread, stack. They're using them around. Last winter I saw more of them then. [They] pick up cornstalks after the corn has been picked and make the big stacks out of cornstalks. But there was . . . well, they had a show--where was that? I saw it on TV last week one day, was on the Town and Country News, and the guy was going to show us all the new and modern ways to bale hay. And the TV camera was on this man

standing there with his mike and they never did show us much about (laughs) any of the new machinery.

Q. You were earlier, telling me about some people who started using one kind of plow and switched to a different kind.

A. Oh, that was about the chisel plow. Well, that was another new tool that came out. Every so often, somebody has to come up with something new. They keep improving the old. Make something new. This chisel plow was . . . it was a great thing where it was needed. Just the types of soil that needed to be chiseled up, it was all right. But to use it on all types soil, I didn't think it's needed. Then, I knew some guys that used one two years and they saw right away that they didn't work. So they quit. Then, this chisel plow that I was saying—it was one of the neighbors. So, they came in real fast, tore up their field and planted corn and they did like the others. They run it so deep, loosen the ground up so deep, that when they come in with their tractor to plant, the tractor could hardly pull their planter. So then, they had to get dual wheels on their tractor, so they could pull the planter.

It left all the grass and trash on top of the ground, which created another problem for them. They had grass problems. With the old style moldboard plow, you turned your weed seed under and you lost so much of your weed seed. For if you just stir it up and leave it all on the top, then they have the grass and weed problem. So, they used it two years and then finally, the third year, they came back with the old moldboard plow. And I asked them what had happened to the chisel plow. At first they told me that they'd pulled the old moldboard plow in the fence row, they would probably never use it again; so I was surprised when they came back with it. And they said, "Well, it took us about three years to find it out but Granddad had the best way a long time ago." Said, "He learned a long time ago how to plow and raise corn. We tried something different but it just didn't work."

But more people are using these chisel plows, now. They can get over the ground faster. Well, they use the herbicide, now, to take care of the weed problem which is bad. They can go over the ground cheaper, faster with the chisel plow but then they've got to put this high priced herbicide on it to take care of the weed problem they're leaving behind them. And then, all of their experiments that I have read, none of these new methods will compare in yield with the conventional methods, with the old moldboard plow. So, I don't know. I'm kind of stubborn and slow to change but I think I ought to just stay with that old moldboard plow.

Some neighbors this past year have used a field cultivator. It's similar to the chisel plow. It just stirs the ground up, you can go as deep as you like. But we watched three fields in the neighborhood this summer and we just didn't like the looks of their corn that grew. There was a big difference in the corn that was planted behind these chisel plows or field cultivators and the ones behind the moldboard plow. So, I was about ready to try that myself next year on a small amount but I don't know whether I will or not. (laughs)

Q. Have you seen quite a bit of difference in the yield with the fertilizers and herbicides?

A. Oh, my yes. Yes. Well, it's been a long time since . . . Well, I used fertilizer on my corn the first year that I farmed. Used just what they called starter fertilizer. And Rob was just a little boy, I think he was eight years old--well, we put some on in strips to check, you know. So, when corn was up a few days old, why, one day we just went out across the field to see where it was and, golly, you could sure see the difference. He just run ahead. He'd pick out the rows that had it on and the ones that didn't have it on. It was that plain. We didn't use much . . . well, for two years we used it and then we didn't use much for a while.

But we use to raise corn, after we came down in this neighborhood--probably, well, that would be 29 years ago--and we didn't use fertilizer but 40, 45 bushel of corn was about the run of the good corn. Unless somebody would have an alfalfa field or a patch of clover something in it. But very few used any fertilizer at that time. Now we can raise . . . well, a lot of them will raise a hundred bushel. I'd say from 85 to 100 bushel, maybe 110 bushel once in awhile, if the weather is right. Have awful good-looking corn this year. There will be an awful lot of hundred bushel corn if we get another couple of rains the right time. But the fertilizer and the seed have . . . Well, we have doubled our yield of corn with seed and fertilizer. Improved seed, I should say.

Q. How was the wheat and rye this year?

A. The wheat was pretty good as a rule. Looked awfully thin. It was dry last fall. Didn't come up for, oh, three, four weeks after we'd sowed it. It was so thin but I guess it had big heads and filled well. But wheat yield pretty good. I heard of some real good yields and some almost unbelievable yields. I heard of a couple that were making eighty bushel. I just couldn't quite go for that. Maybe they did. But two or three right around close were making 55, maybe 58 bushel, something like that. But when they get up to eighty, that's a lot more from wheat. Rye wasn't much good. I haven't heard any good reports on rye, yet. It all went down so early.

END OF TAPE

Q. Do the soybeans look good this year?

A. The soybeans look real good, now. The early beans have pods on them. Some of them, you can see the little bean in the pod. The late ones, the last planted are blooming, just beginning to set on beans. But they really have good growth. Like the corn, if we have another rain or two at the right time, we'll have a real good crop of beans this year.

Q. Has the rain been, more or less, coming at the right time this year?

A. It has for us, right here. Over on the Cimco farm . . . we have gotten a good shower here three different times and we wouldn't get but a sprinkle over there and off away from us, east of us a few miles there were just . . . they've been spotty. There'd be places that one

neighbor would be so wet that he can't work and maybe the next guy, maybe, a quarter of a mile down the road, is just praying for rain and it don't rain on his. Just time after time that happens.

There's been two farms that I know of, here east of us a little ways, and the rains have just missed them just time after time. I've often wondered how that happens. One year, here awhile back, there was a place here up by Forest City and I think the man had around four hundred acres. I didn't know him but different ones told me about this fellow and he just didn't get any rain all summer. Everybody around him had lots of rain and why it never rained on him (laughs) nobody ever knew. But there's two places now, here real close, and they have gotten the rain, once in awhile. But they were watering the corn. They both had irrigation and it has looked to me like in the past years, the guy that had irrigation was the man that it rained on first. His ground was moist, you know. Well, these rains will go over—I think they will travel over moist soil better than going over hot scorching sand and well, you take—oh, south of here through Easton and Mason City and over in that way—there used to be "the swamp" they called it. And it rains there year after year. That is the wet area. Very seldom that they burn up over there, where out here the rains miss us, you know, in a big area here in the sand. But out over the swamps, it'll rain just year after year. Seems like they always . . . But it seems like these two guys, I say they both had irrigation, and they were pumping water on it because it didn't rain on that. Right close to them it rained on all sides of them. How it can just miss little areas like that, I don't know.

Q. Has irrigation helped to increase the yield, too?

A. Yes. It has. They have bad years with the irrigation, though. Here a few years back, some of them were about ready to give it up. There were four years in a row that we out-yielded them on the dry land. After they put the expense of running all this water on and then come up with smaller yields, it really broke their heart. Couldn't understand, why. But then—well, I think, that a person has to have growing weather with his irrigation. You can put water out there and if it's just hot, scorching weather, it just sort of paralyzes your crop, scalds it and burns it. And your corn or beans . . . well, I don't know, they just won't grow in some of that weather. Of course, now, if you have nice humid growing weather and then put the water to it, why it really grows. Of course, this summer up until, oh, a week or two ago, we had a little dry spell. But they just hadn't started their irrigation, of course. Right through here we have had plenty of water, natural rain water. But normally the irrigation helps.

Q. There's an old saying, "knee high by the Fourth of July," your corn's doing all right. Well, this year on the Fourth of July, I saw fields tasseling. Is that a good sign or were they early or what?

A. Well, this year has been a little different. It has been a real good growing season. It was warm so early and our corn at the Fourth of July . . . we didn't plant any early, I believe we planted the first week in May. Now, there is other corn here in this neighborhood was planted a week, ten days before ours. And yes, you're right. Corn was tasseling this

year . . . well, the old saying, "if knee high before the Fourth of July." Now, back when that old saying was around, the old open pollinated corn, it had to be up and started or it wouldn't mature. It [wouldn't be matured before the first] wet frost. With their hybrids or their fast-growing [seeds], and fertilizer on them, as a rule corn is, oh, shoulder high, you know, and not far from tasseling out by the Fourth of July. But if a person is late, knee high corn by the Fourth of July would still make it all right. Last year a lot of it was planted after the Fourth of July but it didn't make it because we had an early frost last year.

Q. Can you keep corn out in the fields on the stalk after it's matured, during the winter?

A. Keep corn in the field?

Q. Yes.

A. Oh, yes. It'll stay out there—well, better get it in by spring—but if you don't have crib room . . . Why then, if more people would leave it out there and let it dry in the fields, instead of picking it so early, and then, so they can dry it, takes so much more fuel—energy—that they're worrying about. They could save a lot of fuel and have better corn, too. But if you leave it out too late in the winter, then you will start losing corn, ears drop off and stalks break and fall down; but if you have livestock to run in the fields, after you pick it, to pick the corn up, why, you can take care of that loss that way.

Q. When was that early frost last year? Do you remember?

A. Why, it was in September. I don't remember the date. We were cutting beans. Our beans were a little bit late last year because it was so rainy in the spring and we couldn't get them planted. But ours were all right. I planted my last ones, oh, I think the third or fourth of June and they were matured before the frost came. But a lot of people planted beans as late as the 24th of July and they didn't even get pods on them before the frost in September, last year. It was almost a month ahead of schedule, (laughs) that frost, normally.

Q. Outside of Havana, about a mile south, there's that water that came up. I've heard that was called Nigger Lake.

A. Yes.

Q. Do you know anything about it? When it originated?

A. No. Well, I think—I don't know how long ago—there use to be, I think they said, a little store there and there was an old darkie man kept this store. That was where they got the name Nigger Lake.

That Nigger Lake area there, back then, goes on east on the hard road over the hill. Now, you've got to drive east on that crossroad and, over on the east side of the railroad, there's a bigger lake there than you drive through on Route 97. But it would come and go in wet seasons and now it's

up. The water was there in 1926, 1927. Then, it was up there in 1943.

But we lived up there on the farm on the west side on the road. We worked for Julius Frye—that's where we lived when we were first married. And we farmed that field that lays in water now, up on the west side. We had corn in there two years when we lived there. And just those two years about are the only ones that I remember of water being in the road there, otherwise. It maybe would be wet, late, you know, but a person could get a crop in. But some years you would have to kind of watch it and steer around the wet spots.

I don't know how many years ago it was that the old darkie lived there, that had the little headquarters or little store there. But, you know, to stop that close to another town was odd. But I don't know, somebody told me about when it would have been, but I don't remember.

But they drained the lake . . . oh, I don't know, was that back in, oh, the Mid 1800's. They put a big tile from the lake, run it north through town and through the sewer and they had a tunnel through the Dearborn Hill. It drained over to the river. But different ones didn't like it the water coming in through town. Some places there get stopped up and then that water would bubble up in their yard. So, they stopped it up. Of course, then, the tile—they dug in different places, test holes, here when the lake was so big a year and half ago. And the tile is still there but it was full of quicksand. But it's staying right with us, now, and it don't look like it's going down. See the boys are fishing out there now. They're really catching some good fish in there.

Q. They really are catching fish?

A. Yes. Yes.

Q. What kind?

A. Well, bullheads and a few carp—well, let's see, there were three kinds—somebody was telling me the other day or I read that there were three kinds. Bullheads seemed to be the main ones they're catching,

Q. Where'd the fish come from?

A. Why, they rained out of the sky! Don't you suppose? No. They get in there different ways. Now, if water will stay out there any length of time, see, ducks will find it and the ducks eat fish eggs. They say the ducks will carry fish eggs, pass them through, you know, and the eggs will hatch. And I have had two parties tell me that they knew of some people that put fish in there. To start them, you know. So how the fish got there, I don't know; but they are there. And it's nice that they are. That's another recreation for somebody.

Q. Were they big fish?

A. Oh, yes. The ones they're catching now, they are some nice ones. Well, see that water's been there, let's see, four years that water's been there.

Q. Has it been there that long?

A. Yes. I don't know how long it takes a catfish or bullhead to grow from a baby up to a nice eatable size.

Q. Do you know how deep it is?

A. Well, it isn't so awful deep. Probably, well, last year when it was over the road it probably was, oh, four feet deep, the deepest. I don't believe it would have been any deeper than that, not much.

Q. Have you seen Nigger Lake before it reappeared this time?

A. When it was dry, you mean?

Q. No. You know, like it was there and then it'd go away and then it's come back.

A. Oh, yes, yes. Like I say, in 1926, 1927 when we had that wet spell, the water was there. Of course, the blacktop was just a gravel road. That's what they use to call the Old Springfield Road. The wagons started out across, you know, from Havana to Springfield and they just took it catty cornered across the country. That was . . . well, one of the first gravel roads and in 1926 and 1927, when this Nigger Lake filled up again—now that was the first that I remember of it being there—but it got so deep that the cars couldn't get through it, then. Then in 1943, I don't remember—we lived below Bath then—and I just didn't have the occasion to be out there. But it was over, I know it was over that road. Of course, that was a blacktop road then.

But it went away and they farmed it. Well, seems like some of them say every 20, 22 or 23 years why, then it comes back again in the wet cycle. 1926 . . . if it was over in 1926 and 1927 and in 1933, I know they farmed that field—why, yes 1933, lived there. I helped farm that field. 1932, they farmed it, I know; because it was dry. They had, I don't know what crop was on there, but we had corn in there 1933. Then, 1943 . . . Well, that wouldn't have been twenty years, would it? Well, from 1943 to 1973 to 1975 . . . Well, they kind of varied, didn't it? It wasn't a perfect circle cycle. (laughter)

Q. Is that lake bigger now, than it was in 1943?

A. I believe that it covers more acres. I believe it does, yes. It's stretched out. It has gone for miles. All of the . . . Well, there's low ground, you see, it went north and east. They said all the low holes towards Forest City and way to Easton—they began to get holes that were on level with the lake, last year. Now over on the Cimco farm, two miles across from here . . . I began to get worried here. I wonder how long it will be before we would get wet holes. But we had five holes over on [the] Cimco farm last year that were wet all summer long. And you could just go from there on clear over south and west to Nigger Lake and every hole was wet. Water would be in it. So it really is getting higher and taking in more acres. See over here on the road east of the hospital . . . Do you know where Herb Borgelt lives? Practically his whole farm was wet

last year. Well, my golly, it's getting close. How long will it be before it's right over here?

Q. It's just like a underground lake?

A. Well, I suppose it is. All of this sand ground here has water under it. You go down to the gravel, it's water-bearing gravel. And then when the water table gets high . . . I often wonder why doesn't that water just run on in the river but it doesn't. But as it raises in the ground, why, it just fills up the lower holes as it spreads out. Water will always seek its level. If it finds a low spot, it will run over there and fill that up.

Q. Have farmers had trouble with getting stuck?

A. Oh, yes. Yes. Well, in this area that I just named--[the area south and west to Nigger Lake]. Last year it wasn't just nothing uncommon to drive down the road and see a big tractor or combine, just the top of it sticking out, you might say. It'd really go down over the wheels. Sometimes they would work and just almost give up pulling on one before they'd get one of them out. But the price they are, they always stay after them until they get them out. Now, we saw a big combine. It was out on Route 136. Oh, it was probably, ten miles out there, on the north side of the road. He was down clear over. The header was down and the wheels were covered over and, just as we went by, they were bringing in some more tractors. They had, I think, three great big tractors out there. Well, they finally got it out because, when we came back that evening, the hole was still there but they had the combine out. But any number of farmers got stuck.

And then, a year ago last fall, they tried to pick--that's the first year it come out in their fields--and then, when it froze up, they'd try to go in and get their corn out. And there was a lot of snow that stayed on that winter and it didn't freeze hard and they'd go out too far on the snow and drop right through. One fellow left his corn out. I said, "Why didn't you go out and shuck it by hand?" He said, "I was just afraid to." Said, "You could just walk over it, the snow would freeze and it'd almost carry you over and then, all at once, you'd just drop through." You drop in about three feet a couple of times and [you're] just about scared out.

Q. In the first or second interview you said that you went out to Colorado every so often to see your daughter, Norma Jean and family.

A. Yes.

Q. How were the crops through the other states?

A. This year?

Q. Last year.

A. Well, they run just about a lot like ours here. They were all late. And where they raised good crops, they had lots of rain and they were

late getting them in, and that early frost just went clear across there. There was crops just froze, clear out there.

Q. What kind of things did you do on your vacations?

A. Oh. Well, one time we use to, when the kids lived in Cheyenne, Wyoming, we—of course, Virgil was in service then and he'd get a lot of time off. He'd save up his off time and he had a place, a ranch, out in that area and he got acquainted with these people and they let us come out and go jackrabbit hunting. That was a lot of fun. I had never seen jackrabbits. First time we went out—of course, Virgil, Rob was along and Bob Ost, our neighbor boy, went with us. The rancher was gone and the man that farmed part of the ground was having trouble with his irrigation. He was pumping water out of the Platte River. He was watering beans and alfalfa and oats and I was more interested in the irrigation.

END OF TAPE

A. I was more interested in this man's irrigation because we didn't have irrigation around here then. They would run it down a ditch and just carry it around the hills on level, you know, and then run it way out. Then, they would siphon it over the sides of their ditch bank with plastic hoses, run the water . . . their fields were laid out, or their ditches would be laid out, so that they could run it. They'd put the rows down the hill and then they'd just siphon it over the ditch bank and run it down between each row, which is really a nice . . . I like that way, that method, better than the sprinkler type because if you keep the water on the ground the plants will get it. When you sprinkle it over the top when it is so hot I think that [it] hurts the plants when it's real hot, pumping the cold water on it.

Anyhow, I went with this man and he was having trouble and I helped him pull his pipe up out of the well. Had, oh, just a cement pit right on the edge of the river and the water just run into it. We finally pulled this big pipe up and it had a tumbleweed, oh, it was just about as big as that chair, [two feet by two feet] and it had blowed over this—pit had a screen around it—this tumbleweed had blown over the top and gone down in there and it was down in the check valve in the bottom of this pipe. And we got that out and I went back down the field with him and I was watching him set his pipes.

I was really excited about this and at noon when the boys came in their eyes were sticking out, you know, and they were telling all about these jackrabbits. I had never seen a jackrabbit. I thought, "Well, what's rabbit hunting," you know; but after dinner, then I went with them and, in a little while, I was just as wild-eyed as the boys were. (laughter) But when those big jackrabbits get up and start hopping through the sagebrush it looks like a young mule going out through there, you know. Oh, they were something if you'd never seen a jackrabbit. And they go fast. So we shot jackrabbits.

Then, of course, we use to go to the mountains. The kids, they had got started camping. They had an old patched-up tent somebody had given them and they had a couple of cots—but usually we just slept on the ground, spread blankets was really the warmest way. We'd go up in the mountains and make camp, you know, gather in our wood, they'd fish some. I never liked to fish. I rather just wander around and climb over top of big rocks, things like that.

We usually drive. Do a lot of driving in the mountains. Virgil was young and he was a good driver and he liked to drive in the mountains, so everybody could just relax and look in all directions. But Virgil had been there before, you know, but he could see it and drive, too.

One time we were there, we were going to . . . Well, we'd missed the big rodeo in Cheyenne. So he said, "Well, there's a rodeo." Oh, I don't remember where it was, it was in Fort Collins, probably. That was down in Colorado. So we drove down there and, of course, we drove down there on a Saturday and everything was filled up, you know, days before, getting ready for their big celebration. We couldn't find any place to stay. So, well, let's go on over the mountain, go over Trail Ridge Road, and over to Grand Junction, I believe was the next big town.

We went through Estes Park and down to Grand Junction and, oh, when we got down there, everything was filled up because they were having the big boat show, boat racing. They had a lake. So, everything was filled up there, no place to stay. We didn't have our tent along that night. So we drove north, then, up along the west slope—that's awful beautiful country up there—and I forget what town we went up to, Snowy Range . . . I don't remember anymore. How we did gangle around back there, but anyhow, we were up on top. We give up, I guess. We would have had to go to Snowy Range and crossback and come down from the north. I can't remember if we backtracked or took another side road—it was a pretty rough road.

Of course, we started out with a big cooler full of food, you know. And I think there were seven of us in the car. Well, we run out of food that night. We ate dinner out of it, you know, and then that night we ate. And that night, at about one o'clock, we were up on top of Trail Ridge Road and there were still people traveling—not so many—but there were cars pulled off, going in each direction; you know, just given up and stopped to sleep for the night.

I don't remember where it was on that road but you could look across and it looked like a lake hanging up in the top of the mountains. It was weird. It was a moonlit night that night. Of course, we were new in the mountains then, you know. It was really ghostly up there. To look off the side of the mountain into this moonlit valley—you know, just kind of dark and ghostly like down there. And this lake . . . We stopped there and we had one-half of a sandwich and about a half a glass of cherry cider that we had bought earlier in the day. So we gave Virgil, and made him (laughs) eat, the sandwich because he had to do all of the driving.

We'd all get sleepy and when we stopped there, at that time, we'd get

outside and it was just so cold you couldn't stand it—at night, you know, and up high—oh, I think it was around twelve thousand feet, something like that. Makes your head swim, you know. So we drove and drove and finally we went back to Cheyenne. We knew we had a bed there.

We thought one time of going on into Denver but we just figured that, "Well, they'd have some celebration there." Come in late in the night and you couldn't find any place, so we drove and it was almost five o'clock when we got back to Cheyenne the next morning. Everybody went to bed.

Q. Was Snowy Range a town?

A. No, that's just the mountains. They're, probably, some kind of a tourist trap there, now. We use to go up on Snowy Range to camp out but, well, there were probably a campground at that time up there.

Q. Do you remember the names of the mountains that you went to?

A. No. No, we just . . . Trail Ridge Road is the main one. We took a trip one time, oh, we went out there. See, it would take us two days to drive out there and they had this trip all planned. And they had a jeep—what they call it—a jeepster convertible or something like that. It was a little job, red; it was bright red with a white top you put down like a convertible, you know. They had the supplies all ready.

So Norma Jean and Virgil, Mike and Brenda—they weren't nearly so big then. That's been, oh golly, ten years ago probably, and Brenda was a pretty good-size girl then. Mike was just a little fellow, probably six or eight years old. We all six got in that jeepster with their supplies. We could put the top down real easy. They took us back in the mountains where, well, we got back away from the beer cans along the road, you know, just back on an old logging trail. We come out on it. Of course, he'd been back there and they knew where we were going. Poudor Canyon was one place but I don't know . . . at that time we finally ended up at Snowy Range.

We were out three days and nights and we'd come on to these little, oh, they were little motels or cabins—mostly they had them [cabins] rather than motels. They were some of the first ones, probably, that were built back there. They were getting pretty, some of them, pretty old and dilapidated, but we could stay—the six of us get a cabin. They would just have the bed and the mattress and you'd have to furnish your own bedding, you know. Well, I think you just . . . pumped your own water from a well pump outside. Little wood burning stoves in them . . . just sort of rough it, like the first travelers did out there, you know, pioneers. That was, well, we really enjoyed that and to get out in the wild.

Of course, when you get into a place like that, it was close to a highway. They [the cabins] were on the first highway. Then, as highways got better, you know, well, they'd cut these places off and they just sort of dry up and just the more hardy people'd come back to them. But there'd be little cabins and maybe a little store where you could buy supplies. A gas station and things like that.

But this one place we stayed, there was a skunk that came. . . . We were right on the bank of the river. And this skunk came up. We saw him coming up across the yard. I don't know if he had a home under the house (laughs) or what, but we all held our breath and I don't know if he went away or he was just a good skunk and stayed quiet. We didn't see him anymore.

Seemed like, in the higher elevation, every afternoon it clouds up. It would be just as bright in the morning and then, about noon, it starts to cloud up. Thunderstorm after thunderstorm. I don't know how many times we put that top down. We'd see it coming and then we'd grab the top and put it up and just had windows we cranked up the side. After riding out there two days and then get in that and riding for three more days we were about tired out. We got tickled when we got back. We could see a level cornfield.

But Virgil would drive back to these old logging trails, you know, just around the side of a mountain. You'd look off down the . . . it's just nothing but a rut, you know, where they had these four-wheel drives. So, you'd look down off to nowhere.

Q. Did you ever go through any deserts?

A. No. We've never been . . . that's down southwest. They have—what do they call that—sand dunes in Colorado. We got there one time. That was in another one of their jeep trips. But it . . . well, it just looked almost unbelievable. Of course so many of the things you see out there, they're so different than what we see around here, in this part of the country. But this sand dunes, when you get down in there any direction you look is the high rock mountains, you know. Just rock all around you and this was just sand out there.

There were fences. Well, we came on to them in different places. There was a little grazing land in there, you know, but this sand would just drift from year to year and there was one place . . . I have a picture of me and I had my foot on top of a steel post—it was probably sticking three or four inches above the ground—and then, about three feet above that one, was the top of another post. And in just the last few years, they had put the third post up by that. And it would just keep drifting over, you know. Then we went on to another place and about the same thing, where the fence had blowed out, you know. Sand was just carried away from it and gone some place else.

We got down in this one—oh, we'd just taken a winding road. Well, a lot of that ground back there then was Government pasture ground. I don't know what they called it, public ground, but it was Government. The guy that pastured had to have a lease from the Government to pasture. But it's sort of open. More people traveled around there more and more, you know, lately, since they got the jeeps in there and they'd have trails around here and there.

We got over back of one sand ridge one time and the jeepster wouldn't pull it over that hill. So we went down, a few miles down, and around and we

still couldn't get back over that sand ridge. So Virgil, he'd back off and get up about as far as he could go, you know. I'd get stationed outside there and when he'd get there I'd start to push. I could help him a ways but we just couldn't make it over the top. So finally he got Brenda—I think she was about ten years old, maybe eleven—so he got her in the seat and showed her how to work the throttle and I got stationed there and then, when we pulled down to a crawl, Virgil jumped out and Brenda held the throttle. Virgil and I both pushed and we got the jeep over the hill. I was just completely tuckered and, when it began to pick up speed, I said, "Holy cats." It just goes on (laughter) with Brenda driving holding the throttle down. But Virgil had enough steam left that he run and jumped in with her and stopped it. I think Evelyn and Norma Jean had gotten out but we lighted it up, you know, as much as we could. Sometimes we'd get places like that and you wonder, "Why in the world are we out here?" But then the next time why he'd have some more places about like that.

No, we used to go . . . as I was saying, when they were in Cheyenne, used to go jackrabbit hunting an awful lot. I used to go down . . . some of the places just looked like they had just scattered rocks and, oh, they'd be as—well, you could pick any size of a rock from a little pebble up to one as big as a house, you know. Just strewed out across the face of the world. You wonder what ever made them. How they came like that.

I remember one time I was going to ride with the boys. I could do anything, I could climb just as big a rock or climb a tree or walk just as far as they did. Virgil got to talking about this one old sergeant in the Air Force. He was telling about this one old guy and I said, "Well, how old was he? How old did they let the guys stay in?" I was thinking of an old man eighty years old or something. And, "Oh, he's an old dog. He's an old graybeard." Well, he said, "I bet he's forty." And (laughs) I was 41 that summer. So (laughs) I could see how old I looked to the boys, then. That was the first time anybody told me how old (laughs) I was. But at forty I could go right along with them. But this old guy forty years old, to kids 20, 21, you know—of course, Rob wasn't twenty, yet, he nor Bob Ost. Virgil, I think, was just 21. But I didn't realize how old I looked.

Q. Did you get any jackrabbits?

A. Oh, yes. One time, the first time we were up there, I think, we killed forty jackrabbits.

Q. Forty?

A. Yes. They wanted us to kill all we could. They liked for us to come because jackrabbits . . . it didn't take very many jackrabbits to eat as much grass as a calf would eat. And, of course, they were pretty short on grass. Lots of jackrabbits. They would eat alfalfa . . . They would just strip a big spot of alfalfa field. Then, in the wintertime, they would climb up on their haystacks and dig holes to make their nest in, you know, and then rain or snow would blow in there and then when it'd melt, well, then the water would run into their haystack. And a jack-rabbit was just a nuisance as far as they were concerned. So any time we were out there, why, we were always welcome to go jackrabbit hunting

and that really pleased us. But they didn't want us to shoot the little cottontail. In the wintertime they went out to shoot . . . jackrabbits they said were tough and stringy, they weren't very good to eat.

Q. Did you eat the jackrabbits you killed or what did you do with them?

A. Well, just throwed them off to the side of the trail. I wondered, too, "What are we going to do with them?" The guy said, "Well, just throw them out there." We'd go back after dinner or the next day. They'd be gone. Coyotes, buzzards and whatnot all picked them clean. They'd always be gone in a little while. There was always somebody watching us, you know, to see where we put them, I guess. (laughter) Some animal or bird or something because they'd soon strip them out and they'd be gone.

They used to have a jackrabbit drive. That was some place in Colorado. We never did get down there. But they would go out, oh, it was just similar to the fox drives that we use to have here. They didn't use guns and they'd just have any kind of a club or something to shake and rattle and make a noise or flopping noise or flapping noise. Just make in a big circle, men and boys, you know. Some on horses, some on foot, but they'd keep this big circle solid and just drive the jackrabbits in; and then, they would have a pen, a wire pen in the middle, and run the rabbits in there and then the people would just get in there and just slaughter the rabbits. And, I don't know, some group got after them and made them quit because it was too cruel to the animals. It did look kind of bad. Oh, I read about it when I was out there different times. But just to keep driving them down to a smaller corner and then just beat them to death by the hundreds, you know, did look a little gory. Worse than shooting one with a ton of shotgun.

Q. Were they easy to kill or because of their speed it was hard to get them or what?

A. Well, they were pretty big, I don't know, you just had to hit them. We used a shotgun but it was just like a . . . they were a bigger target than a cottontail. But they went faster and they jumped crooked. They'd just jump this way and then that. And sagebrush, now that made it a little more interesting. Sagebrush was just a little more over knee high and it was just spotty, you know, and maybe you'd think you had him in a clear spot and then, about that time, he'd duck behind a bunch of sage. He'd be gone for two, three more jumps. It took a pretty good load of shot to bring him down.

Q. About how big is a jackrabbit?

A. Oh, let me see, I don't know what they would weigh. I would say they're almost as big as a, oh, maybe twice as big, maybe a little more, two and a half times as big as our cottontail. When I'd pick one up by his hind feet, his ears would drag on the ground, just hold my arm [bent at the elbow].

Q. Did they have big ears?

A. Oh, yes. Yes. They were just built like a cottontail. They're bigger. Their ears were long like the cottontail, but they were much bigger because they were a bigger rabbit.

Q. Have you hunted cottontails?

A. Yes.

Q. Would you say a cottontail was easier to hunt than a jackrabbit?

A. Well, not any easier to hunt, no. If you just get where they are. Now, we would usually go out there in August and if it was cool, we wouldn't have any trouble finding them. But if it was on a hot day, they'd be sitting in the shade and they just wouldn't jump up. That was the same way with the cottontails. If the weather's just right and the notion strikes him, why, he'll just sit there hunched up and if he thinks you're going to walk by him, why, he'd let you walk right on by. I have walked right on by them and then, when he thinks he's safe, he'd take out behind.

Q. On your trips did you have any problems with snakes or lizards?

A. No. We never did see any snakes out there. There's suppose to be . . . that was another drive that they used to have. I read about, saw pictures of them, but I never . . . I wouldn't go on a snake drive. Use to have a rattlesnake drive and they would just start out, you know. Of course, I think they had prizes for the one that brought in the most rattlesnakes, the biggest and points for everything like that, you know. If you'd bruised your snake or you had to kill him to catch him, why, you didn't get any points. But that would look pretty scary to me.

But the ole rattlers . . . well, I guess, probably the reason we didn't see them maybe, just didn't go where they were. But they had what they called rock rattlers. They were in the rocky country and they'd get on the shady side or just kind of crawl under (telephone rings) an overhanging rock. But we never did see any rattlesnakes. I wouldn't want to. We used to see antelopes a lot when we were out jackrabbit hunting. They'd always see us first, then they'd be way on in front of us.

Q. Did you ever hunt the bigger game?

A. I went along one time, when we went out in the last of October, and we went to, oh, we were down on the—what do they call that—Black Mesa up on the Gunnison River. That was down in the southwest part of Colorado. And down in this Gunnison River Canyon—it's so deep and straight up in places, they say the sun never shines, only when it goes right over the top. A little while at noon the sun shines down there.

We went out there in the fall, got out there for Mike's birthday, and we went to, Virgil and Dale Roberts . . . Anyhow, we drove in Virgil's pickup truck, way down there. We started right after dinner, drove all afternoon. Of course, the women had fixed us up a big freezer full of food, that was one thing they always took a big freezer of food along. When you get out there in the high mountain country, you can really eat.

We drove all night and we got into this place where they would always go. And we saw a lot of deer, on the way down that night, by light. So, when we were there we'd get up on this—oh, just kind of like a pasture out there, and it was cold, my golly. Well, I went out for a while and then I froze out. I went back to the truck and got in and they would hunt. Well, it was illegal, it was before hours, they weren't supposed to shoot deer at night, you know, but the guys were trying to shoot them by moonlight, if they could. But we didn't see any.

Later on then, for a while, the moon went down and it got dark. When the moon was light, you could see a man a half of a mile away out across there. Of course, the guys all had to have on these fluorescent jackets, you know, so they could see him. Tell him from a deer when he was out there. But we didn't get any deer.

But we were driving around one mountain and Virgil had told me, "Now I want to show you something down here." And we got to this one (pan crashes) place and we looked down and there was a pickup truck—had rolled down the side of the mountain—and it had two spotted horses in it. I suppose the men were in it when it went over. I don't know why they went over but they had . . . I didn't remember it. I don't know the story, what happened to those guys. But probably crippled the horses up and they just shot them and left them down there and the truck was laying down there, way on below the horses, you know, and just strung the sides off of the truck, just scattered them. Really a gory looking sight. So Virgil was trying to scare me and I was riding on the outside edge where you look right down. So this other guy says, "Oh, don't worry about it, he won't run over there because if we go over, he's going to go with us."

But it was a thrill to go out. We came down off of those high mountains then, that evening. Seemed like every camp—just every crook in the road there'd be a camp set up, you know. And just one after another they had a deer or two hanging up in the camp. We saw one that day, after it got daylight.

But they go back. He and some of his friends out there, go about every year. I don't care a lot for deer meat. They had some quite often when we were there. But they got to where they didn't care for it. They just don't use it. When he would kill one, he would just give it to some of the guys in the group that didn't get one of them, not even bring it home with him. Just went for the fun of going.

Q. What about bears? Did you see any?

A. No. Not there. We were in Yellowstone one time. That was on the first trip West. Evelyn and I went. That was in 1948. Russell Friedrich just got a new Pontiac and so they were going to Yellowstone and they asked us to go with them. They had two little girls then. Our kids were big enough we left them at home. Your dad and mother had just been married then and they stayed with our kids.

We got to Yellowstone. The evening we got in there . . . of course, there were signs all along the road, "Don't feed the bears." "Don't feed the bears." And I don't think we saw any bears. We stopped at headquarters

and got our reservation, our cabin, for that night. Well, here this guy came out—had the emergency, the first aid stand there—had a white shirt on and he was just blood all over. Of course, you know what happened. He'd fed the bears and he run out of food and he rolled the window up and the bear just took the window out and clobbered him, you know. Clawed him over the top of his head and on his shoulder. So that guy learned his lesson late.

So we went on down to our cabin, ate supper—and that was another one of those little old slab-siding cabins—and after supper, we decided we'd go back up to the store and get some ice cream. And Russell and I were walking along and there was a lady getting some things out of their car right in front of their cabin and just out between the cabins here walked a big black bear. Russell took off—he got away from us—and the woman jumped in the car and shut the door and I stood there with my hand on the fender of this car and the bear stopped right between the cabins. I don't know whether he was afraid of me. I knew I was afraid of him. And I was just about ready to open the door or try to open the door and try to get in that car (laughs) with the woman. She'd might have clawed me worse than the bear, I don't know. (laughter) But he looked for just a minute and then he walked around the car and when he went around behind it I went around the front and went the other way.

But that night, out in the camp, you could hear a lot of people, a lot of commotion, you know, and you'd go up close and they would have a bear surrounded. And young men old enough to know better, you know, would run up and kick these bears. Well, they were just scroungers that were coming into camp. People had been feeding them, you know. Why somebody didn't get killed, I don't know. But they would just make a big circle around the bear. Yelling at him and throwing things at him and, of course, when he'd turn around and start out, they'd usually give ground and let him go.

Then the next day we were driving along the road. Well, any time you come up on a line of cars, you could just bet there was a bear or two there. [There was] this one car that we came up right behind and the man was outside with his camera trying to get a picture. He had a little boy inside and the little boy had some chocolate cookies. And the man wanted that boy to lean out the window and hold a cookie up and make that bear stand up on his hind feet and take the cookie out of his hand. The little boy was afraid. The bear would sit down there and then, when he'd start to rear up to get the cookie, the little boy would drop the cookie and duck back in the car. And his dad came back there and just walked right in front of the bear and grabbed that little boy and shook him. Russell and I had both got out. We were just, well, just intended to go down and shake that man. He didn't have any better sense than that. And we stood one on each side of the car and just held our breath. That little boy was scared. He was more scared of his dad than he was of the bear, then. So, he held the cookie and when that bear raised up and took the cookie out of the little boy's hand, well, then he got the picture that he wanted. But you see people do some of the craziest things.

But that was up in Yellowstone. The only place that we ever saw any bear.

We went down in, oh, Estes Park area, Rocky Mountains National Park. We would drive in there and along towards evening—of course, the animals are never hunted there—and towards evening, the big antelopes or I mean the big moose. Those big . . . wasn't a moose. A moose is that big cow thing that goes out in the water . . . Elk. Elk. They'd start to come out of the brush. You just couldn't find them. They'd be hid in the daytime, you know. Along just before sundown and then they'd start moving out and we'd sit up there on the road and, of course, we'd use binoculars. But one time we were driving down a little side road. Virgil could always see things like that ahead of time and he said, "Here's one. Here's one," and he stopped the car. And this big thing was sliding down this hill. He had to stop or he [the elk] was going to slide right into our car. We really cranked the windows up fast. He was looking right down at us. (laughter) Just kind of skidding on his hunchers to keep from sliding on down. Oh, we'd see an old coyote once in awhile. You know, sneaking out across looking for his supper.

Q. How about big horned mountain sheep?

A. We never did see any of those things. They were . . . I think they're farther north up in Washington and Oregon, maybe Montana, in the mountains, there in the higher rockier mountains.

Q. See any lizards?

A. Lizards. No. I've seen more sand lizards than . . . I never did see any little things like that.

Q. Do you remember any other trips you took?

A. Well, we've taken a lot of them. Usually nothing exciting happens. One time we were going in the wintertime and it got foggy on us. We had to quit in the middle of the afternoon. The next morning we got up and it had rained and froze. There was ice all over the road.

One time we got in a blizzard. We were out there one time and we were going home the next morning. We got up the next morning at four o'clock and the wind was howling and the snow was blowing. Well, we were all packed and ready to go—it was just out east of Cheyenne a little ways. We thought we could get ahead of it, you know. And I always thought that we'd get snowed in there, maybe have to stay until spring to get out. So, we got out on the road. We drove. Got behind a car—it passed us. I said, "Well, we'll just stay right behind him and follow the road that way." So finally I realized that he just kept pouring it on, we were going so fast it was silly. You couldn't see ahead, you couldn't see behind or anything. Just open the window, it was just a great big roar. So I knew about where we were and the roads were wide so we could tell when I pulled off on the shoulder and I just listened and I couldn't hear anything, so I just give it a quick whip and made a U-turn right on the road. Might have been right in front of a semi but we made it. We went out about fifteen miles before we give it up. So we drove back into Cheyenne and stayed another couple of days. Usually we watch for nice weather, a clear spot coming in the sky. Then we strike out,

go out or come home.

Q. Tell me about your wedding.

END OF SIDE ONE

A. We got married in the Christian parsonage. And Thelma and Elza Williams were with us. We had run around with them and Evelyn and Thelma went to high school together. And after the wedding, we got in my Ford and went to Peoria for the weekend on our honeymoon.

Q. Was it a large wedding?

A. Oh, no, no, just the four of us.

Q. Did you have flowers?

A. No. No, it was just a small little wedding. I don't know, might have had a bouquet or something like that.

Q. Okay. Thank you, Mr. Sarff.

END OF TAPE