

## PREFACE

This manuscript is the product of a tape recorded interview conducted by Marjorie Taylor for the Oral History Office of Sangamon State University in August 30, 1974. Linda Jett transcribed the tape and Ms. Taylor edited the transcript.

Robert A. Taylor was born April 2, 1882 and graduated from Lincoln College in 1905. He and Ms. Taylor are relatives. This memoir is a commentary on Mr. Taylor's life on his parents' farm and his relatives that lived near-by. The information contained in this manuscript gives the reader a look at farm life in the early twentieth century.

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Robert A. Taylor, August 30, 1974, Virginia, Illinois.

Marjorie Taylor, Interviewer.

A: John was sick and he couldn't go and I had to go by myself. And I won all the classes and then won the state first prize. I got about fifty dollars all told that day.

Q: How did you show the horses?

A: Oh, they were just showed in halter.

Q: Did you lead them around and put them through their paces?

A: You lead them around. They were draft horses.

Q: Now what breed did you say they were?

A: Percheron.

Q: Where did you get the stock of those horses? Where did you buy your stallion?

A: Well, the original landed at Galveston at the time of the hurricane, that's when this horse landed from France. And he was in that but he survived. He was brought with the company here. I do not know who they were.

Q: How much did the horse cost?

A: About \$1800 I think.

Q: And he came from France.

A: Yes. And the next horse we bought his name was Gib. And a few of us owned him. Your dad was head of the group. He went for him.

Q: Where did he get him?

A: I don't know where he bought him. I believe Bob Ross went with him.

Q: Was that down below Jacksonville some place, around White Hall maybe?

A: No. White Hall was later than that. Bob Ross and I went to White Hall when they showed these horses in Virginia, Bob Ross and I ended up the two together. The fellow couldn't decide which one to give it to for a while. I finally got it. Made Bob kind of sore. He wanted to go buy

one, a thoroughbred to beat me--next year he did buy one. I don't remember how that came out the next year. But anyhow I remember how the sale came out. We were down in White Hall and of course by train in those days. Come up an awful rain and we had to walk back to White Hall. It was about a mile in that rain.

Q: What was the name of that man down there who had the horses?

A: Well, I know him just as well as I know my name.

Q: Krusa? Well, that's not important. How much did you pay for the horse?

A: Well, I don't know how much I paid for him. I think about \$1200. He wasn't as good a horse.

Q: Did the first one die?

A: I don't remember what they did with the first one. No, I guess he didn't.

Q: Where did you keep the horse?

A: Bob Ross's.

Q: Who took care of him?

A: Pete Thievagt.

Q: That was his occupation then? He was a horse trainer. Was it a money making proposition? Did you make good money with it?

A: I think so. He rode this horse and he run off with old Pete. Liked to scared him to death. Your dad had one of his own, you know.

Q: I remember that horse. That was Uncle Angus that had that one. See, Uncle Angus moved to Urbana.

A: That's right. When he moved there he had this fellow up here in Chandlerville look after him.

Q: Perry Burns maybe?

A: And he got sick. He was so thin he couldn't walk hardly at all. Dr. had Dr. Thornborrow down there to doctor him. And Angus told Doc he'd just as soon sell him. He said, "I'll take fifty dollars for him." So I bought him for fifty dollars. He got lame but that was about all. And I got him up to 1800 pounds, worked him.

Q: What was his name?

A: I don't remember. He died. He got sick one day. Uncle Will (Horrom) was there at the time working on the barn. And he [the horse] died right out there in the pasture.

Q: Well, that was a long time ago wasn't it? How many horses would they show at a time in Virginia when they had the horse shows?

A: A good many of them. I didn't go all the time. Quite a big show.

Q: Who else had Percherons besides you folks?

A: All of us down in here.

Q: This whole area?

A: Yes.

Q: Well, now who else showed horses? Did they come from all over the county?

A: I think so.

Q: Can you remember some of the other people who would show horses?

A: Bob Ross was the main one that showed.

Q: Did Ed Campbell show any horses?

A: Riding horses.

Q: Did he win the prize in that class?

A: I don't know. I don't remember.

Q: Can you think of somebody else who showed horses?

A: No, I don't.

Q: Did Howard Campbell show horses?

A: I don't know whether he did or not.

Q: Did any of the Maslins show horses?

A: I do not believe so.

Q: Well now I want to know something else. Did they have a program along with the horse show like a band or something?

A: I don't believe there was.

Q: I guess it'd scare the horses. Did they have people around selling ice cream cones and pop corn?

A: That was before that stuff was made.

Q: Well, what would be the date of these horse shows? About 1900?

A: Yes, be along about that time, about the time I came home from school, 1905.

Q: What year did you graduate from college?

A: Nineteen five.

Q: And where was it you graduated?

A: Lincoln College.

Q: And what did you study up there?

A: General courses.

Q: Did that help you be a farmer?

A: I doubt it.

Q: Didn't the chemistry help? Did you study chemistry?

A: No, I don't believe I did.

Q: But you had math, didn't you?

A: Oh, yes.

Q: Didn't the math help?

A: Might have then. Used an adding machine more.

Q: How many years did you go to Lincoln College?

A: Five years. I never went to high school, went to preparatory at Lincoln. Two years.

Q: And where did you go before you went to Lincoln?

A: Down here, Hickory.

Q: How many people went to Hickory when you were there?

A: I don't know. About thirty I expect.

Q: A whole housefull. Who were some of the teachers?

A: Emma Suffern was the last one that I went to. Did you ever know her?

Q: No, I just heard about her.

A: She was a good one. And Miss Ella Wilson was the one before her. She couldn't keep any order. But Emma Suffern straightened us all out.

Q: She was supposed to be rather mean wasn't she?

A: You didn't behave yourself she would.

Q: Did she whip you?

A: No.

Q: Did she whip anybody?

A: Yes.

Q: What did she use?

A: She used a stick.

Q: That would hurt.

A: Yes. Her days were about over when I went to school. Jennie Reid, do you remember her?

Q: Yes, I remember her. She was nice.

A: She's the one that used the stick. I saw her whip Tom Schaad one day and he just stood there, didn't bat an eye. He and Frank Frame got into an argument and one of them pushed the other one down in the water down there in the creek.

Q: Did she whip both of them?

A: I suppose she did.

Q: What year were you born?

A: Eighteen eighty-two.

Q: And what's the month?

A: April 2.

Q: April 2, 1882. And what's your full name?

A: Robert Alexander is my name.

Q: And who were you named for, do you know that?

A: I was named for two uncles I guess.

Q: Well now, can you tell me about some of the first farming operations you remember as a little boy? Did they hoe the corn or did they have a corn planter?

A: They had a corn planter.

Q: Who planted the corn?

A: Joe DeVault.

Q: Joe did everything, didn't he?

A: Yes.

Q: What did you raise on the farm, corn and what else?

A: Wheat, oats.

Q: What did you do with the oats?

A: Well, we fed them in those days.

Q: Did you have a binder?

A: Oh, yes.

Q: A threshing machine?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you stack the wheat or put it through the thresher?

A: Stacked it.

Q: Who stacked it? Joe?

A: Joe stacked some of it. I learned the job toward the last.

Q: Oh, you can stack wheat?

A: Yes.

Q: Now what did you do with the corn? Did you sell that or feed it out?

A: We sold some. We didn't raise much corn in those days.

Q: How much would you get a bushel for the corn?

A: I don't know. It wasn't very much.

Q: Where did you take it to sell?

A: Chandlerville.

Q: Who ran the elevator?

A: Pendleton I guess.

Q: Now did you shell the corn at home or take it to town to have it shelled?

A: Shelled it here at home.

Q: Who ran the sheller?

A: Jake Thievagt I guess.

Q: Well he also ran the thresher didn't he?

A: Yes.

Q: Was that a pretty prosperous business?

A: No. Not too much. I wouldn't think.

Q: Did he have a steam engine?

A: Yes.

Q: Who ran the steam engine?

A: Pete Myries.

Q: Is that right? What did they do when they didn't thresh or shell corn?

A: I guess they threshed way late and then shelled corn in the winter.

Q: Was that wheat better quality than what comes from the combine?

A: No.

Q: Is wasn't? Did people take their wheat to the Beardstown to the mill sometimes? Where did you sell the wheat?

A: Bluff Springs mostly.

Q: Who ran that elevator?

A: Who's the woman we were talking about, Mamie Hageman?

Q: Hageman. Her father?

A: Miller Hageman ran the elevator down there I think.

Q: And he was her father?

A: No, I think he was her uncle.



Q: I never knew that.

A: Well, I don't know if that's the truth either. Adam Hageman was her father. He worked for Bishop.

Q: What did Bishop do? What was his business?

A: He run the implement business.

Q: And that's where you buy your plows and your corn planters?

A: I don't know where he bought in those days. I imagine in Chandlerville. Bowman-Haynes and Company was running the elevator up there and Pendleton was in with them and he run the elevator business.

Q: Was Mrs. Briar a Bowman?

A: I think so. Yes, that's who it was.

Q: And Dr. Lyles' wife was a Pendleton wasn't she?

A: Yes.

Q: That would be her father who ran that business?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you trade grain for machinery or did they give you cash and you'd give them cash?

A: We used cash.

Q: Did you folks ever trade wheat for flour at the mill in Beardstown?

A: I think so.

Q: How did you trade that? Even up?

A: I don't have any idea how it was.

Q: Was that considered good flour from down there?

A: Yes. Pretty good flour.

Q: Was that Mr. Schultz?

A: Yes.

Q: Well, how long would it take to haul a load of wheat to Beardstown?

A: Maybe about two hours to go down there.

Q: Would you eat your lunch down there?

A: I expect sometimes.

Q: What would you have for lunch?

A: I don't remember.

Q: Somebody told me you'd eat crackers and cheese when you got down there.

A: Always the rule.

Q: Buy it down there or take it from home?

A: Buy it down there.

Q: And that was your lunch?

A: Yes.

Q: Now I've heard the story that your father hauled wheat to St. Louis.

A: I heard that too. Who told you that, Archie [Dunn]?

Q: Archie told me and so did Orvie [Taylor]. Do you remember it?

A: No.

Q: Do you remember any stories your father told about when he first broke the prairie? Did he first break the land around here?

A: Some of it, yes.

Q: Which land did he plow first, do you remember?

A: No.

Q: Was it down there where Davidsmeier lives?

A: I don't know.

Q: Well, what kind of a plow did he use when he first came here, do you know that?

A: A walking plow.

Q: How many horses to it?

A: Three.

Q: Three horses. How much could you plow in a day?

A: I don't know. Not very much.

Q: Did they raise most of the food on the farm?

A: Yes.

Q: Well now, what did they have? You raised your own potatoes and what else?

A: Of course in those days we had apples and peaches and orchards.

Q: Did you make sauerkraut?

A: Yes.

Q: How did you do that?

A: I didn't help with it. I don't know.

Q: Did you help much in the house?

A: No, I do not think so.

Q: Where did they keep the apples in the winter?

A: Down in the cellar.

Q: Under the house or under the smokehouse?

A: Under the smokehouse, no they didn't either because there wasn't any cellar under the smokehouse in those days.

Q: Did they keep them in buckets or bins?

A: Bins.

Q: Did they keep nice all winter or did they spoil?

A: Oh, they started to rot.

Q: What kind of fruit did you have?

A: That's all that I know of.

Q: Did they can the peaches?

A: Yes.

Q: In glass jars?

A: Yes.

Q: What did they put in those brown stone jars?

A: I don't know that they put anything in them.

Q: Would it be preserves?

A: No. They put them in glass jars.

Q: Well now, did you have chickens?

A: Why yes.

Q: How many?

A: Oh I don't know.

Q: Thirty?

A: Oh should have more than that. Lou [Robert's sister] had chickens on her own accord too.

Q: Yes, I've heard about that. Did you have geese?

A: No.

Q: Turkeys?

A: Oh, once in a while they had a few. Hershel [Wilson] had the turkeys. And they come over here and roost on the house at night.

Q: That wasn't very neighborly was it?

A: It was all right. He give us one as a friend.

Q: How many turkeys would he raise in a year's time?

A: Oh, not very many. A dozen or more.

Q: And you had hogs to butcher?

A: Yes.

Q: How did you cure the meat? The hog meat.

A: Just salt it.

Q: How did you do that?

A: Just rub it in on the meat.

Q: And then where did you put the meat?

A: Hang it up in the smokehouse.

Q: You didn't put it in a box or anything?

A: No, I think they left it hung up there.

Q: And then how did they do? They did something else to it didn't they? Did you smoke it?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you wash the salt off before you smoked it?

A: Yes.

Q: Tell me about that, how did you do that?

A: Just washed the pieces off like you would anything else.

Q: How did you smoke it? I'm not sure about that.

A: With hickory wood. And an old kettle.

Q: What kind of a kettle?

A: Just an old iron kettle.

Q: That the same one you made the lard in?

A: Yes, I expect it was.

Q: How much did you smoke the meat?

A: I don't remember. About three weeks I think.

Q: Did you smoke it every day?

A: Yes. Not on Sunday.

Q: No, your Scot-Presbyterianism came in there. Now, what did you do with the sausage? How did you make the sausage?

A: Grind it and season it.

Q: How did you season it? What did you put in it?

A: Salt and pepper and sage.

Q: How long would that keep?

A: Oh, I don't know. A good bit. Generally put it down in a crock and I covered it over.

Q: Fried it down. That's what I wanted you to tell me about. Now tell me about the lard. How did you make lard?

A: Just set the kettle outdoors.

Q: What did you cook in that kettle?

A: Just the fat of the hog.

Q: A fat hog made a lot of lard?

A: Yes.

Q: How long did it take to cook it?

A: Oh, three or four hours.

Q: Did you strain it?

A: Joe did. He did all of it.

Q: Well, then how did you get those pieces of fat meat out of that?

A: It was strained through a sack. Lard press. They had a lard press.

Q: Now tell me about that lard press.

A: I don't know what ever become of it.

Q: How big was it, what did it look like?

A: Oh, just an iron thing about two gallons. Turned with a crank and grease went down there.

Q: Was that hard work?

A: No.

Q: How long would the lard keep?

A: It'd keep a year or two.

Q: And if it got so strong that you couldn't eat what would you do with it?

A: I guess we used it up before it got strong.

Q: How did they make their soap then?

A: Oh, we had an old ash hopper and got the lye and put the ashes out in it and poured water on it and it came out lye.

Q: Oh? What kind of fat did you use in that soap? Where did you get the grease?

A: Fat off the hogs. Trimmed it off.

Q: You mean like what was left from the lard? Would you use the lard that wasn't so first class for soap? If some of the lard wasn't very good would you make that into soap?

A: I don't think so. I don't know.

Q: Did they use bacon grease for soap?

A: They used what you call soft soap. I don't know how. I didn't make that.

Q: But you had an ash hopper when you were a boy?

A: Yes.

Q: How often would they make soap?

A: I don't know. Probably once a year I imagine.

Q: Where'd they put it after they got it made?

A: In the basement.

Q: Cut it up in cakes or was it soft soap?

A: I think it was soft soap.

Q: And where did they keep that in? A barrel?

A: They kept in the basement I guess. I don't remember what they did with it.

Q: Did you buy soap to wash your face or did you use that homemade soap?

A: We bought soap.

Q: What did they use that homemade soap for?

A: To wash the clothes.

Q: Did they have washing machines?

A: No.

Q: How did they wash the clothes?

A: On a board.

Q: Where did they get the board?

A: Home.

Q: Who did the washing?

A: Did you ever see a washboard?

Q: Yes. I've seen them. In fact I have an old one in the attic. Who did the washing?

A: Miza [Robert's sister] mostly.

Q: Was she a good washer?

A: She was good at everything.

Q: That's right. I still never eaten a better pie than she could make. Well, let's see you canned vegetables, you made soap, and had sausage and then they made quilts, didn't they?

A: Oh, yes.

Q: Where did they make them? Where'd they sew?

A: I don't know. Upstairs in a room I think. I don't know.

Q: A quilting frame you mean?

A: Yes.

Q: Did just your sisters quilt or did some of the neighbors come and help?

A: No. Just they did.

Q: They were pretty good at it weren't they?

A: Yes.

Q: Did your mother quilt too?

A: Yes.

Q: I guess she taught them how. She must have taught them how to do it.

A: I expect.

Q: Did you have rag rugs?

A: Yes.

Q: Tell me how they made those.



A: I don't know.

Q: Did they cut up the old clothes?

A: Yes.

Q: Then who made the rugs, who did the weaving?

A: They had that done some place I guess. I think they just took the rags somewhere and had them made.

Q: Do you know who that would have been?

A: No.

Q: Did they put straw under those rag rugs?

A: Yes.

Q: Nailed them down?

A: Yes.

Q: Who did that?

A: The girls.

Q: Did they have a carpet stretcher?

A: Yes.

Q: I've never seen one of those. What are they like?

A: Well, I don't know. Just had hooks on that put in the rug and then they pulled it.

Q: Now who took care of the garden?

A: Joe.

Q: I think Joe was the head cheese around here.

A: He was for years.

Q: And how many cows did you milk, when you were a little boy how many cows did they milk?

A: Oh, three or four.

Q: Did they make butter?

A: Oh, sure.

Q: And cheese?

A: Yes.

Q: When did you learn to milk?

A: When I was three or four years old.

Q: Who taught you, Joe?

A: Yes. Or taught myself.

Q: What were some of the first chores you remember doing on the farm?

A: I don't know. Tending to the cows and calves.

Q: How old were you before you went to the field?

A: Thirteen.

Q: Oh, what was your first job in the field?

A: Plowing.

Q: Did you walk or ride?

A: Walk.

Q: Did you go barefooted?

A: Not when I was plowing no. We went barefooted sometimes.

Q: Why didn't you go barefooted when you plowed?

A: Hard on your toes.

Q: Who went to the field with you?

A: Angus and Joe.

Q: Then what was the next job you had assigned?

A: Just regularly, whatever come up I guess.

Q: Now how many people worked the farm at that time? Let's say about 1890, how many people were working on the farm? You would have been eight years old.

A: On this farm?

Q: Yes.

A: About three or four.

Q: Now who were they?

A: Well there was Joe and the rest of us. Homer Dailey was one of the first ones I remember.

Q: Joe was here before you were born wasn't he?

A: Oh, yes.

Q: Do you remember any stories Joe used to tell?

A: No.

Q: I remember he told about the barbeque that General Lippincott had. Do you remember that story?

A: No.

Q: You're no good. (laughs) You can't remember the stories. You're like the man in Scotland. Tell me about corn fodder. I want to know about that. Making corn into the fodder. How did you use the fodder?

A: Well, they just cut the corn and made it in the shucks and hauled it in the winter. Fed it that way.

Q: When did they stop doing that? Was it the silo that changed that?

A: Yes.

Q: When did you get your silo?

A: About 1913.

Q: Who built your silo?

A: Dave French's father, Willie French.

Q: He built the silo then. Who helped him?

A: Joe.

Q: Did you ever remember any log buildings around? Did you have a log corncrib or anything like that?

A: Oh, no.

Q: Did the Frenchs live in a log building?

A: Oh, yes.

Q: Where was that house?

A: Well, they lived right south of us up here.

Q: Was that on the part that belonged to Warner's or the part that belongs to you?

A: It belonged to Warners. I don't know if it belonged to Warners in those days. I guess it did.

Q: How big a house was it?

A: I don't know.

Q: Were you ever back there?

A: No, I don't believe I was.

Q: Who tore it down?

A: I don't know that. Fell down I guess.

Q: Did you ever hear of Indians living back there?

A: No.

Q: Well now, Orville French told me some Indians lived back in there when his folks first came here. You don't know that story?

A: Who told you that?

Q: Orville French. Said an Indian woman came and took care of them. He didn't know whether it was when his father was born or when it was when Will was born.

A: No Indians during my time.

Q: Well, they were older than you were though. George French and Willie. How many riding horses did you keep at a time?

A: One or two.

Q: Now were they purebred?

A: No.

Q: Just horses.

A: Yes.

Q: Did you have a carriage?

A: Surrey.

Q: Oh, what's the difference between a carriage and a surrey?

A: I don't know. Same thing I guess.

Q: Where did you get that surrey, do you remember that?

A: Withey Brothers in Springfield.

Q: It must have been a real nice vehicle then, wasn't it?

A: Yes, suppose to be. It was very satisfactory.

Q: How much did it cost?

A: I don't know.

Q: When did you buy it?

A: I never bought it. Angus bought it.

Q: What was the matter with it?

A: The springs were stiff to keep it from bumping up and down if you had it loaded to heavy. It's down there in the shed now.

Q: Does it still have the top on it?

A: Yes.

Q: Well, we'll have to have a ride some day.

A: It's past riding. It's got one wheel broke down.

Q: How far would you drive in the surrey? Would you go any farther than Beardstown in it?

A: No.

Q: How would you go the rest of the time? If you wanted to go to Springfield, how would you go?

A: Stay at home in them days. Never went to Springfield. Went on the train when we went.

Q: Where would you go to get the train?

A: Virginia.

Q: Who ran the depot?

A: Oh, different ones. I don't know.

Q: What time of day did the train go?

A: About four or five o'clock in the morning.

Q: Did you go to bed the night before?

A: Oh, sure.

A: What time would you get up?

A: Just in time to get to Virginia.

Q: And then what time would the train come back?

A: About eight or nine o'clock at night.

Q: You knew you'd been somewhere gone all that time. Then would you drive home after that?

A: Yes.

Q: Would the stores be open when you'd get to Springfield?

A: I never stopped there. We just went on out to the fairgrounds.

Q: Oh, you just went to Springfield to go to the fair?

A: That's about all.

Q: What did they have at the fair?

A: Oh, just like they do now. Stock and stuff.

Q: Did you ever take your horses to the fair at Springfield?

A: No. No.

Q: Did you ever buy any horses up there?

A: No.

Q: What was the best most profitable and best money making thing on a farm back around 1900?

A: Horses I guess.

Q: Who did you sell them to?

A: The buyers would come around asking.

Q: Oh, they did.

A: Neighbors.

Q: Who were some of the buyers? George Montooth maybe?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you know he was buried last Saturday?

A: No, was he.

Q: Eighty-eight years old.

A: I sold George Montooth a horse at the fair, sold it to him out in Virginia.

Q: How much did he pay you for him?

A: Two hundred and thirty dollars.

Q: A piece?

A: For that one. Just had the one there. I remember that well because he had me drive down there by the jail and drive him up the street in a full gallop. He had the check written out and he had to make the train. Just had a few minutes to make the train.

Q: Well, what happened to the horse? How did he get the horse home?

A: Well, he left him there and he got him the next day I think.

Q: Where did he leave him?

A: I don't know.

Q: Was there a livery stable in Virginia?

A: Oh, yes. Sure.

Q: Well, who ran that?

A: Well, different ones. Can't think of the man that ran it last.

Q: How much would it cost to leave a horse there all night?

A: I don't remember that. A dollar I expect.

Q: And they'd feed it too for that?

A: Yes, supposed to.

Q: You had your doubts sometimes?

A: Yes.

Q: Was there just one livery stable in Virginia or was there several?

A: Just one. You know where it was don't you?

Q: Where the Dour Implement just moved from?

A: Yes. What are they going to do with that building I wonder?

Q: Somebody said they're going to make apartments but I don't know. Was there a livery stable in Chandlerville?

A: Yes.

Q: Who ran that?

A: Watkins.

Q: Did he trade in horses too?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you ever sell him any?

A: Yes.

Q: Was that \$230 the most you ever got for a horse?

A: Yes.

Q: What color was he?

A: Grey.

Q: What was his name?

A: I don't know.

Q: Percherons are always grey aren't they?

A: No. Black.

Q: They're big though aren't they?

A: Yes.

Q: Are they rather gentle horses?

A: Some of them and some of them weren't.



Q: Are they hard to break?

A: Some of them.

Q: How did you break a colt?

A: Just hitch them up.

Q: Then what?

A: Drive them off.

Q: Who did that usually?

A: Joe.

Q: I thought so. (laughs) Did they ever run away, very often?

A: Lots of times.

Q: What kind of bits would you use in their mouths?

A: Just a regular straight bit.

Q: But after they were broken you used the other kind didn't you?

A: What other kind?

Q: Isn't there any kind that has a thing in the middle that bends over? What kind of a bit do you call that?

A: That's a curved bit for saddle horse.

Q: But you never put a curved bit when you were breaking a colt?

A: No, you don't.

Q: You didn't.

A: Two of us we had four horses apiece on gang plows right down north of here. That was later years. That was about the last we worked horses. I don't remember who that was whether that was Ed Hill or who that was. But a pheasant flew up out of the creek and all four horses run off. We didn't have ahold of them. But I caught my team. And we finally got them stopped. But he didn't catch his team. They tried to go between the windmill and the creek and there wasn't enough room for them. And one horse got down, they all fell on top of him.

Q: Was she badly injured?

A: Not so bad. Nice looking horse.

Q: Breaking a horse was kind of a chore wasn't it?

A: Those horses were all trained by us.

Q: You did?

A: Yes.

Q: Would you break them before you sold them?

A: Have to, yes.

Q: You couldn't sell if they weren't broken?

A: Oh, you could.

Q: But you didn't get as much money?

A: No.

Q: About what would an average horse sell for?

A: Some of these good horses for \$400. I sold some two year old horses, two horses for \$375.

Q: What did you feed these horses?

A: Oats.

Q: How much?

A: I don't know.

Q: Would the oats be threshed or did you just saved the bales and give it to them?

A: Threshed.

Q: Didn't you give them any hay?

A: Yes.

Q: What kind of hay?

A: Timothy.

Q: Where did you grow it?

A: We had it on the place.

Q: Never did feed them straw though?

A: Not much, no. Oats and timothy.

Q: How many wagons would you have on the place?

A: Three I think.

Q: Did you ever see people hitching up oxen and use them?

A: Yes, oxen they used to use them to haul grain.

Q: Oh, they did. How many oxens would they hitch together?

A: I think about four.

Q: Why did they use oxen in place of horses?

A: I don't know.

Q: You mean Henderson would bring their grain down to this road to haul it to town?

A: He feed all that grain.

Q: Did he buy it from you sometimes?

A: Yes.

Q: Did they paid more than they did in town?

A: I don't know. I can't say. (tape stopped)

Q: The Joe he [Robert A. Taylor] frequently mentions refers to Joe DeVault. Now he's going to tell you about Joe and how he came here. Tell how he first came here and how old he was and everything.

A: I don't know that. He was just a boy. I lived above town and moved down here with them.

Q: He couldn't have been more than sixteen or seventeen could he?

A: I don't know.

Q: And who taught him how to do the things he knew?

A: Well, he worked with my father.

Q: Was he a good butcher too?

A: Yes.

Q: Where did he learn that?

A: Well I think Louie Held had a butcher shop. He worked for him when he was a boy. I think Louie Held was his name.

Q: Was that in Chandlerville?

A: Yes.

Q: And they butchered meat locally and then sold it out, is that it?

A: Yes.

Q: Was Joe good with horses?

A: Yes.

Q: How did he get along with the hogs?

A: Didn't raise many hogs.

Q: Why was that?

A: I don't know. We didn't keep hogs like we do nowadays.

Q: Did you just raise enough to eat?

A: No, we sold some.

Q: Well, did you have any cattle to sell?

A: We had some.

Q: What kind of cattle were they?

A: Shorthorns.

Q: Was any of them purebreds?

A: No.

Q: Where would you sell the cattle and the hogs? To the local butcher?

A: I used to sell cattle to Arch Taylor, Robert Taylor. Do you know him, Arch's boy? He had a butcher shop in Virginia.

Q: Oh, they did.

A: On the west side. But he bought most of the stuff.

End of Side One, Tape One

Q: Where would he have these animals killed?

A: At the slaughter house.

Q: Did he own that slaughter house?

A: Where was it?

Q: Just east of the cemetery you say.

A: Yes.

Q: Now didn't Dick Wilson's father owned that land eventually, is that the place you mean?

A: No. Wilson was a little farther over.

Q: I don't know either. What kind of meals would you have in the winter on the farm?

A: Oh, I don't know.

Q: Did you raise dried beans? Did you have any dried beans?

A: Yes.

Q: How did you heat the house?

A: With wood.

Q: Where did you get the wood?

A: Out in the timber.

Q: Oh, who did that?

A: Joe.

Q: (laughs) We have an answer for everything. Joe. What kind of wood would burn the best?

A: Any kind.

Q: How many stoves did you have in the house?

A: One in the living room besides the cook stove.

Q: Was the rest of the house cold?

A: Yes. I think maybe the girls had a stove upstairs. I don't remember. Maybe they did.

Q: Did you sleep upstairs or down?

A: Upstairs.

Q: Did you ever have a trundle bed, one that went under a big bed?

A: No.

Q: You don't remember anything about that. Where did you get your clothes when you were a boy on the farm? Did your mother make them?

A: I suppose we bought them in town.

Q: Where did you get your shoes? Beardstown?

A: Chandlerville.

Q: Who sold shoes?

A: John Anderson.

Q: Where did he come from? Was he from Denmark?

A: Yes.

Q: That's what I thought. Now can you think of anything that you liked doing especially well on the farm when you were a boy?

A: Oh, most anything. Do you know John Grosboll's son?

Q: No.

A: He is a lawyer.

Q: That's what I know. Have you met him yet?

A: I've met him, yes.

Q: Where did you know Powell and John Grosboll?

A: Lincoln College.

Q: Did one of them graduate with you?

A: They were out before me.

Q: Well, how did it happen that your folks were so interested in education? Was it your father or your mother? That was unusual at that time.

A: They both were.

Q: They were. Did your mother go to college some place?

A: Yes. Women's College in Jacksonville.

Q: Well, how old was she when she went there?

A: She was a young girl.

Q: She must have been one of the first.

A: I think she only went about two years.

Q: How did they get her to Jacksonville, no train then was there?

A: Oh, yes there was.

Q: Do you remember the early streetcars in Jacksonville? What was the source of power?

A: I don't remember.

Q: I've heard they had donkeys hitched to them?

A: No.

Q: I guess you didn't go to the city much when you were a child. Now you went to church. Who were some of the preachers?

A: Down here?

Q: Yes.

A: Mr. White was one of the first. He helped organize the church.

Q: That was in 1848 wasn't it?

A: I don't know.

Q: Who was the first one you remember?

A: A man by the name of McFarren.

Q: Did they live down here or did they come on Sunday to preach?

A: They lived here I guess.

Q: The parsonage wouldn't be that old would it? Or was there another parsonage?

A: I don't know.

Q: What year was the church built, 1890?

A: I was going to school there when the church was built.

Q: There was a Baptist Church there at one time wasn't there?

A: Yes.

Q: Where was it located? Was it on the north side of the road?

A: Right north of the parsonage, where the parsonage is now.

Q: Oh, it was. Where was the little Cumberland Church they tore down, where was it built?

A: There wasn't any.

Q: There was a frame church before the brick one.

A: I don't know.

Q: There weren't two frame churches there at the same time?

A: I don't know.

Q: Were there big, big crowds that go to church?

A: Big compared to nowadays.

Q: In what way? What do you mean? What do you mean in particular? Do you mean people steal or the television shows or what do you mean?

A: I mean steal, lie, drunk. Everything bad.

Q: They didn't use to do that way?

A: No.

Q: When did they start doing that way?

A: Gets worse all the time. People get worse I think.

Q: Did people have too much money now? Is that what you think is wrong?

A: Some of them. Some of them don't have any.

Q: Did you have, when you were a child were you given money to spend?

A: Not very much, no.

Q: There just wasn't any to give was there?

A: No.

Q: Did you work in the garden as a little boy?

A: A little bit.



Q: Did you help hunt the eggs?

A: No.

Q: Feed the chickens? But you wouldn't help with the butchering when you were small did you?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: You did. Did you stay home from school to help butcher?

A: Yes.

Q: Tell me about the way people exchanged meat in the weather.

A: Do what?

Q: Exchanged meat. One person would butcher and then everybody would share. And then the next one would butcher and everybody'd share. Tell me about that.

A: I don't think we did that too much.

Q: No. Did they always bake the bread in the home? Pancakes?

A: Buckwheat cakes.

Q: Oh, did you raise your own buckwheat?

A: No.

Q: You bought that then in town. Well, they didn't have to buy too much in town did they?

A: Not very much.

Q: Well, now I want to know how you cut the wheat? How did you do that?

A: With a binder, a cradle earlier--like a big scythe.

Q: You still have one?

A: No.

Q: Well, then when did you start using a binder?

A: I don't recall.

Q: Did you ever use a cradle?

A: No.

Q: He was quite a bit older than you were wasn't he? Uncle Angus was quite a bit older wasn't he? Ten years maybe.

A: Well, about, yes. I think he was, yes.

Q: So he taught you quite a few things then. Did you have much company? Would people come and stay all day on the farm?

A: More than they do now. But Angus he lived up there with Uncle Archie for a long time.

Q: I didn't know that.

A: Oh, yes. Duncan Taylor stayed there. Remember Duncan Taylor?

Q: Yes, I remember. He was a big man.

A: Yes.

Q: Who kept house up there? Who was the cook?

A: Ellen Taylor. Uncle Robert's daughter.

Q: I remember. I've heard of her, yes. Do you remember her?

A: Oh, sure. I do not know what he paid him but gave him 80 acres of ground.

Q: For taking care of him?

A: Yes.

Q: I never knew that. And that old house that they lived in it's been made into two houses wasn't it? Uncle Archie's old house was made into two houses?

A: Yes.

Q: And then tore it down in the field by the corncrib.

A: Anybody living in this one up here?

Q: Yes.

A: Who lives there?

Q: Cheslea rents it to somebody. Some woman with some small children. Have a swinging door. They just move in and out.

A: Who lives in the Fielden house up there?

Q: Well, that's the new hired hand we have. They call him, I don't know what they call him. Worms I think. That's not his name. I don't know what his name is. But he said call me Worms. They don't need help with the boys there.

A: The boys are there?

Q: There's only one boy home now.

A: I thought there were two there.

Q: Well, they went back to school Sunday.

A: Champaign.

Q: Yes.

A: Where's the other one then?

Q: There's two in school and one at home.

A: I thought two of them had graduated.

Q: Where was it that you went to buy the machine? Now what was it you bought there? What kind of a machine?

A: Threshing machine.

Q: What name?

A: Advance Rumley.

Q: Oh, most of them Advance Rumley?

A: Yes.

Q: And what kind of an engine was it?

A: Steam engine.

Q: Now what year did you buy that?

A: I don't know.

Q: Was it during World War I maybe?

A: We went to the dealer in Bushnell. He didn't know us. The banker at home told me later this dealer had called to check on us while we ate our dinner.

Q: That was before the days of credit cards.

A: We gave \$1400 for the steam engine and the separator.

Q: Who ran that machinery?

A: Hershhal, John and me. Hershhal (Wilson), John [a brother of Robert's] and me.

Q: Who ran the steam engine?

A: Elzie Juckett.

Q: Wasn't he part Indian?

A: Oh, I don't know.

Q: What do you remember about Elzie?

A: He got awful drunk a few times. I had trouble about that. He was a wonderful engineer.

Q: Where did he learn that?

A: I don't know.

Q: Well now what did he do the rest of the year?

A: Drink, I guess.

Q: Well he had to have money.

A: He shelled corn and stuff like that.

Q: Oh, he did. What did you use for fuel to build up the steam?

A: Coal.

Q: What kind of coal, hard coal or soft coal? (phone rings) Soft, it had to be real soft coal if it was local coal.

A: Yes.

Q: Now who ran the threshing machine?

A: Different ones.

Q: And how did you feed the men? The crew, how were they fed?

A: Fed them at a cook's shack.

Q: Let's hear about the cook's shack.

A: The men ate there. Had a woman to cook the meals.

Q: Was that on a wagon you could haul around?

A: Yes.

Q: A little bit like an early version of a trailer?

A: No.

Q: Who were some of the cooks?

A: This woman that cooks all the time. I can't think of her name now.

Q: Was there a Mrs. Sallee who cooked?

A: Yes. You know more about it than I do.

Q: Well I want you to tell me.

A: She was the last one we had. Harve Sallee's wife. Old Harve ran the separator at that time.

Q: Was he good at that?

A: All right.

Q: How long would it take to get the steam up on that engine?

A: A couple of hours.

Q: Did you let the fire out at night or would you bank it?

A: Banked it.

Q: Did you ever thresh for other people?

A: Oh, yes.

Q: Was that a money making practice?

A: No, not too much.

Q: But you got your own stuff taken care of, is that the idea?

A: Yes.

Q: Where would you thresh with that, where else would you go?

A: Oh, just the neighbors out here.

Q: How much did they pay you a bushel to thresh?

A: I do not know, no idea.

Q: What can you tell me about corn shelling?

A: Not very much.

Q: When did you shell, in the winter, in the fall, in the summer?

A: In the winter. We had corn all winter.

Q: After the ground was frozen?

A: Yes.

Q: Who hauled it off?

A: Two men.

Q: Now did you always haul regardless or did you count the number of loads you traded for the neighbors? Did you always haul the same number or did you just let it go?

A: No, we kept track of them.

Q: Where would you eat? Who fed you at noon?

A: We generally came home for dinner.

Q: Oh, you did. There was more exchange of work on corn shelling than anything then.

A: Yes.

Q: Did you raise yellow corn or white corn?

A: Just raised white corn in those days.

Q: What did you do with the white corn?

A: Sold it.

Q: Did they ever make hominey at home?

A: No. I think Carl Dunn's wife wanted white corn. I made some.

Q: He's been in Europe hasn't he? Well is there anything you'd like to put on here?

A: No.

End of Side Two, Tape One