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ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH CENTER

BLANCHE LASHBROOK

Interviewed by Catherine Jones  
8 January 1988  
OHRC accession #88-66-1,2

## INTRODUCTION

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my oral history interview with Cathy Jones,  
Interviewer (please PRINT)  
which was conducted on 1/8/88, to Indiana University.  
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<u>Blanche Lashbrook</u> DONOR	<u>1/8/88</u> DATE
<u>Cathy Jones</u> INTERVIEWER	<u>1/8/88</u> DATE

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Biographical Data Sheet

I. INTERVIEWEE/NARRATOR DATA

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Address: 201 N. West 1st St., Paoli , IN 47454

Phone: 723-2830

Date of Birth: 1900 Place of Birth: Paoli

Sex: F Ethnic Origin:

Education: Paoli High School -diploma

I'm not sure about other education.

Occupational History: an adventurer and traveler; varied ventures include  
a bowling alley and a drive-in resturant

Special interests, hobbies, etc.: goldf, traveling, flying airplanes

Father's Name and occupation: Lashbrook ; in the lumber vusiness

Mother's Name and occupation: Care from Dubois CO

II. INTERVIEWER DATA

Full Name: Catherine Anne Jones  
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Date of Birth: 8/59 Place of Birth: NY

Association with the Paoli Project: assitantship

Subject of interview: life history, travels and adventures, farm life

Number of Tapes: 2

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE INDY-FRENCH LICK CAR RACE	1
INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION	2
Father	3
Mother; long-livead family	3ff
THE 1920 AUTOTRIP TO FLORIDA	5
The Stranger story	6
Gas mileage	7
Going home	8
FATHER'S BUSINESS	8
LOVE OF TRAVEL	
Bridges	9
HOME IN PAOLI	
Father's farm	11
Her life on the farm	12
She and her siblings	12
CHILDHOOD	
Play	13
Horse Comet	13
Her work on the farm	14
LOVE OF DRIVING	
Cars	15
Airplanes	16
SPORTS	
Golf stories	17
MOVING INTO PAOLI TOWN	18
MARRIAGE	19
HER BUSINESSES	20
CHURCH	
Dad & Sunday School	21
Her organ playing	21
Religious beliefs; story	22
ON PAOLI	
Family names	23
Memories of the square	24

LASHBROOK

Funny childhood story 25  
ON GOOD NEIGHBORS AND GOOD FRIENDS 26ff  
STORY ABOUT MOM 29

INDIANA UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH CENTER

INTERVIEWEE: Blanche Lashbrook  
INTERVIEWER: Catherine A. Jones  
SUBJECT: History of Paoli, Indiana  
DATE: January 8, 1988  
TRANSCRIBER: Norma M. Olmer

Lashbrook: ...and his wife was expecting. So, I had a nephew, he \_\_\_\_\_ this house. That's why we consented to move to town...

Jones: Yes.

L: ...'cause we could have this house. There was just a year and three months difference in our ages. So we grew up together, and for several years my brother helped dad on the farm. He finally moved to Indianapolis...

J: Yes.

L: ...and we were together every day. And Fred always spent more time upon the hill with us because he loved his grandmother. And besides, we had common(?) in our house then.

J: Yes.

L: We had a bathroom; and a bathtub and all. And his mother'd send him up home every day to get his bath. (laughs) So we grew up together. Anyway, I was about 5-years old, and it came out in the Indianapolis Star... there was several automobiles was going to make the trip from Indianapolis to French Lick. Well, my brother's house set right down on the highway just before the road that goes out to the quarry now.

J: Yes.

L: And Fred and... the first car that made it was

---

J: Yes.

L: ...was to come through and they had different strips of colored tissue paper. Oh, they were strips about that wide and about that long, and they were going to drop as a guide to show the rest of the cars how to get to French Lick. Fred and I got out at front about 9 o'clock in the morning to wait for those

LASHBROOK

automobiles; we just stood and waited. And the first one finally came through about 4 o'clock in the afternoon. And oh, they just scattered that paper --tissue paper-- all over the place. Oh, Fred and I were so excited to get to see those cars. That was an event.

J: How old were you?

L: I was about 5; about a year...

J: You were about 5. Ooh.

L: ...after that we moved back to the farm.

J: Let me just introduce ourselves. My name is Cathy Jones, and I'm here with Blanche Lash....

L: Lashbrook. L-A-S-H-B-R-double O-K.

J: ...B-R-double O-K. OK. And we're at her home in Paoli, and we're working together on the oral history project for Paoli.  
Can you tell me when you were born?

L: What?

J: When and where you were born?

L: I was born in that house...

J: Yes.

L: ...well, it was in the country.

J: What year was it?

L: 1900.

J: 1900. OK.

L: I'll soon be 88 years old.

J: Happy birthday.

L: Thank you. (both laugh) If I make it.

J: Congratulations. (simultaneously)

L: I was born June 1st, 1900.

J: Now, do you have any brothers and sisters?



LASHBROOK

L: I had two brothers and two sisters.

J: Yes. Do they live here in Paoli?

L: They're all gone now; I'm the last leaf on the tree.

J: Lord.

L: And I guess \_\_\_\_\_ knocked me on the head on Judgment Day; I refuse to give up.

J: Good for you. (laughs) Well, where were your mother and father from?

L: Dad was born on... his father owned a farm on 145, that road to Patoka Lake...

J: Yes.

L: ...about 6 miles out of French Lick.

J: Yes.

L: And he was one of ten children. There were 5 girls and 5 boys, and in 1938... the last time they were all together, we had them up home for all day and dinner. And at that time, in 1938, their ages totaled 768 years.

J: Wow. And how about your mother; where was she from?

L: She was a King and she was born in Dubois County. And on the farm... do you know where the little town of Crystal is?

J: No ma'am.

L: Well, down towards Jasper...

J: Yes.

L: ...on 14-... on 56, I guess it is. And grandmother, she was born on the farm... my mother was, on this farm, and she had... let me see, they've been dead so many years and all but my mother.... There was Aunt Dora, Aunt Sade, and my mother, and one boy, Uncle Tom McAde(?). That was her thing, and my grandfather went to the Civil War at that time, and he was killed in the battle of... well, it's in... I've got a family history of it somewhere.

J: Yes.

LASHBROOK

L: I think it's in my locked box. And he was killed... and my grandmother raised those children, and she lived to be 96-years old.

J: You have good genes then.

L: And we went... she lived alone, and she got her hip broken twice after she was 75-years old. So mother and I went down; she was living in this little town of Crystal then. It was just a village. And she was out... grandmother was out working in the flower bed; she could walk with a cane. And I went up to her, hugged her, started to talk to her. I said, "Well, grandmother, how are you today?"

She said, "Oh, I'm all right." But she said, "I'll tell you, I'm getting feeble."

Well, that was her 94th birthday. I said, "Well, grandmother, don't you think that you're getting old enough that you can brag a little about getting feeble?"

She said, "Oh, I've time to be feeble yet."

J: (laughs)

L: She said, "Just look at my father. He went out and shot a mess of squirrels the day before he died. And he was 118."

She said, "I oughtened to be feeble."

J: Wow.

L: And you know... of course, back then I didn't pay too much attention, and I started to question it, but in later years I got thinking about it.

J: Yes.

L: My mother remembers when he died. He was given a land grant over between Brazil and Terre Haute for fighting in the Revolutionary War. My mother remembers when he died; she was 7-years old.

J: Your mother remembers when her great...

L: When her grandfather died.

J: When her grandfather died.

L: He was... she was 7-years old.

J: That was her great grandfather?

LASHBROOK

L: No, that was her grandfather.

J: That was her grandfather. OK.

L: So, we do live a long time which I think is a wonderful...

J: Yes.

L: ...heritage. And I think I've been blessed. Well, I have... I've been fortunate, I'd say, all my life. But I was going back... you know, of course, after we owned our first automobile, we couldn't do without one. So we kept advancing with cars. And I was 20-years old; this was in 1920.... In the meantime, my oldest brother had moved... he was superintendent of the Florida Power and Light Company. He got this job in Miami; he moved to Florida. And Mom decided we were going to visit my brother and we were going to drive.

J: Yes.

L: Well, in 1920 the only road that was marked at all was what is now US 50 into Washington...

J: Yes.

L: ...and all it had was red, white and blue. The old National Highway; red, white and blue painted every mile or two on telephone poles. And there was no such thing as a road map; there were no roads. But we de... Mom decided we were going to Florida, and we were going to drive. And we had a new car (laughs); it was a 12-cylinder Packard. The Packard Twin-6. Big as a freight car. And we started out.

Well, the only way we could get started was to go to Indianapolis and get on the old National Highway, and go east to Washington. And we did backtrack a little up to Baltimore because my mother knew that her father was buried in the national cemetery in Baltimore. So we went to Baltimore, then Washington, and it took us 11 days to get to Miami -- but we made it.

But after we left Richmond, Virginia, they were just beginning to build roads. Well, we hit the rainy season. And we stayed this night in Sherault(?), South Carolina, in the only hotel there was and it was about half-finished. It took us the next day, all day, to do 48 miles, but we made it. And I don't know what... they were just beginning to grade for some highways. And so didn't know what... we ran out of roads completely.

J: Yes.

L: The only road we found that day took us all day. Army had

LASHBROOK

moved the tank, and they had made this gumbo clay with just enough sand to keep it from sticking. And you'd drive through it, you could make it, but it... you could hear popping just like glue (laughs). But we made the 48 miles and that night... no, that was between Henderson and Sherault. Of course, Sherault is where we got to, and they had this one hotel, and there wasn't any such thing as motels or anything like that. And so we thought: Well, what are we going to do?

So we were sitting there in the lobby after we'd had our dinner, and back then, you know, people'd talk to you, you'd talk to them. So this man... some man came in, sat down with my mother... just my mother, Nell and me, there wasn't a man in the crowd.

J: Yes.

L: And so he got talking; he said, "Where are you ladies from?"  
And we said, "Southern Indiana."  
And he looked at us; he said, "Well, how did you get here?"  
I said, "Well, it wasn't easy..."

J: (laughs)

L: ...but we got this far."  
He said, "Well, where are you going?"  
And we said, "To Miami."  
"Why," he said, "ladies, there's no road." He said, "I am..." he was the... happened to be the superintendent of this highway, and they were just building... grading... starting to grade, you know, get ready for... and I believe it later became Highway 1 that runs from Maine down to Miami. And he studied a minute; he said, "Yes, I'll take you. If you ladies will meet me here in the morning after breakfast," he said, "I start... I go to work at 8 o'clock." He said, "If you will meet me here," he said, "I'll get you on your road."

Well, today you'd be afraid to do that. A perfect stranger.

J: Yes.

L: But back then, it was all right. And we met him the next morning and he started out --and it was still raining-- and he took us through woods, people's farms, and took us about 50 miles till we came to a little shell road. They used to... they'd grind up shells and made roads so they'd be passable, just one-track roads. And he took us to this road. He said, "Now..." he said, "you are only 30 miles out of Columbia, South Carolina." He said, "Now you stay on this shell road and that will take you into Columbia. And they can tell you about the roads from there on."

LASHBROOK

Sure, we went 30 miles and we came to Columbia --and stayed all night-- and there was still a little shell road like the one we hit, but it poured rain. And that day, even part of the road was corduroy. Do you know what a corduroy road is?

J: No.

L: Well, in Georgia, this was, there was logs --little logs--a certain... they wasn't always the same size either. They would lay crosswise, you know.

J: Yes.

L: And they would throw sand underneath until... you wasn't going a mile down in the swamps. And we got into Jacksonville, Florida, in a cloudburst and we couldn't even see... And my brother was head of the Monon, and the L and N Railroad is off... this was in Indianapolis. So he mapped... when he saw we were determined to go, he would kind of guess at how many miles we could make in certain days...

J: Yes.

L: ...and he had us where we were to stay every night. Well, we missed it a time or two but we did pretty well. But if we got into a place that --maybe only 3 o'clock in the afternoon-- maybe it was 200 miles to the next hotel listed on our itinerary, we stayed in that... we just lost that much time, because we were afraid to get caught out.

Well, anyway, we made it in 11 days.

J: What an adventure.

L: Well it was.

J: Yes.

L: We drove... I never will forget, 'cause the road was down and, of course, (laughs) a 12-cylinder car... it was a gas eater too.

J: Yes.

L: We drove 19-hundred and 95 miles to get to Miami...

J: Wow.

L: ...and we burned 19-hundred and 98 gallons of gasoline (laughs).

LASHBROOK

J: Wow. (laughs)

L: But it was fun.

J: Yes. Yes.

L: And the funny thing is, you won't believe this... well, I'm talking about things that's not history; I'm just telling you things of my family life, you know.

So, my dad came down at Christmas and he... so we were in an apartment and... furnished apartment, and stayed in that.... Well, we'd been there... we had left home the last of October 'cause we were in Henderson, North Carolina on Halowe'en night and it was pouring rain. Anyway, Mom and I got homesick, and we wanted to go home. And she was determined we were going home; that's my Mother. As I say, she was the... she was a goer. (laughs) And we started, and they said, "You can't drive... you can't drive north; there's no roads finished." And they were still grading, you know, old 41 and Highway 1, and so we finally... but we worked and we planned and... you know how we finally got home?

J: How?

L: Well, we drove to Jacksonville; we could drive there. It wasn't all paved but it was driveable. We went to Jacksonville and we had made reservations and all. We loaded the car on a steamship and we had bought our tickets on the same ship. We sailed from Jacksonville, 5 o'clock in the... Friday evening, and Wednesday morning we docked in Philadelphia. And they unloaded the car... it's down in the hold of the ship and it was kind of a mess but it... we got it cleaned up so we could drive.

And we started for home on the old National Highway. And in Frostburg, Maryland... the elevation was up around 7-thousand feet. And my other sister, Lucy, had met us in Philadelphia. Dad didn't want... he wanted her to have a chance at a trip, so he said: I'm going to send Lucy the money to meet us in Philadelphia and drive home with us.

So we started home and, by George, up on top of the mountain in Frostburg, Maryland, we ran into a blizzard. Ice and snow (laughs). And there was one hotel there and it hadn't been built very long. And I never will forget: they had the most elaborate menu, but all we could ever get was ham and eggs.

J: (laughs)

L: Anyway, we were there for three days, but we finally got out of there and into Indianapolis.

J: And then back home to Paoli.

LASHBROOK

L: And back to Paoli.

J: And back to Paoli. What an adventure.

L: Well, really, it wasn't quite... that was quite an experience, and we had so many funny things happen to us.

J: Now, let me ask you this: What did your father do? what kind of work did he do?

L: Well, he was in the timber business for one thing. When he bought that farm, it was all virgin timber. And he was going great.

J: Yes.

L: Well then... another thing you won't remember was... I don't remember it either: The Cleveland Panic in 1897.

J: ...'97. (at same time)

L: Well, Dad had about 30 families dependent on him for a living; they worked in the sawmill... the sawmill on our place. And Dad could have shut down and waited till things got better, but here was this 30 families with young children and wives, and he sawed up over a million dollars worth of black walnut timber during that time to keep those families in food and shelter.

J: Yes.

L: And I guess that was the humane thing to do.

J: To stay in business...

L: Yes.

J: ...and keep the business going.

L: But it almost broke him, but we weathered the storm, I guess. I don't know what... I never in my life was cold or hungry or... and that's something.

J: Yes.

L: What else can we expect. And I always had enough clothes to cover me, and always had an itchy foot.

J: To travel?

LASHBROOK

L: To travel. And I tell you, after Nell's husband died in '57... well we started before that, but we covered this country pretty thoroughly. I don't know how many times we've been to Canada; twice I've been around the Gaspé before they even had a decent road up around that (laughs).

J: Yes. Yes.

L: And, I'll tell you, I always had a thing with bridges; they fascinated me. Bridges and mountains, I love to drive.... I know, I never will forget the first time I saw, or drove, across the Golden Gate Bridge.

J: Yes.

L: That was one of the biggest thrills I ever had in my life; I never dreamed of....

J: Yes.

L: When I was a kid growing up, whoever'd think I'd ever get out....

END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE ONE

L: ...then the next one... you remember when they built the Mackinac Island bridge?

J: No.

L: Well, that hadn't been too... that was back in... that was finished in the early '70s, I believe; or late '60s anyway. I'd read about it in the paper, and I'd say, "Oh Nell, are they ever going to get that finished? We've got to go back up there so I can drive it." They finally did. We'd been to Mackinac Island but we had to ferry over to the island itself. And there wasn't any bridge at all from there to Sault Ste. Marie. And I got an awful bang out of driving up there, just to cross that Mackinac Island Bridge. Well then... but there's still the biggest... then I started reading about the Chesapeake Bay Tunnel... bridge and tunnel....

J: Yes.

L: You know, over them... well, what's the name of the town (laughs)?

J: I... it's....



LASHBROOK

L: The navy....

J: I don't know myself; it's out east though, somewhere.

L: It's over east.

J: Right.

L: And I thought: Do my soul, they're never going to get that finished. And I knew when they did, I was going to go drive it.

J: (laughs)

L: And I did.

J: Did you ever think of moving somewhere else?

L: No!

J: Why not? You traveled so much, why did you always come back to here?

L: I was born here; it just suited... I... it was fun to go, but it was lots more fun to get home.

J: Yes.

L: I was happy.

J: What was it like...? Oh, first, how many acres was your father's land?

L: Farm?

J: Yes, farm.

L: Originally it was a section -- 640 acres.

J: Yes. And that's where the timber was?

L: Oh yes, it was all on that... it was all virgin timber at the time he bought....

J: Did he sell... he sold the wood to local industries?

L: Wherever he could, during the...

J: The Cleveland....

LASHBROOK

L: ...panic, the Cleveland Panic.

J: Right.

L: I was... that was before I was born, so he never talked too much about it, but....

J: Well, when you say "farm," did you also have a garden and a farm?

L: Oh Lord, yes, and I was a tomboy. Now, I couldn't care less about housework or anything like that. But boy, I sure could drive a team of horses and help my dad put out a crop.

J: Would your mom try and get you inside sometimes? or did she let you do what you wanted outside?

L: Oh, she let me do what... I guess I was what you call maybe "a spoiled brat." (both laugh) Well, you see, I don't think they expected to have me.

J: Were you the baby?

L: I was the baby, and Mom always... you haven't got that on?

J: Yes, I do; do you want me to turn it off?

L: Well....

J: I can.

L: I was... I don't know whether you'd want this on... I was Mom's change-of-life baby; she was 39-years old and had snow-white hair when I was born. And she was so embarrassed; she'd... well, what will people think of me, an old white-haired woman with a baby. Well... but we all turned gray early.

J: Yes.

L: But anyway, there was 7-years... Nell was.... (telephone rings, machine turned off)

Well anyway, there was 7-years difference between me and my sister next to me.

J: Yes. Nell.

L: Nell. There was 12-years difference between me and my older sister Lucy. And there was 18-years difference between my next-to-oldest brother, and 21-years difference between my older

LASHBROOK

brother and me. Mom wasn't in any hurry about it. (laughs)  
That's why... that's how it happened.

J: Huh. I guess that's not the usual spacing of children you would expect to find back then.

L: Why, no.

J: (laughs)

L: No, they usually had a house-full.

J: Usually one child right after another.

L: Yes. But that's the way it was. And the amazing thing is, all except my oldest brother Emmett, who had died in 1948, the rest... we were all living and home when our parents celebrated their 71st wedding anniversary.

J: Wow.

L: And that's unusual.

J: Yes. Yes.

L: But.... So, I've had a good... I've had a good life. A lot of fun....

J: What was it like being a child? What was it like being a little girl back then? What kind of games did you play and stuff like that? What was it like being a kid back then?

L: Hmmm. Well, I always played... when I was a little girl, till Fred was 11 years old... my nephew. We played with tricycles and wagons, and I never did care for dolls.

J: Yes. Yes.

L: And the only thing... I did have a teddy bear; oh, he was a doll. I kept him; and then our other... only other young child was Lucy and Paul's son, who was killed in an automobile. He was home from his first semester at DePauw University, and went to a basketball game. Didn't make it back.

J: Oh.

L: He slept with that teddy bear till he was old enough to go to college. (laughs) And then somebody stole it. So, I don't know what happened.

LASHBROOK

J: Oh, that's awful.

L: But anyway, we played... oh, we played... well, I'm trying to think, what did we play then? I know, when I was a little kid in school, we played tag and oh....

J: Well, you mentioned your horse Comet.

L: Yes.

J: Now, what did you do with Comet? Did you just ride her around the farm? or...?

L: No, I... one year I went to country school...

J: Yes.

L: ...and I rode her to school.

J: Yes. Yes.

L: And then she got killed...

J: Yes.

L: ...and I nearly grieved myself to death.

J: You felt really close to her. Yes.

L: I love animals,...

J: Yes.

L: ...I really do. I wonder how many dogs and cats --when I lived at the farm-- that I took in and gave homes to (laughs). They'd wander in half starved and all... and I took care of them. I loved every one of them.

J: Yes. Did you have livestock on the farm also?

L: Oh yes, we had cattle and hogs and....

J: Did you have people outside of the family who worked on the farm?

L: Oh yes.

J: Yes, you had...

L: We had to have....

LASHBROOK

J: ...hired help.

L: Dad always had help.

J: Did you have a lot of chores that you had to do?

L: Me?

J: Yes.

L: No, I did what I... (laughs) I tell you what I would do. Back when I was just... why, I wasn't 10-years old, I could handle a team of horses, and that's before they had tractors that were practical, you know. They use for everything. Dad would put out... he raised a lot of corn and wheat, and you had to make the ground tillable. Well, I wonder how many dollars I saved my dad; how many hundreds of acres that I helped him.... In fact, you had to roll the ground after you plowed it.

J: Yes.

L: You probably wouldn't know what a roller was?

J: No.

L: Well, you took a team of horses to pull one, and it was a big steel roller, you know. And it'd break up all the clods and after you plowed it and harrowed it, then I'd roll all of it. And that was play--to me.

J: Yes. Yes.

L: No, I loved the farm.

J: You stayed there for 80 years, on the farm.

L: Yes. Dad died in 1950, and my mother lived just a year after Dad died. But they did celebrate their 71st....

J: That's nice. Well, let me ask you this: As a young girl on the farm, what did the land... what did the farm mean to you? Do you know what I mean?

L: Well, I don't... I never thought much about it; it was just home.

J: It was home. Yes.

L: And I loved it. I love the country. And now, maybe, as I

LASHBROOK

say, I was fortunate.

J: Yes.

L: I had a car from the time... why I just hopped in the car and go to Indianapolis or Louisville or anyplace --after we got roads --and cars got dependable. I didn't think anything about taking off and going wherever I wanted to go.

J: Was that unusual, for people around here, to just think of Indianapolis as being nothing to go to? or Bloomington? or wherever?

L: Well, I guess it was, maybe. Maybe... I don't know... I just know, my mother'd... I'd get up in the morning... never was one to get up early unless I was going somewhere. And I'd get up late and I'd go down and eat my breakfast, and Mom would be sitting there patting her foot...

J: Yes.

L: ...and she'd say, "Let's go somewhere."

I'd say, "OK. Where you want to go?"

Well, no telling, she'd liable to say Indianapolis or Timbuctoo (laughs) if there was a road \_\_\_\_\_. And we'd just take off. We'd leave a note for Dad that we'd gone, and he didn't care.

J: Yes. It sounds like your mom was independent or...?

L: She was one grand person.

J: Yes. Yes. When you were young, did you have any aspirations of what you wanted to do? or what you wanted to be?

L: Well, let's see. Yes, and I finally did... of course, I learned to drive a car.

J: You told me you learned when you were 10...

L: 10-years old.

J: ...and that you had your first car when you were 12.

L: Yes.

J: Right.

L: And then airplanes fascinated me.

LASHBROOK

J: Yes.

L: So I was about 31, 32 when I learned to fly.

J: Yes.

L: And I just loved it; and it's a wonder I'm....

J: You learned to fly?

L: Yes.

J: Oh.

L: I was just ready to solo--I had 10 hours of instruction--and my heart went bad, caused by a thyroid goiter that I didn't know I had. And that ended that. But I loved... and it's a wonder I didn't get killed. I learned to fly was in an old army... World War I army plane, just next thing to a jenny. You wouldn't even know that name; that was one of the first ones that flew in World War I. Anyway, I loved it. And while we'd... we'd get in... Nell, she liked to fly with me and it was a three-passenger, open cockpit, biplane...

J: Yes.

L: ...and this friend had bought it cheap. As I say, it's a wonder we're here to.... But we flew to Cincinatti...

J: Wow.

L: ... and there wasn't any airports then, only Luncan(?) Airport which is more-or-less private.

J: Yes.

L: And the only airplace you could land was... oh, what was that airport in Louisville? (long pause)

J: Anyway.

L: Anyway. And in Indianapolis... we flew up there, and it's a wonder we ever got there and back -- but we did.

J: Yes. Yes.

L: But I never... I tell you, I always... I loved sports, and I took up golf. And I got to be a pretty good golfer. Always played with my brother-in-law and his friends, 'cause the women didn't play. And I spent half my time in Indianapolis visiting

LASHBROOK

my brother. And Nell, she lived there for several years too, and I played golf. \_\_\_\_\_ loved it, and I owned the bowling alley for several years here, I loved to bowl.

J: Yes.

L: And, as I say, I like sports. I played... I was just learning to play golf when I went to Florida--in 1920. Of course I took my golf clubs, and the only public golf course was Hialeah and.... Always had a caddy 'cause I was always lazy; I didn't want to carry my own clubs (laughs). And I had Seminole Indians; they were the ones were caddies out there. And that was back when they wore the striped... different-colored striped dresses, and always barefooted. And that winter, I always had a Seminole Indian for a caddy.

J: Yes. Did you ever think of leaving the farm? You stayed there until....

L: No, I would always make my "brags"....

J: Always make your....?

L: Ever since I was... as I say, I loved to go, but I was always happy to get home. And I always made my brags:...

J: Brags, yes.

L: ...When I leave this hill, it will be feet first; 'cause I thought I would just live and die there. Now, that's how much I loved that place. But I also, then, when I began to get 80-years old... I was 80-years old when I finally said, "Well, Nell, we're going to have to go to town... move to town; this is too much." Her health was failing and it... all our friends was just having a fit; they worried about us all the time...

J: Yes.

L: ...and I said, "Well, things have to change and....," which they do. "And we have to be big enough to accept those changes." And so my sister, after we moved, she had a... she'd get a little depressed and she'd look at that picture of the house...

J: Yes.

L: ...and she'd say, "Oh, I look at that picture and I feel so sad I want to cry."

I said, "Nell, you shouldn't feel that way."

She'd say, "Why, how do you feel?"



LASHBROOK

I said, "I look at that house... that picture, and I think: Well, how blessed I have been all my life." I said, "Things have been more-or-less easy; I've never had any big worries." And I said, "I think of all the happiness that my family and that farm has meant to me, and..." I said, "You know, that just makes me feel great."

J: Yes.

L: "I don't get depressed 'cause I think: Lord, I've been far luckier than I deserved."

J: (laughs) (long pause) Did you ever marry?

L: Yes. Married a fellow... I was... I don't know if I waited too long or... I was having such a good time, I had a lot of beaus and a lot of dates...

J: Yes.

L: ...and was engaged several times. I didn't really want to get married and I don't know why I did.

J: Really?

L: I was married about two years and, well.... I'll tell you one thing, he was a very likeable fellow and good-looking; he was a South Carolinian. He was born in South Carolina originally. I met him in Florida through mutual friends. Well, instead of... and I say I'm as much to blame as he was, maybe more so. Anyway, I wasn't about to get married and move to Florida.

J: Yes.

L: Noooo; I wasn't going to leave Orange County. So, he worked for the Buick automobile people in Miami, and he had a real good job...

J: Yes.

L: ...but I wasn't about to marry and move down there. And so I told him off up here, and Dad... we set him up in the automobile business down here, which is now part of the bank. The old Westside Auto Company which was us; and that was a mistake 'cause I'll tell you, I never had to depend on Mac. You know, I never... and I wouldn't leave home.

J: It was a mistake that you never had to depend on him?

LASHBROOK

L: Yes.

J: Why? A wife should depend more on her husband?

L: Well, you know, I never had to ask him for money to do this or do that. And I was independent; I'd always been more-or-less independent, you know. Dad had been very good to me and I wasn't going to be bossed. And he tried... he tried to boss me, and that would just (laughs) rile me, and I wouldn't stand... I wouldn't stand hitched on being bossed.

J: Yes.

L: So, it just finally didn't work out.

J: Yes. (pause) Did you work? or were you able...? or your dad help support you?

L: What?

J: Did you work? Did you have some business? or did your dad...?

L: Me?

J: Yes; or did your dad help support you?

L: Well, yes, I had a bowling alley for several years.

J: Yes.

L: I decided... I had one of the first drive-in restaurants (laughs) anybody'd heard of. I built it down there on the road below our house, and boy, did I have good food. I fixed food just like my mother fixed her own all...

J: Yes.

L: ...her life and... well, I'll tell you, you've heard... you've heard of people going out of business because of no business?

J: Yes.

L: I had to go out of business because it got beyond me. I even built on... I built on a big... and it was only open in the summer. And I built on a big screened-in porch onto this... it was an awful cute place. And, why, they were coming from far and near; they were coming from Evansville, Bloomington, everywhere... the word would get around (laughs). And I had to

LASHBROOK

have help; I had everybody working up at the house, and my sister in town; everything was homemade. I even made... I served everything in a basket.

J: Yes.

L: I served baked ham which I baked myself; I served steak-burgers which was ground round, no filler, no nothing. I made every bun and roll that was served in that restaurant, and I had... now, let's see.... And fried... oh, fried chicken, that was my... that was real.... I dipped the chicken in thick cream, and then in flour, and fried it....

END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO

L: ...he taught Sunday School class for over sixty years at Ames Chapel.

J: Your dad taught Sunday School...

L: Yes.

J: ...at the Methodist chapel.

L: Yes. And that'd be on Sunday morning. And then, sometimes he'd come home before... and eat his dinner; then he'd liable to take off.... He'd go to Orangeville, or Old Union, or some of those little country churches where they had afternoon classes-- and teach over there. He loved... he loved his Sunday School and church.

And Mama went to church as long as her health... and I played the organ at Ames Chapel 'til, oh, '64. I had a blood clot...

J: In your...?

L: ...and it paralyzed this hand and my arm. And I was in the hospital... the Methodist Hospital in Louisville; it hadn't been open very long. And Doctor Clark sent me down there, and I took their... the use came back partially...

J: Yes.

L: ...but not enough that I could ever play the organ again in public.

J: I'm sorry.

LASHBROOK

L: I wouldn't... why, I used to play up at the funeral home: I played for weddings. Well, I played for any...

J: Yes.

L: ...anybody'd want me to, as long as I could.

J: And you also joined the Methodist Church?

L: Yes.

J: Why was that? Why did you also join the Methodist Church?

L: Well, because my parents were Methodists...

J: Yes.

L: ...and that was... I was... from the time I was born, you know....

J: Yes.

L: So naturally.... (long pause)

J: There you are. (laughs)

L: And, you know, I'm... I guess I'm rather liberal in my ideas of religion.

J: Yes.

L: Now... and I wouldn't... I'm sure Dad probably wouldn't agree with me, although I don't hide my \_\_\_\_\_ today. You know, I don't think the church that you belong to is so terribly important.

J: Yes.

L: Who is to say who's right and who's wrong? I don't know your religion....

J: Yes. I was raised as a Catholic.

L: Well, all right. You couldn't really say that I'm wrong in being a Methodist; I couldn't say you're wrong being a Catholic.

J: Yes.

L: Of course, the dearest friends I ever had were Catholic...

LASHBROOK

J: Yes.

L: ...and I respect... I always respected their religion and it isn't what you belong to...

J: Yes.

L: ...you could be a member of any church and still do wrong.

J: Yes.

L: You know, I never lost my temper but about one time. This was after my dad and mother were dead, and I was playing the organ over our little church, and I was running late. And as I walked out our front door, there was two women standing there just ready to knock on my door, and I said, "Oh, what can I... did you ladies want something?"

And they said, "Yes, we'd like a few minutes of your time."

And I said, "Well, I'm sorry; I'm late for church service now." And I said, "I'm the organist and I must get there."

And they said, "Where do you go to church?"

And you could see the Ames Chapel Church from our hill.

J: Yes.

L: And I said, "Right straight across as the crow flies, about a mile. Ames Chapel Church."

They said, "Well, what denomination is it?"

And I said, "Methodist." I was still just as polite and... even though I was in a hurry.

And with that, one of these women said, "Well, you'd better take a few minutes time to talk to us. If you belong to that... to the Methodist Church, you are bound straight for hell."

J: Oh dear.

L: Well, when they said that (laughs), they said the wrong thing. I really lost my temper, and I said, "I'll take my chances. But," I said, "in the meantime, both of you...." They had parked their car outside of my yard gate. I said, "In the meantime, you get off this hill and don't you ever set foot on it again. If you do, I'll set the dogs on you. Or I'll do something." I said, "I won't listen to such talk as that."

And boy, they got. And I never had one come back (laughs) after that.

Now, I Just don't believe in that....

J: Yes. Umm, let me ask you some questions about Paoli.

L: All right. If I know; I don't know anybody here any more.

LASHBROOK

I've outlived....

J: You've outlived them, yes.

L: ...every... all my friends.

J: Sorry.

L: The names... I read the local paper and there won't be one name after... out of ten that'll even be familiar.

J: Before, would you know all the names?

L: Why, my Lord, anybody I would talk... \_\_\_\_\_ be one that I knew. You know, there were the Lendleys which my brother-in-law \_\_\_\_\_; there were the Stouts....

J: Yes.

L: Well, Coxes, McCrackens; they were all.... Now they're all gone.

J: Well.... When you were young and you'd come to Paoli, would you know most of the people that you'd see in town? or...?

L: Why yes.

J: Would you know them by name?

L: Oh sure.

J: And you'd know things about them; their family and such?

L: I knew everybody.

J: You knew everybody.

L: Knew everybody I met on the street. (laughs) Now I don't know anybody I meet.

J: Yes.

L: And if I do... if I think I know somebody, it will probably be somebody I thought I knew but it'll be their grandchildren (laughs) with a family resemblance.

J: Do you have many memories of the square?

L: Of the square?

LASHBROOK

J: Of the square.

L: Well, yes.

J: Do you remember how it was? I guess, back awhile ago, it used to be a lot busier and there was more going on at the square. People would go there to talk and stuff.

L: Well, I never... they used to have the ba... they had the...

J: The bandstand.

L: ...the bandstand; they had concerts and it attracted a pretty good crowd.

J: Yes. Yes.

L: And when I got old enough to walk... after a while my dad was sheriff,...

J: Yes.

L: ...I loved to run off. And my dad... at that time, when you were sheriff--(I don't know if it's still that way or not)--served as bailiff when court was in session. And I loved my dad, and I don't know how many times they'd be bathing me and getting me dressed and I would run off while they left the room for something.

J: (laughs)

L: End up in the courthouse with no clothes on.

J: Oh God. (both laugh)

L: And then Dad would have to send for... call down to the jail and tell Nell... Mom or... to tell Nell or Lucy to come and get me. And they were that embarrassed in age. They'd get so mad; but I don't know why I... I got a chance to run away, I'd run.

J: Yes. Yes.

L: And I didn't care whether I had no clothes on or not. (both laugh) But no, the names... there were a lot of family names back then in Paoli that... there's not any anymore.

J: Yes. Yes. There's also more new people who have moved here, I suppose.

L: They... now they have names that end in "ski" or, you know,

LASHBROOK

foreign names that's not even familiar.

J: Yes.

L: But very few of the ones that... the Stouts and the Stipps and the Millers; there's still Mabel Miller. She's a day younger than I am...

J: Yes. Yes.

L ...but times change.

J: What other changes have you seen in Paoli?

L: Well....

J: In the people?

L: Well, I... off hand, that's hard to....

J: Oh, I just wondered if maybe people seemed any different these days?

L: Well, some... I'll tell you, you're lucky anymore if you have good neighbors. You know, people I think live more to themselves; I know I do. But I am very fortunate; I have a neighbor, a friend, lives half-way up this street here.... I don't drive any more.

J: Yes.

L: I quit driving of my own free will because I felt like I wasn't a safe, good driver any more. And I've got one that lives up on the next corner; they are the best friends and neighbors. Lillian comes over; drives my car wherever I want to go, whenever I want to go...

J: Yes.

L: ...and, of course, I do things... I try to do things for her too. And do. I'm not a person that... I hope I'm not what they call a "moocher."

J: Yes.

L: I just never... I just never could go to that. But you can have good friends and good neighbors, but you know, just like I told another friend here in town... she always complains she doesn't have any neighbors, she doesn't have any friends, always.... She never has a good word to say about anybody.



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J: Yes.

L: And one day she was going on about somebody and laying them out. And there wasn't anybody doing anything for her if she was... if she dropped dead. And I said, "You know something? If you... you have to be a friend, to have a friend." And I said, "That's all you ever have to remember." And with that I closed my trap.

J: Yes.

L: But that's the truth; you've got to be... you've got to be a little friendly...

J: Yes. Yes.

L: ...and neighborly; and I like people.

J: Well, did you have li....

L: Well, there are people I like better than others.

J: Yes, sure. (laughs) As a kid, did you have many neighbors close by?

L: Didn't have any.

J: Didn't have any.

L: Well, I had... they were about... the closest one was a family lived... the Pipers, they lived, oh, a good mile. Our farm... we had acreage in every direction. We couldn't have any real close neighbors.

J: Yes.

L: But I remember them, and she died; we were the same age. And she died just about her 18th birthday. And... but that was one of the closest neighbors. She had a sister but she was older, and then they final... they moved to town. And they're all old; they've been dead for years -- all of them.

J: Yes. Well, did you have any... would you see any of your neighbors very often? Like...?

L: Oh, we went to church and....

J: You'd see them at church.

LASHBROOK

L: ...and, of course, we had a lot of relatives then. And we had a lot of company; we always had a lot of company. Why, I remember we'd go on a Sunday, back in the days when I was just little and before we had a car, you drove a horse and buggy. And we'd go over on Moores Ridge and 145 where the Lashbrooks all lived --at that time-- and we were real neighborly and friendly; and we visited people.

J: Yes.

L: It was an effort but we did it. No, I... and I always had, when I got a little older... always had gals from town that'd come out to the farm, in the summer especially, when school was out...

J: Sure.

L: ...and they just loved to spend the summer (laughs)...

J: Sure. Yes.

L: ...out on the farm. So, I never felt lonely.

J: Yes. Yes. No, I just wondered... I had just wondered if you had neighbors close by, and if you did, how often you saw them.

L: If what?

J: If you had had neighbors close by, and how often...

L: Not too... not next door like you have in town. No.

J: And now, the ones that you have in town, do you know them all?

L: Yes. I know all of them and we're all friends.

J: Yes. Well, because you'd mentioned before: a person's lucky if they can get good neighbors these days.

L: What?

J: You mentioned before that a person was lucky if they could get good neighbors...

L: That's right.

J: ...these days.

LASHBROOK

L: Somebody to... Well, I say, I like people.

J: Yes. Yes, it makes a difference.

L: That makes all the difference. If you don't like people, or trust them...

J: Yes.

L: ...but I always did.

J: Yes. Yes.

L: I never had any trouble getting along.

J: (sighs) Well, let's see.

L: Well, I don't think I've told you very much.

J: Is there anything you want to tell me?

L: About history or anything? (laughs) No, I think I've pretty well... as I lived it.

J: Yes. Well, this is why I came here today.

L: I've... As I said, I've had a good....

J: Yes. Yes.

L: I think I've had a pretty good life.

J: Yes. Thank you for sharing it with me today.

L: Lots of things... funny things, I probably haven't told you (laughs). If you still stayed around long enough I'd think of.

J: (laughs) OK. I did think of one more question though.

L: All right.

J: And I wondered about... you know, your mom was a real goer and sounded like a strong woman.

L: She was.

J: Yes, and I wondered: how did your dad react to her, you know, taking off to go travel and....

L: Anything my mother did, Dad never disapproved.

LASHBROOK

J: Hmm.

L: He was crazy about that... crazy about Mom. She was a good-looking woman.

J: Yes.

L: I never will forget that night that we made it to Columbia, South Carolina, on that trip to Florida.

J: Right.

L: We checked into... oh, it was the hotel we were supposed to go to, and it was a beautiful hotel. And such a change from the one we'd had to stay in the night before; the one that wasn't even finished, in the middle of nowhere.

So... and we never... we always... there were three of us, but we always made them put an extra bed in, because none of us would sleep alone in... we didn't want to be alone in a hotel room. And so we checked in, and it was a beautiful hotel; we had a... the bathroom had a stepdown marble bath....

J: Oh. Nice.

L: It was a plush hotel. Anyway, we had registered and gone up to our room, and then Nell had thought of something; she wanted a magazine, I believe. So she went down to the desk, and she was standing there looking at a magazine rack--and the desk was right there. And the clerk said to the bellboy standing there; said, "Did you take ice water up to Room so-and-so?"

And the bell boy said, "Well, I haven't yet, but I'm getting ready to." He said, "Which room is it?"

Well, (laughs) the clerk said, "Oh, I can't remember the n... but," he said, "it's that good-looking woman with the two daughters." (laughs)

And Nell came back up just dying laugh.... She said, "Well you know how you and I rate." (both laugh)

J: Oh dear.

L: But that wasn't half the... you haven't... that isn't on, is it? Oh... MACHINE OFF

END OF TAPE TWO, SIDE ONE

END OF INTERVIEW

## INDEX

airplanes 16  
Ames Chapel 21, 23  
bowl 18  
bowling alley 18, 20  
bridge 10  
brother 1, 5, 7, 12, 13, 17, 24  
car 1, 5, 7, 8, 16, 23, 26, 28  
church 21-23, 27  
Cleveland Panic 9, 12  
Comet 14  
corduroy road 7  
Crystal 3, 4  
farm 1-3, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 18, 19, 27, 28  
father 3-5, 9, 11  
Fred 1, 2, 13  
French Lick 1, 3  
goiter 17  
golf 17, 18  
jenny 17  
Lucy 8, 12, 13, 25  
Methodist 21-23  
Monon 7  
mother 1, 3-6, 8, 15, 16, 20, 23, 29  
mountains 10  
neighbor 26  
Nell 6, 9, 10, 12, 17, 18, 25, 30  
Packard 5  
Paoli 1-3, 8, 9, 23-26  
Seminole Indians 18  
shell road 6, 7  
square 24, 25  
teddy bear 13  
timber 9, 11  
travel 9, 29