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ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH CENTER

OWEN STOUT

Interviewed by Catherine Jones
14 October 1987
OHRC accession #88-61-1,2

INTRODUCTION

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I, Owen Stout, hereby give
Interviewee (please PRINT)
my oral history interview with Catherine Jones,
Interviewer (please PRINT)
which was conducted on (1987) October 14, to Indiana University.
Date

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OK to deposit
4/5/91 BT

In full accord with the provisions of this Deed of Gift, I hereunto set my hand.

Owen Stout
DONOR

12/26/87
DATE

Catherine A. Jones
INTERVIEWER

12/15/87
DATE

PAOLI PROJECT
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Biographical Data Sheet

I. INTERVIEWEE/NARRATOR DATA

Full Name: Owen Stout
(First) (Middle) (Last)

Address: Route 3, Paoli, IN 47454

Telephone: 723-3756

Date of Birth: 12/1903 Place of Birth: Paoli

Sex: M Ethnic Origin: ?

Education: high school and teachers' college certificate (1923-ish)

Occupational History: country school teacher, self-taught chemist, employed in South Bend as such; returned to Paoli during Depression and, again self-taught, opened printing press. Later, son went into partnership with him.

Special Interests, Hobbies, etc.: These are really his life: singing and music. Has organized endless concerts, dramas, symphonies, etc, his entire life. Renaissance man of Paoli: well self-educated. Has written two books, and lots of poetry. Still very active with lectures, poetry readings, etc.

Father's Name: John Murphy Owen Occupation: farmer

Mother's Name: _____ Occupation: housewife, farmer

II. INTERVIEWER DATA

Full name: Catherine A. Jones
(First) (Middle) (Last)

Address: HM: 11705 Eden Glenn Drive, Carmel, IN 46220

Telephone: HM: 844-7935

Date of Birth: 1959 Place of Birth: Local: 331-1058 Staten Island, NY

Association with Paoli and Project: researcher

Number of Tapes: 5

Subject of Interview: life history

STOUT

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INTERVIEWEE: Owen Stout
INTERVIEWER: Catherine A. Jones
DATE: October 14, 1987
SUBJECT: History of Paoli, Indiana
TRANSCRIBER: Norma Olmer

Jones: Hi, I'm Cathy Jones. Today is October 14, and I'm here with Mr. Owen Stout at his home, Route 3, Paoli, and we're working together on the Paoli Project. OK.

So, let me just start off with some basic information about you.

Stout: OK.

J: What year were you born?

S: In 1903, the day before Christmas...

J: Oh, a birthday...a Christmas baby.

S: Yes. December 24, 1903. Twenty years later, on my twentieth birthday, I was married. (laughs) So I have three holidays---or did have---three holidays all in a row.

J: Wow!

S: I celebrated simultaneously my wedding anniversary, and my birthday...

J: ...and Christmas.

S: ...and Christmas. (laughs) So that's a little unusual.

J: It's a lot unusual. And where were you born, Mr. Stout?

S: I was born here in Greenfield township, the southern part of Orange County, on a neighboring farm. The farm, at that time, belonged to a minister. His name was Moses Ed Apple; everybody called him M.E. Apple or Ed Apple. The place where I was born has long-since gone. It was a log cabin. I don't recall...I can't remember the log cabin. But the ruins were there when I was younger...I mean when I was able to _____. And I went back there when I was about twenty-years old, about the time I was married, and I got a cedar tree that stood in the yard there-

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-it had fallen over--and we cut it up and made a cedar chest out of it--just in memory.

J: Oh, how nice.

S: Yes. So, I was actually born about a mile-and-a-half from where I am here now. In this northern part of Greenfield township.

J: Now, you said that you don't quite remember the log cabin--how many years were you at that house? Did you then move somewhere else?

S: We moved away the following year.

J: Oh, OK.

S: My dad and mother were married thirteen months before I was born and that was in February of 1902. And they lived just for a short while---a very short while--with my grandfather and grandmother and then they found this place that could be rented--my dad didn't own it, as I told you it belonged to Mr. Apple--but it was what they called in those days a "tenant house." And most of the farmers, if they could afford to do so, they would provide a house or a home for someone to tend land for them on what they called the "shares" which was really a rental plan. And they paid the rent by providing the landlord with goods from the land. Crops and garden produce and animals--whatever it might be.

So my dad was a farmer; he'd grown up as a farmer and he'd worked for seven years for a neighbor whose name was also Apple--Alfred Apple--over north of us here. And he was very much interested in horses. And he took a course in horse training, and my dad was very good at handling horses and colts.

So he enjoyed farming. In fact, that was practically the only industry--if you might call it an industry--occupation, rather, of everyone in the country about here. The towns--and that's what you're interested in primarily, of course--had businesses and some manufacturing plants. In the country out here, almost invariably, everybody was a farmer. And that meant that, not that he was a professional farmer but he could raise enough to provide for himself and family without an outlay in cash.

J: Yes.

S: Things could be traded or bartered and... for instance, you could go to a country store--and there were two or three country stores in this immediate area that you could walk; it wasn't too far. So you could take a basket of eggs, for instance, and walk to the country store and exchange those eggs for such things as

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you could not produce like salt, coffee, sugar. And those were the necessities. The farmers, practically everyone, had animals such as cattle, sometimes sheep; they had hogs and they also had chickens--sometimes other fowl. They also raised geese and guineas and turkeys and all sorts of things.

J: How big was your father's farm?

S: You mean at that time over there?

J: At that time, yes.

S: I would have to guess because I don't know exactly. But roughly about a hundred acres.

J: Oh!

S: Yes.

J: Now, where had your mother and father come from?

S: They were both raised right here in this locality. My mother came from over in French Lick township and my father grew up right here at this very place because this belonged to my grandfather, that is...

J: This house? I mean, this lot...

S: Well, this house actually sits on two acres that I purchased from Mr. Apple adjoining my father's and grandfather's farm. And the reason for that was, I bought the two acres immediately after I was married in 1924 because at that time the estate of my grandfather had not been legally settled. So there was some remote possibility that I might never get it, although I was in the line to inherit it, because I was the only child. But rather than take a chance at having any legal problems, I bought the two acres adjoining my dad's farm and we built a house here in 1924.

Then in 1947 I moved away...I attempted to rent the house which I did for a short while, but that was unsatisfactory so I sold it. And the fellow that bought it lived here a year or two and the house burned.

So that was the situation when I decided to retire in 1970. So we finally decided that we would buy land back, my wife and I. That was my second wife, my first wife had died. So we bought the land back, which was just two acres right here and we built this house. So that's the history, briefly, up to that point.

J: Let me backtrack a bit. The second farm that your father moved to when you were very young, about how big was that?

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S: They were all approximately the same size. The farms locally here would range from, I'd say, a minimum of sixty to eighty acres up to several hundred acres.

J: Yes.

S: The farm that my dad worked on before he was married, that I mentioned, belonged to Alfred Apple; Mr. Apple was increasing it almost every year and _____ at the time of his death there was about between twelve- and fifteen-hundred acres. It was an enormous thing. But my granddad only had sixty acres and that's what I have now. Well, sixty-four acres actually. And so my dad inherited that because my dad took care of grandfather and grandmother when they were old. There were no such things as nursing homes; that was unknown in those days. So it was customary for the children to take care of their parents. There was no welfare; there was no help of any kind except the neighbors. And the neighbors then were very cooperative and very helpful and there was never an exchange of money. Neighbors would help with anything that needed to be done.

J: Like...can you give me some examples so; I can get a better idea?

S: First of all, the farmers that came in here to tend the land, they had to first clear the forest.

J: Yes.

S: And they had what they called "log rollings" which meant the neighbors would all come in--the men--and they would cut the timber, and roll the logs in heaps and burn them, and clear the land so the farmer could...that was one example. If the farmer had a house or a barn to build, they would have a log...I mean, a house-raising or a barn-raising and they would all _____ it. And I remember some of those things. I attended a few of them. My dad, down here, was ill--he had been injured in an accident after he had a barn "pattern", they called it--which was the framework--all out and ready to build. Well, he couldn't build his barn so the neighbors gathered in and in one day, they set up that barn.

J: Wow!

S: That was 1912.

J: After...I assume it was just the men that worked, but after the barn was finished or after the end of the day, would everyone eat together too? Or _____ home...

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S: Oh, yes. That was almost invariably done. Yes, the ladies would come and they would visit and sometimes they would have quiltings--various types of work. They even met together to take care of crops because quite often...for instance, I remember, a kraut-making.... That would seem to you, maybe, as being a very small thing, but some of the people including our neighbors here, raised cabbage enough that they could sell wagon-loads of it. And quite often, instead of selling cabbage, they would all get together and they'd have a "kraut-cutting." They did it all by hand, but they had these boards that you moved the cro...the cabbage back and forth, the heads over the board, and it sliced it up into big jars. And those jars were made of crockery; they would hold all the way from twenty to fifty gallons, some of them. So, I know my mother and I, as a youngster...would go with my mother to this type of thing. And, so, it was my pleasure to get the stalk of the cabbage which was a delicacy. So they'd shave the cabbage off and I remember, as a kid, they'd give me the stalk so...that's what they called it, the center of the head. And I put a little salt on it...boy, that was delicious.

J: (laughs)

S: So, the whole families would gather for meetings of that sort. And as I mentioned, of course quiltings where they worked... and there were many other things of that sort. Hog-killing time was also an occasion for the women to "render," they called it, which was merely cooking-out or frying-out the fat in the parts of the meat that they wanted to preserve. So the menfolk would meet and they would kill the hog. They would shoot it, usually, with a muzzle-loading gun and then they would hang it up, head down, over a tressle-like affair and they would bleed the hog. They would cut its throat so the blood would run out, otherwise the meat's not good.

J: Yes.

S: And they let that hog hang there over the noon-hour usually because it had to cool. And then they'd wash it out and get it down on a platform and cut it up into parts: the hams and the legs and all... And then the internal parts of the hog, for the most part, were rendered into what they called "lard." They still use that term, of course. And the women-folks did that. Then the parts that would...were suitable, they made into sausage and they had a hand-turned mill--which was very common--that they ground the meat. And they used sage and a few other spices--but sage primarily--along with salt and pepper to preserve the meat. And it was packed away...usually the sausage was made into little patties. And they would put those in one of these jars similar to the one I described with the kraut-making. And they would

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embed it in the lard. They'd melt the lard and then put those patties in. And they'd keep all through the winter. So, if you wanted sausage, you'd merely go and dig those patties out, melt the lard off them, and they're ready to fry. And they were pretty good.

Then it was also customary for all of the people that came to help, which sometimes was as many as maybe four or five families, to take home with them--free of charge--the choice cuts and parts of the meat. Because you couldn't preserve all of the meat all the time--according to Abraham Lincoln (laughs)--so those parts of meat that needed to be cared for, they would divide and that includes such things as what they called it, "tenderloin." They had other names for a lot of the parts of the meat which would not be intelligible. That's one of the projects I have considered doing--I might someday be able to do it--is to compile a dictionary of the words and their meanings that have changed over the years.

J: It would be fascinating to see...

S: Yes.

J: ...how the words have changed.

S: I think of a word every few days that I... forget if I don't write it down. And to give you an example, there is a game called "Carom." You know, that you play on a board. You probably know _____

J: No, no, no.

S: And it's played with wooden rings. And you drop the rings across the board. It's a game that's quite similar to pool only it's played on a small board you can hold in your lap. Has pockets like a pool table. Well, to me, when I grew up, I never heard the name "Carom", but I played and so did my friends and most of my cousins that I played with--with those rings. And they called them "thump rings" because you'd thump them with your thumb.

J: Well, I'll tell you, my grandmother always beats those kids at Scrabble because she knows all these words that we....(laughs)

S: Yes.

J: So I can appreciate what you're saying. Can I get back for a second to the farm? How many brothers and sisters did you have? You were the oldest. And then...?

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S: I was the only child. My mother had another child after I was born, that was born dead.

J: Oh!

S: It didn't survive. But both of my ancestors...my father came from a family of eight. My mother came from a family of twelve.

J: Wow!

S: So they were large families prior to my generation. In my generation, most of the people had begun to see and understand that a large family was, rather than being an asset--which at one time they were--they were really a liability because it begins to take money to do things.

J: Now, in your grandparents time, the kids were a help--on the farm and the land.

S: That's right. And they invariably stayed at home until, as you mentioned, they were old enough to be married perhaps. And then quite often they would seek greener pastures. They would go away. In this particular area there was a large number of the young folks of my dad's time went to Illinois because over in Illinois, the farmers over there, they had much better farmland, larger farms. And the area that my ancestors went to from here, they went primarily to drain the land because a lot of the land up in Illinois--south of Chicago, in the neighborhood of Kankakee and down to Kentland and all that area in there--they had to put tile under the land in order to remove the water before it was tillable.

So a lot of the young men went to Illinois and worked there in tiling that land. They would dig it. And the first instances it had to be done with a team of horses--or maybe with a shovel even. Later on they got machinery that would do it. And they would lay that drain-tile until the field could be tilled. And of course the tile had to be placed below plow depth, so that....

J: That sounds like a lot of work.

S: A lot of work.

J: Lord.

S: Yes. And there's still evidence of all that over there. If you go through that area today, you'll find those drainage ditches because, for the most part, the tile ran into a big ditch out to the edge of the field which was almost like a creek

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or a river--a small river. And it carried the water on off. So that was one of the things.

The other thing...they also went to Illinois quite often for two things...was the corn harvest--they called "husking"--in the fall and the broom-corn harvest, because in those days.... Broom-corn is a plant...it resembles corn, quite a bit--about the same size. Instead of having a fruit or an ear like the corn does, it had a tassel and the seeds were formed on that tassel or "top." And after those seeds were taken away, you had a brush-like top which could be converted into brooms. And there was quite an industry in making those brooms. So the broom-corn harvest was a very lucrative field and it attracted a lot of people.

J: Now, when these young men left...I'm assuming these were some of your uncles.

S: Yes.

J: Would they leave just for a season? Or did they leave for good? Or, how did that work?

S: They left for a season. On the other hand, some of them found sweethearts and wives there. It happened in my mother's family with four, I believe it was. My mother had two twins...a twin brother, one set of twins--two boys. They went to Sheldon, Illinois along with, let's see, two sisters. The two sisters immediately found employment; one of them in a restaurant, and the other woman--the older one, my Aunt Lydia--was an expert seamstress. And she immediately started making dresses and all sorts of things for the ladies out there, and developed quite a little home business. Later she got married there and so did Aunt Ruth--so they never came home. And the two twin boys, Uncle Charlie and Uncle James--Jim, they called him--they also married, but only one of them married there. Uncle Jim was going with a girl here when he left, so he came back and got her and took her there. So they all lived there--afterwards.

So quite often, when the family was disrupted by these leavings, so called, they never came back. They left permanently. Later on, quite often, there'd be other members of the family go and that happened in the prior generation even to that. Even in my grandfather's day, when they came from North Carolina up here, there would usually be two or three would come, and if they liked the situation, they would stay. And then shortly after that, their remaining relatives in North Carolina heard about it and here they came.

J: Yes. It went both ways.

S: Yes. There were waves, so called, of this immigration. So

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the Stouts...I was working on that before you came today. I have a friend was asking me to help in locating some land deeds and there's a place out in Orange County here called Stout's Chapel. Well, Stout's Chapel was named after one of my ancestors; I'm not possitive which one. But the Stouts came up here about 1815. They came immediately after the initial Quaker trek in 1811 and '12. And, well, the first Stouts--about 1815--then my great-grandfather came in 1836. So there was several different times that they made these pilgrimages or changed their locations.

J: Now, let me ask you a question. Just background information on your family.

S: Yes.

J: Are these...is this something that you grew up knowing or have you had to dig around to get this information about your own past?

S: I had to dig.

J: You had to dig.

S: Yes. Yes, I must tell you about that. First of all, my grandfather Stout was in the Civil War. And he enlisted and they sent him to Indianapolis. He was what they called in those days "bullheaded." He was the type of fellow that was going to have his way with everything and did. So he told the authorities, when they took him to Indianapolis, that he was going to come home when his first child was born, because he had just married my grandmother who was Lavina Willard. And they had a child on the way. Well, in the Civil War they needed men pretty badly, of course. So it was strictly against the rules; they wouldn't grant passes. That was, in December of that year, early December--which was 18 and 63 I believe, or '2. I'm not sure; '63 I think it was. My grandfather along with another old man that...he wasn't an old man, he was a young man then....

END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE ONE

S: ...had told the authorities that he expected to be home when his first child was born and when that came up, it so happened, in December. So in the early part of December my grandfather along with one of his buddies at Camp Morton--because at that time of the Civil War, there was a camp in Indianapolis named after Governor Morton--and... well, they deserted. And they walked from Indianapolis down here to Orange County. A hundred miles. And they walked, of course, by night. And they hid by

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day.

J: Yes.

S: Well, he was here when Uncle Joe--that was my oldest Uncle--when he was born. Well, my granddad, I guess, decided it was pretty easy that far, so he didn't go back. And naturally, of course, they sent out a mili...the militia (police) for him. They came down here and they couldn't find him. (laughs) He had gone to one of his uncles who lived over at Patoka and he was staying over there. So he evaded them. But anyway, after things cleared up and all was well, my granddad decided to go back to his army because he felt an obligation to it. He knew, of course, there'd be a penalty. So he willfully went back. By that time the regiment, which was Company E--I could give you numbers if you wanted them, but that's not necessary--was down near Vicksburg, Mississippi, or rather Tennessee. And they'd been fighting up and down the Mississippi River because that's where the heat of the battle was.

So he went back down there; walked of course, that's about the only way they had going. And well, when he got down along the Mississippi--somewhere down along there, I'm not just sure where--he got sick. And they found him and they took him in to a military hospital in Arkansas--which was right across the river. So he came out of it, but they found out he had deserted so they put a charge of desertion against him, and they threw him in a prison up in Alton, Illinois.

J: Wow!

S: And he spent quite some time there. But he went back and helped fight through the campaign in the South and, believe it or not, when he was discharged in 1865, I guess it must have been--again I have his discharge upstairs--they gave him an honorable discharge. Apparently they weren't too adept at keeping records. And the result was, after he came home and years later, he drew a pension--very small. In those days, of course, the dollar was worth ten dollars today...

J: Yes.

S: ...or more. But eventually, after several years, the War Department caught up with him and they discovered that he had this charge of desertion. So they took the pension away. Well, by that time, granddad and grandmother were both old people and grandfather died shortly afterwards. And my Uncle Arnel attempted to have the pension restored for grandmother's use. And he wrote to the congressman--I was going to tell you who that was...Crowe, I believe, E.B. Crowe was the Congressman from Indiana. But they could never do it because they still held that

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charge of desertion. So--what I was going to tell you--my grandfather, when I was growing up.... We moved over here in 1912 from one of these farms that I mentioned where my dad was a sharecropper--we was on three of them. From the time I was born, there was two others. And then he came back here.

J: And that was in a span of about ten years? Nine years?

S: I was, let's see,...about ten years.

J: About ten years.

S: About ten years. So my father and mother took care of my grandparents until, as I said, my grandfather died--which was in 1918. And then my grandmother lived on until 1929. Well, it was the understanding with the other brothers and sisters, my uncles and aunts on my father's side, that my dad was to get the whole farm for his caring for granddad--which he did. Well, it was in that interim that I got married after a number of years, and that the estate had not yet been settled. My grandmother was living when I was married. So that's why I bought this land adjoining it, so if it did ever come to my occupancy, it would be together and it would be one farm. So now, then, I have the farm that was once my grandfather's--they settled there in 1878. Grandfather died in 1918, as I mentioned, and my grandmother died in 1929. I built this house--(it burned, first house)--here in 1924 and I taught school eight years, not consecutively but within the next...up until 1930, in the early thirties.

And little by little I became interested in printing and several other things. I wanted to be a chemist when I was growing up in school and there was no chemistry taught in the local high school at that time. So I took a course in chemistry by correspondence and I gained enough proficiency... I did get a job as a chemist in South Bend. And so I went to South Bend, worked up there immediately prior to the Depression. 1929, that's when the Stock Market crash was. And I worked through that until work got so slow that I was only working about two days a week. And by that time I had these two little boys of mine; I have three children but my family's divided: my two boys were fifteen months apart and almost like twins. And I decided South Bend was not a good place to raise children. I don't like the city for the life...for the type of life that's there. And I had this place I'd bought, as I said, these two acres. I had a house here, it was all paid for. I came through the Depression with flying colors, I guess you'd have to say, because I didn't owe anybody a dime when I came out.

So we came back down here; I had to renew my license because, at that time, a teacher's license in Indiana was for a period of two years. And I had, of course, lost that period. So I went back to Terre Haute--Indiana State Teacher's College--and

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did some more work there and got my license renewed and then I taught either two or three years--I forget. But anyway, a total of eight. And during that period then, I became interested, among other things, in printing. And that's a big long story and this is all just my personal history, so it may not be of interest to you.

J: Can I just stop you for a second. It is of interest, but before we go on ahead, I'd like to go back to the farm for just a few more minutes, if we could. So, you were the only child.

S: Yes.

J: And you lived with your mother and father and...

S: ...grandfather and grandmother.

J: ...and grandfather and grandmother. Did you have...did anyone else help the family with the farm? Or was it just....

S: No.

J: No?

S: Absolutely no help whatever. No. In those days, you could have hired help. But the farmers simply couldn't afford it. So they did the work themselves and if they couldn't, in the case of my father, rather than hiring help he would rent land on the sharecropper basis from adjoining farmers.

J: Yes.

S: So, after we lived here with my granddad, my father still tended land belonging to the neighboring farmers, especially old Mr. Alfred Apple. Mr. Apple, then, died and before his estate was settled up, his heirs in turn--who, by the way, were cousins of my grandmother's--they took charge of that farm and they were glad to have somebody to take care of it. _____ it had eroded and washed away and had been much worse. So my dad tended for several years, down parts of this Apple farm, and that was during my so-called formative years. I was in high school and early college and all that. So I helped with all that.

J: Well, what kind of chores did you do around the house when you were living there? When you were young?

S: You mean my chores?

J: Your chores and then your mom and dad. How did work get done?

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S: Yes. Well, it was primarily done, of course, by hand labor.

J: Yes. Yes.

S: And the chief thing, it occupied timeless caring for the livestock. In the winter time you had to take the horses, sometimes cows, and sometimes other animals to get water. Quite often they couldn't have water...there was no such thing as an electric pump...

J: Yes.

S: ...and in our case, we had springs--there were two or three on the farm--but you'd have to drive the horses down to the spring and back and you tried to arrange as far as you could so the hogs and sheep and chickens and other things could go to the water themselves. That wasn't always possible. Occasionally there would be a drought, and even in the summertime you might have to take the horses and sometimes a mile away to get water.

J: Was this something that you did? Was this your chore?

S: That was one of them. Yes.

J: And how many animals are we talking about here?

S: Not very many. My father always kept at least a team, which was two horses...

J: Two horses.

S: ...that worked together.

J: To plow?

S: And since he liked horses... Yes, to plow and to do everything with them. Plowing, cultivating, harrowing...

J: Yes.

S: ...and hauling, going to town with the wagon--everything. But my dad, since he loved horses and, as I mentioned, he had had a course in horse training and, in those days they called it "breaking the horses."

J: Yes.

S: A young horse has to be coralled, he has to be controlled and he has to learn to wear a bridle and a saddle and all that.

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And my dad was very adept at that, and he prided himself at being able to handle horses that other farmers had trouble with. Sometimes you have a...what they call a "high-strung" horse, which was one that just doesn't want to abide by rules and regulations. And it sometimes takes weeks. So my dad did that quite often for other people as well as himself. So the fact that he loved horses, he kept usually more than just a team. Quite often there was nearly always three, sometimes four. And he would raise up colts. And while those colts were young, of course, he kept them because eventually he would make work-horses out of them or sell them to do something else. And so therefore, that was a source of income.

J: Would he get money for helping farm...or goods or something for helping farmers. No, that was just because....

S: Almost never.

J: Yes.

S: There...along towards the last, after the Depresssion and after our country went from this--I don't know the correct word, there really is no correct word--but the way of life that we had at that time. Once that was over, we became more-or-less an industrial nation. We left agriculture for industry--then the dollars came in. And again, I'm giving an opinion now.

J: Of course.

S: The socialistic idea came into people's minds during and immediately after the Depression. Our country got in a very bad way and I can't tell you why, I don't guess anybody else can exactly, but for some reason we got into such a political...and there were several scandals. You remember the Teapot Dome scandal and all that took place. People began to lose confidence in government. And the result was, when Roosevelt--FDR--was elected in the '30s, it was a landslide. Because everybody felt that we were going down the wrong road, that we were going so fast, it was going to be the ruination of the country. But they forgot two or three things. First of all, we left our standards behind. The one that's most noticeable, of course, is the standard--the monetary standard. We left the gold standard.

J: Yes.

S: And our money is actually, today even, merely a note. And no backing. And again, this is my opinion and you may detect my politics which I don't attempt to hide or I don't attempt to reveal. But anyway, from that day on, everthing had a money-value to it. And the chief reason for that, as I see it--again,

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an opinion--government can tax for money. You can't tax from people. In other words, if I want to give somebody something, if I want to trade a farmer an hour's work for a bushel of corn--or whatever may be--the government can't get their hands on money that way. So, I think it's primarily because of the tax system, and Roosevelt was an expert at that. First of all, he had studied the Keynesian Theory, which you probably know about, from England--and it's good. So, from that time on, everything had a money-value. And it wasn't long till people's lives began to have money-value. Sorry to say that, because before that time a man was as good as his bond.

J: As good as his word.

S: His word, yes. And a man's life meant more...and most of them were religious people. They read the Bible, they studied it. And they read in there: What profiteth Man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?

J: Yes.

S: So, with that philosophy, we left our standards.

J: Then you think most of these changes were around the '30s, after the Depression?

S: Yes.

J: Coming out of it?

S: In southern Indiana, yes.

J: Yes. I get the sense, what you're saying is that the Depression really made people think about the direction industrialization had taken in the country?

S: They had to think it--because it was legally imposed upon them.

J: Yes.

S: I think they blindly... and I'm not saying the President did all this. The President, of course, does not make laws as you well know, the Congress does that. That is, in the national... So in order to get it done, Roosevelt, of course, had a lot of tactics. One of them was, of course, he packed the Supreme Court--that was the term they used. In other words, the Court at that time would not accept some of the New Deal--that's what he called it. And so in order to get that New Deal made into law, and since the Supreme Court would not do it, he persuaded

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Congress to permit the Supreme Court to be increased in size. Therefore, he had the opportunity to appoint several members to the Supreme Court, finally winding up with Earl Warren who was, I think, one of the most liberal that ever sat on it. So, he packed the Supreme Court by increasing its size and therefore putting men that would agree with him, especially on the interpretation of the 14th ammendment. The 14th ammendment is a bugbear of the whole thing and I could go into details of that.

J: Let me just go back a second. You were not here in Paoli at the time of the Depression. You were in South Bend.

S: No. Well, yes. Partly. We were here, as I said, till-- let's see, I went to South Bend...I'll have to get my book-- 1929, I believe it was. '28 or '29. And we were up there for two different periods. I went...I came home and then I went back. And then I worked on the WPA--that's Works Progress Administration--as a time-keeper. I was a paid employee, not a political-appointed person. So I've had several things... there's a period that I can give you the exact dates and all of...

J: Oh, that's OK. I think there's a good-enough general...

S: But basically, I was always here, because I have my home here, I voted here--I claimed this as my legal residence.

(Sound of rattling paper) I don't know if I have that much down here, but I've got a notebook upstairs somewhere that has all these dates and everything else in it.

So I considered myself as being a resident of Greenfield township.

J: How did the Depression affect this area?

S: The majority of people here was affected as much by the Depression as they were by the years leading up to the Depression. Because the farmers, for the most part, as I said, they were not into it to make money in the first place. They never made much; they never had made much and they didn't care to make much--they didn't have to because you didn't have to have money to survive. So for the most part, the farmers I'd say in general came out of it about as they went in; there wasn't much change.

J: OK.

S: But immediatley after the Depression set in and especially when the taxes began to come, farmers went broke rapidly. And they decided that there was not much to be made and to be had by staying on the farm, so the result was they left in flocks and

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droves.

And by that time, the farmers first attempted to live on the farm and do their work in the town. So here, for instance, in Paoli there were two or three factories. One of them that I mentioned up there the other day was...they called it the Basket Factory which was...the correct name was the Edgerton Manufacturing Company. And they employed as many farmers as they could get--and some of the wives, though not too many women worked there, but there were a number--making baskets from the local timber. But they lived back here on the farm; they'd drive into Paoli. By that time they had Model T's.

J: What time...what time was this?

S: 1925 to 1935, along in there.

J: OK. OK.

S: So most of the farmers worked other places. My dad worked up there some; I did too. I got 35 cents an hour. And my dad drew the same thing; that was the prevailing wage for labor. 35 cents! And we had to go to Paoli and back, of course. And in order to do that, you had to have a car--even this far out. So I bought a car; I bought a Model T Ford in 1923 the first year I taught school--my first money went for a car. It didn't cost very much.

J: How much did it cost? Do you remember?

S: Yes. \$328.

J: Did many of your neighbors have cars?

S: Yes, they began to at that time. There were a few at it before me, not too many. But many of them afterwards. Yes, that was when the automobile came in. Henry Ford, along with Thomas Edison, of course, I think, made most of this possible. Edison and Firestone: they were great buddies, those three. And Edison, of course, is the inventor of many things that affected everybody, but everybody. The noteworthy one was the electric lamp, I think, and the generation of electric power and all that.

J: When did that first come out this way?

S: Electricity?

J: Yes.

S: 1947, that's what I mentioned, I think, briefly. That's the reason I went to town. I had established a printing business

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down here, and it required power. And I had to generate what little power we could myself. So there was a company--Delco, that still makes automobile parts--came out with a plant that you put in a farmhouse or in the basement of the farmhouse, and generate electricity.

J: Yes.

S: It was driven by a gasoline engine. So I first tried to drive--and did drive--some of my machinery directly from a gasoline engine. The gasoline engine is one of those little horizontal types that had two flywheels, you cranked it up and it pop-pop-poped and away it went. But they were inefficient; they were hard to start on a cold morning. You had to have water for cooling--which would freeze. There were problems.

So this Delco Company, in particular--there were several others, but Delco was one of the leaders--built a small farm-lighting plant. It was 32-volts, which is much less than these modern ones, and it was DC.

J: Yes.

S: Which meant you could not transform it. Therefore you had to carry the current with big wires, took a lot of copper. So they were fairly expensive. Well anyway, I bought a small Delco plant to run my press. I had a press; I had monotype typesetter and several other things. But it didn't last but...probably less than six months till I had more and I had to have more power. Result was, I finally bought a bigger plant. Delco made a 4-Cylinder and it was a big one. And they had batteries to charge up; a whole battery...a whole string of them. Well, that was expensive and wasn't too long till I still needed more power.

J: Yes.

S: We got to the point where we drove two of them. And every cold morning you had to get out there and start those things up and it was a nuisance. So, when the REMC, another one of Roosevelt's programs--that was Rural Electric Administration, REA--there were a few, very few, progressive people, farmers mostly, out here on these ridges, that wanted electric power. But do you know what most of the farmers said?

J: What?

S: They said, "We can't afford it." The minimum charge was \$2.50 a month and the farmers said, "We can have our kerosene lamps for light for less than \$2 and-a-half a month."

So they wouldn't sign that. Well, I was one that did, because I needed it badly.

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J: For your work?

S: Yes. My buddy out here next door, Albert Apple, had a little woodworking shop--he signed up. Out here at Wildwood Lake there was another family named Apple--Elmer Apple--he signed up. We three was all there was along this whole ridge out here for just about ten miles.

J: How many...how far away were your neighbors at that point?

S: How what?

J: How far away were your neighbors?

S: Oh, they were right here.

J: Just right along the road?

S: Yes. They were all within...I mean there were different distances naturally, but we call anyone "neighbor" within a mile. And we had, within a mile radius of where I lived here, I'd say, at least twenty-five or thirty. So there were a lot of families.

J: Twenty-five or thirty families?

S: Yes.

J: So when you were growing up as a boy, what did the word "community" mean to you then? What kind of area was that?

S: Two things.

J: Yes.

S: The school and the church.

J: The school and the church. This is a good time to talk about the school. Can you tell me...let's see, when did you start, I guess, grade school.

S: I started in 19...my first year was 1910. But I had gone the fall of 1909, which I didn't have to; I was underage and so I more-or-less learned the ways of school.

J: How did your parents feel about education?

S: Well, they were all for it. My dad only went to school to the fifth grade.

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J: Yes.

S: And he got kicked out because he chewed tobacco in school. (laughs). Believe it or not. And my mother only went--I don't know, I forget--she didn't go that far, I don't think, really. But they were all for education and they quit merely, as a rule, because my parents had to have a home.

J: Yes. Yes.

S: My grandfather White, he had, as I said, twelve kids. And so he took them out of school and, of course, they got married quite early in those days too. Girls did and boys too. So, that's one of the things that I think entered into the economy of the country. Primarily there was the big families because the farmers back a generation or two prior to my time, they felt it was a great asset to have boys that could follow the plow and girls that could take care of the kitchen and do the hoeing. Because the women and the girls also did the work in the garden. The men did part of it but most of the work around the house including the gardens, the orchard and taking care of the cows--milking the cows--all of that was women's work. Practically all of it. So my mother prided herself in all of the things that she could do and all her sisters were the same. Because my mother could...she'd go right with Dad, she could do everything that he did.

J: And your mom didn't have any little girls, so she didn't have any help.

S: That's right.

J: OK.

S: I was the only child.

J: In fact, we did talk about chores a while back. You had to take the animals to water: was one thing you mentioned. Chores. When you had to take the livestock...

S: Oh, yes. Yes. Yes. The watering the stock. Yes.

J: What else did you do? As a boy?

S: First of all, the most strenuous thing was to tend the fields of corn and other things. The corn was the prime crop. And in order to do that, you had to take a hoe and cut the weeds, because the plow didn't always get them all. So my dad would usually plow the corn through...between the rows and get

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all the weeds he could. And then I, and my mother too, would take hoes and we'd follow the plow and we'd cut those that the plow missed. And we had fields of corn--twenty acres and sometimes even more. That's a lot of work.

J: That's a lot of work.

S: So that was one of the big things. On top of that, this land that my dad would tend for these adjoining farmers--and when he tilled the land for others--quite often was not clear land. They would purposely want him to clean it up and get it ready to improve the value of the land. So he quite often ran a field that was full of bushes--that were big bushes, big as your arm--and you'd have to chop them down with an axe and burn them and then plow out the roots of those things. So I've helped many-a-day with all that kind of thing: cutting and piling those bushes and burning them in great big heaps, big bonfires.

J: Well, how did you...how did you have time to go to school too? Did this interfere with your schooling? Or...?

S: There was only six months of school in those days. Up until...I think all my common schools were only six months. They changed the time as time went on until now, of course, there's nine months and they're talking about now more than that. But the school was in the wintertime.

J: Yes.

S: And you didn't have farmwork much of that nature. The only thing you had to do was take care of the livestock, as I mentioned. So, you didn't waste much time, I'll tell you. We worked.

J: In school, do you remember your first teacher?

S: Oh, yes.

J: Can you tell me about her? or him?

S: Her name was Nola Breeden. Her pictures in that book.

J: Oh, OK. All right.

S: And she was a young girl; I don't know but I would assume, at that time she was about twenty. And all of those young teachers that I had, the younger ones, were girls. And they were very adept with the primary grades. And I always felt--as a teacher and as an administrator--a woman should be in that position.

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J: As opposed to a man?

S: In preference to a man.

J: Why?

S: Because...well, I've tried to do that. In a one-room country school, I had to be...teach the first grade as well as the eighth grade. I never felt that I was adept at it. I never felt that I was adequate. I never felt that I made a success with those little kids.

J: What advantage would a woman have? These are kids, first through eighth grade?

S: They have a motherly instinct. And to deal with children, as you well know or you will find out, that means everything. That's all of it. If you have the good will of the child, he will do whatever you want him to do and the way you want him to do it. If you don't, you're just barking up the wrong tree. (laughs) That's what they used to say.

END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO

J: ...things that your teachers tried to instill in you as a student. Things that were important in life?

S: Oh, yes, all of them. They wouldn't have had a job, otherwise. The school, in that day, and I know from first-hand experience--not only did I go, I taught under those conditions. The first years I taught, the schoolteacher was looked up to with respect and honor as much, and sometimes even more, than the minister was. And my dad told me many times, and I've heard other parents say the same thing, "You go to school and get in trouble and you come home...! There'll be no questions asked, but you're going to be punished again when you get home."

J: Really?

S: And I know, I used to not quite understand that. I couldn't understand why Dad and Mother were always right. But I believed they were. I was taught that. So I dared not question: whatever Dad and Mother said, that was it. And the other thing: it always puzzled me, at that time, was why Dad and Mother never disagreed. If I got myself in trouble--which all kids do--and Dad would tell me that he's going to give me a little flogging for it maybe--which sometimes happens, not too often--my mother was always right with him. And I couldn't understand why, because sometimes

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I was accused when I wasn't guilty. Not too often, but sometimes. But my mother and dad were always together. I never could understand that. But years later, I found out. And that was the rule of the day; that was the way...that was part of life.

J: What did you find out? By being a parent yourself? Is that what you mean?

S: To a great extent, yes. I begin to get all of this, I tell you. I've always been an avid reader. And as soon as I was able to read, I read everything I could get my hands on and especially those things that were kept in the dark. There were a lot of things that kids were not supposed to know.

J: Yes, like...

S: Sex.

J: Yes.

S: And family life and a lot of other things. So the result is you get misinformation, because in a school, you have all sorts of people coming to that school, some come from families that are religiously oriented and some come from the scum of the earth, almost. Well, the result is, you listen to those children that come to those schools--and I found that out more and more when I started teaching. I'll tell you, the first day of school, in a country school, I could go in there and just listen to those kids out there as they mulled around and talked and played, and I could pretty well tell exactly what kind of a home everyone of them came from.

J: Well, what kind of homes...what was the range?

S: What did I mean by that, you mean?

J: Yes. Yes. What kind of homes are you talking about?

S: Well, first of all, whether or not they were readers. Did they like to be progressive, did they come home where they had enough means to do things. Or did they come home and had almost nothing and they had to skimp and maybe wear each others clothes, which often happened. All of those things, there were different levels of life just like there is today. So...and some of these people enjoyed having their kids do things that they considered "smart"--that was the term they used--just because they were more or less like they were themselves. For instance, a parent that used curse-words every time they spoke, he seemed to enjoy having his kids grow up like that.

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J: Yes.

S: And it may seem strange to you, but that's the way it was.

J: Yes.

S: So we had all those levels to contend with. And it took years, and we've still not gotten over it, of course. But the prime purpose of the teacher, first of all, is to instill a desire for knowledge. If you can instill in a child the desire to learn, the desire to know, the desire to improve and go up instead of down, you've got it made. (laughs)

J: OK. Now think back to the kids that were in your class.

S: Yes. You mean when I taught?

J: I'm sorry; when you were a student.

S: As a student. Yes, OK.

J: Yes, when you were in grade school and.... To how many did education have that kind of effect?

S: Well, first of all....

S: What did most people think about education? or do with it at the time?

S: Most of the farming class, which were the majority of the people, thought education was, first of all, unnecessary. They thought, if you had what they called "horse sense," that you could get by. And you could. But get by was all. And that's the reason my dad and my mother, I think, were head and shoulders above most of them, because they saw...my dad always told me...he said, "I want you to get an education so you won't have to work as hard as I did."

That's not the real reason, but that's what he thought.

J: Was this something tied into your religion? Or were your parents just different in that respect?

S: Both. Both. My father's family and my mother's family were both religiously orientated, but they were neither of them...none of them were fanatics, by any means. And they weren't even regular church-goers.

J: Were they...?

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S: They did go a lot and they enjoyed it and they did belong to churches.

J: Were these Quaker? I know you're...

S: No. I'm a Quaker now. No, there was no Quaker church down in this area. And in North Carolina the Quakers were, of course, very prominent and that's the reason I mentioned they founded the town of Paoli. When I came up here... but the Quakers--they called them "the queer people"....

J: The queer people?

S: Yes. Just more or less like the Amish are today and the Mennonites; several other branches. They're all Anabaptists. If you go back into...read into that term, most originated in Germany. So my folks, when they came here...I said my dad rented...or rather, sharecropped for Mr. Apple, and he was a minister of the United Brethren faith. The United Brethren, going back into their history just a bit, that name "Brethren" came from the Brethren that, as the Germans used the term, were people that were one clan or they worked together like they were the same-type people. That originated over in Pennsylvania nearly, oh, late eighteen...late seventeen-hundred, early eighteen-hundreds--I forget the exact time. But anyway, there were two or three sects over there and they were more-or-less like the Mennonites--and the Quakers. but they went under different names.

J: Yes.

S: And, well, they decided they were going to form a church because there wasn't enough of any one of them, so they had to get together. Story is that the old heads--those people, about a dozen of them, I guess--they met in a farmer's barn at one time and they organized. They didn't meet to organize; they met to see if they could get together on other ideas--so they wouldn't clash. So they discussed their religions: I believe so-and-so and I think this way and so-on. And when they got through, they stood there and meditated a little bit and finally one of these old fellows--so the story goes--got up and he said, "Why, there's no difference between you and I--thee and I. We see things about the same and... why, we're brethren."

And he stuck out his hand and they all did that--before they got through. "So, why here we've been quarreling about... making a mountain out of a molehill. We're in agreement. We're brethren."

So they called themselves the United Brethren because they had been, before that, different sects. And that's more-or-less the way the Quakers came into existence too. So here we are even

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yet today doing that. So most of these things had an immense influence.

So in this area there were three churches primarily: there was this United Brethren, of which Mr. Apple was the leader. He started out as a school teacher and then he later studied some scripture and, believe it or not... at that time at Paoli, where the high school is, just on the hill there, they had what they called a Normal School. And that was equivalent to a college; that is a junior college, I suspect.

J: Yes.

S: But they taught Greek, they taught Latin, they taught Philosophy. And Ed Apple went to that school and Ed could read Greek--that's where I got my interest in Greek.

J: From Ed Apple?

S: Yes. And I don't think any of them got as far as Hebrew, but Ed Apple was quite a philosopher. He was a good speaker. He could deliver a sermon; he was eloquent. So they did have a great influence. There weren't too many people, though, that admired that kind of life enough to follow it. And I pride myself in doing that.

J: Yes.

S: Because I've always tried to select my friends as people who could do something for me. I want someone a little bit above me. You know (laughs)...I'll have to give you a little philosophy because this is part of my way of life: You can't push a man up; you've got to pull him up.

J: Yes.

S: So, in order to be pulled, you've got to find somebody who's higher than you are. So don't expect somebody who knows less than you do to push you up. Now, you can do that by force but it's not going to last. So, my philosophy has always been: If you want to be raised, you've got to get somebody higher than you are to do it.

J: So what were the things you valued in your friends, then? What are some of the qualities or...

S: In the Friends church, you're talking about?

J: In your friends.

S: What do I value?

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J: In friends, yes. What are some of the things that you think pull you up?

S: Well, first of all is that sense of responsibility, the sense of fair dealing and honesty, and the third, I'd say, as Tom Edison did: persistence. Edison said, you know, his great invention and all his work... he said, "It's only two per cent inspiration; it's ninety-eight percent perspiration."

And I was a great student of Tom Edison; and I read everything about him. I still think he was one of the most wonderful men. Yet, do you know what his school teacher said? "Take this kid home; I can't teach him anything. He's a dummy." That's what they thought.

J: Yes. Yes.

S: (laughs)

J: Getting back to school: Did the boys and girls sit together and play together?

S: Oh yes.

J: Yes?

S: The one-room country school was never divided. Now, in the early days of education, there were some sects...see most of the schools of Indiana were church-oriented. Our college...we were talking about

J: Earlham, yes. And all....

S: They were all church schools to begin with.

J: Right.

S: And then, of course, the state universities came in; that was something else. So, in the beginning, all of these schools-- I think I'm safe in saying all-- were highly religiously orientated. And each one of them had maybe some peculiar characteristics, but in essence they were just like the United Brethren. They all believed in those things that I mentioned there. They believed in integrity, they believed in honesty and fair play and especially believed in God. There was that center-thing--called whatever you will--that's there. And still is, for most of us. But they didn't quarrel too much about it. Occasionally somebody came in with such a far-right or far-left --they didn't use those terms either but that's what it amounts to today--ideas that they clashed with everybody else. And the

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result was, you had a lot of friction and that first came up, usually, in the church. And quite often it would carry over into the school.

We had an example of that here along about the early 1800s because there was a radical thought came into Youngscreek. And there were three churches down there--I mentioned them awhile ago: the Primitive Baptist, which is the old Baptist, the early...they used to call them Hardshells--that was the word, Hardshell Baptists. And the Campbellites.... (telephone rings, Stout answers it, machine turned off.)

J: Oh, OK, all right.

S: Quite often, some more-or-less radical person came in as the leader or as a preacher or as a teacher even...was usually the preacher. They had...would create a lot of disturbance in the community and sometimes would get families...maybe the children would get close to the parents, and vice versa; all that kind of thing, which was very bad. In that early day there was common practice to debate the thing out, and Mr. Apple out here that I mentioned--Ed, his name was, _____ Moses Ed--he always led the more liberal thinking and the so-called "upper group" against anybody that tried to hold down and become too orthodox or too fundamental.

So the result was, they had a number of debates down at Youngscreek between the Primitive Baptists, first of all, and the Campbellites. And Ed Apple was neither; he was a United Brethren as I told you, so he served as moderator quite often. And these debates became very...just like a big political rally sometimes, where you have a riot. because neither side would give up. And to give you an insight as to how that could happen, the Primitive Baptists had a belief that they called Predestination. You may know about that.

J: Yes. I do.

S: And most of the progressive churches don't believe that way. So they had debates quite often. And those debates, they would get, I guess...I didn't hear any of them actually, but one of my friends that died recently, he could have told you much about.... He said they got so loud and some of those debates down there in the summertime when the windows were open, you could hear them from hill to hill. And shout at each other. (laughs) So they debated that doctrine, they debated the Baptismal Doctrine because that was the crux, really, of the Campbellites. The Primitive Baptists believed in the doctrine of Predestination and, probably even to some extent, Reincarnation. And the Campbellites, for the most part, had differed and split off--in Scotland--from the Baptist and the Presbyterian faith because of their belief that water-baptism was the only sure means of

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salvation and, not only that, it had to be done in a certain way. And, oh, there's several other different...but that was ultimate. So these things were bones of contention and they created a lot of trouble among a lot of people.

J: Did these differences show up in the classroom? Children of the different...?

S: I would never let it show up.

J: Right. You are talking about as a teacher.

S: As a teacher.

J: Yes.

S: No, when I was in school up here, I don't recall that there was ever a time like that in the school itself. But now, the social activities affiliated with the school?

J: Yes.

S: To give you an example of that: quite often in the country school...they used the school and the building and the property as a meeting place, such as a Community Hall or a community.... And one of the things they had quite often was a Hymn Sing; they had all the parents gather in--maybe Friday night, whenever it might be--and they'd all sing songs. A lot of fun; a lot of good times.

J: Were these church songs?

S: Oh, yes.

J: Yes.

S: So, I was going to tell you: we had a blacksmith out in Queen City who was a Campbellite. And he had a big shaggy dog he liked--if you wanted to call him--but he always took the dog wherever he went. So he came to Hickory Ridge one night, up here at our school--and he was in the crowd. He came up to the front seat, sat down--the fifty seats were set in rows, each pupil had his own separate seat. He sat down in the front row and brought that dog in the school house with him--nobody objected, he was a nice dog. The dog sat right down there and just...there he was. No problem at all.

Another man there, who was--I don't know exactly what his religion was, I've forgotten--but anyway, he was a singer. And somebody asked him to get up and sing a solo. So he got up and started to sing his solo. And here sat Rufe--I said was his

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name--with his dog. Well, it happened that this fellow Smith--that was singing the song--and Rufus Willard had had an argument about religion out in the blacksmith shop one day. They quarreled about it somehow. Anyway, they were not enemies, exactly, but they didn't get along. So, as soon as this fellow started to sing--his name was Smith--Rufus' dog (makes howling noises). And the more he'd sing, the louder he got. And Rufe didn't do anything about it; he just sat there and let him howl. Everyone expected trouble cause people knew that Smith and Rufe had had some words...

J: Yes.

S: ...and they knew that neither one of them was going to back down--or they thought so--and they expect they might have a fight out of that.

J: Yes.

S: So that old dog, he howled there two or three times and old Mr. Smith just got up--well, he was already up; and he was up front singing his song. He just walked back to Rufe's chair and he got that dog by the nap of the neck like that, and he just took him to the door and threw him out--and came back and sang his song. Rufe didn't get up and didn't say a word. (both laugh)

And that's the sort of thing that could happen. (both laugh)

J: It's a funny story.

S: Yes. But in the schoolroom itself, after I was teaching at least, I would avoid that just like a snake in the grass. Because, if anything starts in the way of religion...a lot of kids will say, "Ah, my dad don't believe like your dad does. Your dad says we're going to go to hell if we don't belong to his church"--and all that kind of stuff. Well, you better get that out. (laughs) So I would never permit that. Occasionally there were some examples of such....

J: Where did you teach school? Did you teach here in Paoli?

S: I taught in this township, seven of the years. One year I taught in West Baden over there in Northwest Township....

J: Yes. Yes.

S: And the reason for that was political. The teachers were hired, in that day, by the township trustee who was elected by the people. And we had a fellow that was elected trustee, named

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William Grimes, and he had, I think--I'm using my opinion--...

J: Oops. There... (machine difficulty?)

S: That's all right. I think William Grimes was very biased. He was a politician more than anything else. So he and I didn't agree too well on a lot of things. And one of the things that caused me to have trouble with him...he was a great friend to the mother of one my pupils. And this pupil had bad eyes and...in those days you couldn't go and buy glasses and get fixed like you do now. So they were using that as an excuse--and that's the way I saw it, and that's what the superintendent said--to get him out of school. They didn't want him to go to school but legally he had to. They passed a law you had to go till you were sixteen, unless you graduated.

So, I had a letter from the superintendent explaining that this boy had been out of school too much and that legally he would just have to go and he wanted me to notify the parents. So I did. And this old lady, the boy's mother, she told the trustee that I had...that I said that I got a letter from him, on the boy in school. Well, if I said that, it was a mistake; I don't think I did. But I could have said trustee instead of superintendent. But anyways, she tried to make me a liar and he came up and Mr. Grimes took her side. So it came time for the next school, I asked him about a school and he said, "You didn't support me in the election, did you?"

And I said, "No, sir, I didn't." Because I didn't believe in that. Then he said, "Then I can't use you." (laughs) So I lost my school. So that's when I went to West Baden.

J: Well...and how long did you teach at West Baden?

S: One year.

J: One year? And then what happened? And then you came back?

S: They changed the trustee...

J: Ahh.

S: ...after the election and...yes.

J: Evidently a lot of people didn't vote for him.

S: Of course. (laughs) Well, that was a thing, I'll tell you. If you read that book, the story's all in there; that was some election. (laughs)

J: I should just mention: the book that you're referring to is called "I Was There" and you published it in 1960?

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S: '60, yes.

J: And it's basically about...about your family, about your childhood.

S: It's just the same thing I'm telling you, exactly. It's just the history of my life, more or less. I meant for it to be an autobiography but I spread it out more than that. And I decided that if I ever did rewrite it, I was going to inclu...increase the scope to include the family tree of all my ancestors as far back as I could go.

J: Yes.

S: And there's no end to that. I found out after I had written that book that there was much information I got in a few years. And just recently I thought I'd gone back as far as I would ever be able to go because we traced the stock-line back to Nottinghamshire in England in the year 1583...

J: Lord!

S: ...and we had a direct line of dates on up. Not too many months after that--or several years after that, but not too many months ago--I had a letter from one of my ancestors I didn't know anything about--out in the West, he's in the state of Washington. And he has been in contact with a fellow in Wisconsin who was a retired lawyer, and he had delved back into the history of the...of English history and found out that our ancestors in England were actually Vikings, or "Vickings", and they traced their origin back to King Olaf II of Norway in the year 800 AD.

J: Lord! That....

S: So I do need to revise that book. (both laugh)

J: By a couple...by a thousand years or so. Yes.

S: A thousand years. (laughs) So there's no end to that.

J: You had mentioned beforehand, two most important things were the school.... I think you said that the two most important things in the community were the school and the religion.

S: Yes.

J: OK. Can you tell me some more about how religion was important in the community?

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S: Well, first of all...going into religion, I'll have to quote some Scripture maybe. There's a passage in the Scripture somewhere, I think it's back in the...Solomon, that says, "As a man thinketh, so he is."

J: Yes.

S: I keep that in mind always. It's what a man thinks, not the Truth...it is his criteria of what he's going to be.

J: Yes.

S: So, the religions here--as well as everywhere else, I presume, but I know it's true.... Among people that are unlearned, for the most part, and among people who are mentally lazy...they don't want to take the time to dig into things. With that class of people, they're going to come up with some beliefs--and they think that their belief is synonymous with the Truth. Therefore they'll pass it on as being the Truth. So the result is, you'd find two men of different opinions and different beliefs that say that they're both right and yet they disagree. Well, you can't have two Truths unless they agree. So that's a type of...you're dealing with ignorant people. And religion, it seems, even today, the _____, the people _____ for these--what I call--off-brand-types of religious things. For the most part, they are just non-thinkers; they just don't think or they wouldn't get into this kind of mess. So we had that _____ here because, as I told you, I think, in 90 percent, or more than 90 percent, of the farming-class of people here didn't attend school even beyond the fifth or sixth grade, maybe.

J: This is of your parent's age?

S: Yes.

J: OK. How about of your generation? How many years did kids go to school?

S: Well, the law required 16 years.

J: Ah, there was a law by that time.

S: Yes, along about 1920...first World War, along in there. But it became more-or-less the trend and the main-course in life for every kid to get a high school education. And, of course, that's the time that I came into the picture. But out of my class, up here at Hickory Ridge, there was only three in my class when I was in the eighth grade.

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J: Only three pupils?

S: Yes. Yes, the whole school was about twenty.

J: Lord!

S: Eight grades. You see, each grade couldn't have many. Out of those three, I was the only one that went on to high school. The other two quit. So...and that came about gradually because it wasn't too many years following that till almost everyone, at least, started into high school. Not too many graduated for a long while; now, then, nearly all of them do graduate.

First of all they have the busses; they don't have to walk or depend on parents. When I went to high school, my mother or my dad--usually my mother--took me with two horses hitched to a buggy from here to Paoli on Monday morning. And they rented a room up there for me and I "bached"; I cooked what little I could...

J: Really!

S: ...till Friday. Then they came on Friday evening and got me and brought me home; I stayed down here over the weekend, they brought me back on Monday morning. And with a horse and buggy to get from here to Paoli on a cold winter day--when the days were short--we had to start sometime at 5:00 o'clock. It was dark. So that's the way I got my high school....

J: Did it cost much to go to high school? Speak of the school bus...

S: Cost nothing....

J: ...here it comes right now.

S: Yes. Yes. They're bringing the other grandchild. His mother's not home yet. I guess he can get that door.

No. In money, no. It was just... Hello there (laughs)

J: Hi, there.

S: Yes, he's been to school. That's a first-grader.

J: This is...

Child: Hi grandma.

J: ...Eli. (All talk together with child. Machine turned off.)

What was I going to ask you? Say, if you...did you go to

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church every Sunday?

S: Not every Sunday, no. When I was in high school, I was always interested in music. And therefore I had everything they gave in music; I took courses and I sang in the operettas and I played in the orchestra and all that. And that meant, quite often, I did stay over the weekends because we'd have programs quite often, on maybe a Sunday night if it was a church program--and all that kind of thing. So I always took all the music I could get in high school as well as in college. And when I went to college, I took a teacher-training course, because that was my bread-and-meat; I had to have a job. So I didn't have too much choice in subject matter, but again, I took as an extra-curricular activity everything I'd get in music in college...wherever I was.

J: Was music something that was played at home? Where did you get your interest in music?

S: Oh, yes. But again, music was an unsophisticated and unlearned type of thing. People say, you know, you "played" music. Ever notice that word "play."

J: You play music, right?

S: You don't "play" music. If it's serious music, you work at it. So, to me and to all the people here, they spoke of playing music, which meant they'd thumb an old guitar...and I learned to do that. And I learned to play the fiddle just "off-hand," so-called. And I think it's a valuable way to do it. But I think you should be able to read music, and all. So, we had....

END OF TAPE TWO, SIDE ONE

S: ...or dance. And my dad was an expert dancer, believe it or not. He could have got on the stage, I expect, if he had attempted to. But the old country dances, as a rule...there was liquor. They...everybody went to the dance...you usually had a bottle of liquor on his hip--and my dad abhorred that. So the result was he actually refused to let me attend the dance. I never went to a dance in my life except for eight years later. He probably said, "If liquor's there--and you're not gonna get in." And as I told you, he got kicked out of school because he used tobacco. He never wanted me to use tobacco and I never did.

So, the music of that day was very crude and as far as the songs were concerned.... For the most part, what they really liked, and what they wanted and what they did was a comedy that

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was in the words. So they had funny songs which was no more than just a poem that was set to some little jingling tune. And we still have a lot of that. Your rock-and-roll and a lot of these things--if you'll notice the repetition in the words--it's not music really. I don't think. (laughs)

So I always had an ambition and I acquired that ambition from two or three sources: first of all, as I said, my dad liked that type of music; my mother did too. But they knew nothing about it. And he bought an old violin--my dad did--before I was born, I guess; he had it long years ago, anyway. But he never learned how to tune the thing. Unless you've got a piano, which nobody had-- you had to pump organs, some of them, not very many of them. You've got to tune the violin by ear and you've got to learn what a perfect fifth is, because a violin is tuned in fifths. Well, there's an old fellow named Frank Riley, he'd been along with my granddad in the Civil War, and he could play the fiddle well enough to do the dances. And he used to come over once in a while and he'd get hold of that old fiddle my dad had and, boy, he could just make it rattle. And I thought, "Boy! That's something I'd like to do." So my dad--I was just a kid then--my dad said, "No, you'll break it. You can't have that fiddle." And he kept it hanging on the wall.

But as soon as I started into high school--or a year or two before maybe--he found out I was interested enough in it that he began to let me have it. Well, the first thing I wanted to do was: not so much to play the thing as such, but I wanted to know why and how music was performed because, to me, it was just like reading in a book. You could read a newspaper and get a story; you could read music and get a tune. So I wanted to know how it was read.

Well, there was a family named MacIver that lived over around French Lick. And when the big hotel at West Baden was first built--about 1900--they hired an orchestra down there to play for the guests. And it wasn't a dance orchestra; it was a concert orchestra. It was just like a little Symphony. They had some of the best musicians they could get--out of New York, Chicago, music schools, everywhere. Well, I didn't go; I couldn't. But this MacIver family...there was one fellow, he was an old school teacher and an old bachelor, but he hung around there and he learned quite a lot from one of the violinists in that orchestra. So he, I guess, got a lot of help from him; I don't know how much help he actually got but anyway, it inspired him. So he learned to play the violin; and he learned all the positions and the fingering and he learned to do it. And, boy, the first time I heard that man play, I _____. I wasn't even in it. It was so far over my head, I thought, "Oh, boy. Here's something I've got to get...I've got to know this."

J: Hmm.

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S: So, we went over here to Apple's chapel church and they'd bought a new hymnbook--a little paperback book for about thirty cents--and we had one old lady over there that could read notes. She knew music and she played the pump-organ and led the songs. And she had a beautiful contralto voice. Well, that part-singing... boy, that hit a famous chord, to me. So, I bought a copy of that book--or my dad did. And I brought that songbook home. And one of the songs that they sang over there almost every time they had a church was "In the Sweet By-and-by." Did you ever hear that old hymn?

J: No, I don't think I have.

S: (Sings) There's a land that is fairer than day. Da-da-da da-da-da.

Well, anyway, I knew that song; I knew it, I could sing it by heart so to speak. Maybe. But when I saw those notes on that, I knew there was a connection.

J: Yes.

S: I knew those notes indicated the tones but I couldn't figure out how. Well, of course, in a hymnbook--as you well know--you have two lines of notes: above, soprano and alto and then bass on the bass clef. Well, strange as it may seem, I figured--or tried to figure--that the notes or pitch were determined by those two black dots (or noteheads). It didn't dawn on me that that was an interval and that there were two tones there. Well, I couldn't make it jibe. And I worked on it...nobody knew, even my teacher didn't know any music of that sort. They knew the _____ scale; they could sing Do, Re, Mi, and so on--that was all. But my aunt, who was my dad's youngest sister, bought a piano--one of the first in this country, I guess--and they moved it in down here to my grandfather's; and I'd just moved over there to live with him. And in that...with that piano there was an instruction-book. And, of course, it was part of the piano study. But it had the staff, it had the name of the notes _____, and I got hold of that and...lo-and-behold; why yes, there it is. So I got the principle right quick. So, after hearing this McIver fellow a time or two--and I went to school with his...he was the uncle of the family, really. And they all played; they all knew notes and all that. It just set me afire to do music. So, I got a group of kids together down here, of my age--some of them a little older or younger--and I took my little knowledge that I got out of that piano-instruction book and what the McIver's could tell me about it, and I started teaching those kids to play instruments. (laughs) So we had a kid-orchestra.

J: And this was during high school?

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S: Before high school.

J: Before high school.

S: Yes. But it occurred only in the high school and clear on up. And, even today...

J: Oh, yes.

S: ...this is the result of ignorance.

J: So, when you started high school, what were your main aspirations?

S: My aspiration, first of all--as I mentioned--was to be like Tom Edison. I liked science and I liked invention and especially, I was wild about chemistry. And they didn't teach chemistry, but I did take Physics and General Science and everything I could. So, I wanted to be a chemist and, like Tom Edison, I wanted to have a laboratory. I'll tell you another little kiddish thing; it's so kiddish I'm almost ashamed to tell you.

J: Oh.

S: But, when I was in grade school--fifth and sixth grade, I'd say--I used to get the Sears-Roebuck catalog down. They had that big catalog then. And Sears, at that time, carried a lot of things that you don't see in the catalog anymore. For instance, they had a long list of books. You could buy nearly all the classics out of Sears-Roebuck. You could get the Illiad and the Odyssey; you could get James Oliver Curwood's Zane Grey, Gene Stratton Porter--all of them. And they had all kinds of things in the way of electrical devices, as far as they were known: telephones, electrical bells, batteries. I used to take my notebook--like this--I'd make an order, which I knew I could...I didn't have a dime. I'd make an order, out there, for a library. I was going to have a library that had all these classics in it; it was going to have an encyclopedia and a big dictionary--because we did have a big dictionary in school. And so, I was going to have a library. Then, when I got into music...oh boy!

J: Hmm.

S: I had to have a concert home for that orchestra. Cause I was going to have an orchestra, no question about it. (laughs) So, in my kid's mind...I wish I'd have kept some of them. I had that list of books that I was going to have in my library.

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J: Yes.

S: And I had the list of music that I wanted...that I had the instruments. Because the kids couldn't furnish the instruments, a lot of times. And, even like Edison and some of the others, I was going to have an observatory up there on that top floor, with a telescope that I could study those constellations they used to tell me about. I had to know their names, too. So, I dreamed in my childish fancy that that was going to be on top of the high hill, right over here on my granddad's farm.

J: Yes.

S: And it was going to look like an old English castle because I'd studied the book of Ivanhoe by Scott and, boy, I fell for that. Very heavy. (laughs) In fact, I fell for everything I read, I guess.

So, I was going to build that out of stone. And imagine, maybe a six- or seven- or ten-, twelve-year-old boy...fifteen maybe, getting stone to build a castle? (both laugh) Just utterly ridiculous, but I... I... stayed with it. To this day I tell people, "Here. This hill is just about as high as the one over there." We're 800-feet above sea-level, right here. I call my place Valhalla, did you know that?

J: I was going to ask you about that.

S: Yes. This house represents, pretty well, a carbon copy of my childhood dreams. I have most of those things right here. (laughs)

J: That's wonderful.

S: Well, Valhalla... again, in years later, when I got into more serious music, I first heard of Richard Wagner.

J: Yes.

S: Richard Wagner, you probably know, is the old German composer. And I first heard of him through one of these descendents of this McIver family, that I told you about. One of the grandsons--about my age--studied cello at the Conservatory in Cincinnati, back about 1916 to '18, along in there. And he came back with such glowing accounts of things. And among others, the Victor Talking Machine Company--that's what they called it in those days--had recorded some of Wagner's works. And the greatest--and I still think--the greatest music ever composed, was done by Richard Wagner--as well as Beethoven and some of the others. But Richard Wagner, as again you probably know all about this, composed what I consider his

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masterpiece, they called the Nibelungen Ring...

J: Yes.

S: which in German means the...from mythological history of Germany and all that Teutonic area. Well, anyway, in the Nibelungen Ring, which consists...a lot of people say they're operas, they're really not; they're music dramas. There's four parts and it takes four consecutive nights to portray the whole thing. So he starts off--Wagner does--with the Rheingold.

J: Yes.

S: And the Rheingold...have you read about that?

J: Mm.

S: The Rheingold has to do with the legendary history--and the mystical part of it--of the Christian world. It actually begins...the first record of the Prelude to the Rheingold depicts a creation in the world in music. And there's so much philosophy and everything else, I'll take the rest of the day to talk about it. (laughs) It starts out with one tone; and you hear that one tone for 135 measures; just one big bass tone--E-flat, way down there.

J: Yes.

S: And that corresponds pretty well to what the Orientals call the Om...

J: Exactly.

S: ...or the Aum...

J: I was just thinking that.

S: Yes. ...which was a minor tone and therefore the big bells over there in Tibet, and all that. That all involves all that. Well, anyway, the Rheingold takes up the first day--which is the mystical part, the gods and all of that. Then comes the Valkyrie. The Valkyrie or Valkurie were the children of Wotan and Wotan corresponds to the Greek Zeus or the Roman Jupiter; he was god of the world. He had nine daughters and they were called Valkyries. So the Valkyrie has to do with this one Valkyrie, Brunnhilde, who disobeyed Wotan by helping the wrong man in a battle. (laughs) I'll not go into detail.

But anyway, Wotan with his nine children--the Valkyries--lived in Valhalla, which was on top of a high mountain and there...it was just like the stories of Greek and Roman

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mythology. So, of course, I fell pretty much in love with that. So I decided, "Well, here I am. On a high hill. I know the music and I'm all wrapped up with the legendary history and so on. So what better name than to call it 'The Home of the Gods.'" That's what it is.

J: Yes. Yes.

S: So, there's where Valkyrie comes from. (laughs) Valhalla.

J: Valhalla, yes. Yes.

S: And then the other two parts of the story.... The next part, the third part, is Siegfried, which has to do more-or-less with the man--that's real life. Siegfried was, of course, a man, a human being. And his wife...he fell in love with Brunhilde, who Wotan had banished; put her in a ring of fire, if you recall, out there on that mountain....

J: Yes. Yes.

S: And she lay there for thousands of years. (laughs) And then, finally, the last part of the Ring is the Gotterdammerung, which means "the downfall of the gods," because Valhalla was finally destroyed because Wotan himself turned out to be sort of a wicked-old creature. He got things in a bad way. (laughs) But I love Richard Wagner. He was quite a character. If you ever read his biography, you'll find out he was banished from Germany because of his political ideas.

J: Well, his music enough caused quite a stir.

S: What?

J: His music alone caused....

S: Oh yes. Yes, yes, yes. Oh yes, and even yet a lot of people can't stand it; a lot of people criticize it because, they say, it is militaristic. Hitler loved it.

J: Yes. Yes.

S: That's not saying anything either; I didn't admire Hitler, at all but.... Oh yes, yes. So your anthropology, really the study of people, is the essence of creation.

J: Yes.

S: And, if you go back to Socrates...remember when the kids came to him, his one word to all of them is, "Know Thyself."

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J: Yes.

Another person: Time out? (all laugh)

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