

We are out here at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Jess Caster out on the road to Shannondale here and this is August 3, 1977, and this interview is being made by Bob Wernle and John Bowerman of the Montgomery County Historical Society. We are going to interview Jess Caster and Ione Caster, his wife.

RFW: All right, let's start out and ask Jess a few questions here. Jess, how old are you?

JC: I am 93.

RFW: When were you born? When and where were you born?

JC: I was born in 1884 the 31st day of May.

RFW: Whereabouts?

JC: Right here on this ... not this house but on the same place.

RFW: Had your family owned this property before you were born?

JC: My father was born here in 1841.

RFW: On this same farm?

JC: Yes sir.

RFW: Was it in this house?

JC: No. I was just three years old when this house was built.

RFW: Where was the old house that was here?

JC: Why we tore it down. It was back there. It stood right out there and of course we tore it down.

RFW: Jess, had your parents lived here too? Had they been... you say they had been born here?

JC: My father was born here yes. Mother was born up here on .. place up here on the Shaverplace.

RFW: Was she a Shaver?

JC: Yes she's a Shaver.

RFW: But she was born in this vicinity too?

JC: She was born up there yes.

RFW: Do you know the dates of their births? About when and what year were they born?

JC: I can't tell you that. I don't know.

RFW: How long has this farm been in the Caster family then?

JC: My grandmother come down here, she married a Beck, about 30...

RFW: A Beck?

JC: A Beck, she married a Beck. They had five children. Then she was married to my Grandfather Caster in 1840. My father was born in 1841.



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RFW: Where had those people come from?

JC: My mother's folks come from Pennsylvania. They was Dutch. My father's come from Kentucky.

RFW: Did they meet here in Montgomery County or did ...

JC: Mr. Robbins, he settled up there where that big house burned down up here. Where the big rock is you know. You know where that big rock is across here. Sugar Place we call it.

RFW: All right.

JC: He settled there and that's where my mother, she came down there then, and she married Beck and come down here.

RFW: About what year was that then?

JC: I can get you an abstract.

RFW: Oh that's all right we don't need to go into it right now.

JC: '30 or '31.

RFW: 1830's?

JC: Yes.

RFW: The farm has been in the Shaver, I mean in the Caster family name ever since then?

JC: Yes.

RFW: How many acres were in the original Caster farm?

JC: Well there was 160 acres.

RFW: Let's turn to you Mrs. Caster. When were you born?

IC: In 1888.

RFW: Who were your parents?

IC: Well my mother was Della Mount, William Mount's daughter and my father was Alva Tribbett.

RFW: Were the Mounts related to the Governor Mount?

IC: Oh yes.

RFW: What was the relationship?

IC: Well my grandfather and Governor Mount were brothers.

RFW: They were brothers.

IC: Yes.

RFW: And that was the Governor and your grandfather were brothers.

IC: I well remember being over there the night that word come that Governor Mount had died.

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RFW: Were you alive when Governor Mount was governor?

IC: Hell yes!!

RFW: Do you remember the days when ... did you ever go over there to the Governor's Mansion?

IC: Yes I visited over there.

RFW: How old were you then?

IC: I suppose I was about 8 or 10 years old or something like that. I remember going over there with my mother.

RFW: Do you remember anything about the visit? Anything you did?

IC: Eric Butler had a tricycle, grandson, and I had never seen one or ridden one. I about rode that thing about all day I think.

RFW: Over there at the Governor's Mansion?

IC: Yes.

RFW: Where was the Governor's Mansion in those days? Do you remember?

IC: Well it was due north of here on the Overcoat Road.

RFW: Oh you mean visiting his house then.

IC: Yes.

RFW: Let's see, your father's name was Tribbett and your mother was a Shaver ..

IC: Oh no.

RFW: Your mother was a Mount. Where does the Shaver come in from Jesse's side of the family? When did your parents come to this county?

IC: Country?

RFW: County.

IC: Oh they have always been in this county.

JC: Mr. Young when he come down here, your grandmother's father.

IC: My grandmother's father came from Boone County. We have never been very far away.

RFW: Were they early settlers of Montgomery County as Jess's family were or were they later?

IC: You mean my grandparents?

RFW: Yes.

IC: I 'spect... I don't hardly know. It was about the same time I 'spect with them, they lived over there on the Mount place.

RFW: The Mount Place, where was that from this place?



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IC: It is just over on the Overcoat Road, the road north here.

RFW: Incidentally, ...

IC: There was two there and granddad's farm. They were close together.

RFW: While we are at it, I think that's an interesting name, Overcoat. Jess can you explain that got to be Overcoat Road?

JC: I did it.

RFW: You did it? What was the origin of that name? Why do they call it Overcoat?

JC: This was Lebanon Pike and that was the Overcoat Road and I just can't tell you now.

RFW: I thought ... That is kind of an interesting name. Do you happen to know Mrs. Caster?

IC: No I don't.

JC: Do you know?

RFW: No I don't know. I was just asking. Do you know John? What is the story on that?

JB: The story that was written up was this overcoat had been left there on a post for so long and finally it got it's name by the coat hanging there. This was written up in the Indianapolis News about a year ago.

RFW: Oh was it? Jess, let's go back to you and where did you go to school around here?

JC: Well, I went down here to .. Do you know where the park is down here?

RFW: The little wayside park?

JC: The old schoolhouse is torn down but it was made into a church Kingsley Chapel Church.

RFW: What was the name of it?

JC: It was made in the barn.

IC: What was the name of the Chapel?

RFW: Kingsley Chapel?

JC: Yes.

RFW: That was right down there where that little wayside park is.

JC: Right over there. Of course the road has changed now but it was back in there. Where the church was there is a gravel pit digging out. Where the old barn is the schoolhouse was, right there.

RFW: What grades were in that school?

JC: Eight. Up to eight grades.



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RFW: Was it a one room schoolhouse?

JC: Yes, just one room.

RFW: Do you remember who the principal was? Do you remember who the teachers were?

JC: Well I can remember the first ones. Ed Slavens has been ... I want to go back and I don't want to wreck it. I want to tell you, it got to be .. you know, they got to go to school up to twenty years old, big fellas and the Irishman lived out here on the hill, O'Connors, and they had some boys that was unruly so they put this Ed Slavens in there to try to .. and he straightened them out. That's my first school. I went to that school. Of course there was Mrs. Corns, Fred McAlister..

RFW: Corns? How do you spell that name?

JC: C-O-R-N-S.

RFW: Corns. Okay. She was a teacher was she?

JC: And then there was Fred McAlister was a teacher. Mrs. ... let's see ... George Jackson, did I name him?

RFW: No you didn't.

JC: George Jackson and his daughter taught two years there... My mind ain't like it used to be.

RFW: Was there just one teacher in the school all the time?

JC: That's right.

RFW: You all had the same teacher in eighth grade.

JC: Yes.

RFW: How did they handle that with all those kids in there? How many kids were in the classroom?

JC: Well there would be about twenty.

RFW: All different grades?

JC: All different grades, yeah.

RFW: Did you go on to high school after that?

JC: No.

RFW: Just eight grades.

JC: Eight grades. See I had no way of going to town and I couldn't go to Crawfordsville. No place to stay down there. I had to come home and go to work on the farm. When I was fifteen years old I came back here and took over the farm.

RFW: So you went to school until you were fifteen years old.

JC: Yes.



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RFW: All right, do you remember any incidents from there when you were in school?  
Do you remember anything that happened other than those tough kids that were there? Tell us something about some of your experiences in school down there.

JC: Oh, I don't know. I was a janitor at church for five years while I was going to school.

RFW: Janitor of the church?

JC: Janitor of the church. I got \$5.00 a year for taking care of the church.  
\$5.00 a year and that was big to me.

RFW: What kind of a church was it?

JC: Baptist church. They would have a type of meeting there every winter about two weeks and they would have big crowds come in there, you know. They would join the church and bring them up here by the bridge and baptize them.

RFW: Right up nereby here then.

JC: Right back of the homeowners down here.

RFW: It would be Little Walnut or what is that creek out there. What creek is this that runs behind.

IC: Little Sugar isn't it?

RFW: Little Sugar?

JC: Yes.

RFW: Little Sugar Creek. They would baptize them in the creek down there?

JC: Yes.

RFW: Did they have a regular minister down there or did he come?

JC: Yes they had a regular one. He would come ... He had a church over at Mace. Stephenson is his name .. for several years. A man named Stephenson.

RFW: Stephenson.

JC: Yes. Then there was Riley come along later. Preacher Riley that winded it up. He's the last one.

RFW: Preacher Riley. About when did that church go out of existence? Do you remember? How old were you when that church went out of existence?

JC: Oh I don't know. About ...

IC: I remember going down there to service with Aunt Lyda Mount.

JC: I know it but I 'spect I was about 20 or 25 years old something like that.

RFW: When did you and Mrs. Caster meet? Had you known her all your life when you got married?

JC: Hell no! I met her about the first time she come with her aunt down there to the church. They came out of the church, you know, and that's about the first time I ever saw her. Of course, I've known her ... been with her for several years.



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IC: There was a young man come out of a truck to take Aunt Lyda horse, take care of the buggy and there was this shy boy standing out there in front and Fred Martin he says, "Jess here's a girl for you too." I was just a kid. He took off around behind the church.

RFW: He was scared of you huh?

JC: She was different then.

RFW: Jess, when were you married?

JC: It will be 66 years next month, the 6th of next month.

RFW: That would put it at about 1911.

IC: 1911.

RFW: 1911. How many children did you two have?

JC: Just four.

RFW: All right. Give us the names of the children and what are they doing now?

JC: Carolyn's the oldest.

RFW: And who is she married to?

JC: She married ...

IC: Paul Spurgeon a minister from ..

RFW: Paul?

IC: Spurgeon. S-P-U-R-G-E-O-N.

RFW: And he's a minister from New Castle?

IC: He was then.

JC: He was minister up here for awhile then he went to New Castle where they got married. Then I've got a second daughter that lives in West Virginia. Her name is Hoaglin.

RFW: Hoaglin. What's her first name?

IC: Margaret Jean.

RFW: That's Margaret Jean. What's her husband's name?

IC: Raymond.

RFW: And what does he do?

IC: He worked with a car buyer. He's retired now.

RFW: What's the next child.

IC: Mrs. McCarthy, Elizabeth McCarthy that lives in Crawfordsville.

RFW: And she married to James McCarthy. She teaches school doesn't she?

IC: Yes out in New Market.

RFW: The youngest one is Abe is it?

JC: Yes. He's the youngest.

IC: Finally got a boy.



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RFW: Jess, you went to school here. You mentioned the fact that you couldn't get into Crawfordsville. Wasn't there an interurban line that ran by you here that could take you in?

JC: There was nobody around here that went to school any place. I just couldn't go. It was too unhandy. No place to stay down there.

RFW: Didn't the interurban come through here one day.

JC: It came here in 1900 didn't it?

RFW: It was not until 1900?

JC: That there was .. of course I had two sisters you know, they went to town but they was younger than I was.

RFW: I didn't get that now. What were your sisters names? I don't think we covered that did we?

JC: Millie Sadla and Ursula Ward.

RFW: Ursula Ward is now dead but ..

JC: No.

RFW: Oh yes, she's still living out at the ... Millie is still alive isn't she?

IC: Yes.

JC: She's still living out on the farm but Ursula is at a nursing home.

RFW: That's right, I'm sorry yes. You have no brothers?

JC: I had a half-brother. My father was married twice and he married a Sutton and they had one boy and she died. Fred was about 10 years older than I was.

RFW: Whatever happened to him?

JC: He got killed in the Army.

RFW: In World War I?

JC: Yes. He joined the Army. He had been in 25 years and he got killed in Texas. He always carried a right smart amount of money on him and maybe somebody shot him, we don't know. We could never tell. We went down there and tried to find out but couldn't find nothing out down there.

RFW: Now did he have any children?

JC: Yes he had a girl. ~~Any of his kin living?~~

RFW: Any of his kin living.

JC: Doris is dead. She's been dead several years.

RFW: Tell us about the interurban that went out through here. You say that went through in 1900 about?

JC: Well I can't tell you. Let me get that contract. Do you want an exact date?

RFW: Oh no just about when it went through.



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JC: I've got in on the deeds in there.

RFW: Did you deed land to the interurban for the right-of-way?

JC: Deeded to them as long as it had in it interurban. Then when they vacated interurban, it came back to us. Didn't charge nothing. Just deed it to them.

RFW: Did you use that interurban to ride back and forth to Crawfordsville?

JC: Many of times.

RFW: Where did it go beside Crawfordsville?

JC: It turned around there in Crawfordsville you know. The interurban station used to be down there at the old YMCA and it had car barn on West Main Street you know.

RFW: Went out West Main.

JC: Yes. The interurban, we used to ship alot of stock on the interurban.

RFW: Where would you ship it to Indianapolis or where?

JC: Indianapolis since we had a station over here. Took it to Indianapolis.

RFW: Would it go through Lebanon?

JC: Yes Lebanon.

RFW: Did they have to switch the car then at Lebanon when it got there.

JC: Oh no, we just went straight in.

RFW: Oh you would?

JC: Two or three cars would take it right in to Indianapolis to the yards.

RFW: Was there a bunch of passenger service on this line?

JC: Oh my yes.

IC: Yes lots of people.

JC: Lots of travel.

RFW: They used this rather than the other route did they?

JC: I dont' know about that. Of course the Ben Hur went up through Mace and I don't know about that. This here went on for several years. Of course I think it went on in the 30 something. It done a big business for a good long while.

RFW: When did electricity first come into this area?

JC: I can't tell you about that.

RFW: Did you get your first electricity off of the ..

JC: Tipmont.

RFW: It didn't come from the car line out here?

JC: No. Tipmont was organized over there. It come up and stop here. We was the end of the line up here.



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RFW: I thought maybe that electricity had come in with the Interurban.

JC: No no.

RFW: In other words, you wired out there but you couldn't do anything with them.

JC: That's right.

RFW: You say you went to church down here at this Methodist church down here and that went out of existence and where else did you go to church?

JC: Shannondale. We went over to her church. She belong to Shannondale and I don't belong to a church. She belongs to the Shannondale church. Her great-grandfather started that church up there at Shannondale. This old rock up here is the first sermon he preached in this country. He preached off of this old rock up here in the pasture.

RFW: What was his name?

JC: Young.

RFW: What was his name Mrs. Caster?

IC: Clayburn Young.

RFW: Clayburn Young. He was, I take it, a Presbyterian preacher.

IC: Yes.

RFW: Where did he come from?

IC: Up in Boone County is all that I know. My grandmother she was born up there in Boone County.

RFW: And he was a relative of yours?

IC: You mean Clayburn Young?

RFW: Yes.

IC: Yes he would be my grandmother's father, Clayburn Young was.

RFW: When was that Shannondale church formed Mrs. Caster?

IC: Well I'll just have to go get the ...

RFW: Well we'll just turn this off.

RFW: Okay let's start over again. Mrs. Caster has brought out two programs. One is for the 76th anniversary of the Presbyterian church at Shannondale and another one for the Centennial program for March 17, 1931. The Shannondale Church was founded on March 17, 1831, and in the front of the Centennial program is a picture of Clayburn Young the first pastor and founder of that church. Now, go ahead Jess you were going to say something there.

JC: Well I was going to tell you about it rained and rained all day and we got out and my sister went out over her and picked it up and I had to go get his car out of the creek. I come down here long about 4:00 o'clock and Dr. Peacock



JC: had drove back and forth along the road here ...

RFW: That's Dr. Peacock the older Dr. Peacock?

JC: Old Dr. Peacock. I had seen that boy down there getting a horse out of there and heard his mother say, "I'll bet he's going right across the creek." So I went down there and just as I got down to the front of this house I heard Mrs. Bowen (?) throw up her hands and I looked over and seen Dr. Peacock, the horse getting up and that old truck of his going down the creek and there he was out in the creek holding the wire. Homer Jackman, who was a good swimmer, and I was raised in the creek, knew how to swim like a duck, so I went out there and he said, "Come get Dr., he's got the cramps." I went out there and the water stuck me right up here.

RFW: Around your chest?

JC: Yes. I went out there and got ahold of his coattail, he had on a raincoat, and he says, "Let me have him now." So they went up and got a rope and we pulled him around and I got loose and said, "Let's go." They pulled us around got us out and he had the cramps and he couldn't stand up. We lived up here in the little house then so we called up there and brought him up there and he ... she washed and I had my toes all wet and dressed him up and he says, "Got any whiskey?" This is the thing I wanted to tell you. I always kept a little whiskey on hand. I had a little bottle, you know, pretty good size bottle and he drank all of this whiskey, drank it down. I told him I hated to ask. She sat the chamber down by the couch where you live in and you couldn't hold all the mud in your hand that he had spit up.

RFW: Is that so?

JC: Spit up. Along around 10:00 he said, "I want to go home." So I took him home. I have always been proud of that deal.

RFW: You rescued his life. You rescued him. Saved his life.

JC: Yes.

RFW: Did ...

JC: You talk to Fred down here and he'll tell you all about it.

RFW: Now about when was that Jess? What year was that about? Do you know?

JC: No.

RFW: Well, about how old were you at the time?

JC: Well I was married. I had been married about ... let's see I had been married about six or seven years.

IC: We still lived up in the little house, Jess.

JC: I 'spect it was about ... fifteen or sixteen.



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RFW: You were still in school. Just out of school maybe.

JC: No. We were married.

RFW: Oh fifteen or sixteen.

JC: Yes.

RFW: He must have been riding a horse wasn't he?

JC: I was riding the horse.

RFW: You were riding the horse. He was riding a horse too?

JC: He was riding a horse and the horse got tangled up in the wire and fell down and that throwed him off you see and he went on down the creek and caught them wires and he went over it and Charlie Williams, a big tall fella and Homer Jackman, they tried to go out there and he just washed right down the creek. Homer says, "Go get that thing, he's got the cramps!" So I went and got me a stick and I went out there and the water stuck me right under the arms. I went out and got ahold of him and went up there to Al Moore's got a rope and throwed it out to me and so I got ahold of him and I said let's go. He let loose and they pulled us around. He had to help him up because he couldn't stand up.

RFW: I don't understand why he was going across the creek. Wasn't there any bridge there?

JC: Yes there was a bridge there but the water ran over the road.

RFW: Now those wires what would they have done? What wires would there be out there?

IC: Fence I reckon.

JC: Probably going to take them to Darlington, down in there. He said he was going across there and this fella would take them over home.

RFW: Yes but I don't understand what wires would there have been over the creek. Wires, you said he caught some wires. There wasn't any electricity out there was there?

JC: No, the fence.

RFW: Oh I see. When did you say .. Tipmont .. When Tipmont came out here you got your first electricity. When did you get your first telephone out here?

RFW: Would it have been before electricity or afterwards?

JC: I don't remember when Bell did bring it out here.

RFW: You remember you had something to do with the Shannondale Telephone Company.

IC: Yes.

JC: I was a director up there for forty or fifty years.



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RFW: Well now, the Shannondale Telephone Company was in here before electricity was.

JC: Oh yes.

RFW: Those were magneto telephones were they or what?

JC: We had telephones that went out through the woods at the first then we went straight up the road.

RFW: Were you one of the founders of that telephone company.

JC: Yes.

RFW: Let's go over that bit about the telephone company. I think you said they ran a telephone line, just one line, to Lebanon. Then you said when James A. Mount was elected Governor what did they do?

JC: They brought the other line off of Crawfordsville and across through the woods.

RFW: Up to his house?

JC: Yes.

RFW: Was that before the Shannondale Telephone Company was formed?

JC: Yes.

RFW: When was the Shannondale Telephone Company formed?

JC: 1900 wasn't it?

RFW: What happened? Did a group of farmers get together and decided they had to have..

JC: Yes. Kind of poles just common poles you know. It had one wire that come across ... go through the woods and then to Shannondale.

RFW: Where was the exchange up there at Shannondale. The exchange was there wasn't it?

IC: Yes.

JC: The first change was down there. Never did change that did they.

IC: I don't think they did. Right down, that house in front of the church.

JC: Right in front of the church. That's where the change is, exchange. Bert Stewart lives there now.

RFW: Who lives there?

JC: Stewart. A fella by the name of Stewart lives in the place now.

RFW: S-T-E-W-A-R-T?

JC: He bought the property. When we sold out the telephone company, we sold it to him.

RFW: Who was the operator of the telephone? Did you have just one operator all of those years or were there several?

JC: Oh no. We had alot of them.



IC: Different ones.

JC: Browns, Charlotte LaFollette, Oldheimer, oh I don't know, alot of them.  
Slim Stewart. Oh I don't know.

RFW: Would the family live right there in the house and handle the telephone.

JC: Yes.

RFW: Did the telephone operate all hours of the day or did they cut it off at night?

JC: No, you could get them anytime. Just ring up there and you can get them anytime.

RFW: Now what about when you first built those lines. Did all of you farmers get out and do the work yourselves or did you hire somebody?

JC: We done it ourselves.

RFW: Did you get paid for that?

JC: No, no. Everybody just wanted a telephone. First telephone we had was from here over to my grandmother's. We had a little line just from here to there. We had that a long while before that.

RFW: That was a private telephone?

JC: Yes, just for my mother and Grandmother Shaver.

RFW: About how far distant was that?

JC: 3/4 of a mile.

RFW: You strung some wire out over the farm.

JC: A wire up there, yeah.

RFW: That was long before the telephone formed.

JC: Yes.

RFW: John why don't you take over and ask a few questions here.

JB: Jess I am very much aware that James Mount was buried at Oak Hill Cemetery. Do you know any interesting things about Oak Hill or any interesting stories?

JC: No I don't. I don't know much about Oak Hill and my father and mother is down there, my brother. I don't know much about it.

JB: You don't know any stories connected with this cannon that just inside the Oak Hill gates do you? There's a cannon on a cement pedestal type of thing. The grave of a Birchfield who's a Civil War veteran. You never heard any stories about that have you?

JC: No I don't know anything about it. Anything I had there were my father and mother's. He was buried first and we bought a lot out there and that's the first I know about it.



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JB: I noticed that there is a plaque on this big rock that you talked about a while ago. Does that plaque ... Is that memorialized first sermon there? What does it say?

JC: That's where the first church. There is a plaque out there about the first sermon preached in this county.

JB: Who was instrumental in putting the plaque on this rock? Do you know?

JC: Who?

JB: Who was instrumental in seeing that this plaque was placed on the rock? Did you have something to do with that?

JC: Well Mrs. Sawyer decided I think. I think my sister had something to do with it.

RFW: Millie Sadla?

JC: Yes. She could tell you about that.

JB: Mr. Wernle talked to you. I was wondering who ... back in these days you were speaking of Horsethief Association was pretty common in parts of the county. Was there ever a Horsethief Association or detective agency in this area?

JC: I had one up in Shannondale.

IC: My Grandfather Mount belonged to it, I know that.

JC: Yes. They had a pretty good organization in Shannondale. When I was a little fellow I know that a fella stole a horse over here in, oh I would say about New Market. They caught him way down here. Well, I don't know where they caught him but they hung him right there.

RFW: When you were a boy?

JC: I was a little boy.

RFW: You don't know what his name was?

JC: They only said .. Pa said, "They hung that horsethief." My father told me but I don't recollect that. I was just oh seven or eight years old. That's the horsethief. They ought to have it now. They ought to have it now to hang these fellas.

JB: In those years, were there ever any former slaves that came here to work on farms? Any negroes that had been slaves or children of slaves that came here to work?

JC: Any negroes?

IC: No.

JC: Did you say negroes?

JB: No.



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JC: No there were no nigger here. Of course, there was a man that lived up here that had a nigger work for him. Wilson had a nigger work for him. Of course, I can't tell you anymore than that. Only what I hear and talk about.

RFW: How many years ago was that Jess?

JC: Well that's been about twenty-five years ago.

RFW: Oh recent then.

IC: Yes.

JC: He had a darkie working for him and he and he come down here we'd .. he had an old slave running around and he come down here and he disappeared all at one time and so we don't know what has become of him but Mr. Wills lived down here where the church is and she tore the house down. He said he thinks he killed him. This man, Miller, ...

IC: I don't think he knew anything about it though.

JC: This man, Wilson, was awful high-strung man and he had a nephew from St. Louis work for him and he beat him up and he had to go over to a neighbor's, just to show you what type of man he was now, he might be the one that killed the nigger, he went over to a neighbor's, Stewart, and he wanted him to take him to Crawfordsville. So he said, "I'll go down and get in that barn and you come around and get me and I'll take me to town, you see?" He was all bloody, he beat him up. So I don't know. I just figured he might have killed the nigger.

RFW: Mrs. Caster, while you were out of the room, we were talking about a painting we noticed up here on the wall. Jess said that maybe one of your relations painted that.

IC: My Aunt Nellie Mount painted that.

RFW: Now was that the Governor's wife?

IC: No. It was my grandfather's daughter. I have a better one hanging in the hall. One I think is better painting.

RFW: Painted by the same lady?

IC: Yes.

RFW: Was she an artist?

IC: Well, what you would call amatuer. She had a few lessons I think, but she just did that. Just a kind of a talent I think.

RFW: Have you got any old pictures of the house around here hanging up? The house as it used to be? Any pictures of the house?

JC: The old schoolhouse?

RFW: This house.



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JC: We've got to have a picture of this house.

IC: This has never changed much. It's stayed about the same.

RFW: Do you remember when the first automobile started coming in around here?

JC: Yes but I don't remember what year it was in.

IC: I can.

JC: Terry Oglewhite bought the first one.

IC: The first automobile I ever saw was at the St. Louis World's Fair and there was women running all around there, everybody looking at it, of course. And then it wasn't long till there was one here in Crawfordsville, Tillery Albright.

RFW: Albright? A-L-B-R-I-G-H-T.

IC: He had one of down there.

RFW: What kind of a car was it? Would you know?

IC: No I couldn't tell you that. He running around all over the country, you know, scaring all of the horses to death. Then my cousin, Clarke Tribbett, bought one and I rode in there soon.

JC: John, I want to tell you a story ...

IC: And he came out and took me a ride in it. Oh my I thought that was fast. Seems like we were going twenty-five miles an hour.

JC: I want to tell you a story about Alex Tibbett, Jim Robinson and any of our friends lived over here and they had three children ...

RFW: Why don't we get this on here. Why don't we get him on here and go back to this.

JC: Otis and Dale and left her to sell cars for Cummins down here in Crawfordsville, down about where the, right west of the bank there, the drive-in bank, they bought three cars out here on Sunday, Christmas, they ordered dinner over there and \$1,000. for three cars. \$1,000. Lee Hood bought three cars out there for \$1,000.00.

RFW: He bought three cars all at one time?

JC: Yes, one for each children.

RFW: What kind of cars were they do you remember?

JC: Fords.

RFW: What year would that have been? It must have been in the Depression.

JC: No just when the Model-T started up.

RFW: Golly! I didn't know they were that cheap except in the Depression.



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JC: Did you see in the paper a while back what they were worth? Henry Ford raised the price. It was in the Journal.

RFW: About \$6,000.00 now.

JC: I think it was \$290. and some odd dollars what they got for them.

RFW: Let's go back here to Mrs. Caster. You were telling about the first car you remembered and you said that some relation of yours bought one soon after this Albright.

IC: The first one I ever saw was at the St. Louis World's Fair. I was around then and looking at that. Then Tillery Albright got on down here in Crawfordsville was the next one and then my cousin over in Darlington...

RFW: What was his name?

IC: Claude Tribbett.

RFW: Tribbett, okay.

IC: He bought a car.

RFW: Do you remember what kind that was?

IC: I 'spect it was a Ford. As I remember it, it looked like it surely was. It was just a little one-seated car and come out and take me and my sister a ride in it. My goodness I thought we were going to destruction. I 'spect we were going about, possibly, twenty-five miles an hour on the road.

RFW: Were there any paved roads by then?

IC: No, not very many. It was just gravel road then.

RFW: Where would a fella like that buy a car? Did he buy it in Crawfordsville?

IC: Well, I couldn't say. Would you have any idea Jess? Where would Claude Tribbett would buy a car?

RFW: Where did he buy it?

JC: Over in Indianapolis.

IC: He did?

JC: Yes. Albright got his over at Indianapolis.

RFW: Jess, were there any automobile dealers in Crawfordsville in those early days?

JC: No.

RFW: Not any. What were some of the stores you remember down there in Crawfordsville back in the early days. Some of the business that were there.

JC: Oh I don't know. I used to go down there with my father who drive down in the old buckboard. Warren Pickett sat there ... Warren Pickett had a grocery store right where your Ben Hur Building is. The the Robbins' house was the hotel was right west of it. Then Jim Ensley had, right across the street there where that ... Ensley had a big livery stable there.



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RFW: Lindsley?

JC: Ensley, Jim Ensley.

RFW: Is that where the Bank Cigar is now?

JC: No. Right there where that there .. I don't know ... Who does own that there? It used to be Dell. Owns that place right on the corner there.

RFW: Where the post office used to be?

JC: Yes.

RFW: Where Goodrich is now.

JC: Yes.

RFW: What was that? Was it a livery stable?

JC: Ensley's livery stable. Down on Market Street right about where the Journal-Review goes out there, big cab company there. I can't recall it right now. They had cabs. They would haul people up there to the hotel. What's that fella's name. Big hotel down .. big cab company ~~any~~ there. He had cabs, you know, set up outside and had the cabs haul them in there.

RFW: Were they horsedrawn cabs?

JC: Oh yes. Everything is horsedrawn. The old fire station there ... I used to go down there and watch them. I knew them well.

RFW: Where was the fire station?

JC: Right where the Journal-Review is. That's where the fire station ... they had a couple of horses there and I'd go down there and watch them. Of course, Pa always talked of them. We used to monkey around over at town. I just monkeyed around and meet him at a certain time. He talked Mr. Elston .. Mr. Elston had the bank right there where the wallpaper store is, you know. That's the old Elston Bank building is.

RFW: Where the Crawfordsville Paint and Wallpaper Store is now?

JC: Yes. And then of course on down there Armstrong had a harness store down there west of ..

RFW: Who had a harness store?

JC: Harley Armstrong. Armstrong.

RFW: Armstrong. Where was that, the harness shop?

JC: It was down there about where ... right west of the 5 and 10¢ store they had part of it that building. Warren Picks was on the corner there where the grocery store .. there with the clothing store. Warren Picks on there and Harley Armstrong had the harness store right west of him, making harness. Great big hides there. I can see them yet cutting big hides and making harnesses.



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RFW: Harness.

JC: Yes.

RFW: Where was that harness store? Would that be now?

JC: That was along about 95, something like that. Jim Leon run the grocery store right up there by Abe.

IC: I remember barn hill and Dan Pickett.

RFW: Where was that Mrs. Caster? Where was it?

IC: Well, it was up here on East Main. Would it be where the Ben Hur Building was ... is now?

JC: What?

IC: Pickett?

JC: They was on the corner you know and moved down there where the Penny's Store was.

IC: The what?

JC: They moved down where Penny's store was. Bill Carr built this house here. That's that back there. Bill Carr and his son built that addition of this house and then they went down and built the Ben Hur Building.

RFW: Bill Carr? C-A-R-R?

JC: Yes.

RFW: They built an addition onto this house right here?

JC: They built that room here. That used to be the kitchen there and that room there and then the fireplace you see. It didn't suit my mother so he built a kitchen on there. They built this here and then went down and built that Ben Hur Building.

RFW: That was quite a big job compared with this job.

JC: Yes, well.

RFW: Were they local fellas?

JC: They lived in Crawfordsville. Bill and Ivy Carr.

RFW: Bill and Ivy?

JC: Yes, Ivy Carr.

RFW: That's the first I've heard about who built that building. What year was that? Do you remember? Well, I guess we don't need to know that because we can probably check back.

JC: They had the Robbins' house right there where the loan company is in there.

RFW: Where Union Federal is now?

JC: They had a pretty good hotel there. That's where that cab man ... what's his name, had them cabs. I had a friend of mine down there and I would go down and get a bowl here and there in that hotel. I would bowl there.



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RFW: In the bowling alley in the hotel?

JC: Yes.

RFW: That would have been the Robbins' house.

JC: Yes.

RFW: What were some of the other businesses down the street?

JC: Oh I don't know.

IC: Well, Tannenbaum's.

RFW: Where was that Mrs. Caster?

IC: It was on further west on Main Street on the south side.

RFW: What kind of a store was that?

IC: Men's clothing.

JC: Tannenbaum's lived right down where the ... right west of the alley there. West of the ... where Ping's used to be. Right across there. It had double story in there.

IC: That was on the south side. Who else?

JB: Do you remember a Fisher's drug store?

JC: Yes.

JB: Where was it?

JC: Fisher? It was down ... that's where ... where was that?

JB: Would have been around Horner's Corner or in that area?

JC: Where?

JB: On North Green Street? Would it have been down there?

JC: No.

JB: The corner where the used car ...

JC: No.

JB: place is.

JC: Where the used car is, down there, used to be a big tie-in stable there. You tie your horses in there, the livery stable in there. Then a fella had a barber shop in the front end. He had a barber shop ... been up front of us. The guy would ties your horses in there and right where this here up here by the railroad there where the company is there, that's where Cline used to have his tie-in station. Alot of changes.

JB: Someone had told me Fisher's drug store was down there. It wasn't then?

JC: Fisher's drug store... I just don't know .. believe I recollect that one. There was ... a Brown's drug store down there.

RFW: What was the name of that?



JC: Brown's.

RFW: Where was that?

JC: Ted Brown's store was right down there where ... right there where that there Sport Goods is. I think that maybe if drive west of the bank there on the north side.

RFW: Oh, where the Sportsman Shop is.

JC: Yes.

RFW: What about the banks that were in Crawfordsville in those days, Jess. What banks were there?

JC: Well, there was the First National, the Citizen's Bank and then they started the State Bank, the Elston Bank. Four banks I guess.

RFW: Now the State Bank was where. Over where the wallpaper store is?

JC: That there was the Elston Bank.

RFW: Where was the State Bank?

JC: It was right west of where the new Elston Bank is. They changed that all in there... the State Bank.

RFW: Now were there other banks around the county besides these?

JC: Well, Darlington had two, I know they had one over there. Then they started two. Well I don't know. I didn't go much around that a way. Of course they had one over in Mace and Linnsburg.

RFW: At Linnsburg.

JC: Yes they had one at Linnsburg, right on the corner there. Charlie Linn run that.

RFW: Charlie Linn?

JC: Charline Linn.

RFW: Did you ever trade over at New Ross?

JC: New Ross? They didn't have no bank over there then. When they started that there one ... bank over there, I used to go over the elevator you know. Whitecotton's elevator. Harris finally wanted it and they got that one. They started a bank there. Jim Porter and what's-his-name started that one over there.....

RFW: Now, Jess, you were County Commissioner for awhile weren't you?

JC: Nine years.

RFW: Were you also on the County Council?

JC: No I was never on the County Council.

RFW: When were you commissioner?

JC: In the '30's. It was in the Drepression time. I was commissioner.

RFW: Did you ... What projects did you build while you were County Commissioner?



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JC: Well they built the Oak Hill Road. You know you used to go up where they built that road there and they built the road up this side of Darlington that goes to the Boone County line. Then we built .. another road we built, there was two roads we built. Here's the best thing that I am proud of. I've got to brag on myself. When I went in there they had two Democrat commissioners and I was a Republican. They had three Republic commissioners. They had Elmer Hester, Thompson and Bert Dunbar.

RFW: Hester or Hessler?

JC: Hester. Then they finally ..next election they changed everything, of course, and put in ... I was .. had two Democrats and .. Bert Dunbar, they kicked him out. He was a Republican and the Democrats kicked him out you know. I was a Republican so I wanted .. they picked a man to take his place and they picked Swank. I know Swank and maybe you have heard of him.

RFW: Swank?

JC: Yes. And he went out there and Roy Martin that lived out there by Whitesville, he was Democrat and Billy Graves lives over there by Linden, someplace over in there. So Roy says, "That put Seth in there" and he said, "now you" to Seth, "you and Jess run it. You are on the same telephone line and you run it and I'll back you." There was a nice fella. He got killed. So we went out there and as a caution they had a fifty some-odd patients out there. I'm going to brag on myself right now. This is what I'm bragging on. They had fifty some-odd patients. Well, there was a butcher shop on East Main Street. Do you recollect Adair?

JB: I don't.

JC: Adair..

RFW: A-D-A-I-R?

IC: Yes.

JC: We raised the hogs and raised their cattle out there to that .. to kill a beef and then Seth was going to get a quarter whenever he wanted it to use up and go back ... We would give him the hide just for killing the beef. We killed our hogs and raised our garden stuff and we had dairy there. The boys let him milk the cows and he take it down to the decreamery and shrupp it for butter you know, couldn't sell it but he'd take it down and shrupp it for butter. If you go down and get the records, he is 35 or 36, I think that's it, the old records, you see where that come out in the black. The



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JC: county come out in the black.

RFW: This is running what, the hospital or the county farm?

IC: County farm.

RFW: County farm.

JC: Yes county farm. So we run that and of course, I give some fellas a job and they beat me. Well I guess it's a good thing they did. I was there nine years. Under Paul Stump and I was under Bob Tinsley and I don't know who all was in there then.

RFW: These were auditors you mean. Paul Stump and Bob Tinsley?

JC: Yes. Ernie Bower was the Sheriff.

RFW: Alright ...

IC: Well they ... because Jess kept the Democrat in out there why then they need next time.

JC: They've got seven or eight out there at that County Farm now and its costs about \$30,000.00 to run it. That just shows you the difference in sixty-six years.

RFW: Do you remember you were County Commissioner. Were there ever any .... Was there ever any excitement in the county government when you in there? No embezzlements or anything like that?

JC: Everything went smooth. Here's the way I played it. I was Chairman a couple of times, about half Democrats and half Republicans. I hired them and she didn't even know that I was independent. A fella didn't do any business why he ain't got elephant. They were afraid to sell it when I had a good hog pit. I'm going to tell you another one. I may have done wrong but that Court House down there (END OF TAPE)

RFW: Okay Jess, why don't you tell us that story about the Court House again while you were County Commissioner.

JC: Well it WPA time and they come around ..

RFW: This is WPA time? Okay.

JC: I was in that mess all the way through. So they come out and down there on ... I says, "Everybody else wanted to build it and I was chairman of the Board"and I wouldn't let them do it. I called Gus Wray and we went up into the Court House and looked it all around and looked it over and he says this will be standing 75 years from now. It is well built and everything is just right. So that's the reason we don't have no bigger Court House or a new one.



RFW: I think the next thing John was asking you about the fairgrounds and started to tell some little story about the fairgrounds. You said you had been President of the fairground one year.

JC: Yes I was President.

RFW: They had horse races out there?

JC: Oh yes. The horse races were pretty good races.

RFW: How often would they the fair?

JC: They would have it every fall along about the first week in September.

RFW: Was it used other times of the year for other things?

JC: Everything there, they would have a big fair there.

IC: They never had anything else much other than the 4th of July celebration later on but I don't remember much else.

JC: They had a good fair there several years. Everett Pavey and Bob McClamroch really killed the fair. They killed it really. Several fairs going on but they killed that fair.

RFW: Why do you say they killed it? What did they do?

JC: They were getting all of the money out of it. They were getting the money out of it. That's what I think it was.

JB: Pavey had a race horse didn't he?

JC: What?

JB: Didn't Pavey have a race horse?

JC: Yes.

JB: Or maybe more than one.

JC: Walter Breaks was one of the directors too, out there. I will never let that die. Walt would never let that die. Walt kept that a goin'. Seems best that I go in with some other fellas and buy it but I didn't do it.

RFW: Jess, did you ever do much traveling in those early days?

JC: No.

RFW: You didn't get out of the county very much?

IC: No.

JC: I played baseball. I was a pretty good one if I have to say it. We had a good ball team up in Shannondale.

RFW: What teams did you play?

JC: What?

RFW: What teams did you play?



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JC: Oh we played Mechanicsburg and the ... I don't know several teams around here.

IC: Darlington.

JC: We had several teams around. Lebanon. Charles Fulton ... I was second pitcher. We had a pretty good team.

RFW: What was that hard ball or soft ball?

JC: Hard ball.

RFW: It was hard ball.

JC: I don't like soft ball.

JB: Is this the time, Jess, that Ladoga had a good ball team? Was there some pitcher from Ladoga that actually made it to the Majors? Do you remember that. I can't think of his name.

JC: We've played them too.

JB: Who was the pitcher from Ladoga who made it to the Majors, maybe the only county that played in the Majors. Who was that do you remember?

JC: No I don't know now. We played Ladoga. They had a good team down there. Curry was one of the pitchers down there.

RFW: C-U-R-R-Y?

JC: Yes.

JB: During the period that you lived Jess, you talked about the Horse Thief Association. This was the period that the Klu Klux Klan was active in Indiana. Were they ever through Montgomery County. Klu Klux Klan ever have any activity here?

JC: No not that I know. They had a state meeting over hear in the woods back in over here and had a man down here at the road motioning .. showing them over there, but I don't know. They had a big burning cross over there. Anderson owns the place now. They had a man down here at the crossroads and guiding them over where to go. No there were several of those Klansmen around here. I know several of them. Bill of Shannondale came down here and I said no. I don't want nothing to do.

JB: What were they against? What were the Klan in Montgomery County opposed to?

JC: I don't ... get your money, that's about all I ... get your money. They never done nothing but lots of people join them you know. Of course, it was \$10.00 to get in. I didn't pay much attention to them. I know they had one west of Crawfordsville and went across down there one down there in Clarke township but I never paid no attention to them. I wasn't interested.



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JB: When Mr. Wernle talked to you about this farming operation back when you were going full blast with horses, how many horses did you have at one time on the farm, Jess?

JC: I used to have sixteen head of horses and mules. Heck, before I got into the tractor business, I had three or four hands and I had about sixteen head of horses and mules. All I did was keep up.

JB: Did these hired men stay with you or did they board with you. Did they come ...

JC: No. I had one boy here that worked for me for twelve years, fourteen years Grover did. When ... before that I had Willard Stockton and he had four boys.

RFW: Stockton? S-T-O-C-K-T-O-N?

JC: Stockton. His daughter is a janitor at the Court House now, Reba Stockton.

RFW: S-T-O-C-K-T-O-N.

JC: She's a janitor at the Court House now.

IC: Well, but she married an English wasn't it?

JC: I just hired an extra hand at harvest time, of course, we'd get the horses and then get out cut a few of the corn. Willard took care of the horses. We had to have four horses to binder and he'd cool them off. I'd cut the wheat, they alternated in the hot of the day and we'd get out about 5:00 o'clock and we'd have it in mind you know. We'd just try to shock it up and we'd get it shocked up by then. They didn't work when it was hot you see.

JB: What did you have to pay your hired hands in those days, Jess?

JC: Well I paid them \$1.25 or \$1.50.

JB: A day, not an hour.

JC: Yes. I wanted to tell you another thing about this house. We built this house and mother boarded the hands and they got \$1.75 a day for carpentering this house.

RFW: For building this house?

JC: Building this house, they got \$1.75 a day. They would get up and work of a morning. She'd get breakfast ready then they'd work after supper. \$1.75 a day.

RFW: Goodness me! That was about a 14 hour day then.

JC: Yes.

IC: She would have to cook for them all and keep them going.



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RFW: That was your mother though. Not Mrs. Caster, but before you were married.

JC: I was just a kid about 3 or 4 years old.

IC: All the wood that's in this house come off the farm.

RFW: What kind of wood is it Mrs. Caster?

JC: Every stick in here ... All that siding on there is boards two foot wide popular. That's the sheeting and all of it was hauled to Crawfordsville and hauled it down there and they had it sold in Shannondale. All of this oak and everything is hauled out of there. They had a plane mill there where Horner's place is. We had two or three plane mills there. Then they done the planing for this house. Made all of them little ... shutters and everything.

RFW: What about some of these little towns around here. Mrs. Caster, do you remember anything about little towns around here? Did Shannondale ever amount to anything as a town?

IC: Well it did in a way for a little town. Jess could tell you all the things they've had in it. Business that is. It's so much more than they've had in late years. They had a blacksmith's shop and they had ...

JC: They had two blacksmith's shops.

IC: Did they? Was there two?

JC: They had a big saw mill up there. I'll but in on her.

RFW: That's all right.

JC: Morgan Johnson had a saw mill there right where that old truck is there. They sawed lumber there. They had three or four teams. I remember they'd saw and haul it to Crawfordsville, mostly railroad stuff. They would saw that. Morgan Johnson and Frank Johnson owned it. Then they had a quart shop up there where you could buy your quart.

RFW: A quart shop? What do you mean?

JC: A quart shop you would buy a quart of whiskey.

RFW: Quart of whiskey.

JC: Then they had a butcher shop up there too and a barber shop. Dr. Burrows had a doctor's office there. He was the man that brought me into this county.

RFW: Burrows.

JC: Yes. He was a regular medical doctor.

IC: Yes he was a good doctor too.

JC: He had a long beard. Crippled man. He was on a crutch. He was my doctor for a long while.



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RFW: Now did .. Was there a dentist up there?

JC: What?

RFW: No dentist at Shannondale?

JC: No.

RFW: Just a doctor?

JC: They had two grocery stores there for a while. Lee Young had a grocery there. Then Dunham started a shop down there.

RFW: Who?

JC: Dunhams. They had the barber shop.

RFW: D-E-N-H-A-M.

IC: D-U-N-H-A-M.

RFW: Oh Dunham. D-U-N-H-A-M.

JC: Yes.

RFW: What else did they have there?

JC: Bud Dunham was a barber.

RFW: A barber shop?

JC: Yes. I don't know what they did have now, but there are several houses torn down from what there used to be. Old Dr. Shannon down here at Crawfordsville, his father used to be a doctor up here in Shannondale, his grandfather, great-grandfather.

RFW: Was he before Dr. Burrows?

JC: Yes. Shannondale was named after him.

RFW: Oh.

JC: Shannondale was named after him.

RFW: Where did those doctors get their education? Do you know? Did they go to medical school?

JC: I reckon, I don't know.

IC: They had to, but we don't know. I don't think they were strick about it then like now.

RFW: Was there ever a time when they had two doctors at Shannondale at the same time?

JC: No just one doctor.

RFW: So Dr. Shannon's grandfather would have been before this Dr. Burrows then.

JC: Yes.

RFW: Was there ever any doctor after Dr. Burrows?

JC: Yes. Kennedy.

RFW: Dr. Kennedy?



IC: Canada.

RFW: How do you spell that?

JC: C-A-N-A-D-A.

RFW: Like Canada the country.

JC: Yes.

RFW: Did ...

IC: They would come in and stay a little while but they didn't last very long. I can't remember the names of the others.

RFW: What about this little town of Beckville out here. Do you remember anything about Beckville?

JC: We used to have a saw mill over there. They had a dandy store there. They had the grocery store over there and Peterson run it.

RFW: Peterson?

JC: Yes. Peterson run it. They done a big business there a long while and I used to haul tile from New Ross and Old Mrs. Bowman had a carpet .... she wove carpet. She had a little house right along the road and I can see her yet. That's Frank Bowman's mother. Had a schoolhouse there and I don't know what all they did have. There have been four or five houses tore down since.

RFW: Did they ever have a doctor at Beckville?

JC: No.

RFW: Were there any other little towns around?

JC: No not as I know of.

RFW: Did you ever do much trading up at Darlington?

JC: Yes I used to trade at Darlington right smart. Bank over there. They had three or four good grocery stores in Darlington at one time. I want to tell you a little story about one of the Larricks.

RFW: Pense Larrick?

JC: No, his uncle.

RFW: His Uncle Larrick. What was his first name? Do you know?

JC: What was Larrick's name? Anyway, he had a bell in there and 8, 10, and 12 coal oil. You go in there and one of them. 8¢ you could go and get it out of the same barrel. If you wanted 12¢ they'd get it out of the same barrel. That's a fact now. He sold salt piled up along the .. outside there. He sold salt by the barrel.

RFW: What .. Back in those days when they had the whiskey shop, did they have a barrel that they dipped into and got the whiskey out of a barrel? How did they do it?



JC: I don't know. I didn't buy any of it.

IC: I think they did because I can remember going with my aunt over in Darlington...

JC: When they raised the barns they did. When they raised this barn down here and this one over here they had whiskey they just ... a barrel of whiskey then. Everybody come him and they raised them by hand you know. Them big beams place there and up. Of course that was before my day. I heard them talking about it.

RFW: Did they ... Do you remember the Chautauqua? Did they have a Chautauqua Society around here? Chautauqua where they ...

JC: They didn't have them up in Shannondale.

IC: No. The only ones I .. my sister and I went to Thorntown to the Chautauqua. Of course that's over in another county. We went over to there for that and I told Jess a while back I said, "Now knowing that we never hear any good speaker or hear any good music was to go to the Chautauqua." You could go and hear pretty good talent then. Now you can just turn that on and get ....

RFW: Do you remember going and hearing anyone famous at the Chautauqua?

IC: No. No, I don't.

RFW: I suppose when you went over to Thorntown you got to go in the horse and buggy, didn't you?

IC: Oh yes.

JC: I made several trips up there. She'd graduated from high school in Thorntown you know. I used to drive up there to see her. It's a long drive in a horse and buggy.

JB: Ever find any arrowheads on your farm Jess?

JC: What?

JB: Ever find any Indian arrowheads on your farm as you would farm?

JC: Yes, lots of them. Somebody got the most of them and picked them up one day. I don't know who it was. We find quite alot of them. Most of them is .... I've got an Indian axe out there in the pantry now. No, I was coming back from Thorntown, little young when I was living over there where fella by the name of ... anyhow he had alot of pea fowls and ...

RFW: Alot of what?

JC: Pea fowls. The used to be up on top of a barn and I'd come along and they'd squawk you know. They'd make the darnest racket you ever heard.

IC: That was the young.

RFW: What were the pea fowl?

JB: A pea fowl is bigger than a guinea isn't it?

JC: Oh yes.



RFW: How do you spell that?

JC: They would spread ... great big pigeon is a pea fowl.

RFW: Can you think of anymore John? Maybe we better go and let them have their supper.

JB: Jess wore out here. When did Governor Mount's house burn, the old homestead? Hasn't been too many years ago has it?

IC: It's a good many but I can't tell you.

JB: What was Governor Mount's background that got him into politics? What had he done?

IC: Well I couldn't tell you that. He was just a farmer over there. You know Jess how he happen to get into politics?

JC: He's sort of ... farm meetings where they have ...

IC: He was a good speaker.

JC: He was a good speaker. He was an awful good speaker. He would go down to these conventions around that a way ... my mind's bad ... anyway he made lots of talks. Shivley ran against him. Fella by the name of Shivley ran against him. We were shucking corn along the road and they go around in their wagon for the rally. There would be 8 or 10, 12 wagons driving around and they would go to Shannondale, Darlington and around to rallys. And he come down there and I think Pa got up said, "Governor Mount." I would help him sell corn.

JB: Did you ever hear Jim Watson speak?

JC: Jim Watson?

JB: Yes. He was what, United States Senator? Senator from Shelbyville?

JC: No. I don't recollect that.

IC: I remember the name.

JB: He is the fella going to the farm meetings like you said Mount did.

RFW: Well I guess we're about played out here.

IC: We haven't been much help. We just got too old to remember.

RFW: Well this is the ... We're just collecting this stuff and we'll put it together and someday it will mean something to somebody.

JC: What?

RFW: Someday it will mean something to somebody.

JC: The storm blowed it away. He played the board of trade.

RFW: Charlie who?



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JC: Charlie Windle.

RFW: How do you spell it?

JC: W-I-N-D-L-E. And he come over here and he drive around his family and say "Buy wheat! Buy wheat!" He'd pay the board of trade in Lafayette. He made alot of money at it at one time. So he come around there, then he got around and said he killed himself. I can kill myself. I can do it. That's when they took his wife and daughter away from him.

IC: Well...

JC: They took his wife. They took her to an asylum. I got her out of the creek here one night. She got out. Charlie that runs the switchboard up there and he called me about 3:00 one night and he says, "Mrs. Windle's house is a latern and Charlie says she's gone and doesn't know where she is." I went over down here and she's a big powerful woman. She's awful stong and Albert Henthorn. So they come up here .. so we went down here, they have been workin' on the road all year and I seen where she had gone across there bear feet, across in the mud. I went down to this gravel pit down here and went around that and she wasn't in there so I didn't give it up yet. I went down back of that old schoolhouse and there she sit out in the road in there. She had mud up to her arms and she had a rope tied around her arms and her hands and I says, "Come on Mrs. Windle you'll take cold in there." She said, "Who is it?" I told here and she said all right. So I holered at the boys and they come over there and Sam Wray cut the ropes and they took her up there and I come back home, of course. She took .. anyhow they took her away. I wanted to tell you about Charlie and he lived down here on where Martin lives and so he told him the same thing. Fella that stayed with him, I never thought ...she had a gun but Homer had I guess but he says, "I can kill myself. I ain't afraid of it." Roy Alman lived there with him and .. so he called me and I was about ready to go to town on Saturday and he says, "Come out here, something happened to Charlie." So I went out there and run down to the barn, cow barn, and put the gun right here and shot himself in two. Shot himself in two.

RFW: Did you ever have any murders around this place?

JC: No.

RFW: You don't remember any robberies or anything like that?

JC: No. There hasn't been anything around here that I know of.

RFW: Didn't have any crime out this way at all?

JC: What?



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RFW: No crime?

JC: No.

JB: Jess, do you know Hanibal Trout?

JC: Old Mr. Trout? Yes. He's a man that gave me some good advice. He says, when one day I was out playing with his Washer, that was his grandson you know, and he was sitting up there on the porch and he said, "Come up here young man, I think you'd make a good farmer. I want to give you a little advice. When everyone else runs, you stand still. When they stand still you run like the North Wind."

JB: Was he a pretty interesting character?

JC: He was a good man. He was commissioner for 12 or 15 years. Eunice Carr down here was a Democrat and he get ...

JB: Hanibal Trout signed his name ... signed his checks Yours Truly, Hanibal Trout, his checkbook.

JC: That's how he would give thanks at the table.

JB: Oh yes. Why don't you tell Mr. Wernle that.

JC: They asked him to give thanks at the table and he used to say, "Yours Truly Hanibal Trout."

RFW: He lives around here somewhere?

JC: I've seen funny things happen to this country.

IC: That big house that sits back of Uncle Sherman's place, that's where they lived.

RFW: Whereabouts is that from here?

IC: It's about ... You know where Sherman .....

JC: back there. I used to go down there and his father and mother were buried out there. They had a brick toilet and they had a little place, oh right smart place, little cemetery there, that's where his father and mother were buried and they took good care of that you see. Trout and his wife were buried there. Of course when Hanibal died, Mrs. Trout, he died on one ... Mr. Trout died on one day and three days after that his wife died. They buried them over at Mace and Sherman took them over there and put them all together. So he took that out of there. Hanibal Trout.

JB: The Hanibal Trout rest park right? This little rest park is the Haniable Trout rest park?

JC: Yes. Named after him. He used to own that land there .... He had a lot of hogs out east of us. They would go over to the creek and get water. The hogs were right close to the church there. That's where the hogs would go to water you know.



JB: Did you ever drive hogs to market?

JC: Yes we used to drive them to Mace lots of times. We'd feed them back here back south here about ... back end of this farm and get up and drive them to Mace. I drove several years hogs to Mace. They were great big then. I drive them to Mace lots of times. I drive down there through Uncle Jake's place and on the road, drive them over to Eggers'. Berry Linn was the buyer.

JB: How many miles would that be?

JC: Oh about 4 miles.

RFW: What would they do when they got them to Mace?

JC: Load them there.

RFW: Load them on a train?

JC: Oh yes. Big Four haul alot of hogs. Etters had hogs there for years.

RFW: Etters? How do you spell that?

JC: Edwards?

RFW: E-D-W-A-R-D-S.

IC: You know who all the Edwards is.

RFW: Ollie Edwards from Mace. Well John, we've gotten alot of stuff here.

JC: Of course we've got this interurban. Of course we used to haul them in wagons and trucks you know. Hogs in trucks or wagons you know. Get up and get down early. Of course when the road gets slick to haul the hogs we'd have to take ... (END OF TAPE)

RFW: Tell them what you did with the horses shoes. You were going to tell us that. Go ahead and tell about that.

JC: We would have to take them to the blacksmith's shop and have them sharpened you know and have them so they could stand on the ice. We would have to take the horses several times a year to get them sharpened. It would get slick you know and they would fall down. They used to have lots of ice. Of course you didn't have no ... had the roads you know you slid right then. It didn't have salt on the road and it would get slick. Come sleet or something and it would get slick.

JB: What would a team of horses cost in those days Jess?

JC: \$1.50.

IC: You didn't hear.

JB: If you bought a team of horses, how much would you have to pay for a team of horses?



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JC: I paid I think the best I paid ... I bought that team at a sale for \$450.00. Big strong team. Of course the mules, they was about \$400.00. You could but much for \$100. or \$200. Of course I raised alot of the stuff. I raised several myself. I raised lots of ...

JB: Ever raise mules or donkeys?

JC: Yes. I used to have alot of mules.

JB: Did you have a donkey? Have your own male?

JC: Oh no. Baker had that over here on .. I like to work mules.

JB: Mules offspring of a mare and a donkey right? Am I right?

JC: What?

JB: Mules an offspring of a mare and a donkey is that right?

JC: Yes.

RFW: Well Mrs. Caster we haven't given you much of a chance to do much talking here.

IC: That's okay.

RFW: Thought of anything?

IC: It don't matter very much.

RFW: Well should we cut it off John?

JC: by that time old Dr. would be in his seat and the boys and away they would go.

RFW: That was Dr. Griffith?

JC: Yes.

RFW: He was the doctor and he ...

JC: No, that was just his name and people called him Dr.

RFW: It was a volunteer fire deparment wasn't it?

JC: Oh no, he was a fireman.

RFW: Oh there was a regular fire department?

JC: There was a regular department.

JB: The fire would be what steam pressure? How did you get the pressure for the water? Would it be steam? Did they have hydrants?

JC: They had hydrants yes.

JB: Did they?

JC: Yes. They had a big stand-pipe out there this side of the hospital there on the hill. Great big, tall...you know, the water works was down there as you go out to the poor farm where the spring is. They had a big ... I don't know I 'spect it was 50 feet high .. pressure. That's where they got their water. College boys placed their initials up there about every year.

RFW: Jess, do you remember when they used to have steam ... central heat in Crawfordsville?



JC: Steam? Oh yes.

RFW: It was piped under the streets.

JC: Oh yes.

RFW: Where was that steam plant?

JC: It was right there where that there commerical business is there where ... this side of Horner's on the corner.

RFW: Where did that steam run? Where did they pipe it to?

JC: All over town.

RFW: About how far did it go do you remember?

JC: No I don't know. It didn't last long. Electricity come along you know.

RFW: Was it piped under the streets?

JC: Oh yes, sure.

RFW: Who owned the steam plant? Was that one of Billy Martin's jobs?

JC: I believe Billy Martin owned it. He used to have ice houses out west of town and he built ice houses out there. Billy Martin used to have an ice house close to the .... well, the light plant down there.

IC: The ice house was east. East part of town.

JC: East ... that's where the ice house was. Maxwell run that there artificial ice you know up there close to the cement plant. Of course Maxwell run that ice. We used to go there and get out ice.

IC: That's when we had to go after ice just for our refrigerator, you know. You'd have to get 100 pounds of ice.

RFW: Where did they get that ice? Did they ship it in from the North or where?

JC: They would get it from the creek. They give alot of men to put that down there ... They had big ice houses and put that ice in there.

RFW: They would get it off of Sugar Creek?

JC: Yes, Sugar Creek. Sugar Creek is a whole lot deeper that it is now.

IC: We've got the ice house still out here. They always put up ice and have their own ice.

JC: We used to always put up ice down here where we bought it at. Darlington had a big ice house down there by the cemetery. They put ice up every year.

JB: Is the place still here where you stored the ice? Do you still have that now?

IC: Yes.

JB: Saw dust bins and all of that stuff?

IC: No, the building is still there.



JB: Oh just the building.

IC: Yes nothing else.

JC: We put that ice sitting on edge you know and pour water on it and freeze it together and then we put all of our ice about that much cement around or saw dust around the outside and cover the box a foot deep and we'd keep ice there most of the summer.

RFW: Where did you make your ice, off of the creek down there?

JC: Oh yes. We would haul it up on the sled.

RFW: Well it's been very interesting. I think maybe we'll (END OF TAPE)!!