

THE CRAWFORD HOTEL

This interview is an order of the City of Crawfordsville Board of Public Works and Safety has condemned the Crawford Hotel. The date of this interview is October 24, 1974. The Crawford Hotel stands at the northeast corner of Main and Green Streets in Crawfordsville.

The people that we are going to be interviewing are Frieda Jones, Mrs. Marsh H. Jones., and her husband operated the Crawford Hotel and she worked with him in operating the hotel for a number of years. The other interviewee is Marsh H. Jones, Jr. or Bud Jones, and he spent some of his younger days here at the Crawford Hotel when the family more or less lived at the Crawford Hotel. This interview is being conducted by Bob Wernle and Bob Harvey of the Montgomery County Historical Society.

Bob Wernle: Now Frieda, will you tell us, when was the Crawford Hotel built? The Crawford Hotel was built in the year 1899.

Bob; When did it open its doors? Frieda: They served their first breakfast on New Years Day, 1900.

Bob: Do you know what was on this corner before the hotel was here? Frieda: No, I don't. The only thing I know is that there were cows kept in a pasture behind that was back of the hotel some place. Was there a building here? I don't know.

Bob: Now, do you know who built the Crawford Hotel? Frieda: Yes, Mr. Crawford. Now, which Crawford was that? Yes, that would be Lydia Crawford's Dad where the Delta Tau house now stands. They lived there in that house. They lived in that big old red brick house and they built the Crawford Hotel with the understanding that Mr. A. B. Jones would take over the day it was built, which he did.

Bob: Now who was Mr. A. B. Jones? Frieda: He was the father of my husband, Marsh H. And where had A. B. Jones come from? Frieda: They came from Logansport. They had the Avalon Hotel in Logansport, and they stayed there until the Avalon Hotel burned. Bob: And when they came to Crawfordsville the Crawford Hotel had already been built? Frieda: No, they had promised that if Mr. Crawford would build a new and very modern hotel they would come and take it over. No, they lived at the Robbins House. Bob: And where was the Robbins House? Frieda: That was next to where the Ben Hur Building now stands. Bob: Was that a hotel too? Frieda: That was a boarding house type hotel.

Bob: Now when the Crawford Hotel was built, was it all built at once or were there additions made? Frieda: No, it was all

built at once, but even this lobby where we are now standing ~~has had~~ many modifications. Bob: Now who operated the hotel from then on--can you give me a succession of operators? The Jones family operated the hotel until my husband and I sold it in 1948. Now that is the business, not the building. We never owned the building. Bob: Did the Crawford family own the building all that time? Frieda: They owned the building previous to 1948, then Mr. Fliederier from Detroit, Michigan came down, and they didn't know what they were going to do with the Crawford Hotel, but we had it up for sale, the business up for sale. So Mr. Fliederier made an arrangement with the living heirs of the Crawford estate which was the Crawford hotel, and gave a nice deal monetarily, so he took over the rent and we sold the equipment, good will etc. to Mr. William Killian. Bob: And then who operated it after that? Frieda: Well, Mr. Killian stayed here until his death. I don't know who--Bud's voice--Marshall Fuller operated the hotel.

Bob: You say that the hotel is substantially the same as when it was first built? Frieda: No. Bob: I mean the outside. Frieda: Yes, the outside is. Bob: While we are at it, why don't you tell me some of the stores that were around the first floor of the hotel. Are they pretty much the same as they always were? I don't know what they are now, but I can tell you they were about the same as the big city ones, and there were some good stores. Bob: All right. What stores were there? Frieda: When I first came here Harvey Scharf had an ice cream parlor, a drug store on the north west corner. East of it was an abstract company, next to it was the entrance to the lobby, then came a barber shop which Mr. Wray owned, then there was a bake shop, and I don't know who had that at that time, but there was a bake shop, and I guess that was the end. Bob: Was the Crawford Cafe there at that time? Frieda: Yes, the Crawford Cafe was there and in the beginning the Jones family ran the Crawford Cafe and then on the second floor a large dining room with course meals, even for breakfast, and if you wanted to order everything on the menu, you ordered everything on the menu for breakfast for around 35 cents--that meant everything you wanted to eat as many times as you wanted to eat it, and lunch was about the same price and dinner in the evening ran around 35 cents and the only expensive meal was Sunday noon and that was 45 cents. Bob: Now, who would eat in that room on the second floor? Frieda: That was simply loaded with Crawfordsville people. Bob: Was it a public dining room? Bob Harvey: The hotel was American plan. Room and board. Frieda: Then I don't know what year they took away that room and board. Then they did not give board because the trouble we were having was that traveling men were bringing in people they were trying to sell goods and they were calling them family.

Bob Wernle: Now, we got away from the stores. Why don't you go up Green Street and tell us the stores that were there?

Frieda: When I first came here there was a little shop--no that was the pool room next to the entrance--there was a large pool room on this floor. Bob: Do you remember who ran that? Frieda: Oh, absolutely, the Jones family. It was very lucrative. Bob: Was it just a regular pool room? Frieda: Yes, just a pool room, and much to the disgust of a lot of people in Crawfordsville they had five cent slot machines. And they ran a little dice game that was just played there on the counter before any one who wanted to see it. Bob: How many years ago was this? When would that have been? Frieda: That would have been about 1923. Bob: You do remember it yourself then? Frieda: Oh yes, I came to live here in 1922. Bob: Now that's the pool room. Now let's move on North. Can you remember any other stores? Frieda: The pool room was beyond the side entrance on Green street, and I'm going North, and next to that was a second barber shop and it wasn't there very long because the owner of the barber shop on Main street didn't like it and there was much feuding and fussing and fighting and then an abstract office. I don't know who owned it or ran it. Then later on there was a beauty parlor I suspect because they curled hair with curling irons and not cutting the hair. Of course you men don't remember that even if I explained it to you. They would finger set the hair. Bob: Now would that have been next to the alley? Frieda: That was next to the alley. Bob: Now would that have covered the stairs and the first floor? What about the corner? I don't think we've covered the corner. Frieda: That was Harvey Scharf's. That was the ice cream shop and drug store, prescription drugs. Bob: Was there another store, Bud? Maybe you can tell me. Bud: When the hotel was originally opened, and why we have Federal Street in Crawfordsville which is merely an alley, the original entry to the bar was on the alley and according to Crawfordsville statutes you can't have a bar opening from an alley and so the alley was named Federal Street. That's how the Crawford was legal when it was first opened. Bob: That is very interesting. Bud: And that is where Federal Street got its name. Bob: Now what you're saying the bar used to be over--Bud: No, the way the building still exists on the north wall in the alley there is a large window along that northeast entry and that was the original entry to the original bar in the hotel. Bob: What is located there at the present time? Bud: For years it was the pool room and there was a little ante room and I think for years they had a snooker table--the first snooker table in Crawfordsville was in the Crawford Hotel. Frieda--we put that mainly for the college boys. Bud--No, for the Stoker's. Bill Stoker and his father were absolute snooker fans.

Bob; Now, let's come back here to the lobby of the hotel. Frieda, when we walked in you said that the stairway was different when you first knew the hotel. How was it different? Frieda: Well, it was a stairway that went up directly on the north wall and the stairway separated about

fourteen feet and the stairway went to the left and you were on a little balcony and here was always a sitting room kept there. They had desks up there for writing.

Bob: Now here on this first floor, where was the desk of the hotel? Where was the registration desk? Frieda: The desk of the hotel when I first came here was just a single table kept over here at the side of the stairway on the East toward the north east wall. Bob: There was not a regular registration desk? Bob: They did not have a desk when I first came here. But they had put in on the west wall a cigar stand and a desk for registration. Bob: Now I see that this a tile floor. Is this the floor that was in here when you came here? Frieda: This was a floor that they always called terrazzo, and it was supposed to be a very fine type of tile and it is in fairly good shape right now. Bob: Did it cover this whole first floor? Well, was this entrance hall as narrow as it is? Frieda: Just as it is now. Bob: The lobby was just as we see here. Frieda: There was none of this built up counter business. This was just one big open lobby. Bob: I see this fireplace over here has more of this terrazzo. Did they use the fireplace? Frieda: Oh, yes, we used it. Especially in the winter on Thanksgiving and Christmas week and if someone was coming in--some notability that we wanted to look extra grand we lit the fire. Bud: May I add something? Bob: Yes Bud. Bud: During the war we took alot of heat because of the floor design here on the floor. If you look at it and it was World War II what would you think? Bob Wernle--It looks like a swastika to me. We had a picture of the German flag and we pointed out that the swastika twisted the other way and we called these things Indian good luck signs!. Bob Wernle: Now was there a safe in here on the first floor? Or what did you do about security for money? Frieda: Well, I don't know that it was so well taken care of. The stairway that went up from the lobby to the sitting room overlooked the lobby there was a cubby hole there that was all exposed to anybody that there was a safe there. There was a big monster safe--one of those big old fashioned ones and that was where all the daily receipts went in and ladies who wanted to leave their diamond rings left them and we put them in a little envelope and dropped them in there. Fortunately, we were never held up but one time. We were held up one time. Bob: Ok. Now why don't you tell us about that. That should be interesting. Frieda: Well, Mr. Jake Andrews was working at night, a fine gentleman who worked for us many, many years, and the telephone rang, and when the telephone rang I answered it and they said "Send Marsh down here immediately. We've been held up!" So we got down here. We all came down! And we got down here and a man had come in with an accomplice waiting at the front door and had held up the hotel! And all the help in the hotel had always been told if you are ever held up what they ask for, give them! So they shelled out what was there and I forget the amount of money--not that we didn't want to lose it. And then the Crawford Hotel police all took

out, people took out in their own cars, and they pursued the man, and they finally caught him out near New Ross. Bob: Now, about what year was that, Frieda? Frieda: Let's see. We were living out on East Main. That would be -- Bud: It was in the 40's. Frieda: in the 40's, yes. Bob Wernle: Do you know if the man was ever tried and convicted? Bud: That's a lawyer's type question, isn't it? Frieda: Yes, that sounds just like an attorney. He was tried and he was convicted, and we had a very kindly judge, and since this man was so young--I think up in his late twenties, they decided not to convict. Bud: Now another thing. The elevator enclosure was open and it was open all the way to the fourth floor with grill work around it and you could see the elevator go up and down the shaft quite handily. But the thing that was so unique about the elevator, it was a two story elevator and the bottom story which passengers never rode on was used to handle freight. If you got a large shipment which you wanted to take upstairs--why the operator in the upper half would have to have someone in the lower half yell at him when to start and stop! And the electrical switch gear on the elevator was the original electrical switch gear that was put in when the building was built and you can't imagine the involved system of cables and counter balances that were used to make that cable throw the switch in the basement. And periodically it would fail. So when that happened, there was a safety cable at the top of the shaft and a safety cable at the bottom of the shaft, and when you hit those, they would physically give you a back-up to shut it off! I was talking to Ed Foerster just yesterday. He worked at the hotel with me in the early forties, and he was still talking about the harrowing experience when he started to come down and it wouldn't shut off and he went clear to the basement! And that was the kind of trip some of the guests used to make! Unfortunately, on the controls there was no indication of which was up, down, or stop, and you had to learn this technique by experience! Bob Wernle: Was that elevator in the hotel at the very start? Bud: It was the original elevator, and if you saw the switch gear in the basement you could believe it!

Bob Wernle: Now, Frieda, you started to tell us about some of the guests. You mentioned famous people. Were there ever any famous people that stayed at this hotel? Frieda: Well, way back when I remember hotel business, all the very famous people were gobbled up by some of the residents of the town, because they wanted to have entertained them. And yes, there were some here. There were alot of circus people came in and owners of circuses and then many many hotel people and probably the two best known guests we had not once but several times was James Whitcomb Riley and George Ade. Bob: Do you remember them coming? Frieda: Oh, yes. I remember them. Lets see. Riley died. When did he die? 1917 or something. He was here the first year I was visiting in Crawfordsville, that was the first time Mr. Riley was

here. And George Ade was here a long time because he came with Tom Taggart. They were circus people. Bob Wernle: And what was the occasion for James Whitcomb Riley's visit to Crawfordsville? Frieda: George Ade. Oh, he came with George Ade. Bob Wernle: What about people coming here in connection with the college? Frieda: They were usually entertained by someone in the college. There wasn't as much of that coming back and forth way back as there is now, but in 1922 when I was really active in this hotel, actually the college guests were absorbed by professors, friends of the college and so forth. Bob: Now you have covered a little bit about the famous guests. How about the unusual guests? Have you got some stories to tell us about them? Frieda: You know, Bob, are you egging me on? I hope not! I'm just nasty enough to tell you! Shall I go ahead? Bob: Yes, go ahead! We'll ask the radio to censor this! Frieda: Oh, we don't care. I was telling Bob this story this morning. There was a man and woman came in, checked in at the desk, he signed Mr. and Mrs. because that's the only way we took them in because we didn't want these lawyers, you know, to get their fingers in our hair. So he signed in as Mr. and Mrs. So-and-So. So she was sitting back, leaning against one of the big posts that are still in the lobby, and he said "What do you want, dear, do you want a shower, or a tub?" She said, "Hell, suit yourself, mister!" There's another good old hotel story: One time, not one time, but several times, my brother added something to it. Marsh would come home laughing. And see if you get this one? Well, we had more than 100% occupancy last night! Do you know what it means? No. Well, Bud, finish it. The time you and Foerster were sure you had 100% occupancy--Bob: I see. Go ahead Bud, you finish it. Bud: Even at 16, 17 years old it didn't take much experience behind the desk and you sort of had a feeling when a couple would come to the desk if they were really legitimately man and wife. It was amazing. Now on this one particular evening this couple came in and Mr. Foerster and I decided we would rent them a room and we placed a wager on how long this room would be occupied. The only thing I remember about the wager is I lost! But at any rate after they left the premises we scurried back upstairs and changed the linen, and rented the room again! This was not a widely followed procedure, however. Frieda: We tried not to have that.

Bud: When the hotel was built of course there were no telephones in it. And few baths. Evidently that was before the age of cleanliness which we seem to be entering once again. But to get the service from the lobby upstairs there was a push button on every wall in each room and if you wanted the bell hop you pushed your button and there was an enunciator board down here and the flag would drop, and you would know which room upstairs was asking for service, and then the bell hop would go upstairs to see what was required. And I can remember back in the early thirties as a little boy that enunciator board still hanging on the wall back in the

office. But that was another era. Certainly the telephones were probably put in by when--the late twenties or early thirties? Frieda: No, I'd say about 1925. Bud: All right. As long as I can remember there were always phones in the hotel. For years we had an old weighing machine over here by the door into the lobby near the cafe. It sat there for years and years and years, and it became very apparent college boys would go over and hit it and then pick money up off the floor. Finally I approached my grandfather once to have a brute force opening of it--it didn't even work any more. So we opened up the back of it. And the reason it didn't work anymore it was jammed full of pennies! Because when we got the back off of it the pennies went all over the floor!! To give you some idea how long it had been since that had been opened, we extracted \$20 worth of Indian heads out of it! Frieda: I still have some of those out home.

Bob Wernle: Frieda, Bud has just mentioned baths. How many rooms were there in the hotel? How many sleeping rooms? Frieda: Let's see. I imagine. Bud: We advertised 100, but we actually had only 78. Frieda: I think that was it. Bud: Of course all my information is the late 1930's or early 1940's. Bob: Let's start again. Frieda, we were talking about baths. How many baths were there in all those rooms? Frieda: Oh, there weren't many rooms with baths. After I was here in 1922 was when we put in most of the baths. There was so called public baths. I don't know that there was any rooms even in the 1920's or before the 1920's that had private baths. Bob: Then would there be a bath on each floor? Frieda: There would be more than that. There would be two baths, one for the VIP's and one for the 75 cent jobs. They came in and paid 75 cents for a room. Bob: Now you mentioned 75 cent rooms. What were the rates of this hotel? Frieda: Well, when I came in here, I think the most expensive room that we had in the hotel then was \$1.25 and \$2.25 double. Bob: And what was the lowest price room? Frieda: 75 cents. Bob: And did that include meals, too? Frieda: Oh, no no. Bob: Was that American plan? Bud: That was prior to World War I. Frieda: That was after we had meals in the cafe here. You see in 1922 the dining room had already been closed upstairs. Bud: And in 1941 the cheapest room in the house was \$1.25 and the most expensive room was \$4.50. Frieda: \$4.50 double. That was the extra deluxe big one.

Bob Wernle: OK, you mentioned those meals that you served and how inexpensive they were. What would a typical breakfast consist of? Frieda: I wish I had taken time to get one of the menus! You name the breakfast item and it was almost always on the breakfast. They had ham, bacon, eggs, hot cakes, corn pone. And you must remember this was before the days of dry cereal. And they would have grits, and oatmeal, and cornmeal. That was all cooked stuff. Bob: Where did they cook it? Where was the kitchen? Frieda: The

kitchen at that time was on the second floor at the back end. This was for the dining room. I'm not talking about the cafe. The food for the cafe was cooked in the downstairs kitchen which is still here, and the food for the upstairs was cooked in an upstairs kitchen in the second floor. Bob: Now, let's go to a noon meal. What would be a typical noon meal? Frieda: You would dine in the biggest and the finest ala carte hotel in the United States today. Bob: Would they serve on white table cloths? Frieda: White linen table cloths and white linen napkins, and flowers. The maids were always bringing a bunch of flowers. They had alot of flowers on the tables. The maids were dressed in blue dresses that buttoned down the front like old fashioned Mother Hubbards. There are some pictures around here in the back. Bob: Would downtown business men come in here? Frieda: Yes, business men came in here, but the big time for everybody in Crawfordsville to come was Sunday noon. After church. The dining room upstairs then was a large dining room and it was absolutely crowded. Bob: How many did the dining room seat? Frieda: Well, they had enough that they had eight waitresses and two bus boys. And I imagine a waitress could take 14 people easy. Bob: That must have been a very large room. Frieda: It was a large one. Are we going upstairs? Bob: Yes, we are going upstairs. Frieda: Well, then you can see how big that dining room is. Bob: Then I supposed they served the evening meals, too. Frieda: That would be the traveling men's special. They would come down here from Lafayette, so I was told when we had the big dining room going, and eat a meal and decide that they would just stay all night. So they would call Lafayette hotels and say that Mr. So-and-So will not be in, and will you kindly remove his bags from room so-and-so from the various hotels that were in Lafayette. And then they would stay down here, and eat a Crawford Hotel breakfast and then go to Lafayette. That is on bus service of a kind--on an omnibus. What do you call those things that have seats on both sides? Bob: You mean bus service from Crawfordsville to Lafayette? Frieda: Yes. They had a bus service that was horse drawn way back there when! So you left very early in the morning if you wanted to get to Lafayette to catch a train. I guess you called Indianapolis to see where they would go.

Bob Wernle: Let's see what other points do we have to cover down here. Do we have any more stories about this downstairs area? Bud: One of the more interesting things about the mechanics of coming in the hotel instead of using the individual card that they now use in the Holiday Inns and hotels, we had a large register which was an 11 by 14 sheet of paper. And each person would sign one line after the other, and some days of course we wouldn't have anybody come in. So we didn't want that date followed by the next date blank, we had a man named Mr. Marble. And we would always register him, and put him in a nonexistent room upstairs. So a code word at home when we would call down here was; "Is

Mr. Marble in?" "Yes, meant we'd been skunked, and no meant we had a guest." Bob Wernle: Well, how many people did you average a night? Frieda: During the war we always right straight through had a 100% and then before that if we fell below 85% we felt that we were in deep depression. Bob: So I expect then business dropped off after the war? Frieda: No. We had good business, Bob, because we about worked ourselves to death to have a clean hotel. Most of the hotels after the war were not clean and they could get no good help.

Bob: Now tell us about your function and what was your job in connection with the hotel? Frieda: I did everything at the hotel except tend bar. Bob: Did you keep the books? Frieda: I helped. Mr. Jones was not very well at that time. As he got to the point where he felt he became less and less able to cope, I had to be more and more able to cope. I about worked myself out! Bob: Now did you have any interesting experiences or perhaps Bud did on the nights that he was on the desk here besides those that you haven't told us? Frieda: There are more tales to tell, aren't there Bud? Bud: One thing interesting to me, we had to fill out a night report which gave you your day-to-day operating balances and the amount of money generated by each room on a day-to-day basis. But there was one thing you couldn't do. You couldn't start making out the report until the last of the trains came in, and of course, you think today--passenger trains and people arriving that late? But of course, there were trains on the Monon, there were trains on the Big Four, and you always waited until about 2:35 in the morning before you started making out that report. Because you would pick up some guests that way. Of course, the trains became less and less a factor in the forties than they became subsequently later on. My grandfather always told the story--this is a slight digression--when they were in the hotel business in Logansport, they had three rail lines. And each rail line ran on its own time in Logansport and on top of that there was local time. So in the lobby, there were four clocks which gave the time that each one of the railroads were running on plus local time and all of them had some disagreement of some minutes and that is why we had the standard time act. Frieda: We had three clocks hanging on that wall. Bob: What was the point of that? Frieda: Well, Chicago for Chicago train time, east and west, and we had to have a Crawfordsville clock and a lot of people in those days when I first came here ran on so called sun time. Here in Crawfordsville everybody would say that sun time was twenty minutes off. Bud: There was no standard time. Who could really know? Frieda: Well, there was so called sun time. Bob, could I tell the story of never throwing away a key? Bob: Yes, go ahead. Frieda: They always had a big ceremony when the hotel was opened. And Mr. Talbot, what was he Bud? Bud: Who, Cap. Talbot? Frieda: Yes, Cap. Talbot. Cap. Talbot drove his horse when they had the parade which was the second or third day of January, which was a dirty money day.

And he fell off his horse, which was the first thing that happened. He was picked up and put back on his horse. Then the keys as custom demanded were thrown out in the muddy street. And a colored man who was working here at the hotel ran out and got the front door key and the side door key and gave it to Mrs. Rossitter, who was a sister of Mr. A. B. Jones. One day she said to me, "Here, I'm going to give you the keys." She told me the story, and said never let the men folks know I've had them all these years--and don't you dare give them up! And I still have them, for they said if you locked the door of a hotel it becomes a bad omen! I came down here the other day to see if there was a lock, and all of these doors have been changed! Bud: They made sure you couldn't lock the door!

Bob Wernle: Let's go upstairs and talk about that. We've just walked up the stairs to the west of the building. Now here we come into a room with a terrazzo wall of some sort. Frieda: Now this used to be and we put in this. See, that's the old terrazzo floor. Bob: We're looking out to the North toward the Journal-Review building, north west. Frieda: This was one of the first good rooms that was here. This was here when I came, and there was a fireplace there. Bud: See this fireplace was originally part of the big dining room. Frieda: That's right. Bud: Can you imagine what the dining room must have been like with all the bay windows on the second floor north of the side street entrance all being dining room and the view you had out on the street with a fire in this fireplace? Bob: It would be wonderful! Bud: It really would have been something unbelievable! Bob: Now, Bud, why don't you look out this northwest window and tell us what was across the street directly to the west. Bud: Murray Sommer and I when we would kick up our heels and have a night on the town, well I suppose when we were 12 or 14 years old, a real night on the town was to get out of the house and come down and spend a night at the hotel and go to the Vanity Theatre and see a cowboy movie. Then we would come back and go down to the pool room and get ourselves a coke and come up to one of the rooms in the back part of the hotel, 228 or 328, and turn off the lights, not waiting for a TV show to start, but a show started, none the less. Because across the street in the present building where the Hoosier Motor Club and the Domestic Loans is now located was a very large operation called Colonel Longnecker's Big Push Saloon. And the evening festivities would usually start about 10:30 and, oh boy, we would be thoroughly entertained watching the fist fights on the street cause there used to be some humdingers, and of course, in that era the fire department was located right next door where the Journal-Review now is, and all these fights were of short duration--sort of like a commercial. Bob: Was The Big Push a restaurant as well as a saloon, or what was it? Bud: Now, you're asking me to divulge when I was 12 or 14 years old what was generated on the street, but I have a feeling it was essentially a saloon.

Frieda: They had the best hamburger cheese on rye you ever ate. It was just a sandwich place and a cold lunch and a saloon. This might be interesting. Down in this Longnecker's place I found an old street light. The man who was running it at the time, which has been a good many years ago, asked me what I was looking for? And I said anything I can find down in your basement! So I asked if there was a street light down there, and he said, "Oh, that's one of those old gas things that they had burning here in Crawfordsville." I said "What are going to do with them." He said, "Do you want them?" And I said I would take the one that's not broken! So I took it and that's the one that is hanging in front of the Weathervane. I gave it to Harold Nixon. Bob: Is that the one that used to be in front of your house? Frieda: Yes.

Bob: Now, I notice this is kind of a curvy vestibule that we're viewing. Frieda: It used to be very elaborate. Bob: Why don't you tell us about that little thing you have in your hand. Frieda: Albert Pick of Chicago, who sold hotel linen when you could buy percale double sheets for 95 to \$1-- he started a thing to have your lights turned down. Now that's been back many years ago. "And don't leave a thing in the hotel cause you'll be a nuisance to us." So they could send off STOP HAVE YOU LEFT ANYTHING? PLEASE TURN OUT THE LIGHTS. And they were put all over the Crawford Hotel. Bob: And those were in many hotels, weren't they? Frieda: In the bigger and larger hotels only. Bud: Of course you always had a big lost and found department in a hotel. And it seems that men in the thirties could never keep track of their razor strops--it was a long piece of leather that they could strike a straight edge on. And we had them upstairs that were leather and canvas and I imagine hanging in the linen room there might be 100 of them. And of course, nobody came back for their razor strop. I don't know why we ever kept them. I remember the time we had somebody here who had a 10 gallon hat and they left their ten gallon hat. And I thought "Man, a beautiful, white felt ten gallon hat." But that was rather easy to describe, so they called for that and I didn't get to keep that one! Remember the people we used to have come who were drug pushers? We had trouble back in that era. I checked a man in once and he was in cowboy type attire and he had a great big metal foot locker similar to a GI foot locker. And we went up to the room and I carried this thing up and it was quite heavy and he said "Wait a minute and I'll give you a tip." And he opened it and here were all these obvious vials and pills--much more than, and not as a drug salesman would appear at all. And he peeled out an unusually large amount of money. But speaking of tips: One time we had a gentleman here, he stayed here for six months. And he wanted this and he wanted that. And he never gave a tip and that was unusual, but you kept giving him service and giving him service. But he left one day and he left behind an envelope and in it was \$50 for six months service, and that

was good tip money in 1941! Bob: Did they expect you to carry their bags up to the room? Bud: Oh, yes you carried the bag up to the room and you had a definite routine. Bob Wernle: Bud, I think we interrupted you in a story. Bud: I was talking about cuspidors. They were beautiful, big, tall, glass cuspidors, and they were also referred to in the trade as spittoons. But we had a number of gentlemen here in town, J. J. Darter and Harry Duckworth, and Gayle McClure, and they would come in and eat in the hotel every day. J. J. Darter would always come in and eat his lunch and then come out and buy a cigar, and his noon time hobby was seeing if he could smoke that cigar down to his finger tips and still keep the ash on! Sometimes this lunch period would end at 12:40 or sometimes at ten minutes to one--because soon as the ash fell the rest of the cigar went into the spittoon and out the door. Because that's when he decided it was time to leave. But some of the other gentlemen would come in and they would sit down in the chairs and go to sleep and they had a standing call to be aroused at 1:15 and then they'd go back to work. So they had a period when they could have a nice sojourn sleep. Of course, a lot of people would come in the lobby and go to sleep and not bother to rent a room, too.

Bob Wernle: Now, Frieda, you were telling us about the first time the Crawford was opened and people slept in one place and then move over here for breakfast. Tell us about that. Frieda: On the last day of the year, 1899, the evening meal was served at the Ramsay Hotel. That is where the Elston Bank has its motor bank. All the help that ran the old Ramsay Hotel got busy after the evening meal on New Year's Eve and carried all the dishes and what have you to run a dining room up to the new hotel which is the Crawford Hotel. The guests in the hotel all slept at the old Ramsay Hotel, but came up to the new Crawford Hotel for breakfast on New Year's Day 1900. Bob: What were some of the other hotels besides the Crawford? Frieda: Let's see. The Nutt House was still there. Bob: Where was the Nutt House? Frieda: It was on Main. Bob: Whereabouts on Main? Frieda: It was next to where the Ben Hur is now. Bob: What others were there? Frieda: I don't know that there were others. Bud: The Ramsay was there. Frieda: The Ramsay and then this one. Bud: The Monon wasn't here then. Frieda: No the Monon wasn't here then. Bob: The Ramsay was where the Elston Bank drive-in bank is now? Frieda: Yes, that's right. Bud: Was The Community House here in 1900? Frieda: No. That was put here for traveling young women. Bob: Where was that located? Frieda: Up on the corner of Main and Water, back in there, it was a big old house there. Bob: Was it about where the Post Office is now? Frieda: Yes. They served very inexpensive meals there and they had a few rooms and girls used to stay there under chaperonage. There was always someone in there. Bob: Frieda, when would you say the great dining room was closed? Frieda: I remember this--it was closed before 1920. Bob: Frieda, we are standing in the old

dining room that used to be used by Rotary Club and the Kiwanis Club. This is in the northeast corner of the Hotel. This was opened after the old dining room was closed.

Frieda: Yes, this was opened when the service clubs began eating out. Bob: Yes. Bud, you just measured off the area where the big old dining room used to be. How big did you find it to be? Bud: The big eating space is approximately 60 by 70. Bob: 60 feet by 70 feet? Bud: Yes. Bob: We are approaching the area off of where the Rotary Club used to eat and this serving room that used to be used for the Rotary Club dining room once was the laundry of the hotel. Frieda: Yes. Bob: Why did they have a laundry on the second floor? Frieda: Because all the linens were on the second, third, and fourth floor. Bob: Not tell us about the linens and towels and-so-on in the hotel? Frieda: Well, Bob, when I worked around this hotel, all the linens were ironed by hand for many years until we put in a big rotary ironer. We were still doing our own linens in 1938, and they were done beautifully. But in 1948 when we sold out, they discontinued the linen and laundry room entirely and I think they sent all their work to Lafayette. Bob: Bud, why don't you tell us a little bit about the heating plant in this hotel. I noticed radiators. Is that steam or hot water? Bud: The heating plant in the hotel as long as I was acquainted with all of its problems was a hot water system. The water was heated down in the basement with two large boilers which in history had been coal fired and then there was one large induction pipe that took it to the fourth floor and when it was distributed across the top of the building and slowly filtered back down to the boilers. Consequently the rooms on the fourth floor were real warm, and the rooms on the third and on down to the first. But after the war we were able to get gas, so the building was converted to gas. But I'm sure that back during the days of central Crawfordsville heat when it was over here where we now call the Dawson building--this building was heated from the central gas steam plant here in Crawfordsville. Because I remember down in the basement these large lines that came in through the wall and had obviously been cut off, and that's the only thing that it could have been come out of was steam heat to heat the building. So in the beginning it probably had central heat. A lot of businesses and also homes right around the downtown district were originally heated by the central steam plant in downtown Crawfordsville. Many years up here in the dining room the Kiwanis and Rotary Clubs were called to chow by the donging of this tremendous bell. If you want to see the bell, I believe it is still out at Camp Rotary in all of its glory. The story of that bell after World War I it was told in the community that if you wrote the Navy department they would supply you with a steward's bell, which is one of those bells that probably stands 8 to 10 inches high and you hit it with a gavel and it gives out a nice dong. So they asked the Navy department for a bell and the Navy department very graciously sent one. But when they got it it was a bell of

prodigious proportions. The bell would hang upon the mast of a large Naval capital ship (battleship) in the era of World War I, and not wanting to look their free gift horse in the face, of course they accepted it! And it was placed up here on a large wood support, and when they would ring it the entire building would shake! I mean you would have to have almost a total hearing loss not to have heard it in the basement! Bob: Bud, that was after World War I. Bud: Right. Because that bell was here as long as I can remember.

The next portion of the tape is indistinguishable. Bud mentions employees of many, many years duration--Maude Coleman.

Bud: I think one of the highlights of the hotel--why don't we go up to the north or southwest corner of the building?
Bob: We are now standing in Room 208 which is the bedroom of the southwest corner. Bud: Right. Now most of the rooms in the hotel in the second, third, and fourth floor all follow generally the same floor plan. It's amazing when you once worked in a hotel you haven't lost the floor layout or the numbers of the rooms. I was reminiscing at lunch with my Mother the various room numbers and I seemingly can recall the room numbers better than she. But this room has a large bay window that now faces the Dellekamp building but unfortunately it also faced the Goodman building in the great fire in Crawfordsville in 1933. And since we're only isolated from the fire the caddy cornered distance of Main Street, you can imagine what happened to the windows on this side of the building. They became unbelievably hot! And to keep the building here from catching on fire, and some of these windows did break, we had a gentleman who lived in this room for many years by the name of Harry Hawkins who was employed by Mid States Steel and Wire. And he'd been in a large hotel fire and he made the suggestion that we tack up wet blankets in front of the windows in case the windows broke we would not get the heat in the house and have an incineration occur over here! So we did that. After Harry moved out of this room didn't the Frank Sparks live in here for awhile? Frieda: No, that was upstairs. Bud: Ok. That was in Room 408. But you can imagine what it would cost to replace some of these curved glass windows?. You can see that the windows in this room the windows have been replaced with storm windows, but they didn't go to the effort to make them round. They hedged on the window dimensions and made straight windows in here. But you notice the curved radiator in the window, and you can imagine what it would cost to have a curved radiator made to that particular specification to fit in that radius and, of course, that is one of the original radiators that was put in when the hotel was built.

Bob Wernle: I notice you have a fireplace in this room.
Bud: All these rooms in the corner in the front half of the building had fireplaces. The 8's, the 6's, the 4's, and the

2's--all had fireplaces and as you went down the building on the north side along Green Street the 16's had fireplaces. It doesn't appear on the second floor rooms, but on the third and fourth floor rooms, but above all the exit windows which you could exit from if you had to, there was a large turn buckle in the masonry above the window. After the hotel was built, a chain hooked to the turn buckle, and it hung down along side the casement. At the bottom of the chain was a bag, and in the bag was enough rope with knots in it to extend from whatever elevation you were on to the street! And they hung for years and years! I remember in the 40's we decided to look and see what the ropes were like, and we unwrapped one of the bags and gave the rope a yank, and it came apart like a cobweb. So some of the chains were removed. But the rooms that the family lived in--they'd all been exposed to the trauma of a hotel fire, new ropes were installed on those. But that made it a little bit questionable, because at the age they were when the new ropes were installed I don't think they could make it hand-over-hand to the street anyway. Bob: Were there any other fire escapes besides just these ropes? Bud: Oh, yes. There were fire escapes in the public rest room areas on the third and fourth floors, but unfortunately, and it's hard to believe today, there was no information in the halls as to where the exit might be! I mean you could wander around in a fire looking for an exit--there was one there, but it was up to you to find the thing! Now today by the fire code you simply couldn't get by with this, and I see there are exit signs here in the hall now which were obviously installed after we moved out of the hotel. The hotel, of course, was originally wired all tube and spool wiring. That is, you drilled a hole through the joist in the floor, stuck a piece of ceramic in it and stuck an individual piece of wire through it and this was the way the building was wired. After the fire in 1948, the fire marshal demanded there be an upgrading of the wiring and as you look here in 208 you can see that they upgraded the wiring, but it certainly looks like a shade tree mechanic's job of wiring. We've got conduit running around the baseboard, and of course this really made the place look really down-in-the-mouth!

Frieda: In this room, Bob, look at the cushions that Bud was talking about laying on the floor? And Bob Millis, Dr. Bob Millis, or Robert, who was the father of young Sam, called me and said "Come on down here immediately, I've got my hands full!" So I came down and went into the room and he said "She's dying!" There was a woman lying on the bed here and she was one of the most affable people sometimes and sometimes she was very downhearted. But evidently she got overly affable and was taking over doses of morphine! Bob and I stayed with her until she died, and after she died Bob said "So her husband won't know what's gone on here right under his very nose let's look around the room," And after we had thoroughly looked around the room, he said: "Do you

know what we have found here?" And I said "No." I was just holding all the little folded up squares of white and purplish paper that he handed me. Bob said "We've got over \$5,000 worth of morphine right here." I said "Now what are we going to do with it? You take it. You take it." Bob replied "Ye Gods, they would never believe me! You just go into the bathroom and flush it all down." So I did.

Bob Wernle: Were there any other deaths that you can recall? Cases when you would come into a room and found somebody had died during the night? Frieda: Died or killed themselves, yes! Remember that woman who killed herself in this room, or was that up on third? Bud: That was up on third. We had some lady came to Crawfordsville to see her son graduate from Wabash, and he did not graduate, and this was such an emotional strain to her that she committed suicide. And then we had a local resident here in the community who had been badly injured in World War I and this problem had dogged him all his life and he did away with himself. I remember Taylor Burdett. We couldn't get in the room. The room was locked. Most of the rooms in the Crawford Hotel had transoms above the doors for ventilation purposes. Taylor was selected to look up over the transom and see what's wrong in there! Well, Taylor fell off the ladder in a complete state of unconsciousness, and we knew when he buckled that there must be something drastically wrong in that room! It was a death by gunshot! I remember the night a woman called me up to the room to fix a radio. I knocked on the door and she said "Here, fix this." Here was this lady, only partially clad in the remains of a skirt, and this long trailing line of yarn off to the corner! The next morning we realized this gal had had a little bit too much to drink and instead of disrobing in the normal fashion, she had unraveled her knitted suit and we had a great big pile of yarn the next morning!

Bob Wernle: Now, are there any other things we want to cover in this room, Bud? Bud: I think we've about covered the whole hotel, don't you, Bob? Frieda: Oh, yes. Unless they want to see what went on in the back alley where we had all our troubles. Did we ever call it the alley when you were here? Bud: You mean the back rooms? After the hotel was built, Mr. Crawford took his contractor to court because the building was not built according to specifications. The floor joists in the floors are not on 16 inch centers, they're on 24's, and just as you walk around in any of the rooms you find the floors squeak with you. Frieda: They still do. Bud: And he took them to court because the building was not built up to specifications, and this fact always bedeviled us. We had trouble with the floors, we had trouble with the roof because there simply wasn't enough support put in the building to handle the loads, and it was very annoying to have somebody step out of the elevator at night and their entire progress down the hall was always preceded by the squeak, squeak, squeak squeak squeak of the

floors until they got to their room and that was the end of the squeak!

This oral interview was transcribed by Dorothy Darnall Jones, wife of Marsh H. Jones, Jr. (Bud) on July 24-27, 2002.

Addendum: Mr. and Mrs. William Doderick Jones and Mr. and Mrs. A. B. Jones moved to Crawfordsville to the Robbins House from Logansport, Indiana from the Murdock Hotel. A. B. Jones owned the ~~Avalon~~ *New Aveline* Hotel in Fort Wayne, Indiana which burned in 1908.

Other famous people who stayed at the Crawford Hotel:

Ezra Pound--He taught at Wabash College and was very fond of the dessert called Cabinet Pudding served in the Crawford hotel-1908.

Amelia Earhart spoke to Rotary Club at the Crawford Hotel. She was the first woman Bud saw attired in an Eisenhower jacket and men's pants.

Governor of Indiana, Paul V. McNutt

Governor of Indiana, M. Clifford Townsend.

Governor of Indiana, Henry Schricker.

U. S. Senator Henry Capehart.

U. S. Senator William Jenner.