

This is July 27, 1977, and this is an interview being conducted by John Bowerman and Bob Wernle of the Montgomery County Historical Society and Luther Lofland. This afternoon we are going to interview Mr. Azel Turnipseed.

RFW: Let's start out by asking Mr. Turnipseed, how old are you? When were you born?

AT: I was born ...

VT: May 13,

AT: 1890, that was May 13, Friday the 13th, 1890.

VT: Right in there in that room.

AT: Right there in that room.

RFW: You were born right here in Montgomery County then.

AT: I was born in that room right there in 1890.

RFW: This was your parents home was it?

AT: Yes.

RFW: What were the names of your parents?

AT: Nathan Nathaniel Turnipseed and Martha Turnipseed, originally a Boots.

RFW: Where did they come from? *my father born in Bellfontaine Ohio, he came to Indiana around 1870, he before this father come to Indiana before the civil war he was opposed to slavery, joined the union army, at war and come home sick and died shortly after*

AT: Why my mother was born in this house just east of here. She's a native

(TAPE WENT BLANK)

RFW: Who else was in the town? *i dont know you are asking about*

AT: That's all.

RFW: That's it.

VT: He had a daughter, Mary.

AT: Oh yes, they had a daughter.

RFW: I know about that. What about this land right here. Who settled this land from your family?

AT: Well sir, this little cemetery down here there was people by the name of Irvin come here. That was in, I don't know, the oldest grave down there is a tombstone marked 1831.

RFW: That's right at the beginning of the county.

AT: The Boots family itself came from Ohio in 1834. They settled here and its one of the oldest families in the county that has been in continual name, there's been a male heir in that house for or ever since 1834.

RFW: This land right here was Boots' land.

AT: No, this land right here was Peterson land. It was originally Irvin land and then it was Peterson land and then this house here was built by Dave Peterson.

RFW: Do you know about when it was built, it is a beautiful house.

AT: It was built in 1860. It was built during the Civil War. Peterson was a cattle buyer and he got over-committed in furnishing cattle to the Union Army and the War went off and it left him holding the bag with quite a string of commitments on hand. The government just wasn't buying things then and he went broke. My mother happened to get married about that time and my grandfather bought this and gave it to them.

RFW: How many acres were in the tract?

AT: There were 263 acres to start with, no about 260, something like that. The Bush family lady came out here about the time of the O'Briens and the Petersons and, I forget the name of that other family, but they came out and tract of land, a \$1.50 an acre.

RFW: This must have been when the land office ...

AT: That is when they put the land office into Crawfordsville in 1820, I think it was.

RFW: Wasn't this land out here, or was it further south, that the land was kind of swampy.

AT: Oh yes. My mother told me that this land here, the most of it, there was little muskrat houses all over. They dug a ditch out by hand through the middle of it and naturally kept it cleaned up. They could only farm the higher parts of it, you see.

RFW: When did the drainage take place, drain this off to make good land?

AT: Now let's see, I can first remember, ditches being very common, that is I've done a lot of ditching myself. I expect I've done hundreds of ditches myself. The hands would come here and work in the summertime and then, of course, there wouldn't be no jobs so they'd board with you and on nice days we'd work, just for the board you know and a little money if you had it.

RFW: By the time you remember, hadn't this land become pretty good land?

AT: Well now, I'll tell you, this land that was ditched out, carries about anywhere from about 18 to 36 inches of black soil. That is, built in, and that's good. We get up on the higher land, there is... The land hasn't been completely ditched for I would expect, we finished the last of it on this farm I imagine we never got a complete drainage left about 50 years ago. When we finally got around to it and a drag line that would, we could put in.

RFW: Is this underlined by shale here?

AT: Yes about 50 feet of sand, rock and shale and right on limerock, down on limerock. There is quite a bit of limerock. There's suppose to be oil under this land that runs north and west. This was originally come from an

AT: an off-shoot of the big land advance that dug the Great Lakes.

RFW: Oh the Glacier you mean.

AT: The Glacier, yes. The Glacier period. The stream...now the deposits of gravel in this country here, all of them lays in a line, oh, southwest and northeast. Lays along just about the...follows just about the same line as the creek as the drainage does.

RFW: You have corners out here called Turnipseed corners. Tell us about these roads that are out in here. Do you remember when these roads were built?

AT: Yes. I can't remember when this road was built but some...

RFW: Which road are you pointing to...the east-west road?

AT: They was both gravel roads. I can remember when they put the cornerstone out there to raise it...that is, they had to loosen up the corner of the cornerstone right out in the middle of the cross roads. That is, with the mark on it where they start to lay from.

RFW: Now were you here when they built either one of these roads?

AT: No. *i wasn't here when the first roads or trails but i remember many times of straightening and making them passable, i have worked on them*

VT: Yes you was 'cause your mother cooked for the men. *my father was road supervisor for many years*

AT: Now wait a minute. There she's a talkin about one thing and you're talking about another. He said was I a livin here when that road was built. I can remember them a talkin about it and my mother... *the first roads were community affairs the County had little to do with it the state made the township all*

VT: Maybe you wasn't born yet. The Darlington road lay around the Boots house way up here. The Darlington road when around there to get to...

AT: My mother usually kept...boarded some of the workers on that road. That is, and my father was kind of a...as a little authority with them, that is, he worked for the county too to a certain extent. That is, in the making of that road. *the township had control of the township roads about 1920*

RFW: Were any of your ancestors on the county commissioners or anything like that that had anything to do with the building of these roads? *the roads were a township affair between the elected trustees and the road supervisors till around 1920*

AT: No. Only my father was a little job of something...had something to do with the road. That is, the very people that constructed the road. Now the road, to a certain extent, then, was made by part of the taxes and you worked the road taxes out. *the county made a tax appraisal, the township trustee and his advisory board set the amount each tax payer was allowed to work out of his county general taxes*

RFW: You mean you personally did your road taxes by performing labor...

AT: Oh, yes, all the first roads was...every fall the land taxes come on and part of them was road taxes and you put a man on there and he got \$2.50 a day for ten days and he was...he could take that off as he worked on his road taxes.

RFW: Oh. I never heard of that before.

AT: Oh, God, I worked on it. I know about that.

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RFW: Now, we were talking about road. Let's go back to stories you heard when you were a boy around here. Your mother grew up around here and your father came over. Do you remember your mother talking about the early times in Montgomery County?

AT: Yes.

RFW: Did she ever talk about Indians.

AT: Well, no, the only thing that I know about the Indians themselves was my brother, Tommy, he was a...he gathered up all the gossip...an old man told him...he lived a little south of here and they was a few Indians come through once in a while but that is all we would know about the Indians. That is, they was...myself, I never seen an Indian. That is, in this country. Of course, I've seen plenty of them in the west.

RFW: I thought maybe your mother might have...

AT: As far as I know I've never heard her say anything about them.

RFW: What about...did you ever hear your family talk about when they built the railroad down here through...

AT: Oh, yes. She was a young girl then when they built the Vandalia Railroad through her...her dad took her over to Bower Station and they got on the first train that went through and went to Frankfort on it.

RFW: Now wait a minute. That would have been the old...

AT: The Vandalia. The Vandalia that went from...through Darlington and then to Colfax and Frankfort.

RFW: And you say your mother remembered riding on that?

AT: Yes, yes, my mother ride on it.

RFW: About what year would that have been?

AT: See that..

VT: She was a small-like girl.

AT: Let's see, she would be a 100 and...say, now, listen, that would have been well over a 100 years ago or right at it.

RFW: Was that a means of transportation for the people around here in those days?

AT: Well, no...yes as far as sending anything that they wanted to send, that is, like grain and livestock and stuff. That was...that wasn't really the means of transportation at that time, which I've heard them talk about. They used to have what was known as feeding stations in this country. That is, if I... a buyer would come along he would buy up a bunch of cattle or stuff like that, why they...one man would go ahead to that next feeding station and they would make the drive into there and feed their livestock, that is, if that station would keep on. Now, my grandfather ever summer, that is, they would go to Chicago and get...the main thing they wanted was salt and stuff like that. That

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VT: is, they made the trip. They would make the trip in the summertime. They couldn't go in the fall. They would go to Chicago. It would take them about three weeks. *these were common freight lines using teams and wagons in the 1830-40 and until the railroads came in, but it was*

RFW: Now, how did they get there? *common practice for the younger farmers to make this trip, taking saleable goods and bringing back salt*

VT: Why, it was a wagon. *but i think the lure of the way stations created the urge to go, there were some ball stores about it*

RFW: They would drive a wagon. But wasn't the old Monon train running in those days?

VT: That was before the Monon train came in. That is, I don't know when the...oh, I know when the Vandalia was a runnin, but you see my grandfather, the one I'm talking about, that is, he was in '34. *these were old trails following solid ground*

RFW: That would have been before the Monon. *they never dispered till the land was drained and new roads were built*

VT: That was even before the Plank Road was built.

RFW: Now, you mentioned your mother riding on the Vandalia. Did...do you remember ever riding a passenger train on there?

VT: Yes. *this was common practice, the drummer a name for the country-saler, and the follow up man who delivered the goods*

RFW: Yourself? *and made collections, so rented a rig and driver by the hour or day, a boy worked for me and he claimed the collector was pretty rough*

VT: Yes. *this was common of till the early 1900 when the auto took over and the livery stable dispered*

RFW: Where did you ride to?

VT: Well, we'd go...drive to Darlington and hit...and put the horses up at the livery barn and get on the Valdalia and go to Crawfordsville.

RFW: Did you ever go up the other way?

VT: Yes.

RFW: Where did you go?

VT: Frankfort or...

RFW: Did you ever take any trips on the railroad other than just to Crawfordsville?

VT: No I was never too much of a railroad fan. When I joined the Marine Corp in the first World War they took me down south and I was in Canada for a couple of years, that is, in...

RFW: O'okay, let's move on here now and start talking about your boyhood around here. Where did you go to school around here?

VT: Brick school house down here where it started on this land.

RFW: Just right down south of here?

VT: Yes.

RFW: It is still standing there. It is a one-room school house.

VT: Yes.

RFW: Do you remember who the teacher was or the principal was?

VT: Yes there was one teacher there. The first and only teacher I remember there was Harper...Her name was Harper. She lived...What was her front name? Anyway, Miss Harper was my first teacher.

RFW: H-A-R-P-E-R?

AT: Yes. They was the family that lived in...an old family in the country. That is, themselves.

VT: There was a man teacher there once. I've heard your mother talk of him that stayed here. *this man's name was harriman he boarded here in i believe in 1892-3*

AT: Yes, yes. That was before I went to school. Harriman...Not Harriman but...what was his name?

VT: I don't know but he lived here...boarded with them and stayed here while he taught school.

RFW: How many grades of school did you go to?

AT: Why, I only went through the, I think, the third grade, and then, well, maybe the fourth and they made it a consolidated school, called the Bowers Schools and they took in most of the townships and they had buses, horse-drawn buses that took the kids to school.

RFW: Horse-drawn buses. That is the first I've heard about them. How far did you have to go? To Bowers? *these were horse-drawn buses with a small stove in and parcel seats, on good roads it took the first*

AT: To Bowers. That is just about four miles from here. *entirely 1-hour and on bad roads 2 or more hours*

RFW: Where is that? West of here?

AT: That is east of here. But me and my brother generally...the old buses were so slow that we generally walked to school because we would cut across the...

RFW: Four miles? *i was a little young for a spring-toothed harrow*

AT: Yes, oh, what the heck is four miles? If you followed a spring-toothed harrow *but never less we walked many times*

all day behind a walkin' plow, why four miles didn't mean much to you.

RFW: Now, do you remember about the consolidated school? Do you remember any of the teachers up there or the principal name or anything?

AT: Yes.

RFW: How many grades were there?

AT: There was .. They had three years of high school, that is, eighth grade. The common, ordinary eight grades and then three years of high school. Then I graduated out of the three years of high school and then I went to Darlington and got the fourth year of high school, that is before I was eligible then to ...

RFW: While this was going on, while you were up there, did they keep open this school down here?

AT: No, no that school was closed. There was three in the township that wasn't.

RFW: You said that there were three schools that weren't what?

AT: That is they didn't furnish transportation to the children. Them three, they were a little bit far off for some reason and they kept them schools for a few years but they finally merged them into all of it, in the township.

Sugar Creek Township school. *they were merged when the motor busses offered in 1910*

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RFW: Did you, during this time you were going to school, also work on the farm?

AT: Oh yes. All kids had certain jobs to do before they went to school.

RFW: Tell us about what you did. What jobs did you have to do around here?

AT: In the first place, generally you fed the chickens and probably, if you were old enough, pushed milking the cow on you. Then you had to keep the hay thrown down for the horses when they come in. That's what you were suppose to do, if they should catch you and get you to do it, why you were suppose to do that.

RFW: How many acres was your dad farming at that time?

AT: Well I'll tell you, there was about 250 acres, something like that.

RFW: You got out of high school and then you sent to Darlington for the last year and then you went to Purdue. How long were you in Purdue?

AT: Long enough to get kicked out. I made the football team and the coach didn't want to give me my numerals, I never was a very easy man to get along with, because I was a real good player and so he tried to talk the freshman class into not giving me a numeral. I was a pretty good, I was able to get back on the first team and they thought alot of me at that time, but I thought too much of myself, but I wasn't no good at that. I was better off farming anyway.

RFW: You weren't in Purdue very long?

AT: Oh no.

RFW: Some where along the line here you got married.

AT: Yes.

RFW: Your wife's name is what?

VT: Vena, V-E-N-A.

RFW: Vena. What was her maiden name?

AT: Her maiden name was McBee.

RFW: McBee, you were McBee. When did you get married.

AT: Oh God, I don't know.

RFW: Your wife is going to remember.

VT: 1925. We had our 50th wedding anniversary and it will soon be 52.

RFW: What was the date though.

VT: October the 20th.

RFW: October 20, 1925. That was after you had been in the Marines during the war.

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AT: Yes, I was thirty-five years old then.

RFW: Tell us about going into the Marines before World War II. What did you do?

VT: You mean World War I?

RFW: Yes, World War I.

AT: I wanted to get in to see some action and I got all fooled up on that.

I joined the Marine Corps early, when to the boot camp and went through. They took out and I was in the 1st batallion in the Marines. They took out 600 men and put them on a boat and sent them out. We thought we were going over there, but we wasn't. Second night out, I lined that ~~**!!~~ fooled boat up with the North Star and I think we were going southeast and I knowed darned well we wasn't going to Germany. We went to the island of Haiti and subdued and worked in over the negroes in there and we spent two years.

RFW: In Haiti?

AT: Yes.

RFW: Two years in Haiti.

AT: I spect I know more about ^{VOODOOISM} ~~Buddism~~ than any living white man.

RFW: What was your job in the service?

AT: Huh?

RFW: What did you do in the service?

AT: In the first place, I felt pretty lucky. I was in there about three weeks

and they sent me down to the docks and they had ~~no motor boat~~. ^{They had a boat but they couldn't} Motor down ^{without a run} there wouldn't work and I told the ensign there that I thought I could fix

it. Well, I was always pretty good at mechanics. I cleaned it up and

started it to running and that night Colonel Russell's man, his chauffeur

got drunk and that fella said, "Can you drive an automobile?" And I said

"Yeah, I can drive an automobile." By golly I drove an automobile ^{with} ~~in front~~

with a little flag on it. Most of that time I got most of the information

I got. ^{from a priest attached to head quarters} ~~I was a pretty good chess player, not too good.~~ At headquarters

there would be alot of sitting around. There was a priest down there that

he was, liked to play ^{chess} ~~and by **!!~~ I wasn't as good as he was, but I would

give him a fair game. That's when I learned about.. we was arguing religion

among other things, and that's when I picked his mind on ^{woodrum} ~~Buddism~~, because

he had been there. He told me all about it. I had seen this because

i have been on a few raids of their meetings where the drs performed their sacrificial (go to) and dance to drum beats, there is no doubt they can alert the jungle of affor of facing danger, the dancers seem to be in a state of shock, there is one thing absolutely sure the mados drs have the black natives under complete control even to life or death

AT: I had been out on inspection and when there station was broke up, we could never catch any of the Voodoo doctors, they called them.

RFW: What kind of car were you driving down there in Haiti?

AT: For gosh sakes, we were driving the one I hadn't ever seen in this country, it must have been a *i am not sure but it was a jeffers,* oh ***!!! the luck.

VT: I never heard you say.

AT: I really can't tell you what the name of that car is, it has slipped my mind. It will come back after while but that don't do you no good now. It was a big wagon, it never been in this country as far as I know.

RFW: I got it up to the point where you were talking about that car and then I was asking you about, do you remember about coming back to the United States? What happened? Do you remember about the trip back and how you happen to come back and so on?

AT: There wasn't nothing to that. They .. An old second class troop ship pulled up out there in the bay and they put you on it.

VT: You were over there a long time. You was sick.

AT: Yes, that was after I had passed out with the .. The doctor said it was either tropical fever or bubonic plague. I think it was that plague, you get generally very few people, get over it and it goes on the medical records that was. I come to about two weeks. That is the first I remember ~~was a~~ little negro baby outside the compound just crying and crying, I reckon it died first, I don't know. Then they give me a medical survey back to the States and when I got back here they put me through for a couple of weeks and then give me another job driving a headquarters car, after I got back there. I spect three weeks or something like that then they .. the papers come out and they let you go home. It seems to be your boss when you get in there. I made up my mind there wasn't anybody going to get behind some brass buttons and make me made so I just grinnned at them by **!!. When they got too tough, I just put up with what happened.

RFW: We're back here in the United States and then did you come back and were you all done with school at that time?

AT: Oh yes. I come back the ... Russell, the man on the isle down there and he said, "Turnipseed if you'll re-enlist, I'll give break to your gunnery sergeant and put you in charge of the radio engines. I said, "Colonel, I wouldn't re-enlist if you'd make me a colonel, I'm going home, get some moss on my back and be my own boss for awhile."

VT: You say you're boss for now. *yes*

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RFW: Is that when you got married?

AT: He didn't grin or nothing so that's all there was to it. Say, them officers when you're ... if you're, and that's what I was a doing and dealing with most of the time. They were nice people if you didn't get ... A new man coming in just for the war's sake, they don't ... they don't. If you do your duty and do it like you do and do what you're suppose to do, there's nothing at all that you get along good.

RFW: All right, what did you do when you came back here to the United States?
How did you get here? Did you come by boat?

AT: The train, they unloaded us there, I mean, I got on the train at Charleston and come right on through.

VT: You come by boat from ...

AT: What do you mean from the island?

VT: Yes.

AT: They just sent a troop ship down there and pick them up.

RFW: You came home on the train and was there a whole bunch, a whole lot of troops on the train with you?

AT: Oh yes. There was one man, Saul ^{Kirk}~~Kurkey~~, he was, and he enlisted with me. I'll say there's another funny thing about that. He didn't know no more about the Army or anything or nothing and we took a notion that we wanted to go and we all went over to Indianapolis. We went into the Army quarter and they getting a bunch of rough stuff there. We were arguing about it and went out on the street and didn't know what to do and we seen something about the Marine Corps down there and we went on down there and say they were pretty nice men down there and they look right to us and we signed up for them. We didn't know what we were getting into no more than a rabbit at that time.

RFW: We're getting back to the United States now, you came back to Crawfordsville I suppose.

AT: Yes.

RFW: Got on a train and came up to Darlington, I suppose.

AT: Or Linden. No, I got off at Linden.

RFW: Did they have a brass band out there to meet you?

AT: No. Nobody there when I left and nobody there when I come back.

RFW: What year was that when you came back?

AT: Late 19, I spect. I don't know. Do you have any idea?

VT: You were gone for a long time and nobody heard from you either.

AT: I never wrote home. *yes i ~~never~~ wrote home several times while the war was on mail was irreglar*

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VT: Everyone was all upset about that. I remember he and my older brother were good friends I know nobody heard from him and everyone was kinda upset.

AT: Well we never got mail down there very often.

VT: I'll bet you were off with the boys, service parties they would come home.

RFW: You waited five years to get married?

AT: Oh, I don't know. I come back.

RFW: Did you go to work here on the farm then?

AT: Yes, yes. My brother tried to hold things together but he kinda had it messed up. I come right on back and took over the hands and the machinery and we ...

RFW: What kind of machinery did you have? You didn't have tractors in those days?

AT: Our first tractor was a Ford tractor, we had five of them at one time.

RFW: What year would that have been that you got your first tractor?

AT: By golly, now listen, we had a truck and a tractor, that must have been in the early '20's. I know it was early '20's and probably in '19. We had tractors soon after I got here.

RFW: Did you have ... Were those the kind of the big wheels with the spikes in them or what were they?

AT: Well, the first ones, yes, then they all had spiked wheels, that is.

RFW: Were they gasoline powered?

AT: Oh yes, they were all gasoline powered. Well no, the first one was coal oil but we got rid of them and went to gasoline powered.

RFW: When did you get the first coal oil tractor?

AT: That must have been about the early '20's, that is, probably '20's, that is. We got it soon after I got back.

RFW: What type of farm machinery did you have?

AT: Oh well, we, of course, that farm machinery we had then, we didn't have a combine, at that time, but we had a binder, the corn planter and the ... all horse-drawn machinery, up until we got the tractors. If some people had tractors before that, before I went to the Army, they, we didn't. We didn't have any till I got back and took over. Of course, I was much more of a mechanic and ...

RFW: Where did you buy this equipment at that time?

AT: Huh?

RFW: Where did you buy this equipment like the tractor, where did you buy that?

AT: Well, at that time, every little town had a store. There would be one town maybe that would have McCormicks and one Deering and there would always be a dealer there, don't you see. We didn't have nothing at all like it is now.

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AT: Now, if you broke a part, why you generally waited, if you needed to, if the dealer didn't have it, to go to Indianapolis, you could go in there to McCormicks or Deerings, either one, and they would give you that part. Now, of course, you can't do that. It's ...

RFW: Now your tractor you said was a Ford.

AT: Yes. Our first one was a Ford, we had five of them I believe at one time.

RFW: You mentioned that you had done mechanical work, what kind of work did you do?

AT: Oh I can do anything. I can take a tractor apart and put it together blind-folded. I was a pretty good mechanic. Good **!!.

RFW: What about the development of farm machinery in your time. What changes have you seen take place?

AT: Well then I'll tell you. Would you like to know what it looked like from the start when you followed a cradle and band the hand up until you had gone up to a \$60,000.00 combine?

RFW: Yes, fine.

AT: My dad when I was about 10 years old, now they had a binder then, but didn't use it. There was a pasture with wheat in the place and the binder couldn't get through and he took and he had a cradle and he cradled that and then he showed me how to bind and all. But then I come from that and the first was a thrashing machine. Now the first thrashing machines, they were pulled by horses and the engine was the horses. They didn't have no motor power and they didn't have no board on but the straw came out of the back end on a riddle and they just come up like that and fell over and then there were a couple of kids or somebody had a long pole with a horse on each end and they would drive under that board like that pull that straw out in the field. It would soon gather up until they would have to move the machine, don't you see. They would move the straw and then we had the board and then we got the engine. We had automotive power on the engine, don't you see. It lasted then and then the combine come along. First, the combine was very, well, they were pretty crude. It took one line after another to combine 25 years before they really got into what you know now as a combine.

RFW: Did anybody around here ever had one of those steam contraptions for tractors or for motor power?

AT: Oh good **!! yes. All of the old ... I spent years helping thrash where they had the steam engine. Then they finally got to the gas engine.

RFW: That was before the war though.

AT: After the war. That was the first World War. Long time afterwards.

RFW: But when did those steam ones start coming in?

AT: Well the steam power came in just after the... right about the time of the
~~now listen, I could be wrong.~~

VT: We had the thrashing machine. *steam power was used to power heavy stationary machines like threshers*

AT: Yes, the steam power came in ... *cover hullers and corn reeders*

VT: I grew up with cooking for them. *no farm work of tillage*

AT: Yes, I guess I am all wrong on that.

VT: That goes back quite a bit with the thrashing machine.

AT: But anyway, that's what happened, the first steam powered came in was pulled by horses and the next motored powered on its own just diddled out and that all started from the latter part of the 19th century. I would say 1890 and in there. It would be about, I couldn't have been much older than 8 or 9 years old, 1899 or something like that. That was the first one to come in. The first automobile to come in along about something like that too.

RFW: When did your family first have an automobile?

AT: We didn't have an automobile for a long time. We didn't have an automobile, mostly alot of the countries had automobiles before we did. We had other stuff.

VT: ~~At home we had those Mitchell.~~

AT: Yes, your family had automobiles before we did. It must have been about '14, something like that.

VT: 1914 or 1915. *my wife talking*

RFW: That you had the Mitchell you mean?

VT: Yes, we did.

RFW: What did you have?

AT: We bought an old Oldsmobile the first one we had.

RFW: When was that, in the '20's?

AT: Yes.

RFW: Tell us something about the happenings around this neighborhood. Were there any crimes around here that you remember back in those days?

AT: Oh nothing of any importance that I know of. I belong to the Horse Thief Society, that is, the ..

RFW: Horse Thief Detective Association?

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AT: I remember that.

RFW: What group were you a member of? Did they have chapters?

AT: Oh yes. *my wife had a horse stall stolen and was required on all many cases of hogs and chickens times was very hard in the early 1930-70*

RFW: What chapter were you in?

AT: Oh I forget the name of the chapter. It was held in the schoolhouse down here. Now the way it worked,

(RFW: TELEPHONE CALL)

RFW: You are going to tell us about The First National Bank?

AT: Yes.

RFW: Go ahead.

AT: John Jackman from, the one that sold us the farm down here, well, we borrowed some money down there on ten-year. We been .. we took over another farm too down there on .. by **!! ... then they would come due in the '30's and money by **!! was scarce. The whole story was that one fella said that a week before that he had two automobiles running and taking people out to look at farms and said the week after that he could use them all on a wheelbarrow. One banker (inaudible) down there at your bloomin' old bank and they had \$600.00. They said they would let us renew us that long if we would give them \$600.00 and renew it at \$600.00 more than what. I settled for \$400.00. It was on your record down there on the books somewhere.

RFW: Did you renew the note then?

AT: Oh yes. They were pretty nice about it. They had a note on there that we had to stand part of the damages.

RFW: We were talking about ... I was asking you if you remembered any crimes or any exciting events around here.

AT: No, as far as that is concerned, there was thievery and other stuff going on but no particulars.

RFW: But you remember the Horse Thieves Association. It was down here at the little schoolhouse?

AT: Yes, that's right.

RFW: Did that Association ever retrieve any horses?

AT: As far as I know there was never a horse stolen, that I ever remember of. There was lots of places there was. I can remember when we found people... I got people that stole hogs and something to eat, cattle like that, you know. As far as the horses were concerned horses, at that time, tractors were coming in and they were getting kinda scarce.

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RFW: Do you remember if there was ever any crime out in this area at all?

AT: No. Do you remember any Ven? I don't. This is here is a country up until the last few years just certain number of families and it just slid along there for a long time and everybody knows everybody else and if one man's business was another man's business, if you tried to steal anything there or anything else, why it was pretty hard to get by with.

RFW: If you can't tell us about any crime, how about some scandal?

AT: Do what?

RFW: How about some scandal? Did you have any scandal out in this area?

AT: No, not too much. They either got paid off or married I guess. I believe that must have been the case. You never heard much about it.

RFW: Back in the Depression, did anybody around here lose their farm?

AT: Oh yes, now I can tell you all about that. In just a few words, ~~all written down there, in this right there. That there has got that there~~ in it. I'll tell you exactly what happened. Now, I came back ... Before I went, the war had started over in Europe. We was selling stuffed goods, that is, your market was good on everything. When I came back after the war was over, corn and wheat, the farmers were rich. That is, they were getting rich. They bought alot of the high price land and they were getting rich. The war got over and then about 1920, 1922 or 1923, something like that, things turned back. The Republicans didn't have brains enough to, they thought they could get along without the farmer. They made that statement in Chicago and they went along that way but every-time it was hard on us, because everytime you would buy something, ~~a~~ ⁱⁿ ~~line of~~ ^{line stock - or grain} ~~stark~~ ^{any} for ~~some~~ ^{much at a time} something, you'd buy it at a bargain, but just like cutting a dog tail off of the time that gradual downslope of the demand left you, either nothing or a loss. They kept that way until the 29th or something like that and the bottom fell out of it, out of the stock market. It fell out of it because those people were buying stock on the 10¢ margin and they couldn't take it. Say if things went from bad to worse and by gosh I'll tell you we 'pert near lost our farm. It was that close.

RFW: Did anybody around here lose his farm?

AT: Oh yes. *very few of the families that were considered wealthy emerged out of it as a wealthy owner well to do an operating owner these families were considered wealthy in early 1900*

RFW: Who lost his farm that you know of?

AT: Cust~~ers~~ers lost their farms, Petersons lost most of their farms, Fishers lost their farms. Oh now listen, all of those families what they done was live too high on the hog. They refused to consider that gradual downslope that led them in that. Now the banks loaned me and my brother too much money to start with, that is, during that time. The banks wanted to loan money, they would say to just take a note and just sign it and send it back, we'll take care of it. When the time came, they wanted you to repay it. Most of them didn't think about that I guess.

RFW: The farms were lost. Who bought those farms?

AT: I'll tell you. I can give you one demonstration right up the road here on the Bowers' farm. This farm was lost, that is the Bowers couldn't take it. It went into the hands of an insurance company, I think the insurance company was the one that held the mortgage on the farm. Well, they thought there were going to, that insurance company, common with all of them, if you'll remember that insurance companies at that time hired some farm managers and they bought alot of stuff and they were going to farm it themselves. They found they were going broke on that and then they say anybody, "If you'll take this land, and pay the taxes and what you can on the interest," why now they took it over for the ... You could get a farm for just going on it. That may seem kind of strange to you, but that happened. If you dig into the records, you'll find out that's what happened.

JB: You mentioned your mechanical work.

AT: Well no, I've got a little stuff out of it but not very much. Generally I created an idea that made it work and they wrote me a thank you note if they used it. It's never gotten me much since and I soon found out that's the way it was a goin' so after that I just made, if I wanted a machine, I'd wait til somebody bought a good one and most people if their paint wore a little or broke down a little, you could buy that machine for little or nothing and good **!! I was a welder. I can weld and do that kind of work. I can take that machine and recondition it and put it back into as good a shape as ever. I never bought a new machine in my life. You buy a good second hand one that has been misused and work it over and.... Of course Tommy, he always like to ^{have} ~~fix~~ a good machine, ~~get~~ him down there where he farms, why we let him have it because likes to look ^{I put the best milk he formed} at the paint on them. That never made no difference to me as long as it did the work. That's the way of it.

RFW: Why don't we talk about the house here. This is a beautiful house. You say this was built about the time of the Civil War. Is all this walnut woodwork we see around here?

AT: Well, this here was built, I bought this back to ... there's a picture in that dining room in there if you go in there and look at it. I brought house back to the original, see. This woodwork in here was all jammed up and wasn't no good. It had been mistreated and there was paint on everything.

VT: This was used as a kitchen at onetime, this room, before the Turnipseeds came. This is like it was then. When I come up here there was 18 rooms.

AT: There is the original house 116 years ago.

RFW: Boy, that is a beautiful house.

AT: Now, this on the wall that you see here and I... that came out of an old barn, the hay mound floor and the thrashing floor, an old barn with big wide boards. We set a mill up outside here. Me and Chester Cook and another old man and Nood Boots.

RFW: But this is not the original woodwork then?

AT: There is the original woodwork in those rooms there.

VT: All this and upstairs is just like it was.

AT: You can go look at it and see. I cut the dye to cut this woodwork in here to match that in there.

RFW: And this is walnut?

AT: That is mostly walnut and cherry. That is all cherry. I traded an old tractor ^{bar} and a truckload of cherry logs and had them ^{sawed in long flat boards} ~~saw just ribs like~~ that and then ... *then we planed out cut for the pattern we wanted*

RFW: I want to ask you about Potato Creek. Tell us about the origin of that name, Potato Creek.

AT: Well, I'll tell you, Potato Creek is the name that come from the wild sweet potatoes. All this ground around here is subject to that and the hogs lived on them and that is the same as Sugar Creek, of this county. Now, the Indians, ^{made maple sugar} ~~this maple~~ out here ~~is the Indians~~, they tell me and I've heard it told many times, the Indians come in here every morning and boil sugar water to get sugar and the people, of course, naturally, followed the same thing. I have seen lots of sugar camps, mostly around Darlington. I don't know why they called this Sugar Creek Township. This is Potato Creek because wild potatoes grow in confusion around here. We had an awful time with them, to start, before we got these 24D and stuff like that to kill them. ~~grew~~ ~~up there and try to plant corn.~~ *we just spray them out*

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JB: What about Lye Creek Mr. Turnipseed.

AT: That's the same thing. Lye Creek comes out of ~~that little ground~~ down *lye creek comes out of what is called lye creek farms, the ground is highly acid there, we used to farm that for years. but good farms land if properly treated*

RFW: Okay let's start. You were talking about Lye Creek. You said that was the same thing as Potato Creek?

AT: Well, no. It don't have the lye in it. The Durham land down there is subject, it's really, well, I suppose, I reckon, ****!!**!!** I can't explain it to you but ... That there water that comes off of it is... carries a certain percentage of lye with it, it's bound to. Certain things won't grown in it, it's not too bad. I notice alot of grasses and stuff, and you don't have no vines or anything like that. The content of lye in the ground at that particular place is called Lye Creek. The little creek that runs out of it.

RFW: You're familiar with the burned-off down here, aren't you? What they call the burned-off. Tell us how that happened to become the burned-off.

AT: Why they tell you that there was a fella that rented that, come in there, I think he was from Thorntown. Now I remember when he come in and he went to the house up above there to get the matches, he was gonna burn some trash off of it. Person up there at the house, I forget what the name was, but they told him he mustn't set a fire back there in that because it was crazy. Well, he did and by golly he burned the whole, just burned all of that off of the top, just the tile was laying there on the ground.

RFW: When did that happen? *1932 they had to dig a ditch to water around all low part of it, lasted about 2 years*

AT: Oh it's been burned for a couple of years.

VT: That was before Delmas went down there.

AT: That was before we went down there and farmed that land. It made an awful smoke down there.

VT: You could tell it up here.

RFW: That was after World War I wasn't it?

AT: Yes.

RFW: Was it in the '30's?

VT: Yes.

AT: I imagine it could have been. Yes, I think it was in the '30's.

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AT: I've seen other fellas throw a cigarette down there, a little smoke come up out the ground and you dig up and find a little ball of fire down there about so big around.

RFW: Could that happen to any of this land around here?

AT: No, no. Only that muck land, peat land. We'd see a little smoke come up someplace and we'd just dig it up and so you could dig down.

RFW: I didn't ask you about any of these little towns around here. What little towns were around here when you were a boy?

AT: Well, I'll tell you, there were two, Kirkpatrick and Bower Station.

VT: There was a little Beeville.

AT: Beeville was really going out before I was a boy. The railroad when it come through took Beeville out. There were alot.

RFW: Beckville or Beeville?

AT: Beeville.

RFW: Where in the devil was Beeville?

VT: Well, I don't know.

AT: Beeville was 2 mile and $\frac{1}{4}$ just right in there, north ...

RFW: This machine here can't see where you're pointing. Which direction are you pointing?

VT: Northwest.

RFW: Northwest, okay. And why was it Beeville?

AT: It was a little trading post. They had littles stores like that over *dh* my mother used to tell me about it. Every few miles they'd ... the trading post would be a wagon on that road come along and it would deliver stuff to that store and take it to that store and

RFW: How do you spell Beeville? B-E-E-V-I-L-L-E?

AT: I suppose so yes. I suppose somebody got stung there sometime and called it Beeville.

VT: Kirkpatrick used to be quite a little berg.

RFW: What was at Kirkpatrick?

AT: It was over here northwest. Kirkpatrick at one time had a bank, two grocery stores, a saw mill, hardware store and a drug store, barber shop and now nothing.

VT: School

AT: Yes, and a school.

VT: That is where I went to school.

*that was my wife she went to Kirkpatrick's
i never went there*

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AT: Now Bower Station over here had a saw mill, two grocery stores, a blacksmith shop. Bower Station never had a bank but it had a post office and a barber shop and all of that. It had everything you needed. The same as Kirkpatrick did.

RFW: What was the most Beeville ever had?

AT: The only thing I remember in Beeville was an old store with kind of false front to it and it sit there but there was no one using it. They moved to Kirkpatrick when the railroad ^{came thru}. They left it out.

RFW: Tell us about Darlington and they days when you were a kid.

AT: Darlington?

RFW: Yes. Was that where you did your business?

AT: I spent my last high school years in Darlington. Darlington had three grocery stores, three banks at one time.

RFW: For crying out loud, what did they do with three banks in Darlington?

AT: Heck if I know, but they had three banks.

VT: Kirkpatrick had a bank.

AT: Two barber shops, three grocery stores, two blacksmith shops and they had I don't know whether they had two dry goods stores or not. I know they had one. They had two livery barns and every year, of course, they had horse races and things like that.

VT: Horse shows, you know.

RFW: Where would they have the horse shows?

AT: Right up and down Main Street.

VT: And everybody standing on both sides a watchin.

AT: Oh, three saloons. Yes, at one time they had three.

VT: Linden had three.

RFW: What about...did they have doctors in these towns?

AT: Yes. They had two doctors over there at one time.

RFW: Darlington?

AT: Yes.

RFW: Did they have a doctor at Kirkpatrick?

AT: Yes they had a doctor at Kirkpatrick. They never had one at Bower Station that I know of.

RFW: Did they have any lawyers out at these places?

AT: No they hadn't got that far along yet.

VT: Linden had a lawyer at one time.

RFW: These banks. Whatever happened to all these banks?

AT: Well, now I'll tell you. The Peoples Banks...it got too cautious. I don't

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AT: know what was the matter with them. They wouldn't loan me no money once. They loaned it to another fella and they lost it. And then Lynch over there. He started another bank. I forget what they did call it now. But the business wasn't.. *enough to keep it going*

VT: There was a Merchant's bank there.

AT: I know...the Farmers and Merchant's Bank has been there...Uncle Jim Peterson had his...ever since I can remember. He bought both the Peoples and that other bank out because it...business got to a point, that is, place where it wasn't profitable I suppose. I don't know why did buy them out but he bought them out.

RFW: Now the Farmers and Merchant's Bank has always been where it is.

AT: The Farmers and Merchant's Bank...I've done business with that ever since...I can remember there was only one time that I ever got real mad at them and hasn't been too long ago. The ~~***~~ fools got a new bunch in and I took a notion that I wanted a \$1,000.00 and by ~~***~~!! they held a council whether they were going to lend me \$1,000.00 or not.

RFW: Where were those other two banks in town? Where were they? Where were they in Darlington?

AT: The People's Bank was right on the corner, on the main corner I suppose. Do you know ...

VT: It was on the corner there, the library sits up here and the bank ...

AT: Do you know where the library sits?

RFW: Yes.

AT: Well, it was right across the street and then up the next corner. That is, the People's Bank was in that corner like ... Here's your library and the People's Bank was here and that other bank mentioned was here and the Farmers and Merchants Bank it was here.

RFW: The two other banks were down on the other block.

VT: Yes.

RFW: In the other block?

AT: Yes, the People's Bank and ~~Jess Linn's bank~~ *Bill Lynch* was all in the same block on the same street.

RFW: And that was across the street from the library?

AT: Yes, across the street from the library.

RFW: Now, we haven't said anything about churches. What churches were there around here in those days?

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AT: Well ...

VT: We had the Potato Creek but ...

AT: You better ask somebody else that because I ..

VT: Potato Creek Church ..

AT: When I was a kid, they would run me down and wash my ears and put a big tie on me and take me to church and I swore whenever I got old enough by golly ... I wouldn't put up with than anymore.

RFW: You went to Potato Creek Church. Was that a Presbyterian church?

AT: Methodist.

RFW: Methodist.

AT: Now right up above us here was a United Brethren. It was German.

VT: They followed the Dunkard church.

AT: The Dunkard we called them. There was no Baptist Church I know of here.

VT: There's one in Linden and Darlington.

AT: There was in Darlington but I mean it probably ... The Catholics in Colfax here had so many Irish come in and settle down why they had a place up there.

JB: Did you ever go to the Dunkard church when you washed your feet?

VT: Oh my yes!

AT: What?

VT: Go to the Dunkard church when you washed your feet?

AT: Oh yes!

VT: I have been there alot of times.

RFW: Where was the Dunkard church?

AT: It was about a mile and a half east of here and north a half mile.

VT: Almost on the road going to ... *colfax*

RFW: That church is not in existence anymore?

VT: I think they tore it down. I haven't been around there but I believe they did. *it burned down*

JB: It hasn't been gone too long. I think about 20 years.

VT: I ~~'spect it was still out there when you were teaching there wasn't it?~~

JB: ~~Yeah. I guess it was. You're right.~~ *I must have been nuts when I gave this answer*

RFW: Are there any of those Dunkards still around here?

AT: Very few.

VT: I don't think there would be any today. Some of their great-grandchildren might still live around. My sister, my older sister, married a Camel and his father was the preacher there at the church for years.

RFW: Can you think of anything else we ought to cover here?

VT: We had a Potato Creek Church.

RFW: Okay, tell us about the Potato Creek Church. That went out of existence didn't it?

VT: Yes, not too long ago.

RFW: Merged with another church didn't it?

VT: Went to Darlington.

RFW: That was a Methodist church?

VT: Yes, a Methodist church.

AT: The Potato Creek Church, Petersons gave them the land, they built a nice little church there and then I can remember when I was a young man, just a boy, they finally built a new part. Right nice little church with a basement, kitchen and stuff like that in it. Then they all got in a quarrel among themselves and they busted up, that is ...

JB: Where's Horseshoe Bend?

AT: I don't know. Do you mean it's around here?

VT: Yes it is. Horseshoe Bend, I've heard of that.

AT: Not unless it's part of Sugar Creek. I don't know. Horseshoe Bend.

VT: There isn't anybody older than we are around here.

AT: I can remember when ...

VT: Laura Boots might remember...

AT: That toll road from Darlington to Thorntown ...

RFW: Tell us about that.

AT: Well all I know about it is when I was over to Darlington I boarded at Kimlers but didn't want to drive no other time. I went down to Cox's there to get a little milk, that is, they sent me there when I got out of school but just part of that old house was still there. Now that toll road the one I ^{am talking about is} ~~would use by~~ people in this country here they would go over to Darlington went to Thorntown, Thorntown at onetime was quite a little trading place, that is it was people that wanted to trade stuff that better than what they did at these little towns around they'd go and all them around here had to go to Darlington to take that toll road because it was winter time that kept it in pretty good shape where if they would try to cut across here to Thorntown, they would have Potato Creek and I forget

to cut the from north of sugar creek to thortown at that time was rough going, much boggy land

AT: That thing was so bogged down and the roads was so bad. They had a pretty good road into Darlington and then they took that toll road into Thorntown.

RFW: Was that toll road still collecting tolls?

AT: No, no, I just remember the house there and the gate there where it had been abandon and sitting there, no.

RFW: Do you remember back when they built the covered bridge down there?

AT: No.

VT: That was in my father's day.

AT: Jim Peterson told me that he and his brother they was just young when they building that thing and my **!! that bridge is 100, over 100 years old.

VT: 100, longer than that.

RFW: Did you ever hear any stories about the Underground Railroad coming up through here?

AT: No, I read about the Underground Railroad but I never as far as I know. A negro was a rarity as far as I know.

RFW: Well it used to run up to Thorntown apparently. I thought maybe you had heard some stories.

AT: It might be the case for all I know but I don't remember.

RFW: I thought maybe your parents might have told you some stories about it.

AT: No as far as I know I don't believe so.

RFW: I'm kinda petering out John, can you think of anything else?

JB: What about the cemeteries around here? Are there very many cemetery plots?

AT: The only cemetery I know of in here is this one that is just right down here below the barn. They were the original occupants of this particular place. That was even before these other people I think bought the land. I can't understand the grave is 1831, that is, there is a marker, a tombstone down there. Why would those people have that kind of a tombstone when these other people come through and bought this land about that time. I reckon they got over three people in the township, they'd got crowded but I don't know where the tombstone come from. That is what ... they don't generally ... them kind of people under conditions like that where would they get the tombstone? But I do know this much, I know that in all my life I've heard them talk about that and there has never been nobody buried there. It had been abandoned years before I was born.

there are 8 cemeteries & still I believe still used, all around at least 3 more rocks still standing

VT: Onetime your mother heard there was going to be a burial there and they all dressed up and that's when she lived up here. They all went down there thinking they were bringing someone to bury, but they didn't.

most of these are started a family burial grounds an land owned by familys a cornerly name

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AT: I should imagine that they must have been here a good while before the land office was in Crawfordsville.

VT: The Peterson cemetery over here. It's an old cemetery.

JB: Where's that? *1/2 mile south and 1 mile east of the N-W corner of the township*

AT: ~~There are several cemeteries in town.~~

VT: ~~West of the first road that goes south.~~

JB: ~~Over there by Mennens?~~

AT: Little cemeteries in a fast town. The house was run like that you know. Near the water mill that is all. *I make no sense of this*

RFW: Well let's.... Let me ask this, do you folks have children?

AT: No.

JB: What about this John Turnipseed...

AT: Somebody picked that name up and used it. That ***! fool named caused me alot of trouble in the Marine Corp. I don't think that ***! fool .. when I was in Boot Camp why there would be a letter come for me and he would say "TURNIPSEED!" like that. I don't think he ever believed my name any more than I did.

RFW: Do you know where the name Turnipseed came from?

AT: Only hearsay. Now what I do know that my father, my grandfather is suppose to be against slavery. They were the family that owned alot of negroes. *they* The negroes in the South, there were many of them named Turnipseed, that is they took the name from the original, back where they came from. When we

remember an in ... We was in Georgia we stopped, we were waiting on something, but he *route to marine boot camp* looked in the telephone book to see if he could find any Kirks. He couldn't find no Kirks and he looked in there and found Turnipseeds and every ***! one of them niggers. He just had a big time out of that.

RFW: Well now where did that name Turnipseed come from?

AT: It's German.

VT: From your grandfather...

AT: They tried to sell me a Turnipseed coat-of-arms. They give ... The family original was German descent, that is.

RFW: Well, let's cut this off, they want to get to supper and so do we.

all I know about my great grand father is he came from gorgie joined the union army fought in the battle of shilo i have a bullet that is supposed to come from there, returned and married an alus girl never very well strong after return, he had some strong radical views, i have many times wished to find out, but common sense told me leave sleeping dogs alone, you never know what you will find out