

Interview with Gilbert Herrmann
December 15, 2009
Conducted at the Herrmann home, Kinsley, Kansas
Interviewers: Joan Weaver: and Rosetta Graff

Weaver: Today is December 15, 2009. We are at the home of Gilbert Herrmann. Joan Weaver and Rosetta Graff are doing the interview. What is your full name?

Gilbert: Gilbert James Herrmann

Weaver: And where do you currently reside?

Gilbert: 530 West 1st , Kinsley, Kansas.

Weaver: When and where were you born?

Gilbert: Born in February the 9th, 1924.

Weaver: Yeah. Where were you born?

Gilbert: In Sts. Peter and Paul (*Catholic Church*) neighborhood, Northwest of Kinsley.

Weaver: It was on a farm out there?

Gilbert: Yeah, a farm.

Weaver: Can you describe where the farm is?

Gilbert: It is about 2 miles west and 5 miles north of Kinsley.

Weaver: What were the names of your parents?

Gilbert: Carl and Martha Herrmann.

Weaver: Okay, what was Martha's maiden name?

Gilbert: Weber.

Weaver: Weber. And do you know your grandparents name?

Gilbert: John and my grandmother I never did know her. She was dead when I was born.

Weaver: And on your mother's side, the Weber side?

Gilbert: Alex Webber and I don't remember grandma's name.

Weaver: Grandma Weber, that is what her name was.

Gilbert: Yeah, uh huh.

Weaver: Can you describe the makeup of your household? Brothers or sisters?

Gilbert: There was six of us in the family. I was the second oldest one. I had one older brother. There was 4 boys and 2 girls.

Weaver: And what were their names?

Gilbert: Gerald, then me, James, Agatha was her name but she took Mary later on in life, and Jerome, then Janice.

Weaver: What was it like growing up in your house? Can you just tell us, you were the second oldest so talk about what the family was like and chores.

Gilbert: Well living on a farm, you know. You are pretty close knit and everything. Doing chores and stuff, we were anyways.

Weaver: What were your chores when you were little.

Gilbert: Milking mostly. Well, we milked quite a few cows to make a living.

Weaver: How many cows did you have? About?

Gilbert: We usually milked about ten of them I think, by hand, no milker.

Weaver: What did you do with the milk then?

Gilbert: Separate it from the cream and sold the cream.

Weaver: Where did they sell it? Did they go on the train?

Gilbert: No, well toward the end we had it on the train. But to start with we had a local guy down here, Al Nall, right there then.

Weaver: Right here in Kinsley?

Gilbert: Uh huh.

Weaver: I am just clarifying things for the tape.

Gilbert: Uh huh. Uh huh. But later on we shipped it on the railroad. You would get more for it going back East, either Hutchison or Wichita. I don't know where it went.

Weaver: What else did you raise on the farm except for milk cows?

Gilbert: Chickens, we also had a bunch of chickens that we would butcher, you know buy a bunch of little ones and put them in a brooder house and raise them. The roosters we would butcher you know and have chicken. We had hogs too you know pigs. We had a little bit of everything.

Weaver: Did you raise crops also? Wheat?

Gilbert: Uh huh. Wheat, mostly wheat.

Weaver: Probably some alfalfa.

Gilbert: No, well yeah we had a little bit of alfalfa ground but not much though. It took better ground to raise alfalfa than what we had.

Weaver: What did you feed the cows?

Gilbert: Feed. Sorghum, you would raise sorghum, and put it up in bundles a lot of times.

Weaver: When you first started helping you dad did you have a tractor?

Gilbert: Horses.

Weaver: Horses. How old were you when you were maneuvering horses?

Gilbert: Well I didn't really drive the horses but I remember us having horses. We would haul the wheat back there; we would haul wheat with horses from the combine and everything. We had to hire a man. We was too slow to do much scooping or anything. I remember him scooping it off and then taking the horses, running back up there and get another load.

Weaver: And you went to school out there?

Gilbert: Uh huh. Sts. Peter and Paul Parochial School.

Weaver: What was that like? How many kids?

Gilbert: Well we had two rooms. Called one the small room and one the big room. From 1 to 4 and then 5 to 8. Graduated out there I think in 1937.

Weaver: From the 8th grade?

Gilbert: From the 8th grade.

Weaver: You had two teachers then?

Gilbert: Two teachers, uh huh. The teachers stayed there. They were nuns from Wichita that taught us then in parochial school.

Weaver: Any memories about that school that you would like to record.

Gilbert: Not really too much from the ... I remember some of my teachers probably. They were nuns from Wichita you know and we use to go there.

Weaver: And they lived there by the church?

Gilbert: Yeah, they lived in their house right by the school.

Weaver: And you had a full time priest at that time?

Gilbert: Uh huh.

Weaver: You have a pretty big congregation?

Gilbert: Yeah, it was a pretty good size. I wouldn't say a big one or anything. We pretty well filled the church up on Sundays.

Weaver: And was the family a big part of the church? Was it a pretty important part on the community?

Gilbert: Oh sure it was, yeah. We were married and everything, took all out religious classes there too, you know.

Weaver: What was Christmas like, it is Christmas time, what was Christmas like in your family?

Gilbert: Well we at first never really did see Santa Claus or nothing that came around but towards the end they had Santa Claus come around there. During the Depression there was a lot of times there wasn't that much. We would put plates out and they would fill them up with candy.

Weaver: Let's talk a little bit about the Depression. What else do you remember about that time?

Gilbert: I remember herding the cattle on the road because we didn't have enough grass. The grass didn't grow enough to get enough for them. So we had a ole road right there next to us. We'd herd the cattle on that during the morning hours.

Weaver: This would have been during the Dust Bowl?

Gilbert: Uh huh.

Weaver: When things were so dry. Were you able to keep the cattle alive?

Gilbert: Oh yeah, yeah. We had a mile of road there that we could run them on, and we kind of herded them on that for awhile. I remember putting up, when we didn't raise any sorghum or feed, we went out in the field after harvest and cut some Russian Thistle and stubble and piled that up and fed it during the winter time.

Weaver: Cows couldn't be too particular.

Gilbert: No, no they couldn't be. We put that stubble up with a header. That's an old header; we didn't have a combine. We boys had to stomp it in the wagon. You pulled the wagon right along and it had an elevator and it went into the wagon. The thistles got pretty stickery up there.

Weaver: I think I would remember that job.

Gilbert: Uh huh.

Weaver: We didn't talk about it but you probably had a big garden didn't you, when you were growing up or not?

Gilbert: I don't remember the garden so much. But I know we had a garden, yeah.

Weaver: Because we have talked to other people and with the Depression they didn't feel quite so much because of the gardens. They had enough food. City folk didn't have that opportunity.

Gilbert: We always had our milk and chickens, butcher the roosters. Butcher our own hogs and cattle and stuff.

Weaver: Did anybody out there in that area lose their farms during the depression?

Gilbert: I don't remember. No. I wasn't that old then really either.

Weaver: How about the dust storms?

Gilbert: Oh yeah.

Weaver: Okay, can you describe what they were like?

Gilbert: That one Sunday it rolled in from the north and boy it just got dark and everything. The one that I really remember.

Weaver: Were you at home?

Gilbert: Uh huh. It was just kind of like night time, darn near. That one was. That was the worst one, I think. I couldn't say what date it was or nothing.

Weaver: People mention the Sunday one. Was it Easter? It was a Sunday anyways.

Gilbert: I think it was a Sunday as I remember.

Weaver: Did you put the rags over the windows or was your house pretty tight?

Gilbert: No, it wasn't that tight either. Wasn't none of them that were that tight. In the house even you could see the dust kind of in the air. That was about the only one that I really remember that was bad, you know.

Weaver: You never got caught somewhere during one of them?

Gilbert: No, no.

Weaver: How about the grasshoppers or things like that? Do you remember?

Gilbert: Well towards the end I know we spread poison on the outside of the fields to keep them from working in. I don't remember them ever really, what you say a plague of them that damaged that much crop. I know we put poison out there for them that we could buy here in town and take it out there and spread it.

Weaver: Well okay let's see. What brought your grandparents, is that who came to Edwards County first?

Gilbert: Uh huh.

Weaver: What brought your grandparents here or where are they from?

Gilbert: My granddad was from Germany.

Weaver: And he came right to ...

Gilbert: Sts. Peter and Paul neighborhood, up there. In fact the ground the church is built on is what he donated to the church and school, that corner. He only lived about couple hundred yards from the church up there.

Weaver: And they came to farm?

Gilbert: Uh huh. Homestead.

Graff: Were they the Volga Germans?

Gilbert: No, I don't think my grandpa was. I really don't know what town he was really from. There is quite a bit of stuff. I don't know whether he was married when he got here or whether he married after he got here. I wasn't that much on genealogy. We have been to Germany a couple times, and we never did look up my relatives back there. We seen a lot of Herrmanns back there 'cause that was a popular name.

Weaver: Did you say that you graduated in 1941?

Gilbert: Uh huh. From high school.

Weaver: Can you remember Pearl Harbor and what you were doing when you heard that news?

Gilbert: Uh huh. Well, I know it was a Sunday, and I had my motorcycle out. I was riding around somewhere up north talking to people when we heard about it. Thought that was something awful.

Weaver: You said that you had a farm deferment to begin with right?

Gilbert: Well, not to begin with no. I got that after. My brother was a year older than I was, and he went first. Then I was more or less a farm hand. Then my younger brother got old enough to kind of work at home. I worked out for a farmer then too, milk and dairy, and helped the dairy farm.

Weaver: Okay, your older brother was Gerald?

Gilbert: Gerald.

Weaver: Did he go in the army?

Gilbert: Uh huh. Uh huh.

Weaver: Where did he serve?

Gilbert: South Pacific, from New Guinea. He got over there about a year before I did. Uh huh. We got together over there in the Philippines. He was way up north in the Philippines, and I was way down south in the Philippines. We got together over there a couple times in Manila.

Weaver: How were you able to do that?

Gilbert: Hitchhike.

Weaver: Had passes?

Gilbert: Uh huh.

Weaver: And how did you communicate to meet up?

Gilbert: Probably writing each other I imagine, I don't really know.

Weaver: And the letters would get there in time?

Gilbert: Well I don't know how. I guess that is the way we did. I don't remember a telephone or nothing. But we got together several times. I went up to see him once and we met in Manila a couple times. I had pictures of it, but I don't know where they went to. They kind of disappeared in some books.

Weaver: So your brother went in and you stayed home and farmed and hired out also?

Gilbert: Toward the end I did; I hired out. Yeah.

Weaver: And what was, how did things change because of boys being drafted?

Gilbert: Yeah I think so.

Weaver: I think your school probably didn't change because it was being taught by nuns anyway. So there wouldn't be a shortage of teachers.

Gilbert: My high school there, I graduated in 41. That is the year the school burnt down you know. I don't know if you remember that or not.

Weaver: Not me. Rosetta might.

Gilbert: And we had to go to school in churches and everything. Graduate in South Park and it poured down rain.

Weaver: I haven't heard that story before. How many were in your class about?

Gilbert: 71 I think.

Weaver: Wow.

Gilbert: It was a big class at that time. Yep. I think that was the biggest class we had for quite awhile there until they combined with Offerle. Then they had some larger ones.

Weaver: Did a lot of your classmates go straight into the service?

Gilbert: Some of them went before. That one VFW out here is named after one of them. Gasser was in the Marines. He was one of the first ones of them to get killed. It was awhile before I went in. Let's see when did the war start?

Weaver: December 7th, 1941.

Gilbert: I didn't go until '44.

Weaver: Yeah, you had just graduated.

Gilbert: No, I graduated in '41. I went to the service in '44.

Weaver: Right. But Pearl Harbor would have been after you graduated.

Gilbert: Right after. I graduated in '41 and it was in December of '41.

Weaver: Well, let's see here.

Graff: When you were growing up was there anything at Sts. Peter and Paul besides the church and the school?

Gilbert: The nun's house and the priest's house.

Graff: There were 2? Okay. And did you have a grocery store?

Gilbert: There was an old store up there. Harry Lewis run a store that had a little bit of everything. Kids would go over there and buy candy and everything.

Graff: Did you come to town very often?

Gilbert: No, we didn't to town very often. Us kids didn't anyway.

Weaver: And it was Kinsley that when you traded you did come to Kinsley?

Gilbert: Uh huh. Uh huh. We traded in Kinsley. Take in a can of cream and sell it a lot of times. Eggs you know and sell them, then buy the groceries.

Weaver: You brought the wheat to town, to Kinsley?

Gilbert: I remember bringing the wheat to town too. Back in the '30's, '31 and '32, there we had a pretty good crop, but the wheat wasn't worth nothing you know, maybe 25 cents a bushel. I know my dad was out there one time, and we loaded up a bunch of wheat in the wagon. There was always a bunch of chaff in it. So he was out there throwing it in the air and letting the wind take the chaff so we could get a little better of a price for it. We had a team of horses ready to haul them in.

Graff: Well how long, do you remember how long it took to get from your house in to town?

Gilbert: Not really, no.

Graff: Well I was just thinking that would take quite awhile.

Gilbert: Uh huh. It is about 8 miles.

Weaver: Couple hours maybe?

Gilbert: Probably would. All together, yeah.

Graff: So did you have a lot of activities at the school? Did you have like dinners and dances?

Gilbert: Yeah, the parish would. We would have an annual picnic up there where they served big meals you know and everything, once a year to make money.

Graff: Did they have like grade school basketball?

Gilbert: No, they didn't have no sports at all. Now we did go out for sports here in Kinsley. We kind of had a carpool out there going, but we always had to go home right after school. We never did get to practice or anything.

Weaver: As a kid, what did you do when you had some free time? Or did you get much free time

Gilbert: As a real little kid?

Weaver: Well as an elementary kid, you know.

Gilbert: Well after I got bigger, there was a lot of motorcycles.

Weaver: How old were you when you got your first motorcycle?

Gilbert: I had a picture in one of those magazines about that.

Weaver: Like 15 or 16?

Gilbert: Probably something like that, yeah.

Weaver: And how did you, did you have to earn that?

Gilbert: Uh huh.

Weaver: How did you earn the money for that?

Gilbert: Well us boys kind of took turns working out afterwards. There was really 3 of that could help around the farm. We took turns working out and getting a little money.

Weaver: What kind of motorcycle was it?

Gilbert: Harley Davidson, about the only one there is.

Weaver: You started out with a Harley, huh?

Graff: Where did you buy it?

Gilbert: I bought it off a boy up there, it was an old one. It was 1928. I should have kept it; it would be worth a fortune now. I think I owned 8 of them all together. I traded up all the time. No, I kind of enjoyed riding motorcycles.

Weaver: Okay, you were drafted and tell us about went off on the train to Leavenworth.

Gilbert: Yeah, Leavenworth. Inducted at Leavenworth. Me and another guy from here, Edward Crockett, went together. Then I took my basic at Fort Riley. That was pretty close and all. They let me bring my motorcycle there. After a couple weeks and weekends I could ride home even. I was pretty lucky that way.

Weaver: I think you are the first person we have interviewed that had been at Fort Riley?

Gilbert: Really?

Weaver: Yeah. Of course we haven't had all army.

Gilbert: Yeah, I was kind of lucky. Edward Crockett got stationed there too. They had a little horse cavalry then. They hadn't left yet, but when we got in there, they did away with it.

Weaver: You were being trained for the tanks?

Gilbert: Uh huh.

Weaver: And they still do tanks up there I think.

Gilbert: Well we had a kind of tracted vehicle with a gun on it.

Weaver: How long were you at Fort Riley?

Gilbert: About 6 months. No, maybe not that long. I think basic was 6 weeks. Then I took some other training there. Then we went to Fort Knox, Kentucky. I got transferred for my advanced training in tanks. They had bigger tanks there.

Weaver: Do you have any special memories at Fort Riley first then Fort Knox?

Gilbert: Nothing special. I usually came home if I had a weekend pass. A lot of the time I would go down to Wichita or something like that. They had a limit on how many miles you could go on a Class A pass. I remember I got caught out in Wichita once and that was too far out of my area.

Weaver: What was the draw to Wichita? Were there girls?

Gilbert: I don't know. Just a town, a big town.

Weaver: And you didn't have a girlfriend at this time?

Gilbert: No I never had a girlfriend. I never cared about them probably.

Weaver: So about how long were you at Fort Knox.

Gilbert: I was in the states about a year. So between the two.

Weaver: Then you shipped out of ...

Gilbert: Fort Ord, California is where I shipped out from.

Weaver: You went on a troop train to California or how did you get to California?

Gilbert: How the heck did I get to California? Probably, now that I don't remember. Fort Ord, California is where I shipped out of I know. I didn't take my motorcycle.

Weaver: Left it at home. You remember the name of the ship that you were on?

Gilbert: No. Well I think it was in one of those books, but I don't know.

Weaver: Okay, we will look that up later. Anything you remember about shipping out?

Gilbert: Well I remember on the ship there. We wasn't in a convoy. We were always by ourselves. We always had, if we saw an airplane or something, we would have to go down in the hole there. It was hotter than... We were sweating like heck, I remember.

Graff: Were you sea sick?

Gilbert: Not that I remember on that. But I was sea sick going from the Philippines going to Japan. For a little bit I was but not bad. We went through some pretty rough waters there on the North Sea. I didn't feel the best.

Weaver: So you were on the ship so where did you first land in the South Pacific?

Gilbert: Philippines.

Weaver: Right to the Philippines.

Herman: Uh huh.

Weaver: Were you ever, you said you had to go down below, were you ever attacked on the way?

Gilbert: No. We wasn't in a convoy. We were just kind of on our own.

Weaver: Can you tell us a little bit about what it was like in the Philippines?

Gilbert: We would take showers outside when it rained. We was kind of in a tent city there. It rained about everyday though the way it seemed. We were on the Southern end, that is where. I wasn't there that long see.

Weaver: Where did you go from there then?

Gilbert: Japan. The war got over with there before. We were preparing to go invade Japan you know.

Graff: So you remember VJ-Day? Victory over Japan? Do you remember that day?

Gilbert: Well not really. I just remember it got over with. They was dropping those bombs, that was big news.

Graff: You weren't that far away.

Gilbert: No. Well, Philippines is quite a ways from Japan. I couldn't say how far.

Weaver: What were the soldiers' reactions to the bombs being dropped?

Gilbert: Celebrating.

Weaver: That you didn't have to fight?

Gilbert: No, we didn't have to fight. Well we did see some action in the Philippines. Mopping up some fanatics, some snipers that was there. I got in on the tail end of the war.

Graff: Where did you land in Japan?

Gilbert: Yokohama, Tokyo.

Weaver: So you were in Tokyo after the bomb was dropped?

Gilbert: Uh huh.

Weaver: Can you describe, were you allowed to go where the bomb was?

Gilbert: We never did. I forgot how far away that was from Yokohama, Tokyo. Japan, where we were, was bombed awfully bad by B-29 bombers you know. All that was sticking up were the chimney, you know. The way they said, they really bombed it. Burned it up.

Weaver: What were your duties in Japan? Where did you spend your time?

Gilbert: For awhile there, I don't know. We went out there to an airport one time in our tanks and smashed up a lot of their airplanes. Our duties after that we turned our tanks in. My outfit did guard duty down at the docks. I was a motor pool sergeant then. We kept the equipment all running. And after we turned our tanks in, we didn't have much to do then, just enough to keep the outfit running.

Weaver: Do you have any other memories of Japan?

Gilbert: Well, working in a motor pool that way, we had a jeep we could take around everywhere. A lot of times on weekends we would go out traveling. We went up Mt. Fuji. Kind of went around with some of the cooks and stuff. They brought meals along, picnics. A lot of them building there, the Ernie Pyle Theatre, I don't know if you have heard of it. Japan was kind of like our weather. It would snow there too, you know, where we were. But it never got as cold as we do here.

Graff: You have wonderful pictures of Fort Knox and every place. So most people didn't have a camera. That doesn't sound right but most people didn't have cameras, but you did. You have saved the pictures and it is wonderful. Where did you get your camera at?

Gilbert: That I don't remember.

Graff: Because there are pictures of you on the farm and it is great. But it must have been on your families luxuries, was a camera.

Gilbert: No, I think it was a little 127 or something. I think I had one of those. I sent a lot of pictures home.

Weaver: It looks like you had, most people we have interviewed have not had pictures.

Gilbert: Really?

Weaver: Maybe one or two. It is a marvelous thing that you have so many. So when you came back to the states were you discharged right away or did you spend some time somewhere else?

Gilbert: No, I came back to the states. Yeah.

Weaver: Discharged right away and went home.

Gilbert: Well not right away. I served six months there.

Weaver: Okay, where were you then?

Gilbert: Japan.

Weaver: After you got back where did you ...

Gilbert: Well I got discharged right away. We came in, landed in Seattle. Then I got on troop train to Salt Lake City to get discharged. Then got another train home.

Weaver: Were there a lot of military going home?

Gilbert: Mostly they were troop trains. That is what they were, A\all the troops, uh huh. Yeah I think my brother got out about six months before I did. He went in earlier, and they had a point system, they did that.

Weaver: What did you get points for?

Gilbert: For being in, length of time mostly. Probably being in battle helped too, I don't remember. We weren't.

Weaver: What effect do you think serving in World War II had on your life?

Gilbert: It was an experience. It was a good experience for me anyways where I didn't serve or get too much battle you know.

Graff: Had you ever been out of Edwards County before you went to Fort Leavenworth?

Gilbert: Oh yeah.

Graff: You had?

Gilbert: Quite a lot of times. Yeah I remember my dad taking us to Colorado one time, all of us four boys, around Pike's Peak and stuff.

Weaver: Did you go by car or train?

Gilbert: Uh huh. Car. Kind of a vacation. Pictures of that somewhere; I don't know where.

Graff: They are here. I have been looking.

Gilbert: Quite an experience for us, that area around Colorado Springs and Pike's Peak.

Weaver: It was just the boys?

Gilbert: Uh huh.

Weaver: Did you fish and that sort of thing?

Gilbert: No, we just traveled around, stayed in a motel. Garden of the Gods and all that stuff out there.

Weaver: When you came home from the war was there any celebration or anything?

Gilbert: Not that I remember. I remember when we shipped out and stuff from Japan they had a band and everything when we loaded up on the boat you know. And they had a band when we shipped out from Fort Ord too.

Weaver: Just when you were shipping out, not when you were coming back?

Gilbert: Uh huh. When we were boarding, yeah. I remember going under the Golden Gate Bridge. We like to travel, Marie and I do. We did a lot of traveling in our life.

Weaver: Now we have not got to that. You got married in 49 but how and when did you meet your wife?

Gilbert: Well school and everything; we went to the same school.

Weaver: But you weren't sweethearts while you were in the war?

Gilbert: No. Not in school or during the war, no. That all happened afterwards.

Weaver: Afterwards. Then you got married and still lived out there and farmed?

Gilbert: No, we got married and we were looking for a farm to live on when we went on our honeymoon. My dad said there was a farm coming up for sale. Somebody wanted it a lot worse than dad did or than we had the money for. We lived in town then in an apartment for probably 6 months.

Then we bought the house right here, been living here ever since. The house was brand new. It was being built and wasn't finished yet, but then I finished it after we got moved in.

Weaver: Now you mentioned a honeymoon. Where did you go?

Gilbert: About everywhere. We took a pretty good one out to California and up North to Oregon. I had a buddy there. Then we had to hit North Dakota. I hadn't been in North Dakota yet. I had been in all the states except North Dakota.

Weaver: Oh you have traveled.

Gilbert: Uh huh.

Graff: When you came from the parochial school, Sts. Peter and Paul, and then in to the high school here, was there any prejudice or adjustments to being in a larger school? Was there any prejudice because you were Catholic or anything like that?

Gilbert: I don't remember. But there was, but I think at that time they were getting more of it and stuff. I remember the folks talking about it and stuff.

Graff: What did they say? What did your parents talk about?

Gilbert: Well you know, there was a Ku Klux Klan here in the south. There was a little bit of everything around here. I don't remember it very well.

Graff: So there were crosses burned?

Gilbert: I don't remember that. I don't think it was that bad, no. But there was local people here that didn't.... some of the bigger wheels too.

Weaver: Everybody where you had grown up, that was a Catholic community basically?

Gilbert: Uh huh. Uh huh. It was. But I don't remember in school. We were some of the first ones from the school up there to go to high school. Before that they didn't, a lot of them didn't go to high school.

Weaver: They just quit at 8th grade.

Gilbert: But I think about everyone out of my class went to high school. We didn't have buses or nothing. Then we had a carpool kind of and somebody would drive. We got a little older we drove our self.

Weaver: Did you make any use of the GI bill at all? Did you do any classes or farming?

Gilbert: No, I wasn't eligible then. I got out of the service, and I couldn't find a place to live. So we lived in town. And if you lived in town, then you weren't eligible for a farm bill, for that bill or anything. No, I never got a bit of good out of the GI bill. Now if you lived on the farm, you got a lot of help then. They about had to do it like that if you didn't live on a farm.

Graff: So where did you work when you lived in town?

Gilbert: Oh I did quite a bit. I worked for the Farm Bureau down here. I run a seed cleaner for them. I run a spray truck for them. I did quite a bit of that. Then I started working for ASC office down here as a field man. I would go out and check all their stuff for them and measure. It kind of kept me going. I kind of tried to farm. I kind of got into farming slow you know. My dad gave me an 80 (*acres*) to farm; my father-in-law gave me a little to farm. Gradually it build up. Didn't have much for equipment: one old tractor and one plow, a drill. About '51 some ground came up in Ness City. Marie's grandpa owned it and somebody else was farming it. They said I could farm that. So I started farming up there in Ness City. I had a section (*640 acres*) up there which was quite a bit of ground at that time, you know.

Weaver: Did you commute or did you have a place to stay up there too?

Gilbert: Well, there for awhile I had an old trailer house up there that we had. We went custom cutting a couple years, and I had to have a trailer house for that. We left it up there. Then later on we had an old bus I made into a camper, and I would take that up there and stayed in it.

Weaver: Another area we have just been curious about not necessarily dealing with the car but we were interested in, but I guess down at Sts. Peter and Paul there would not have been any Hispanics or blacks that lived in that area would there?

Gilbert: No.

Weaver: Did you ever have any Hispanic farm help or anything? Nothing. Okay. In town there were both. Do you remember race relations in Kinsley?

Gilbert: No, I sure don't. I didn't. Of course we as kids I don't think there was much. Probably the older people were the ones that more. No we had a Negro in our class and everything.

Weaver: Let's see. You were living in town so do you remember the, where the Hispanics lived? The railroad workers?

Gilbert: Uh huh.

Weaver: Did you have some of those kids in your class too?

Gilbert: No, not that I remember. I don't think we had a Spanish speaker in class. We had a Negro though, Dorothy Winchester. There were a couple families of Negroes in town. Some of them Gaines boys were real good in sports and everything.

Weaver: What about your unit in the war?

Gilbert: It was all white.

Weaver: It was all white.

Gilbert: My unit started out over here. They put it together in the United States to start with. When I went over there I was just a replacement.

Weaver: So you moved in with men you didn't know?

Gilbert: Yeah. Some of our group went there too, just a couple of them, but the rest of them I didn't know.

Weaver: They were from all over?

Gilbert: Well most of them were from back East, around Kentucky and Tennessee in that area.

Weaver: Did you stay in contact with any of these guys after the war?

Gilbert: Oh yeah. I have made a couple of trips when I got out of the war. I had a good motorcycle and I drove around and visit a couple of them that I knew. I still do. I still got but most of them I ran around with are dead now. We just got a picture from a wife of one of them that we keeping in contact with. In fact I think all of them ran around with real close are dead now.

Weaver: Now did Marie have a motorcycle too?

Gilbert: Not once.

Weaver: Not once. So she didn't have your same love of motorcycles then?

Gilbert: No, she never did. Kind of needless to say that the first thing that went after we got married was my motorcycle.

Weaver: Looking back, overall, how do you think World War II affected your life and how do you think it effected Kinsley and Edwards County?

Gilbert: In what way?

Weaver: In whatever way. How did it affect your life?

Gilbert: It was just part of it. I wouldn't take a million dollars for the experience a guy got. In a way it was good for me to get our like that. I think it was. Of course, I didn't see that much actual bad combat, just mop up.

Weaver: When you came home did you notice differences in Kinsley and Edwards County in the years after the war? What were the changes?

Gilbert: Not that much. I don't think.

Graff: Did it bother you coming from the farm to living in town? Of course you barely lived in town. This is barely in town. Was this always in the city limits?

Gilbert: Yeah, this was always in the city limits. But we lived in an apartment uptown from April till October. I didn't like that very well.

Graff: Yeah being in town. But here you are almost country.

Gilbert: Yeah. It is pretty nice. We got ground right over here, this big area out here where the kids use to ride motorcycles and play ball. I think it was in '58 when I bought some ground right around town

here and I kind of got a big round top (*metal quonset*) on there, and I kind of headquarter here all the time.

Weaver: Is there anything else you want to know about Sts. Peter or Paul? We certainly get a lot of different things in these interviews.

Gilbert: Well sure.

Weaver: Different areas.

Gilbert: Up north there right about a mile this side of Sts. Peter and Paul, there was a big grove of trees. They called it the Herrmann Grove. They use to have picnics there and stuff for church.

Weaver: Like Memorial Day?

Gilbert: Every year they had some kind of picnic for Sts. Peter and Paul and they use to have, I just barely remember that though. Later on they had them up at school you know. They built a big dance floor where they would dance.

Weaver: Did you go out and dance then? Live music? Was it local people that played?

Gilbert: Yes, I can't remember who all played, I really don't. I never was much for dancing. I remember I use to put a wood platform up every year and tear it down after the dance and they put a cement platform up now.

Weaver: Did your elementary school have band? Was that something you could do?

Gilbert: No. I was never musically inclined.

Weaver: But there was music at school?

Gilbert: Oh yeah, Kinsley had a pretty good

Weaver: I meant at your parochial school.

Gilbert: Oh no, no. No music no. Not that I know of.

Weaver: What was Saturday night like in Kinsley?

Gilbert: Wild, it could get. We were lucky if we got to come in here. As a family, we didn't come Saturday night very much. Now Marie's folks did. They came every Saturday night to a movie and stuff she kept saying. But I remember after we'd get older, I'd come in on my motorcycle.

Weaver: What did you do when you came in on your motorcycle?

Gilbert: Rode around mostly. Or go to the movie. They always had a pretty good movie here. I remember Huston Sterrett; I always use to park my motorcycle in front of his place there. When we were getting ready to leave, I kind of made too much noise.

Weaver: I am beginning to think you had a reputation.

Gilbert: Well, not really. We kind of run the cop around a little bit. Clifford Kirkbride, but he was always nice. I wasn't the only one. We had kind of a motorcycle club here.

Weaver: Who else was in it?

Gilbert: Oh gosh. Quite a few of them: Dennis Hattrup, Harold Smith, Richard Smith, there was a whole bunch of them. My brother had one too.

Weaver: Did you go on little trips like they do today?

Gilbert: Yeah, we would go to Dodge and places or ride around home here. Jump ditches and stand up on them.

Weaver: Ever get any injuries?

Gilbert: Yeah.

Weaver: That was a yes.

Gilbert: That wasn't when we first started out; hat was later in life. Kind of paying for it now.

Weaver: Okay, I am going to turn this machine off here.