

Interview with Keith King

March 30, 2011

Conducted in the King home, Kinsley, Kansas

Interviewers: Joan Weaver and Rosetta Graff, Kinsley Library

Present: Marcile King, wife

Joan: Keith, please tell us your full name.

Keith: Donald Keith King.

Joan: Where do you currently reside?

Keith: I am in Kinsley, Kansas.

Joan: When and where were you born?

Keith: I was born in 1928, October 12. I was born on the King homestead.

Joan: And this was near Centerview?

Keith: Yes, Centerview was $\frac{3}{4}$ mile west and $\frac{1}{2}$ mile south.

Joan: And what were the names of your parents?

Keith: My parents were Clarence George King and Iva Belle King.

Joan: Belle was her middle name? What was her maiden name?

Keith: Eggleston.

Joan: And what were the names of your grandparents?

Keith: Dan King and Sarah King.

Joan: And her maiden name?

Keith: Abraham and Cora.

Joan: And their last name was Eggleston because you spelled that for us. Did you have any brothers or sisters?

Keith: I had one brother, Clarence, Junior, King. He died at childbirth. I have one sister, Pauline Fern King, and she is deceased. She's been dead for 10 years.

Joan: Was she younger than you or older?

Keith: She was five years older.

Joan: So you grew up with you and your sister. What brought the Kings originally to Edwards County?

Keith: Well, it was a family by the name of East that was out here. That was my Grandmother King's side of the family. I guess their decision to come out here because they come out here in 1878.

Joan: Where were they coming from?

Keith: Indiana. I think it was Muncie, Indiana. They got into here to Kinsley. The railroad lacked about four miles of getting them to Kinsley.

Joan: So they got out there where the railroad ended?

Keith: Yes.

Joan: And that was 1878?

Keith: 1878. The story goes they came out, and my grandpa bought oxen and a wagon. That's what they come out to where the homestead is now.

Joan: And these other relatives had picked out the homestead?

Keith: No, as far as I know, they just kind of told them about it and they just kind of meandered around and picked it out. People had moved there, but they left. And so they took up the homestead.

Joan: So there already was a house on it?

Keith: No, there was no house. It was kind of a dugout in the bank of a creek. That's what they lived in until my grandpa moved part of it, it was kind of a lean-to dugout, and he moved part of it down a quarter mile east. And that's where the homestead is.

Joan: Okay, I think Marcile looked up this name.

Marcile: Charles and Sarah East.

Joan: That's who he's talking about now. So the Easts, how were they related to you? You've got a picture of them there in the book.

Marcile: It was his Grandma King's sister.

Joan: So they moved this lean-to up, and that's where he built the original house.

Keith: Yes, when they built the house they just built around it. They built a two storey house, and then in later years they added a wing on the south side of it.

Joan: Were you told any stories about these early years of homesteading?

Keith: My Uncle Warren King, my dad's brother, taught school around here, and then he and his brother Charlie went on the Oklahoma Strip Run. They went down there, and Uncle Warren stayed, but not Charlie. Uncle Warren taught school down there. But things didn't work out, so he came back, and moved into Centerview. He came back here and ran a grocery store a while. Then he ran a lumberyard in Centerview. Then he run the Gano grain elevator.

Joan: Was that here in Kinsley?

Keith: No, that was in Centerview. My grandpa went to Mexico and worked on the railroad. (*While he was gone, Indians came and Grandma fed them to get them to leave.*)

Joan: So he went out and worked on the railroad for some money, but the rest of the family stayed on the homestead, establishing the homestead.

Keith: There were two elevators in Centerview, and like I said, he managed the Gano Elevator.

Joan: What was the other elevator?

Keith: The Centerview Co-op. I have a certificate that my Grandpa King bought, a share of stock in it. Also, the Centerview Bank, and he also bought into the railroad when it went through.

Joan: So when you were growing up in Centerview, there were the two elevators and a bank, and what else?

Keith: Well, like I said, the lumberyard, and there was a big building that was going to be a hardware store. It was two storey, but it never did materialize to that. But they had a Woodmen's Lodge up above, and I can just barely remember it. And they had a grocery store and the garage and the school came in. I think it was 1932.

Joan: You'd be pretty young.

Keith: No, the school was there before that. That's all I can vaguely remember.

Joan: Was there a restaurant?

Keith: No.

Joan: Gas station?

Keith: Yes, it was connected with the garage.

Joan: So you grew up on a farm?

Keith: Yes.

Joan: What was life like on the farm? And this was during the '30's, so...

Keith: Well, I can remember the '30's, pretty much. My mother had cataracts on her eye, and they got ulcerated. She went completely blind when I was probably about three years old. My dad wound up taking her down to Wichita, to an eye doctor called Dr. Weaver. My mom and I and Veneda Kennedy Newsom stayed down there. Dad and my sister came back. She went to school and took care of the household there on the farm. But I can remember when we come home, the dust storm days. But we must have had a lot of them down there. We stayed down there off and on for probably a good two and a half years.

Joan: This is in Wichita, and your mother was getting treatments?

Keith: Yes. We stayed in an apartment house on Riverside Street. She had to go to the doctor twice a day. They put eye drops in to get her eyes to where they could operate. It took about two and a half years, off and on. I can't visualize now driving down there in an old four door, Ford car to Wichita and back. But we made the trip, but I don't remember it at all. My mother wouldn't let me out of the apartment house because we lived right along the river. So I was pretty well tied up. I got so sick of staying in that apartment. People that had the apartment upstairs, their name was Heinz, and they had a boy who was in high school. And I don't know why, but he took a liking to me. So I got to go out and run around with him. I loved that. When we came back, when my mother had her operation, she got to where she could see, only she had to wear big old heavy glasses. She had no peripheral vision, but she could see. But by the time they got that all done, I was ready to start school.

Joan: What was school like in Centerview?

Keith: Well, I guess it was, added together, like any of them around. There was school in Fellsburg and over at Trousdale.

Joan: This was a big brick school?

Keith: Yes, it was brick.

Joan: How many kids were in your class?

Keith: When I started to school, there was three. As the years went along, the school increased, and then they combined with the Bethel community and the Charlet School and Macon and Centerview. When I started what they called junior high. That would have been when I was in the 7th grade. They kind of shifted the kids from Fellsburg to Centerview, and Fellsburg to Trousdale and then back to Fellsburg. By the time I graduated, seven of us were in that class.

Joan: But it was still Centerview you graduated from?

Keith: Yes.

Joan: Marcile, did you find the name?

Marcile: No. I may have to go to the tombstone. I can't think of it.

Joan: Did you play sports in high school?

Keith: Yes, I was more interested in sports than sitting in class.

Joan: What were the sports that you played?

Keith: Basketball and baseball and softball and some tennis as the seasons come along.

Joan: And who were your competitors? Who did you play against, what towns?

Keith: Well, in grade school, I played baseball against Fellsburg. Then when I got up into junior high, they kind of had a...I think they called it a "56 League" down there at Centerview. By that time Fellsburg had dropped out. We played Trousdale, we played Lewis, and Macksville and Byers, and a little town called Radium. We played at Wilmore. We played Garfield and Belpre.

That consisted of our sports. But during that time, that was when the war hit, and we had all the rationing and things. We had one bus that they could take us to the sporting events, but about half the time it broke down, so it got to where just parents would take the kids.

Joan: Do you remember Pearl Harbor?

Keith: Yes, we were down to my Aunt Rosa Brown's, they lived four miles south. She was my dad's sister. We had had a family dinner about 2:00 because she always had to go to church on Sunday. At that time they had a little church and a school called Red Mound that was a mile east of where she lived. It was a Quaker church, so we didn't get home too early.

Joan: Long services?

Keith: Yes. Anyway, after lunch, my cousin Vernon Brown, said we would go out and see what they were doing. They were putting one of the gas lines through the country back there then.

Joan: The gas pipe line? That early?

Keith: Yes, in fact there were three at one time. Two 24's and one 48 gas lines. But we went out there and they weren't doing anything. My dad called out to ask if they were broke down or something. The foreman said, "No, we just got word to shut everything down. That the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor." So they said, "We don't know what we will do until we get word." So that's the first we heard about it.

Joan: So they shut down the work for the day on the pipeline? Or was that the end of the pipeline until after the war?

Keith: Yes, they were shut down for about a week. I guess the government went ahead and let them complete that. Oh, in two week's time, they chose all the wire and anything that was steel. They had started getting ready to start the REA so we could have electricity because all we had were gas lights. My dad finally put in a power plant. All he had was trouble, so we went back to gas lights and coal oil lamps. He and a guy by the name of Charlie Derley went around and got most people to sign up so they could have electricity. That's when the REA came in. I think it cost \$5 to sign up. Well, he was just getting ready to start putting in the electricity when all that stuff just got thrown. And so, everybody said, "Well, kiss our \$5 goodbye."

Joan: That didn't get completed until after the war?

Keith: Right after the war was over, they came out to put in the electricity. We didn't have electricity until '46, when they finally got it down through the country. Back then, houses had to be wired for the electricity. So it was about the fall of '46 when we turned on the lights.

Marcile: Well, we didn't have electricity when we were married.

Keith: That's right, that would make it '49.

Joan: So in '49 you got electricity?

Keith: Yes.

Joan: So about three years after the war. So what were your chores as a young lad growing up?

You grew up on a farm, right?

Keith: Well, yes.

Joan: Did you raise both crops and animals?

Keith: Mostly wheat and barley. We milked cows. My dad started a herd of what they called Red Poll livestock cows. We milked 13 to 15 in the wintertime. Up in the summertime we have them dry up. Then we would start in on the field work and getting ready for harvest. Then in the '30's, from about '38 to about '41, I can vaguely remember harvesting. My dad told me, back in '33 and '34, they never pulled the combine out of the shed. It didn't rain in there. And then, next year, finally, we got a little rain, and got the combine out and cut around the creek. We had a little Wild Horse creek that ran through the farm. There was always a little moisture around it, and weeds grew up around the bank. We got enough wheat that year for seed. In '38 and '39, it got a little better. It got over the dust storms. Of course, they come out with different ways of farming and kind of kept the dust down.

Joan: What was farming like there in the '40's? What was your tractor like?

Keith: The first tractor I ever run was, my dad bought a 2236 International on steel. We got it from Shaffer's, here in Kinsley (*Shaffer Implements*). That's the first tractor I really was around.

Joan: Somebody else said they delivered them to Kinsley, and then you had to get them to the farm. Do you remember that?

Keith: No, they had a big old halfback truck and they run them out on it. They backed in the ditch, and run it off.

Joan: How old were you when you started working with the tractor, driving the tractor?

Keith: The first time I went with my dad, it was probably about '38 or '39.

Joan: So 10 or 11 years old.

Keith: Because I always wanted to go to the field for a long time, and my dad would take me and then I would go to sleep. So he would put me in the cab of the truck and let me sleep until I woke up. Then we'd go.

Joan: Now there wasn't any irrigation where you were living, was there?

Keith: Not anything that amounted to anything.

Joan: Did you use any fertilizer or pesticides or anything like that?

Keith: No. There wasn't anything like that when I grew up. I can remember planting wheat in third row corn. My dad had gotten two one-horse drills. (*We had one restored and gave it to my son Boyd.*) My dad planted third row corn. That was the first time I really planted wheat. You'd have to stop and fill it up.

Joan: What about the chickens?

Keith: We had the dairy cows and then we had a few head of hogs, but my dad started raising chickens. What he done was early in the spring when they first started hatching chickens at the hatchery, he built a chicken house. It had three rooms in it. Two rooms were for the chickens and the other one was for feed. They put in what they called a kerosene stove. It was a round-like stove. He put in some tanks off of some old tractors and run a pipe out of the feed room into that converted stove. He put little vents around it so the chickens could get up to it. They had two rooms, and he raised about 500 chickens.

Joan: That's a lot of chickens! This was for eggs or?

Keith: Yes, he made a deal with Ed Fletcher, who had a hatchery at Lewis. So late in the spring, he'd start delivering eggs up to the hatchery. Part of that process was that he had to have what they called "candling the egg". He had scales, and they had to be weighed and put up to a light to see if there were any bad spots.

Joan: Then did they ship out on the train?

Keith: No, he just delivered them to the hatchery. They hatched the eggs out, and we'd bring the chickens back out when they were little. So we had chickens around the farm all the time.

Joan: Did you learn how to butcher chickens?

Keith: No. Talking about chickens, Marcile can tell you about dressing chickens. Then, when I was growing up too, we always had some hogs around. In the wintertime, the neighbors would all get together and butcher together. My dad had what they called an old scalding vat and a sled. They pulled that around to whoever wanted to butcher. After they shot the hogs, they dipped them in this hot water and then they'd roll them on one side and then roll them back. And they'd roll them out on this sled and they'd scrape the hair off of the hog. At times I would come home from school and there'd be about half a dozen hog carcasses hanging up in the granary.

Joan: Did your mother render the fat for soap?

Keith: Oh yes, it's all I can think about is when election time came around, we were rendering lard, and making soap and wrapping the hams and bacon. We had a little place on the side of the garage that we called the meat house. He cured his own meat. We'd wrap them in paper, newspaper, and then wrap them in gunny sacks and hang them up there in that meat house.

Joan: And this was in the fall, so it was cold enough that it would stay. But you had to eat it by spring, was that the deal?

Keith: Most generally by spring it would be, but some of that he would give to my aunts and uncles. In winter we had a big family dinner and get together, and he would generally give somebody a ham and a slab of bacon.

Joan: Now, we've had some people tell us too about rabbit drives. Do you remember those?

Keith: Yes, in fact, I went on a few of them. It turned my stomach. I didn't mind driving them, but when they got them in them pens and started clubbing them, it was too much for me. But they had to do it. They started down at the Parallel and ended up at my Uncle Warren Duggar's

pasture there.

Joan: And they were just eating the crops and everything?

Keith: Yes, when I remember they were eating what little there was green.

Joan: There just got to be too many of them?

Keith: Well, I guess the government thought so.

Joan: What did they do with the rabbits after they killed them?

Keith: Shipped them all back to around New York and Boston and back in there. And then of course, a lot of them were skinned for the fur, mostly. That only lasted about 2 years, I think.

Joan: Did you ever hunt as a boy other than that? There weren't deer at this time, were there?

Keith: No, lots of coyotes that you would see back then. But as far as animals, that was about all there was, was just rabbits.

Joan: Horses?

Keith: Yes, my dad had eight teams of horses. His dad, they farmed with horses. In 1928, my dad got an International combine, and they pulled the combine with horses. In 1932, dad got what they called a Nicholson/Shepherd combine and pulled that combine with the horses one year, and then he bought his first tractor. It was a Case tractor. I used to know what that cost, but I've got a little replica of it. He used that. He bought an Allis Chalmers about two years after that; about all it would do was break down, so that's when he traded and got this International tractor. So he used tractors for quite a few years.

Joan: Okay, and you graduated from Centerview, and then did you just start farming with your dad?

Keith: When I graduated, I played a little Van Johnson baseball during the summer.

Joan: What is that, "Van Johnson baseball"?

Keith: Oh, they used to be all over the country. Kids of certain ages could sign up.

Joan: Sort of like Little League?

Keith: Yes, it was about like that. But I got to going with this gal, and they didn't like her going along. So I quit. I played a lot of town team basketball and baseball. I went to the Hutch Juco (Hutchinson Junior College). I signed up for a year.

Joan: What were you playing for them?

Keith: I was, it was to go to school. I took the courses in bookkeeping. I took a class in...

Joan: Did you live in Hutchinson then? In an apartment?

Keith: In an apartment, 204 East A.

Joan: So you had a business course of some sort.

Keith: Yes, I made the first section, then I got tired of school. Then Marcile came down there.

Joan: When did you meet Marcile?

Keith: I met her my senior year at a basketball tournament over at Macksville. I finally got her to go out with me, and I must say...

Joan: You'd better be careful, she's standing behind you!

Keith: No, it's probably the best thing I ever did.

Joan: So you knew her, but you went away to school, but then she came to Hutchinson.

Keith: Yes, she followed me.

Joan: And then you got married then pretty soon?

Keith: Yes, in '47.

Joan: '47, and you graduated in '46.

Keith: Yes, but I came back to the farm. That's when the REA was around in the country. I got stringing the wires for the houses, and cutting outlet holes.

Joan: And this was in the Centerview area.

Keith: Anywhere they could get a job. I done that for a while and then I drove a school bus.

Joan: And then you were married at this time?

Keith: Yes.

Joan: Where were you living?

Keith: My dad had bought a house in Centerview from Wayne Mettling, and they started to build on, but he got called into the service, so they sold it and my dad bought the house for me and Marcile. So I just worked for him whenever he needed me.

Joan: And you said you drove a school bus.

Keith: Yes, and then my sister got a farm down in the Bethel community, just a quarter mile south and then out on the Edwards County line. It was called the Ralph Scott place. My sister and Vernon moved here. We run a bunch of cattle back there in the sand hills. There was a half section of farm ground, and that was a job for us to go over with Ed Miller, who lived down west of my sister's place, and ride the pastures.

Joan: So you were a cowboy?

Keith: Yes, then if it hadn't been for Ed knowing his way around, I'd still be wandering around in those hills trying to get out of them. In the meantime, my sister was married to Vernon Hagewood. He went to town to pay his taxes, and a guy by the name of Ken (Kenneth) Lambert and learned to fly. He was up here and had his plane up here at the airport. They were hunting coyotes, and he was a spotter. So Vernon went with him, and he never made it back. They crashed down there down in the hills, and he was killed (*December 31, 1945*). We had about 300 head of cattle down there. So we hauled ensilage down there. This was in my senior year at school, so I missed a lot of school my senior year.

Joan: Taking care of cattle? And you kept them over the winter?

Keith: Yes, through the winter. We would feed them, and we took them to the grass. We had to sell them in the fall, but anyway. We had that farm to take care of too. So, it was not a good time for all of us.

Joan: You were working pretty hard.

Keith: Yes, but we had two good neighbors, Ben Titus and Jerry Gee. If it weren't for them, we'd been in deep trouble. But they kept the fences up, and we were in the process of putting new fences up. I don't know how many days we worked down there digging postholes, but boy, there was a lot. But anyway, she finally married a second cousin of mine, Don King. They farmed for about two or three years before he decided to give up the farm. So they sold the farm and moved in here to Kinsley. Marcile can tell you more about what she done.

Joan: She already has done that, because we interviewed her earlier. Okay, you're a young married couple there, and you're starting to have children in '52, Boyd, and then in '55, Jo Lynne, and in '60, William Keith. How was Centerview changing at this time?

Keith: Well, by that time, when I graduated, all there was was a garage, a store (and the post office was in the store), the church and the school.

Joan: So really, from the time you were a little tot to then, it had pretty much gone away.

Keith: And they had taken up the railroad; it went bankrupt.

Joan: Is that the railroad referred to as the "Aunt Nancy" *railroad (Anthony & Northern Railroad)*? Do you remember anything about that when it was running?

Keith: Yes, I can remember quite a bit back when it was inactive. By the time I went about, one elevator had closed, the Co-op elevator. The Gano stayed open, but they quit handling very much grain. The Gano elevator would stay open until it got full. Of course, when they took up the track, everything deteriorated then. That was the main outfit, and when they took the railroad out...

Joan: When did the school close then?

Keith: They had high school one more year after I graduated. There were just two in the senior class. They had the kids, and the older ones came up then to Lewis. They had grade school there (*Centerview*) for three years or four, and then they closed it down. By that time, that was all. When the school closed, then you might say there was nothing there.

Joan: Do you remember how that felt? Or the consolidation process or anything about that?

Keith: All I know about it, the county commissioners kind of decided (and the superintendent and the State of Kansas) to combine those schools.

Joan: It had gotten so small, you really didn't have a choice, did you?

Keith: No, there wasn't anything coming up to speculate on really.

Joan: So your children went into Lewis?

Keith: Yes, three of them graduated from Lewis.

Joan: In the '50's, where did you do your doctoring? Dentist and that sort of thing?

Keith: Well, most generally at Lewis, they had a Doctor Meckfessel. He had been there for years, he was old school. He was a medical doctor, and there was Dr. Crawford, he was the dentist. And then there was another doctor by the name Dr. Luce; he was an osteopath.

Joan: Osteopath? And he was in Lewis, too?

Keith: His name was Luce. Of course, he didn't get along too well with the other two doctors. But anyway, that's where we went to doctor.

Joan: And where you went to trade and that sort of thing was Lewis?

Keith: Yes, Lewis. And then we got to coming over to Kinsley because when the railroad went out, we had no place else to ship cream in.

Joan: So you would take the eggs and cream into Kinsley to put it on the train?

Keith: Yes, we would take it over to Centerview, but when the train went out they would take it to Kinsley.

Joan: And that was what year? Are you talking when the train went out?

Keith: It must have been about '40 or '41 because I can remember when I was in 6th grade, sharpening my pencil and looking out the window when they were taking up the track. A lot of pencils were sharpened at that time.

Joan: So then you used for your farm, for the grain, you said the Centerview elevator was small. Did you then take the grain to Kinsley or Lewis?

Keith: Into Lewis. The Gano elevator stayed open for probably six or seven years, and they trucked the grain out to Belpre. They had a Gano elevator at Belpre. (*John*) Warren King ran it and then my cousin Ermina Kennedy ran it. She was the last one to run it. Then they moved her to Belpre to take over there, and then that Gano Elevator slowed up. I think she went and got a job being the Farm Bureau agent in Kinsley.

Joan: So how has farming changed from the 50's and the 60's? What changes came about?

Keith: Pretty fast. All different types of farming and equipment. Change, it seemed like every year or two something new would come out to take the place of something you had. Of course, combines made an awful change. We had to change tractors and trucks, all that good stuff, you know. Marcile and I lived in that house at Centerview, and in 1952, we rented the Laura Woods place four miles west, on the parallel. We moved over there. There was nothing there but the house and barn. We had a bad wind storm, and the barn blew down. All I can remember is when we moved over there, I had to pump the well water.

Joan: A hand pump! And what year was this about, when you were living there?

Keith: '52' through '54.

Joan: Was there electricity?

Keith: Yes, there was electricity there. So I moved my electric pump from Centerview so we'd have water. Then of course, there wasn't no bathroom. In fact, if I remember Marcile saying, we never had a bathroom inside until we moved over to the homestead place.

Joan: And what year was that, about?

Keith: We moved over there, it must have been in '58, and we had a real bad snowstorm.

Joan: Okay, Bill has 1960.

Marcile: No it would be '57 or '58. (*Blizzard of March 24-25, 1957*)

Joan: Okay, so you didn't have indoor plumbing until '57 or '58.

Keith: Yes, we had a bad snowstorm, and as soon as we could get out, my folks had just bought my sister's house in Kinsley, because they were going to move to Spokane, Washington where Don's dad was. So we all moved up here. I don't know, we stayed up here a lot of mornings. When we got out to the Woods place, all the plaster had fallen in two rooms. It was just a mess. My folks decided to move to Kinsley.

Joan: So your folks retired? Was that in '58?

Keith: Yes. So then we moved over to the farm, and they moved into Kinsley. And we've been on the farm ever since until we retired. But I'm thinking back to when I was a kid. I can remember my toys that I got was all made up out of the junk pile. They had sprockets and what I call lugs on them, and that was my tractor. I made my own implements out of lath and nails. I had a few toys, but that was my farming ones.

Joan: You just had to improvise out of the scraps.

Keith: I finally got a bicycle when I was 10 years old.

Joan: Could you ride a bicycle on the farm? It wasn't too sandy?

Keith: Yes, by that time, we had oiled roads. I never did ride it to school. I could have. I'd walk to school and try to beat the bus home going across the field. But I had a bicycle anyway.

Joan: Did you ever start in the '50's or '60's, start irrigating?

Keith: No.

Joan: So it's always been dryland?

Keith: Yes, in '64 I put in an irrigation well. I rented a quarter from Ralph Baird, and he put in a well for me there at about the same time. I got in a little irrigating over on the Woods place. They had an old well, and we hooked it up. I guess you'd call it a drag line. We put that in and hooked the well up to a tractor with a belt pulley on it. We tried to irrigate with that thing. It wasn't very successful. The well wasn't all that good, and in fact I think it collapsed in a few years after that.

Joan: Did you have to start using fertilizer?

Keith: Yes, by that time we used a lot of dry fertilizer. When it first came out, it was in 50 lb. bags, dry fertilizer. We'd put fertilizer hoppers on the drill. We finally got a planter that you could run with a tube that ran the fertilizer down right behind where you planted it. That was dry. Anyhow, we didn't get liquid fertilizer, or I didn't, until Keen went into tank hauling and started the fertilizer business. It was in the 60's.

Joan: Did you use insecticides?

Keith: We didn't use too much, not until we started planting corn.

Joan: When did you start planting corn?

Keith: My first corn crop was down on Baird's circle in 1978.

Marcile: And he had Mexicans hoe the beans.

Keith: Yes, we had soybeans.

Joan: That's interesting, so would this be in the 60's? Or 70's or what?

Keith: It would have been in the 70's.

Joan: And then you were growing soybeans and had migrant workers hoeing.

Keith: Yes.

Joan: Was that the first migrant workers that you used?

Keith: Yes, we had them. It must have been three or four years that they came out in the summer.

Joan: Where did they stay when they came?

Keith: Well, there was an old vacant farm house, three miles belonged to Lester Derley. They stayed in that farm house. There were at least 40 of them.

Joan: Forty, that's a big crew! Do you know how much they were paid?

Keith: Not enough.

Joan: I know that, but was just curious.

Keith: They cost me about \$10 or \$12 an acre to have it hoed.

Joan: How long would it take for a 40 man crew to hoe an acre.

Keith: A day for a circle (*about 140 acres*).

Joan: Now did you feed them also?

Keith: No.

Joan: They had to feed themselves.

Keith: In fact, the guy that was foreman of the crew, he was a professor of agriculture at San Bernardino College in California. He came out every summer.

Joan: He worked as a migrant worker, but he was a professor during the school year?

Keith: Yes, but he wasn't a migrant worker.

Joan: He was the foreman.

Keith: He just enjoyed coming out and doing that. The guy that had the crew was his brother.

Joan: So he helped out. Now, did most of them speak both English and Spanish? Or just Spanish?

Keith: No, all Spanish. And those two guys spoke English. The professor was a real educated man.

Joan: So they'd be with you a day, and then they'd go to another farm?

Keith: It depended on how much you needed done. One guy went all over the country lining up jobs for them. They worked seven days a week.

Joan: Do you remember the names of the foreman?

Keith: No, I sure don't.

Joan: That's interesting, that's the first mention we've had, that's really an interesting story. Did you have any other hired men or anything?

Keith: Oh, I had some kids, but I had my own crew until the boys left.

Joan: You were raising your crew!

Keith: And then I had some kids that worked for me during the summer.

Joan: During harvest?

Keith: Yes. We put in some more irrigation, so we had six between us and my cousin. I got rid of my combine I had custom cutters for a few years. Then Boyd go a combine. We had cut corn, but I didn't get the corn bug too bad.

Joan: You need irrigation for corn, don't you? It takes a lot more water.

Keith: I stuck to milo and soybean. And then we had alfalfa.

Joan: Now alfalfa needs water too, doesn't it?

Keith: Yes, but they can tell me that alfalfa takes a lot of water, but it don't take as much as corn does. Because I got to figuring up one time, you cut the hay about every three to four weeks. You can wait a week or ten days to water. Or if it rains, you could be down two weeks and not have to water. So I came to the conclusion that it doesn't take as much water as people think, at least that's my theory.

Joan: Is there anything else about the farming? Boy, you came up with that really good story. Is there any other thing that we haven't thought to ask people? What other changes did you see as you progressed through the 50's and 60's. Your sons started helping you, actually they were grown in '70 and the late 70's. Did Boyd help? Is he still farming?

Keith: No, Boyd, after he graduated from high school, he went to college at Fort Hays State and come back to the farm and helped in the summer time for two summers. Then he got a job working through the summer. Then him and Toni got married, and that eliminated that.

Joan: What does he do now?

Keith: He's a bank consultant.

Joan: He did not go into farming?

Keith: No.

Joan: And Bill?

Keith: And Jo Lynne, she went to college, but she decided she wanted to go out on her own. She went to Hays also, and got a job in the courthouse. Then she went to Salina and works for the highway patrol.

Joan: And Bill became a teacher.

Keith: Jolynn became a district sales representative for Kansas Lottery. Boyd wanted to get a combine and come back and cut my crops.

Joan: Just yours or other people too? Custom cutting a little?

Keith: Just me. When he done that, we cut our own. I furnished the trucks, and he ran the combine. We done that until last year.

Joan: Same combine all that time?

Keith: Oh no, he's had three.

Joan: So he keeps his hand in farming by just coming back and combining each summer.

Marcile: And he does custom work now.

Keith: Yes, and he comes back at different times.

Joan: And he does custom work now.

Keith: He comes back sometimes when I get behind. I'd get the ground ready ... then he'd come back and plant it in a weekend. We kind of had a system.

Joan: And Bill stayed here because he's teaching, and he's now a principal. Did he do part time farming to help you too?

Keith: Yes, he came back for harvest two summers. Bill, worked at Salina. He ran a gas station. He painted when he first went down there, him and somebody else. They painted the back of a building there at one of the schools. Then he worked for a farmer outside of Salina, so that's where he worked in the summertime. That's when I was getting a lot of the crops cut, custom. It all worked out pretty good.

Marcile: Did you tell them you drove the school bus in high school?

Keith: One thing I did, and why they ever let me, I don't know.

Joan: You're not the only one we've heard this story from. Not you, but somebody else drove a school bus too, when he was a junior.

Keith: Anybody that was a junior or senior could drive a school bus back then.

Joan: You just had to have your license, and get the commercial license or whatever.

Marcile: And then he worked at the state hospital, too.

Keith: Yes, I did that.

Joan: When did you work at the state hospital?

Keith: It must have been around 1960.

Joan: Was that to supplement the farm income?

Keith: Yes.

Joan: How long did you work there?

Keith: I worked six months, maybe a little longer.

Joan: Did it more than one year, through the winter?

Keith: No, when we moved to the Wood's place, my brother-in-law, Clovis Gossett ran the propane department at the Kinsley Co-op. In the wintertime, he always needed some extra fill-in, so since he was my brother-in-law, he got me the job.

Joan: So quite often, you were working in the wintertime to supplement what you were making on the farm the rest of the year.

Keith: Yes, and then I would help my dad off and on. I was really working. You'd have to say I really farmed. When I really went to farming was when my dad moved to town. And I took over the farm.

Joan: And then you didn't have time to do the extra.

Keith: Oh, I done jobs.

Joan: You still did.

Keith: We had an ice storm. That was the year I worked up at Larned. That spring we had an awful bad ice storm. It took down a lot of poles and lines and all. We got a bunch of farmers together, and they went through to help get the telephone system back in order for the Lewis Telephone Company. My dad was on the telephone board at that time. But they got it fixed back up, and so I went to work for the manager off and on at the telephone company, by the name of Art Lee. He kind of took me under his wing, and when they needed some extra help, if I was available, I would go up and help him. And then they had another bad storm about the time they got that one over with. That's when Lewis Telephone changed and went to Golden Bell.

Joan: About what year was that?

Keith: That would have been about '59.

Joan: '59? Why did it change?

Keith: They were broke because they didn't have enough to fix it back again.

Joan: The first company was...

Keith: Lewis Telephone.

Joan: So it was more of a little local thing, and Golden Bell was bigger?

Keith: Yes, they started it up around Rush Center, All the little towns in that whole area had about the same problems as Lewis. They was able to get this government grant through the REA and start rebuilding all these systems.

Joan: That's interesting because it's the first time we've heard that story too, of the changing of the phone.

Keith: I went to work for Dukskey, anyway, they had to completely start from scratch. They were about four or five miles south of Lewis when I worked for them.

Joan: And this was a construction company? Building houses or barns?

Keith: No, they were the line crew, line construction. I started driving an old 4x4 Dodge army truck (it had a cloth top on it) pulling the wire trailer. I started there, and we went down with four wires and then came back to the parallel. Then we came up to Lewis and run four more. And then we came back to Lewis and ran two because we had just four tramps on the trailer. So we could take four wires up at a time. Then it split off in the area. We never could keep a full crew. Like I said, I worked off and on for Dukskey for the county. He hired one of these guys that knew everything, and he didn't last the first day. In fact, we had to go out and bring him off the dang pole.

Joan: Did he freeze up there or something? Did he freeze or get scared?

Keith: He got there, and he couldn't turn loose. He just froze up there. Of course, that was a 40 foot pole. Most of them are just 30.

Joan: Well, I'm impressed. You've been a cowboy, you've been a lineman!

Keith: Yes, we stayed out in Minneola for a few years.

Joan: Minneola?

Keith: Marcile went out first to help Loren and Leila Shannon. They had had a new baby.

Joan: So now we're up in the 70's?

Keith: No, it was right after we was married.

Joan: So this was real early. So she went out first to Minneola and then you joined her there.

Keith: Yes, I went out and helped Loren build a lean-to on the barn. Then we came back home. We went back out the next year and stayed with Lawrence Young's while they went to, was it Fort Supply? Oh, anyway, down in Texas. We went out and stayed. I hauled water everyday for lots of cows that was brought up from Ashland and put out on pasture.

Joan: Let me go back a little bit because I imagine that when you were a boy. I don't remember when, but during Pearl Harbor, you were involved with a Quaker church. Now was that just your aunt? Or was your family Quakers?

Keith: No. My aunt.

Joan: Just your aunt. So what church, did you go to church when you were?

Keith: Yes, we went to the Methodist in Centerview.

Joan: When did that church close down?

Keith: It would have been in the 60's somewhere.

Joan: Then what did you do for church?

Keith: We started going into Lewis, to the Methodist Church. They were still having church at Centerview.

Joan: So when you were first married, how large was the congregation in Centerview?

Keith: Probably 35.

Joan: And then it just dwindled and dwindled?

Marcile: It was a Quaker church with Methodist ministers.

Joan: Did they have a Quaker service or a Methodist service?

Keith: A combination, a little bit of everything. The first minister, Rev. Ramsdale, he was a Methodist minister.

Rosetta: Do you remember a Reverend Durham?

Keith: Yes.

Rosetta: We have a book that he wrote.

Marcile: He was Quaker.

Keith: Yes, and then there was a Thomas, a superintendent of schools at the same time?

Joan: And that was the only church at that time in the community, was the Methodist Church, wasn't it?

Keith: Yes.

Joan: So that was another way that the community changed.

Keith: Yes, the Quaker church down at Red Mound was still going up in the 50's because they had a minister.

Joan: What church is this?

Keith: Quaker.

Joan: Did they just meet in homes, or did they have a building?

Keith: It was a building. There was a church and a school. They had a school down there. They moved the school building up to Centerview and made the cookhouse out of it. That's where it came from.

Joan: I was going to ask you this earlier, we're going back too. When you said you were at your aunt's, who was a Quaker, and they were going to church when Pearl Harbor happened. The Quakers, of course, are very peaceful people. Do you remember any talk or anything with the adults at that time of going to war?

Keith: No, they didn't say anything. Williams was the last minister they had there. It was when I was in the 6th grade because they had three children. He drove the school bus, and his wife was one of the cooks. He kind of helped the janitor during the day. Then he drove the bus at night.

Yes, I was right about the sixth grade.

Joan: There's one other thing that I guess we didn't mention. I don't know if you want to talk about it, you did not serve in the military?

Keith: No.

Joan: This would have been Korean War time. Do you want to say why?

Keith: Yes, I got turned down.

Joan: You tried to enlist? Or were drafted?

Keith: I was going to get drafted, a bunch of us were. The first time we went to Kansas City.

Joan: Did you go on the train?

Keith: No, on the bus. Gerald Olsen went down with me, and we both got turned down. They said I had a heart murmur, but when I came back, nobody could find it.

Joan: And you're still here today!

Marcile: He's had a lot of heart trouble though.

Keith: That old army doctor was trying to tell me something, even then. I was really surprised.

Joan: So you came back and farmed and had a physical life.

Keith: I kind of cut back and did odd jobs, I guess, with my dad.

Joan: Another question we've been asking people, we talked about telephone and electricity. How about television? When did you guys get your television?

Keith: Well, Marcile's mother bought us our first T.V. set. We was living on the Wood's place.

Joan: So that was in the 50's?

Keith: Yes, and a guy by the name of Dave Merwin went to that television school. He got me the stuff, and we put up an antennae right by the side of the house.

Joan: How many stations could you get?

Keith: We were lucky to get one. We could get Great Bend. That was about it.

Marcile: And not very clear.

Joan: Okay, let's see. Your kids were growing up here in the 60's. Were they involved in 4-H or anything like that?

Keith: No.

Joan: Sports in school, I would imagine.

Marcile: Scouts and sports.

Keith: Boyd was involved in scouts.

Joan: Where was the scout troop located?

Keith: In Lewis.

Keith: There were a bunch of them up there.

Joan: How big were their classes in school in Lewis? Do you know how many kids were in their classes?

Keith: Oh, I would say, 15 or 20.

Joan: So Lewis wasn't filled, it wasn't that big. Were they still playing the same teams in sports?

Keith: Some of them.

Joan: Did they play Kinsley at that time?

Keith: Yes.

Joan: Macksville?

Keith: Yes. Zook, Garfield, they played Garfield. But Zook and Centerview and Fellsburg and Trousdale, they're all closed.

Marcile: They never did play with Garfield, did they? They did at Macksville.

Keith: I guess you're right.

Marcile: I don't think Garfield had a school at that time.

Rosetta: Neither did Zook, did they?

Joan: No, he said Zook had closed.

Marcile: They traveled quite a ways to get to games.

Joan: Did they go to Larned? Or was that too big?

Keith: Well, I remember Lewis playing Larned in football. But that was even before Boyd was in high school.

Joan: So Centerview has disappeared at this time, pretty much. And Lewis, what are the changes you're seeing going on in Lewis?

Keith: Downhill, mostly.

Joan: What's the evidence of it going downhill?

Keith: Well, I would say it was dwindling away because at the time I was in school, high school, we never had much to do with Lewis. But anyway, besides the high school there was three restaurants, a skating rink, a pool hall, two banks, Co-op, four churches.

Joan: So this is right during the war, or at that time?

Keith: Yes, it would be when I was going to high school.

Joan: But by the time your kids started going in the 60's, how had it declined?

Keith: Some.

Joan: How did Lewis decline, the town of Lewis.

Marcile: It didn't have all the restaurants.

Keith: Yes the restaurants went down; one bank went out.

Joan: Still had a grocery store?

Keith: Yes.

Joan: And a drug store?

Keith: They had two grocery stores.

Joan: One grocery store when the kids were in school.

Joan: Was the drug store still there when the kids were there in the 60's?

Marcile: Not when they were going to school. When Boyd was born, there was, but I don't think by the time he went to school there was.

Keith: Yes, that was about the time the Doctor Luce (*F. E.*) left, but the younger Doctor Stanfield came. He was an osteopath. But I think he was there just about a year though. Then he went to Larned, to the hospital at Larned.

Joan: So after WWII, did people not come back? You know, they went off to fight and work in the war plants, and then farming didn't take as many people.

Keith: Yes, the ones that were established were back. They came back, but a lot of them never stayed. Well, it was about the time that farming started going downhill.

Joan: Why did farming go downhill?

Keith: Well, pricewise.

Marcile: And the interest rates were so high.

Joan: So when you're buying land, or buying seed or whatever, you had to pay...

Keith: Yes, we operated on borrowed money.

Marcile: 16% and 18%.

Joan: And that was for land and equipment?

Marcile: For irrigation.

Joan: So the bankers weren't your friend?

Keith: They had to be.

Joan: They were your friend, but they were still charging that kind of interest?

Keith: They didn't have any control over that, really.

Joan: Did people quit farming because of that?

Keith: Well, back in the 70's, when we put in the irrigation wells, a lot of them were a bunch of young kids that came back to the farm. But in five year's time, they'd all left.

Joan: They'd all left; it was too difficult?

Keith: Yes, and they'd bought equipment. A lot of the kids' parents farmed, but there wasn't enough when the interest rates were so high. They were lucky if one could survive.

Joan: It couldn't support two or more families; one family was all it could support.

Keith: A lot of land changed hands back there then. Everybody wanted to get into irrigation, and a lot of big money came in out of Wichita and Kansas City. Buying up or renting land, of course that was when interest rates was high too. A lot of guys invested in land. They said that after they put in the irrigation wells and had the parts and money to manage it and everything, it turned out to be a no-paying proposition. And a doctor and lawyer, they don't like to lose money. So in a few years all that went out.

Joan: How was the price of crops at that time?

Keith: Cheap. I remember selling milo for 80 cents a bushel. Wheat about \$1.10. Of course there wasn't any corn at that time. And the only thing that helped was hay. Hay was pretty good. We had about 100 acres of dryland alfalfa.

Joan: And the hay that you produced went to feedlots and things like that.

Keith: We had about 300 head of sheep back then.

Joan: I was going to ask if you ever had sheep. We missed that story. When did you have sheep?

Keith: Jimmy O'Connor got me started in the sheep business.

Joan: So that's '54 or '55.

Marcile: No, '59.

Joan: '59 you had sheep, and you had how many?

Keith: Well, we built up to where we had about 300 head.

Joan: 300, and who did all the lambing?

Keith: Everybody.

Joan: Did Marcile get in on that too?

Marcile: Yes, we had them in the house; we had them everywhere.

Keith: We had them in the barns.

Joan: And how was that for a money maker?

Keith: It was pretty good.

Joan: That's what Mr. Olson told us.

Keith: If I'd had some more grassland, I would probably stayed in it. Sheep...but it got to where it was awfully hard to sell your fat lambs. Finally got down to where you had to take them, a lot of times, down to Wichita. That's too far.

Joan: That's what he said too, but he said he preferred the sheep to the cattle. Sheep didn't take as much care. They could do things on their own, if you could keep the coyotes away.

Keith: Yes.

Joan: Now, did you use dogs or anything to help you?

Keith: No, just free range.

Joan: Were the coyotes a problem?

Keith: Yes, they weren't too bad around home, but I always shut mine up at night.

Joan: You shut them up, that many! They would come in for water or something?

Keith: No, we'd just go out and hammer on the side of the building and they'd come running.

Marcile: If one goes, well they all go.

Keith: We had two guys that came in and sheared them in the spring. We shipped by railroad from Lewis.

Joan: On the train there?

Keith: Yes, the train would pick them up. When the depot went out, that shut that off. And then they had to haul the wool clear to Hutchinson.

Joan: So that's another change at this time, the depot's closing. Do you know when the depot in

Lewis, when the train stopped stopping?

Keith: It was back in probably '67 or '68.

Joan: That's another thing that affects...

Keith: I can remember Bill Cross down in Texas and Old Mexico buying cattle and shipping up here on the railroad. If you wanted some, he'd try to buy you some down there.

Joan: Then you'd fatten them up here and then sell them?

Keith: That's when cattle didn't bring much up there.

Joan: Rosetta, can you think of anything else we're missing here?

Marcile: I think you ought to know that he ended up serving on the Golden Bell Telephone Board for about twelve years as a director. He was working on it when they first started.

Joan: You did the lines for the Golden Bell, how did you end up being a director? And what time period are we talking?

Keith: Because I took over Bill McLean's place when he retired.

Joan: Okay, about what year is this?

Keith: Maybe about 12 or 13 years ago.

Joan: So about 2000.

Keith: Yes.

Joan: What do you do on the board of directors of the telephone company?

Keith: Spend a lot of money. That was an interesting job because when I first went on that... talking about something changing...it was in the expansion stage, I would say. Because it just bloomed. Every meeting we had, it seemed like there was something changed.

Joan: So it has prospered in recent years? Is that due somewhat to the internet? Or is it all telephone? Why? It is a little company.

Keith: Well, because we've always had a good manager. The first manager they had was David McKay. He was the first one; he was sharp. People just signed up, I guess. They started in a little old shack on somebody's farm. Then it just expanded.

Joan: Was that around here, or was that...?

Keith: No, it was up around Rush Center.

Joan: And then they just expanded out from there.

Marcile: They just keep acquiring little towns.

Keith: All them little towns, you might say, are about to go under. And also, the government opened up the grant money. And of course it went through the agriculture department, for some reason, they got tied into that.

Joan: So it was more like the REA and that sort of thing.

Keith: That's where they got the money then to start up and go with it. They just kept expanding. Over a period of years.

Joan: Golden Bell was ahead of the bigger companies?

Marcile: A lot of Kinsley people wish they were on Golden Bell.

Joan: Oh yes, I've wished it sometimes because I know a little bit about it from calling you people.

Keith: My first job I had with being on a board was the school board, I guess.

Joan: You were on the school board at Lewis?

Keith: Yes. I was on the school board, and I was on the co-op board, the township board, and the cemetery board. I was on the board. Ed Miller, Stacy Graff and I were was on the South Brown Township Board. We were all called in when they started the first reappraisal of all the farmland. We got stuck with that. Everything was redone, changed, and so forth.

Joan: When did you retire? Or are you still farming?

Keith: No, I retired in '86.

Joan: When did you move from the farm? When you moved into Lewis? Did someone move into the farmhouse at that time, when you left?

Keith: Well, yes. Gary Panzer moved into the house.

Marcile: We retired in '93.

Keith: And they lived there until Bill come back.

Joan: And then Bill lives there now?

Keith: No, he lives over there. He come back with intents of us all going on and doing the farming together, but that didn't work out with the three quarters of ground that we lost. We were down to just two irrigated circles and dry land farming.

Joan: So you still own the farmland and rent/lease or something at this point.

Keith: Renting it.

Joan: Is there any other thing in the last 20 or 30 years that you want to mention on the tape? That we haven't covered?

Keith: I can't really think of anything.

Joan: Looking back over your life, you've spent your whole life in Edwards County. How do you think that's affected your life?

Keith: Well, my grandfather and grandmother came out here, and they established the farm. They survived. My dad and mom survived, and we have. I think it's a pretty good place to live. We've always had wonderful neighbors.

Joan: Was it a good place to raise children?

Keith: I think so. All of ours have spread their wings and went other places. My daughter wound up marrying a dairy farmer, and he farms. I guess there's a little farm in them.

Joan: We talked about the population declining. How did that affect your life, as you were living here, to have fewer people?

Keith: When I was growing up, everybody seemed like had a hired hand or maybe two. I don't remember my dad not having a hired hand while I grew up. He kept two boys. A family by the name of Ed Little, they came from Arkansas. They came out here and taught school. I guess that's how he got established out there. They lived out here and had two boys, and lived on a place over by Trousdale. They just stayed there, those two boys did.

Joan: So your dad had hired help, but then, how did that change?

Keith: It got down to where it was just me, for about three or four years. My parents did a lot of work for me a couple years.

Joan: That was a big change.

Keith: I hired somebody through the summer, but it was just one person. But, like I said, I can see the people that I knew when I was younger. A lot of them moved away. Back in the forties there, the dirt didn't blow, but it was about as tough times for a couple years. Because I know a lot of farmers went to work somewhere else.

Joan: So they found outside work to keep the farm going.

Keith: We had people around Centerview that went to work at the state hospital. They were trying to make a living somehow. Like I said, I thought of it, it was like there in the '30's, when they were pulling up and leaving.

Joan: In the 30's, they did, and then....

Keith: So the population was...

Joan: It just keeps going down.

Keith: It just keeps on going.

Joan: You weren't involved in the 80's, when the farmers went to Washington, weren't you?

Keith: Yes, but we kind of messed around there for a while. We had a little office over there in Lewis at one time.

Joan: An office for?

Keith: American Ag (*American Agriculture Movement*). It was pretty active.

Joan: Did you go to Washington? (*March, 1978*)

Keith: No.

Joan: We need to interview somebody who did that. It's past our time period, but we still need to.

Keith: I'll tell you a good guy to interview, it would be Lester Derley because he took his truck with the fuel tanks on it and furnished the fuel.

Joan: You see, we can pick it up in this part of the interview, where we're going beyond, as long as we can go back and do the other.

Keith: Jack Wolfe would be another; he drove an open air tractor all the way.

Joan: Oh good grief. What do you see for the future of Edwards County?

Keith: I think it is pretty well settled, as far as farming is concerned because of all the irrigated stuff.

Joan: What will replace it if they're not irrigating?

Keith: That would be pretty tough. I would say that if they had to go back to dryland farming, I would say that you would see a bunch more pack up and leave.

Joan: So that area where your farm was really needs that irrigation?

Keith: Yes.

Joan: Go to no-till, or returning it to pasture and having cows, or....

Keith: And then ground like that is kind of a problem, because if it rains too much, you can't farm. And if it don't rain, it gets like cement.

Joan: So you think the population will continue to decline? Or do you think it gets maybe...

Keith: I think it will decline some more, a little bit more. A lot of these older people are in my generation, they're up to retirement age and a lot of them don't have anybody coming back to take their place.

Joan: And no one in your family will keep the ground that you still have?

Keith: I hope so.

Joan: You have some grandkids that might be interested, don't you?

Keith: Yes, probably. I don't know.

Joan: Marcile said your son and his son might be the most interested: Boyd and Daniel.

Rosetta: I have a couple of questions. There was a King that was a jockey.

Keith: Ted.

Rosetta: What relation was he to you?

Keith: He'd be way, way, way down the line.

Rosetta: But he lived over in that area, didn't he? But he wasn't relation to you.

Joan: Like a third or fourth cousin or something?

Marcile: Not even that.

Rosetta: Did you ever see him race?

Keith: No, he died before I ever got old enough.

Rosetta: I couldn't remember when he was a jockey, I just remember that...

Keith: I think there was a tombstone...

Marcile: Buried in the Trotter's cemetery.

Keith: with a horse under him.

Keith: There was a family by the name of Bill and Bridgett King that lived off down there. But they weren't relatives.

Rosetta: The other question is, I think of Centerview as hard soil, but if you go to Bethel, that's all sand isn't it? (*Keith answers yes.*) Wasn't it really hard to change from one kind of soil to another kind of soil when you were farming?

Keith: When I was growing up, down and around Fellsburg to the county line, down through Byers, Hopewell, people all down in there are called "sand rats" because the ground was so sandy. They had, you know, like up home there. They wasn't raising anything either. But they had that sandy land that would get to blowing, and you couldn't hardly control it. What really changed that was a couple irrigation wells on that ground. They found out they had a good water table and that ground down there is probably some of the best farm ground they have, that sand. It could grow anything. When I was a kid growing up, if you would have planted sand like they got down at Bethel, where my sister lived at one time, they'd have shot you.

Rosetta: You'd have blown it all away.

Keith: They always said that you couldn't grow alfalfa in sand. But it turned out to be some of

the best irrigated ground.

Rosetta: It needs lots of water. Now, Laura Woods lived in the Bethel community too?

Keith: No, she lived here in town. Her husband, Sam, run an implement business here in town.

Joan: So she owns land out there, but didn't live out there.

Keith: He ran the Oliver Implement Company because that's where my dad got his first Nicholson/Shepherd Combine.

Joan: This is a new piece of information. She likes to get her questions answered and you just came up with new...

Marcile: I did come up with Abraham and Cora Eggleston.

Joan: So that was Grandma's name.

Keith: I could think of Abraham, but I couldn't think of the other.

Joan: They both died before you were born.

Keith: As far as I know, they came out here from Missouri, but why they came up here, I have no idea.

Joan: Probably for the land.

Keith: Probably so.

Joan: Anything else you would like to add?

Keith: I can tell you one thing about the railroad.

Joan: The Aunt Nancy you mean (*Anthony & Northern Railroad*) ?

Keith: Yes. They drilled a well a mile east and a mile and a half north of Centerview. McCarty's lived there at that time; it's where Elmer Huff lived. But anyway, they drilled this well, and they thought it was really going to be a producing well.

Joan: This is an oil well we're talking about, not a water well.

Keith: Yes, and they had so much faith in it that our east quarter we farm is a mile east of our farm. They talked my Grandpa King into letting them build an oil dock on the land, so they could run a spur. They put up the tanks and everything. They thought they were going to ship oil out by the barrel. But by the time they got that all put up and everything, they closed the well. They did take the tanks down, but we had cemented ground over where they ran pipe. I don't know how much machinery we tore up there. Even when I grew up, there was still some there.

Joan: That's interesting.

Marcile: Yes, because didn't the railroad run through this east quarter?

Joan: That's why they put it up, to get the oil down to the train.

Keith: My Uncle Charlie ran a grocery in Hopewell. That's where my mom used to go and buy harvest supply groceries.