

Interview with Bill Olsen
Date: February 23, 2011
Conducted at the Olsen Home, Kinsley, Kansas
Interviewers: Joan Weaver and Rosetta Graff.
Present: Bill's wife, Betty Joan Lund Olsen

Joan: What is your full name?

Bill: Billy Jerome Olsen.

Joan: Where do you currently reside?

Bill: Edwards County.

Joan: When and where were you born?

Bill: I was born right here in this house in this bedroom right here in 1930, January 9.

Joan: And what were the names of your parents?

Bill: Nance and Laura Olsen. His real name was Nansen, but he always went by Nance, his whole life out here. I never even knew what his real name was until we got a little older.

Joan: And what was your mother's name?

Bill: Laura.

Joan: What were the names of your grandparents?

Bill: Conrad and Katherine Frick.

Joan: And the other set of grandparents?

Bill: They were Valentine and Nelly Olsen.

Joan: Did you have any brothers or sisters?

Bill: Yes, I have three brothers and one sister.

Joan: What were their names and what was the birth order?

Bill: Gene was the oldest, Dale second, I was next, and then my sister Darlene and Larry was the youngest.

Joan: Did Gene spell his name Gene? Okay, what brought your people to Edward's county. When did they come and why?

Bill: Well, my grandparents came from across the ocean, but I can't remember the date they came. They settled up south of Burdett about 13 miles. That's where all of Dad's brothers and sisters was

born, south of Burdett about 13 miles. All 12 of them. My Dad's dad came over first. He was a fisherman, that how he made his living, fishing. He started fishing. Then finally he brought his wife over. I don't know when that was or how much later it was.

Joan: Where did he start fishing when he first came here.

Bill: He fished in Norway...then when he came here he fished in Washington State. He brought his wife, I can't remember how, but I think Dad said two years later. Then they had...in the meantime, he was fishing and his boat got wrecked. He was out in the ocean seven days before they finally found him hanging on to a piece of wood from the boat. He quit the fishing and that's when they came south of Burdett. I guess at that time they settled on a quarter of land.

Joan: Do you know about what year that was?

Bill: Oh goodness, I can't think of that. In the 1800's I think.

Joan: It was before they had children. Are you talking about your father's parents or your mother's parents?

Bill: My father's parents.

Joan: Was this before the children were born? Do you know when your father was born?

Bill: Well, let's see. 1899, the 29th of July.

Joan: So sometime right before that, probably, they came here. And the other side of the family? Your mother's side? Do you know why they came to this area?

Betty: They had relatives that paid their way. They lived in eastern Kansas somewhere. Then they worked, they were not indentured, but they worked until they got the fare paid off. And I don't know how they got up here.

Joan: Or how they met, how your parents met.

Betty: No.

Bill: I don't know, but my mother come over with them when they came over here.

Betty: She was five.

Bill: Right, she was born...I can't tell you if it was Germany or Russia, because we always thought they was German, but we found out later they was Russian.

Joan: Well, those borders were flexible.

Bill: Yes, and the reason they came over was on account of the wars there. They'd get everything stocked in the house and then here would come the war and take everything out of the house. And then they'd go back the other way and take your stuff out of the house again. They just got tired of it, and when they'd got ready to go, why one of the brothers, mother's brother, had sore eyes. Well, he couldn't get on the ship with sore eyes. Well, they got in contact with this guy, and he said, "I can make

your eyes alright so you can get on the boat.” So they all got on the boat at the same time. They had to stay in the bottom of the boat, and mother said it was terrible. One thing she always remembered, she was six years old; she said they buried a little girl off the ship. They put her on a board and raised the board up and... she remembered that. She was six years old. She said it was terrible. There wasn't a pot, just a bucket for people to use, and she said it was terrible.

Betty: She said her mother said that if she'd had to put up with that much longer she would have lost her mind. It was so noisy and hot and sweaty and nasty.

Joan: So your mother was German speaking? And then she married a Norwegian?

Bill: Yes.

Joan: Now, did your dad speak Norwegian or?

Bill: They never did. With mother, he'd talk to her folks, especially when the kids were around, they'd talk in German, so we couldn't understand what they said.

Betty: Pretty smart!

Bill: That was...I remember that, they'd be talking along and all once we'd come in there and they'd start talking in German if it was something we wasn't supposed to hear.

Joan: Did you know all your grandparents then?

Bill: Oh yes, all but my dad's dad. He got Bright's disease, I forgot to tell you about that. He got Bright's disease from being in the ocean for seven days.

Betty: From exposure to water for a long time.

Bill: He died when my dad was ten years old. I asked Dad, and he said, "Oh yes, I remember." Of course, he was ten years old.

Betty: It's called nephritis or something now.

Joan: That is interesting! Those are two interesting stories there... how they came over.

Betty: (*Bill's*) Mama said that she was never so scared in her life. They got off the boat in New York, and evidently didn't go through Ellis Island, because when we went up there we went out and read that wall and their names weren't on there. But anyway, and here she saw a train. She'd never seen a train before in her life, it scared her to death.

Joan: I bet it would.

Betty: Coming down the track... But that's how they came out here to Kansas.

Joan: And they pretty much came right out, because they were joining relatives.

Betty: Yes.

Bill: The relatives were from Wray, or something. Or there's a town by the name of Wray, and that's where the relatives was. And that's where they got together.

Joan: Do you know if they came with a little nest egg, with a little bit of money or were they pretty...?

Betty: They sold their farm and what they had in Russia ... because that's why they were so desperate for him to...you know, get on the ship, because they had no money to live on. Because what were they going to do if they had to stay there. I don't know what...

Joan: Okay, you grew up with older brothers and a sister. What was life like growing up? What chores, what was the household like?

Bill: We had a lot of chores. We'd get up in the morning, when I was six years old, I'd say, we'd go out early in the morning and milk cows. We'd separate milk, if you want to hear all that kind of... feed the pigs. I mean, we're helping Dad. We'd come in and always have a healthy breakfast. Eggs, bacon, fried potatoes. Then get on a horse and a bicycle we'd ride two miles to school. That was Nettleton, I went to Nettleton for four years.

Joan: What was that school like?

Bill: Betty, you ought to tell them...you've got that picture of the school.

Joan: You tell it.

Bill: Well, it had a gymnasium and two classrooms, and an upstairs with a stage where we used to put on little plays for the little kids.

Joan: About how many people were in your class?

Bill: Three in my class. The first, second and third were in one grade in one room, and the fourth, sixth, seventh and eights were in the other room. We all...each class sat in a row. We took our dinner to school in a Karo gallon bucket. Do you know what I'm talking about? Mother would punch holes in the lid so it would get air, and that's how we'd take our dinner to school.

Joan: Did you say you walked, or rode a horse, or how did you get to school?

Bill: We rode a horse. We never did walk.

Joan: Well, it's a little far to walk.

Bill: Well, usually there was a bicycle or a horse. Usually a horse, we rode an old horse to school. We'd take the horse, and they had a barn. We'd put the horse in the barn, and the other family, they just lived down where Harvey Cass used to live. And there was two people from there rode a horse and the ones across the road, they rode, and we'd ride to school together on the horses.

Joan: Did you race home?

Bill: Well, we wasn't supposed to. My brother Gene was in the 8th grade when I was in the 1st grade. I don't know where he got it, but he got a buggy. He painted it with red wheels and a black body, and I'd

better not tell you what we put on the side of it. He painted on the side of it, "Striped Assed Ape." That's like him, Gene was kind of a rowdy person. I don't know how many days we went to school, finally, coming home from school, he wanted to see how fast he could take that corner down there a mile south. Well, he took it all right, and all three of us ended up out there in the field with the buggy upside down. It never hurt any of us, we picked the buggy up, got in, and away we went home. But I can remember, whatever those things are called, that the horse walked into (shafts). Well, I was just a little kid, six years old, but everything was all twisted up.

Joan: Did you neglect to tell your parents that story?

Bill: Oh no, they found out about it. Nobody got hurt, teacher never said a word about the buggy, but that was the name of it. I don't know how dad ever let that happen, but he did.

Betty: He would laugh.

Bill: Oh, yes he did; he thought it was kind of funny.

Joan: Do you remember the names of your teachers at all?

Bill: My first teacher was, her name was Olson. Her folks lived in Garfield. John Olson was her dad's name. They were Swedes; he was a blacksmith in Garfield. Do you remember Agnes Ploger She was one of the teachers there.

Rosetta: There was a Henshaw or something

Bill: She taught at the grade school at Kinsley. Seems like there was one in the middle there, but I can't remember...

Joan: How many years did you go to school there?

Bill: Four years, and then they consolidated. They got ready, it was getting pretty late in the fall, I mean the boys would start to school, and Dad and Glenn Bidleman and Art Taylor was on the school board. They went down to look at the school. And they got to looking around at the floor, and the floor had settled about this much in the school.

Joan: About two inches.

Bill: Yes, and they figured that they shouldn't take the chance, so they bought a 16 passenger bus, and that's when we started riding the bus to school.

Joan: Is that about 1940?

Bill: Let's see, I was in 4th grade, I graduated in '49.

Joan: No, that's not... So maybe '39...

Betty: Most kids started school at 5 then...

Joan: Oh, well that makes a difference. So if you started school in '35, no, you were born in 1930?

Bill: I went four years down there, and when we consolidated and went to Kinsley, the folks didn't think we knew enough, so they made me take 4th grade over. I never did forgive them. But after it was all over, I said, "That's the best thing you ever did." Of course, we was all in the big bus that went to Kinsley, because it was a bigger school. The public schools around here was just one room schools, you know. There were several of them. I wish I could remember, I guess you wouldn't want to know where all the schools were at.

Joan: Well, we have a map at the library.

Bill: Oh you do, okay.

Joan: Were there any feelings about the consolidation? Were the families happy you were going into Kinsley?

Bill: Well, the kids wasn't very happy. Oh it was quite a change, let me tell you. At Nettleton, we used to play cowboys and Indians at recess, and all the little games like that. Sword fights and all, and at that school, that wasn't allowed. That really toned us down.

Joan: Which school did you attend at Kinsley?

Bill: Northside School. My teacher in the 4th grade there was Mirabelle Martin. She lived north of Kinsley, just about a mile north of Kinsley, where Vic Hirsch lived. And bless her heart, she took the whole 4th grade, one Friday afternoon, and we all lined up and went out there and had a picnic out there at that little creek. I can remember roasting wienies and everything. I thought that was real nice of her.

Joan: You walked?

Bill: Yes, two abreast.

Joan: We used to walk for Memorial Day things to the cemetery.

Bill: Well, the change that I see in that part of it, kids walked to school. If they lived in town, they walked to school, or they rode bicycles. I remember at the high school building, there was two racks full of bicycles. Everybody rode bicycles to school. And now you never see anything, only automobiles. I don't think that's good, but that's the way it is.

Joan: Well, let's go back to Nettleton a little bit. When you were going to school there, how much of a community was there? Were there stores? Or...

Bill: When I went to Nettleton, the stores was all gone. All there was, was an elevator, and that was across the highway. There was a horse barn and they had a two-car garage. The teachers never did use the garage because it was a little ways from the school and they didn't want to walk, I guess, to the school house. They always parked their cars right there by the fence of the schoolhouse.

Rosetta: There were two teachers all the time?

Bill: Two teachers.

Joan: What would be the total number of students, about?

Bill: Well, I think we got a picture that shows, I think, around 35.

Joan: That's quite a few kids.

Bill: Well, there was quite a few people lived around here at that time. See, there was...well, I could point out houses that were there then, but not now. That's all over the county, all the homesteads are gone, abandoned, been razed, gone.

Joan: And they're farming over it.

Bill: I can remember, years ago, I was talking to the banker about all this that was happening. He said, "You don't know how much we miss little farmers coming into the bank. We really miss them."

Joan: Okay, let's go back then, because I interrupted you. You got up in the morning and did your chores and came in and had this big breakfast. And then you went to school. What else was life like, growing up in your household?

Bill: Well, it was just like any kid, I guess. You come home after school and had chores to do.

Joan: Were you able to participate in sports in school? Or did you come home and do chores?

Bill: Do chores. Then on Saturday, the chicken house had to be cleaned out, every Saturday.

Betty: You never got to play?

Bill: Oh I got to play, sure I did. I never worked all the time, I got to play. I had my little tractors and stuff when I was a little kid, right down south here, I'm sure you could find it...

Joan: What was Christmas like in your household?

Bill: Well, I can remember...see there was an archway here. Mother and Dad, they always had rope from one corner, in both these rooms, with icicles hanging on 'em and a big jingle bell in the middle.

Joan: The silver, metallic icicles or those little tin foil...

Bill: The tin foil. That was every Christmas, I can remember that.

Joan: Did you have a tree too?

Bill: Oh yes, we always had a Christmas tree.

Joan: Even during the Depression.

Bill: Right. We never got much. We always had a sock with peanuts in it, and an apple and an orange and some of that curlicue candy.

Joan: Christmas ribbon?

Bill: Yes, that's what we had. And the thing about it, we all seemed satisfied and happy, because we didn't know any better. At that time, we didn't know our parents was poor. Now, kids know if their

parents got much money or not, but then we had our bellies full, so we was happy.

Joan: What was Christmas dinner?

Bill: We always had turkey, usually, or they'd go out and butcher a couple of hens. And another thing, they used to butcher. There's nothing like fresh meat, but we didn't have fresh meat year round. After so long a time, of course they had to can the meat so it would keep, you know. They canned meat and the basement down there, there's a big cupboard that way always full of quart jars of meat. Of course, we raised a garden in the summer time, and mother would can, and they was all full. So, we didn't go hungry, but one time we didn't have meat. I know we kind of questioned, but we never said too much about it. We grew up, and one time, I said, "How come we always had so much duck and pheasant?"

And Dad said, "Well, we didn't have any meat, and you kids need meat, so I'd go out and shoot ducks off the pond and shoot pheasant and cottontail, young jackrabbits." We never did eat an old tough one, he'd always get the little ones. But at that time, it wasn't no big deal to go out shoot a rabbit. You go out here a quarter of a mile or so, or right around the house, and get some cottontails and jackrabbits, you know. Now you don't see that much anymore.

Betty: Tell them what the best treat in the world was when you came home from school, starved you know.

Bill: The best treat in the world, when we came home from school, mother'd make big loaves of brown bread. She always made her bread, and we'd come home and we'd slice the outside off. We wanted the crust. We'd put cream and sugar on it, because we separated the milk, we had cream. Oh that was wonderful when we came home from school.

Joan: At Christmas, did you have any recipes from the old country? Were there cookies or desserts or...?

Bill: Well, my mother...the only thing I can think of is that baked chicken. The special thing was baked chicken, I really liked it. She fixes it once in a while, she don't like it, but I do. She fixes it for me. It came from the old country. Nobody that I know of ever has baked chicken like this.

Betty: It seems to me that a lot of their cooking, from what Bill's said about his grandma, she always had dumplings, you'd have dumplings when you went to their house, but things were just, you know, blah.

Bill: But this dumpling soup that my grandma made, I wish I could remember what it was. She always had it on an old pot-bellied stove, a heating stove. But I always remember that we'd go in there and smell it. It was always on the stove, and she'd always say (she was Dutch), "Billy, want some oop?" And I'd say, "Yes, I do!" And she'd give me a bowl of soup.

Joan: You were pretty young, but is there anything you remember about the Depression and the Dirty Thirties?

Bill: The only thing that I can remember is one afternoon, we seen a big black cloud coming in and it wasn't long until you couldn't see. Well, the folks knew what was coming, so they had sheets on all the windows. You know, the houses weren't like they are now. So over the windows to keep the dirt from coming in. On the table, she'd always have a sheet on the table. When the food was on the table and ready to eat, she'd take the sheet off and we'd sit down and eat. Other than that, I can't remember

much. I can remember just that black and having to light the coal oil lanterns and stuff.

Joan: Okay, so we'll move up a little bit to World War II. You remember Pearl Harbor? And what you were doing then?

Bill: Yes, I do. I can remember Pearl Harbor? I can remember when it was over.

Joan: Did you hear it on the radio? Did you have a radio?

Bill: We was putting up hay over north of Kinsley about a mile, alfalfa. And all at once the sirens went off. I don't know if somebody went by and said, "The war is over."

Joan: That's getting it over.

Bill: All I can remember is it was terrible when Pearl Harbor was hit. I can remember people talking about the United States was sleeping, they wasn't tending to business. That's the only thing I can remember, people saying, they wasn't tending to business, or it wouldn't have happened.

Joan: Did World War II affect your family? Did you have relatives who served?

Bill: Well, my brother Gene was in the air force. He was an air force mechanic, in a word. He was in California when he became sick. He came home, and it ended up being cancer, I guess. He died at 21.

Betty: He was in the hospital in Chicago.

Bill: He was in California, Chicago, yes, the Wichita and back home. Finally, he went to Wichita and died.

Joan: Do you remember rationing or any other ways that the war affected....

Bill: Yes, the rationing. The only ones who could get tires were the farmers. But they had to go in and get some kind of certificate. They could get tires for their implements at that time, tractor tires and so forth, and trucks and cars. But that's about the only thing that I remember, that tires was real hard to get. I can remember the speed limit at one time was 35 miles an hour on the highway, to conserve tires. Most everybody drove 35, too, because they knew if the tires went out, they couldn't get a tire.

Joan: Anything else about that time period that you'd like to mention?

Bill: Well, I can remember the folks had an old radio that wouldn't work half the time. They'd try to listen to the news to see what was going on. Then of course, they'd always get the paper to read about it.

Joan: Did you go in to the movies and see the news reels?

Bill: No, that was the radio. No, we didn't get to go to town.

Joan: So you didn't get to go to town.

Bill: I don't know, every week or two weeks. It was a big thing when you got to go to town on Saturday afternoon.

Rosetta: When you went to town, did you go to Kinsley? You didn't go to Garfield or Larned?

Bill: Kinsley. A lot of times when we'd go in, the folks would have cream to take in, or eggs to take in and sell. They'd go buy the groceries and they'd always have money left after they bought the groceries. There was a grocery store, it was "West" I think it was called. I remember, they'd go in there and buy groceries, and he had a container on there about so big, with suckers in it. And when the folks would buy groceries, then he'd reach in there with his hand and throw a handful of suckers into the grocery sack. I can remember that real plain. And I mean it was a handful, I mean it was full when he threw it in there. Everybody got a handful of suckers in the grocery sack for the kids.

Joan: And the whole family went to town when you went? Or did some stay home?

Bill: I don't remember all of us going in at one time. If they was a little bit late for chores, the kids would stay home and start chores. I can remember one time, the folks went to town. We came home from school and we went out and we milked all the cows and did all the chores. About that time the folks came home. And we said, "Chores are done!" "Well great!" Well, later on we heard, "We did this on purpose; we wanted to see if you'd do it." I can remember him saying that. If you did the chores when you got home, then the chores were all done. He liked that.

Joan: But you didn't get to go to movies when you went to town.

Bill: Once in a while. And the movie cost, I think, a nickel or a dime. You, know, Roy Rogers and Gene Autrey and all them. They used to line up for blocks for the movie, you won't believe that. They used to line up a block each way to get into the theater on Saturday night. Then when television came, that ended all that. I don't know but it seems like television is the ruination of everything. Kids come home and they don't have nothing to do except sit there and watch TV and eat snacks. You know, that was the one thing where we was lucky, we had something to do, we had chores that had to be done. We didn't have that luxury; I guess you'd call it. After chores were done, if there was any time, why we were playing. But work always came first. I remember one time, also, in the middle of the summer. It was hot, and I was to water the chickens. You didn't let the chickens be out of water. Well, I got busy playing and Dad come home and the chickens were out of water. He said, "Did you water the chickens?" and I said, "I forgot." Well, I didn't forget. He wasn't too happy. I guess I'd thought he wouldn't say anything.

Joan: Did you get a whipping?

Bill: Yeah, when I got one from him, I needed one. I can remember when we grew up, we'd talk about those days, you know. We was always tickled about when, you know, we needed a whipping. But there was always love in the family. Whenever something happened, after the whipping was over, it was done. We were happy then, but the whipping came first. I can remember, I shouldn't tell you this, but I will.

Joan: It's going to be on the tape...

Bill: I liked chickens, so I played like I was a chicken. I went down, in the evenings the chickens would go to roost. I'd go down and sit on the chicken roost and act like a chicken. Well, the chickens were afraid of me, because there would be a flurry on the roost, then there weren't any chickens. Dad come down, saw me, and told me, "Get out of there, and don't ever do that again." Well, that didn't satisfy me, I went and did it again. And brother, I got a lickin' that I never forgot in all my life. I swore it was

a gin pole, but Dad said he ripped off a slab board from an orange crate. Do you know what an orange crate is? We wore overalls, and he took me up by my suspenders and he flogged me. That's the worst whipping he ever gave me. But I learned something, and after I grew up, I said, "Thank you Dad for doing that, I needed it." Today, I think that's partly what's wrong with the generation growing up. A whipping never hurts any kid, as long as there's love in the family. You don't want to forget that. And another time, Dad hired a couple guys, I remember that, we was just kids. I was fourteen, and he had a couple guys hired to drive tractor while we was harvesting. Well, it never worked out too well, we had trouble with the old combine. I was running the combine and this guy was on the tractor. I would work trying to get the combine going and the guy would just sit on the tractor. Finally Dad came up with the other old combine and stopped. He said, "Where's so-and-so?" I don't remember his name, well, he was sitting up there on the tractor. Of course, both these guys was together, and Dad said, "Well, that's it. You're fired. Just go to the house." And he was mad, and the guys wanted to leave. And after all the big to do, and the blowing off and getting mad, another time we sat down and eating a peaceful dinner and everybody laughed. Anytime something happened, when it was over, it was over.

Joan: Now how big was the farm then? About how much were you farming?

Bill: Farms weren't too big back then. I can't remember.

Joan: And you grew wheat, and hay, alfalfa?

Bill: Wheat and he grew a lot of hay for his cows. And alfalfa, and oats and barley. All the oats and barley was always bound with the binder and shocked and threshed with the old thresher machine.

Joan: Here? Did you do all that here?

Bill: Yes, everybody did this, all around this vicinity. They shocked oats and barley, and there was a guy by the name of Joe Schmidt, I think was his name, he had the threshing machine and he'd bring it around to each farmer's place and we'd thresh. I was pretty small, but I got in on all of it. My job was running a little tractor and taking two trailers out in the field. They called them "spike pitchers". They'd load these two racks up and I'd bring them up to the threshing machine and unhook them, and then hook on to two racks and take them back out. That was my job. My brother...

Joan: About how old were you?

Bill: Oh, eight, ten, something like that. Awful small. My brother, he was probably about 15. We had an old truck, and he backed up to the threshing machine, and the grain would come in the truck. He'd haul it up and he and Dad would scoop the grain. There was other people help pitch it into the threshing machine. You know, bundles were tied with twine. And this threshing machine, just before it went into the cylinder to thresh it, it had a thing with knives on it that ran like this. You'd always throw the bundle in so it started going this way (heads first), not this way, so that thing would cut that twine before it hit the cylinder so it would thresh good.

Joan: And then did you take the barley and oats and sell it?

Bill: No, you put it in the granary. That was you pig, hog, and cow feed. He'd grind that. He had beef cows and milk cows both, and he'd feed that to his calves when he weaned them and stuff like that. He'd feed bucket calves. He'd always feed oats, whole oats, to his bucket calves. A bucket calf would never look like the others, they was always kind of plumped out like. You don't want to feed them too

much milk. They'd eat an enormous amount of milk if you'd give it to them. But also, getting these calves to learn how to drink out of a bucket...when they were always sucking on a cow...well, you'd get them calves and put that bucket down there, and then you'd take this finger and you'd stick it in their mouth and stick their nose down in this bucket and they'd start sucking on your finger. After, I don't know, I can't remember, you did the same thing, I imagine four or five times, pretty soon you'd slowly take your finger out and they'd be drinking out of the bucket.

Joan: Were your sister's chores different from yours? Did she work in the field? Or was she more in the house?

Bill: My sister didn't help much. She did a little something in the house, about like this.

Joan: Well, it was something to feed you guys!

Bill: Well, she helped Mom out. But this garden thing, I forgot to tell you about that. We raised an enormous garden and potatoes. Of course, the folks would always get chickens. I don't know what time of the year it was, but they'd start growing up, and they'd get about six weeks old and we'd have chicken for dinner. Us boys would have to go out and butcher six or eight chickens when they was little. Besides that, before we went to feed. And also, we went out to hoed the garden before we went to feed. We'd get potatoes and bring them up before we went to feed. The milk and the butter and the eggs was down at the windmill. They had several barrels set up, and they'd put the milk in there on top of bricks so the water couldn't get over the lid, and the butter. When it was time to eat, us kids' job, or one of us, was to run down and get the milk and the butter. Now where you was born and raised, they had one of those houses, cement, you know what I'm talking about? Now, we never had one. We had a barrel down here, but you had a house up there.

Joan: And the water ran through to keep it...

Bill: Right. It ran through, but it wasn't wasted. It ran right on through on the garden. The garden was always...the onions, radishes and the carrots...the water never stopped running on them. All night, the water'd be running on them. That would make the carrots and the radishes sweet.

Joan: Now your soil out here, is it real sandy?

Bill: No, it's pretty black soil. And also to make it sweet, the chicken house, all the manure would be put on the garden in the wintertime, on the garden, and then plowed under in the spring of the year. I can remember, that's what makes those onions sweet, and carrots.

Joan: Your vegetables, did you have a root cellar or something? Or was it all canned? All canned.

Bill: The potatoes, that was what...we had a big water storage tank in the basement, years ago. We always had running water in the house, but not any toilets or anything like that, just running water. And there was a big tank sitting there with a couple pillars it was sitting on, and the folks would made a place to lay these potatoes in. I mean, we just couldn't eat them fast enough. A lot of them would spoil. That was about the best place. They had an old cave down where the house used to set where they'd store potatoes in to, down under the ground. But they didn't last too awful long.

Joan: So you always had water in the house. When did you get electricity?

Bill: In 1940? I really can't remember.

Joan: Before or after the war?

Bill: Before the war, I think. Do you have any idea, Betty? I can remember when they came out and took a little wooden thing with a point on it about that long and drove it into the ground where the posts were going in the yard. I can also remember when they came out and brought the wires and everything. My heavens, when they wired the house and the barn and everything, they had a generator. And they turned it on, my gracious! It was wonderful! Then they shut it off and left. At that time, why everybody got...they couldn't stand it until they all got an alternator. They had their own little...

Betty: It took two or three years before the REA got...

Bill: Yes, it took several years for it to get here.

Rosetta: What you call a alternator. Is that a generator?

Bill: Generator, alternator, it's about the same thing. Most everybody I know got one.

Joan: If they were doing it during the war years, that's maybe what took it so long. I know that out by Meads, that stopped it. They couldn't get it until after the war because they needed the copper for the war.

Bill: I remember, it was a Kohler plant. And how this worked, I don't know, but you went in and you turned on the light switch and it would start the Kohler plant. At night, you would shut off the switch and it would shut off. But our didn't shut off, every night Dad never could figure out what was wrong with it, so every night he'd have to go out and shut off the Kohler plant, because it wouldn't shut off. But it would turn on in the morning.

Joan: Okay, then how about telephone? When did you get that?

Bill: Oh, we'd always had telephones. Box telephones on the wall. One thing I can remember about the old box telephones. The phone would ring, and a few people always liked to listen to people's conversation. And another thing I can remember from when I was a kid, people lived out here by the name of George Haun. They about had...a whole bunch of kids. Now, they were older than we are, but they all played musical instruments, and I could remember once in a while they'd give one big long ring. Everybody would pick up the phone and they'd get in front of the phone and all of them would play and we'd sit there and listen to them.

Joan: That's a good story; I've never heard that one.

Bill: I can remember that! There was banjo, mandolin, guitar...they had all sorts of things they played. Everyone played a musical instrument. And then also, these people would take old Model T's and make "strip down's" out of them. They'd strip everything off that didn't make it go, just leave the motor, the frame and part of the steering wheel, and boy they'd tear up the road! They'd slide this corner out here, I can remember Dad saying, "Man, they're going to slide all the sand off the road!"

Joan: So this was the old Olsen place. And then you got married and then, did you live here? Or...?

Bill: We lived about nine miles south of Burdett for nine months. Then I was drafted in the service for two years. Then it was time for me to get out, why Dad thought we needed a place to live, so they

moved out and moved to Larned and retired.

Betty: He was tired too,

Joan: So he retired when you got out?

Bill: He was tired; he was doing it all himself. He was getting tired. Of course he retired at 52, I think. I mean, that was quite a big jump, getting out of the army and moving into this house, and all this land to do myself, you know. Now, I'll never forget, my uncle, at that time, my uncle told Dad, "Well, as long as you look after it, why he can live here." That always hurt me, because I was born farming. I didn't need looked after. But that's all, nothing else was ever said.

Joan: You kept looking after it?

Bill: That's right, I kept looking after it.

Joan: Did your father work after you came here?

Bill: Oh no, he retired?

Joan: Or did he get a little part-time job?

Bill: Oh, he did painting for nothing...I mean, he liked to paint. People always liked to have him paint. He'd go paint their house for something to do.

Betty: They'd bring their broken tools to him, the rake and hoes, and he'd fix those. He puttered around.

Bill: Yes, he puttered around the shop.

Betty: I always said he must have 25 gallons of red paint because they'd gather their tools to go home and the handle would be bright red.

Joan: So you don't lose it!

Rosetta: So how did you meet Betty?

Bill: Well, I knew her all my life. I hauled her on the school bus when I drove the bus.

Joan: Now, when did you start driving the school bus?

Bill: When I was a junior in high school.

Rosetta: Now this was the Nettleton school bus?

Bill: Well, there was more than Nettleton that went on it. I drove a pretty good sized bus at that time.

Rosetta: And you were a junior in high school?

Bill: In fact, I got a chauffeur's license. After I graduated, that ended that, no more kids drove the school bus.

Rosetta: No wrecks, no problems, no getting stuck...

Bill: Well, I had trouble with one guy. Oh you probably know him, Ray Moore. He'd tell 'em, "That damn kid is going to kill a bunch of kids!" But Bill never killed anybody, 'cause I felt like I had responsibility, and I never acted like Jughead driving the school bus. The only thing that bothered me about driving the school bus, was when we'd go to a football game, that was my bus. I said, "What about somebody else?" They said, "That's your bus, you're going to drive it." I didn't like that because most of the kids I hauled were my age. It was kind of a responsibility I didn't want. I think we went to Stafford and St. John and Greensburg. I just never did care for it.

Joan: So you were high school sweethearts then?

Betty: No.

Bill: No, we never was sweethearts till we got out of school.

Betty: He flirted outrageously.

Bill: I did flirt a little on the bus. I had that big mirror up there and when driving the bus, I'd wink at her. It's quite a story. And then I worked at the theater after I got out of school for a while. I wanted to learn how to run the projectors. Well, I learned how to run the projectors with a guy up there I couldn't stand anymore. So I told, what was his name, Husted Sterrett, I said, "I can't stand him." And he knew what I was talking about. And he said, "You just sell tickets until I figure it out." I never asked him for a job, I just went in there and said, "I want to learn." So I sold tickets and one Saturday, I guess, Betty came in and there wasn't too many people at the show or something. He came in, and I went to him and said, "Say, mind if I just take off? I want to go down and sit by somebody." And that's when it started!

Betty: It must have been Edith Marie.

Bill: No that was you. That was quite an experience to learn the projector. I don't know what they got now, whether it's the same thing or not.

Joan: Probably not too different.

Rosetta: It's about the same, I think.

Bill: It is?

Rosetta: It's an old projector.

Bill: I guess there was two things that had to be just right. You'd get them together and get them to fire. And also something else, all the film that came in, we had to go through them all. We had a thing, and we'd take a finger and we'd run all that film and if there was any breaks in them, we'd clip them and glue them back together so we wouldn't have a film break at the show. That's something else, I didn't know they did that, but we did it every time the film came in. We'd run all the film through. I mean, that was quite an experience, I was just curious to see what it was all like. After the first show was on,

I'd go down to the basement where they had all the advertisement for the theater, and I'd get the advertisements ready for the next day's show. The Saturday night and the Sunday show, I'd put that outside in the pocket.

Joan: When did you graduate from high school?

Bill: 1949.

Joan: (to Betty) And you're a little younger, right?

Betty: I graduated in '50.

Rosetta: Where's the basement in the theater?

Bill: Under the stage. That's where we kept all the advertising. We kept it in a cool, dark place down there. But it was a big deal to run through all the film. But the guy that was up there taught me how to do that. It was on a crank. He would feed it through and stop and back up when he felt a spot. They had a special splice that spliced it back together. Once in a while, there'd be a lot of them. He said some of them didn't do that. There'd be a break, and sometimes they'd go on through, but it was rough. One side and you could tell they was broke on one side.

Joan: So you started out as a volunteer, but you ended up getting paid? Or did you always volunteer?

Bill: Yes, He liked for me to be there, I guess.

Joan: So you graduated and you were back here farming and courting her maybe? Not yet, not until you graduated.

Bill: Not until I graduated.

Joan: What about her? Were you senior or not when you started dating?

Betty: We started dating the end of that school year.

Joan: And then...because you got married that summer after you graduated. And so somewhere in there you got engaged.

Betty: We only went together 3 months. He had to get our parents' permission.

Bill: We were a couple of dumb kids. We went together two or three months and went and got married.

Joan: Well, it seems to have worked.

Bill: Yes, we've been married a long time.

Joan: How many years? Let's see. 61!

Bill: Well, we heard several people say, "Hell, that won't last very long."

Betty: And there were times when we didn't think it would either.

Bill: One thing about marriage, you've got to give and take. You can't just have it all your way.

Joan: Okay, now she said something about you had to get your parent's permission to get married. So how did this elopement work then? Did you get permission and then you eloped?

Bill: Yes. We had no blood test too. I don't remember where we got that done.

Joan: And you had to get the license.

Bill: And a license.

Betty: No, we went to New Mexico because you had to wait three days in Kansas, until the blood test came back. We couldn't wait for the license. Our lives were so busy.

Joan: Kid's can't wait now, either. But they don't get married, so...

Betty: They used to call it "shacking up."

Rosetta: Why didn't you choose Raton, New Mexico? That's quite a way...

Betty: It was closest. I think Colorado had a waiting period too.

Bill: Well, it wasn't the right thing to do.

Joan: But your parents knew you were eloping?

Betty: No.

Bill: Her folks didn't.

Betty: We stopped in Dodge City, we didn't get far. Plus our friends would tell us, if we weren't such cowards, you'd elope! Why don't you just elope? Well, we finally did. Anyway, we stopped in Dodge to get some supper, and I kept watching. I knew my father was going to come storming in the door any minute and jerk me out of there. But he didn't. It hurt my parents.

Bill: Yes, I hurt her parents. He wouldn't speak to us for what, six weeks or two months or something.

Betty: I didn't call my dad.

Joan: You wanted your whipping and to have it over with.

Betty: Yes. Me too. And it didn't help when we sent telegrams back home. It didn't help when my father called Bill's folks and said, "Did you get a telegram? See what these kids have done?" And his mother just laughed and said, "This is the first you knew about it?"

Bill: That was the wrong thing to say.

Betty: But she loved him.

Bill: The Good Lord has been good to us. He gave us four good kids, sixteen grandchildren, eleven great grandchildren, we own our own home.

Rosetta: Why did you start raising sheep?

Bill: I can tell you why, I did it so the kids would have something to do.

Joan: So it was after you had children.

Bill: Kids can't take care of cattle. We started out with 20 head, we sold the first and then we got 150 or something. At that time, I had 150 ewes and I bought 100 head of cattle. I worked all winter on the cattle and I had 150 ewes and lambed them out. The sheep made me more money than the cattle, so I said, "We're going into the sheep business!"

Betty: The cattle broke even.

Bill: Yes, we broke even on the cattle, we never lost any money, but worked all winter for nothing.

Joan: So that's in the 60's or early '70's?

Betty: Late '50's.

Bill: See, we were in the sheep business for 38 years. It took us that long to find out we didn't like them. But one thing about it I liked, because the kids could help. They could do a lot, but the girls could go out and help. When we lambed, we always put them, we had 60 little stalls, 4' x 4' stalls, when we lambed. They'd go right in the stall. And they had to be watered, and they had to be fed, twice a day. Lambs were coming all the time. What was it, one year we had 900 or something? And my gracious, that's a lot of work. The only thing I had against sheep is the coyotes. If we hadn't had to fight the coyotes, we might have still had sheep. But so help me, you had to watch them like a hawk all the time. Otherwise, we kind of liked them. Of course the wool got where it wasn't worth nothing. They bought wool from overseas, and it was better wool. They wanted "long staple" wool and we didn't have it. They wanted wool like this, and overseas they could get long staple. And our wool market kind of went bad. In fact, early when we were in the sheep market, we'd shear 10 or 12 pounds off the ewe and get \$1.27 a pound for it. So you can imagine what a difference that would make when the wool market came down. That's a pretty good deal, you'd sell the wool and it would pay for all the feed and everything, just the wool!

Rosetta: We've always said that the reason sheep wranglers make money is they can't go anywhere to spend it!

Bill: We didn't!

Betty: I'd forgotten this till now, tell about the kids walking the sheep out of the pasture before they went to school.

Bill: They walked sheep half a mile south out of the pasture before they went to school. They'd come back and get on the bus to go to school. Days when we were lambing heavy and the kids were going to

school, she'd come out in the evening at 10:00 and she'd take care of the sheep until about 4:00 the next morning. Then I'd take over and I'd be with them. I'd feed them and lamb them and do everything until the next day, or the next evening at 10:00 when she'd come out. So she knew as much about lambing sheep as I did. I couldn't have done it without her.

Joan: Did you use dogs too? To help herd?

Bill: No.

Betty: We're only half stupid.

Bill: I used a motorcycle to run the pasture. I'd sit here and watch the sheep, and oh-oh, there'd be a coyote out there. You'd ride out there and there would be a coyote starting to molest the sheep. So you'd run the coyote away, come home and park the cycle.

Betty: We got goats to help protect them.

Bill: They said goats would keep coyotes away. So I went up to, I think it was Jetmore or someplace, where this guy had goats. They were so cute that instead of one, I got five. Well, I brought them home and instead of the goats staying with the sheep, the goats would be in one end of the pasture and the sheep would be in the other. Then they got so that instead of jumping the fence, they'd just crawl up on it and mash it into the ground and get out.

Joan: I bet the goats didn't last long...

Bill: Well, they lasted a little while. They'd eat the slats off the snow fence. We were putting snow fence up to keep the coyotes out at night, and the goats would just sit there and follow a slat and just pull that sucker out and eat it off. And these little yellow flowers that grow on stickers, the goats would eat them like honey. They'd put them in their mouth and they'd roll them in their lips and pretty soon they'd have another. We'd just heard today from Janet Strawn, she'd been reading about that if you wanted to take care of your pastures, you'd get a bunch of goats and they'd eat all those weeds, they like weeds, and leave the grass. That's the best thing you can do.

Joan: And you can sell goats today too.

Bill: We've eaten goat, and it's good, but there ain't much on it.

Joan: Well, the Hispanic population likes goat.

Bill: Have you eaten goat? (*Joan: yes*) It's good.

Rosetta: Not to my knowledge.

Bill: It's good.

Betty: If you'd known about it, you wouldn't have eaten it.

Bill: Probably not.

Joan: I was in Mexico when I ate it.

Bill: I ate turtle once, too, and I didn't know it. I drank goat's milk once and didn't know it.

Joan: You probably knew after you drank it.

Bill: No, I didn't know it.

Betty: Not till two days later when I told him what he had done.

Joan: Okay now, your kids are doing this and I'm going to go back to this in a minute, but were they in 4-H?

Bill: No. They weren't in 4-H. I don't know why, but I just didn't feel like I had time to do that. It takes a lot of time.

Rosetta: With all that lambing that was going on, they did not have had time.

Joan: I was thinking about showing lambs.

Bill: Now Mitchell's boys showed lambs one year. They had a couple beautiful lambs but they hardly showed.

Betty: They weren't black-faced.

Bill: They had to be Suffolk's in order to... they had to be black-faced, that's the one, and these weren't black-faced.

Betty: The Suffolks were winning that year, I guess. Oh well.

Bill: They are attractive sheep. But these sheep the boys raised, they were real good sheep. I'd been breeding long enough, I knew, and I was real discouraged. So was Mitchell; he was discouraged too because they worked awful hard on them.

Joan: Well, let's go back here. We've got you eloping and coming back and you're getting drafted in 9 months. Then where did you live, Betty, when he went out?

Betty: At home with my parents, where they used to live on old Hwy. 183. Where Kingrys live.

Bill: That's where she was born and raised.

Betty: Norma and Woodson Kingry.

Joan: And you were probably pregnant?

Betty: Yes.

Joan: And expecting to have the baby while he was gone?

Betty: No, my stepmother and I drove down to South Carolina and I found an apartment. She came back on the train. Bill was still in basic training, so he had an hour or two free every evening, that was

it. And he didn't always get a pass because someone would goof up you know, and then everyone was restricted. And then when Debbie was due, in August, no, she was due in July, my mother came down on the train and stayed 10 days, because people then didn't know...I just didn't have it when it was due, you know. She stayed then, probably a week, after Debbie was born. Then she came back on the train.

Joan: So then you were okay. This was basic training and shortly thereafter. And you were in...let's see what you have here, South Carolina, Fort Jackson. And you stayed there your whole hitch. What was your job? What were you doing?

Bill: I signed up for automotive mechanic. And they sent me to cooks' school. Now you put your pencil to paper, but I never could figure that. But I went to cooks' school; and oh man, you talk about tough. It was tough. I was assigned a battery after I got out of cooks' school and I stayed in the same place all the time. I ended up being assistant mess sergeant. But the bad part about that was all the ratings for kids overseas, and we'd have to wear these arm bands, sergeant first class. Because that's the job I was doing, and that always... You had to wear it, the job I was doing, I had to wear that arm band. But I realized that if they went over there, they deserved it, so I went ahead and did my job. I'm so proud of my mess hall. We had honorary mess for the whole camp. Any generals that ever came to the fort, where'd they want to eat? B Battery, 28th field artillery. Come time for inspection, they'd never inspect our mess hall because they knew it was clean.

Joan: That's why they kept you there for two years!

Bill: That's right. Someone said you needed a few good people, a few good men, in the United States. And that's the only reason I got to stay. Because I was real strict. I run a good mess hall. The mess hall, the floor, it was kind of really against...maybe if the wheels found out about it they wouldn't like it...but we talked the KP's into going over to the PX and getting Clorox and powdered soap and stuff. It saved a lot of work. And when they got done with that floor at night, it was as white as that glass. I can remember we had an inspection one day and of course they come in and just looked at ours cause it was clean. Then they went next door, and I'll never forget, a buddy of mine, I still know him, he lives up in Iowa, we stood there at the door and I never seen guys get chewed out so bad. Oh boy, and their floor was as black as the ace of spades. And I heard them say, "How come their mess hall is white and yours is black?" It was bad. Everything was clean, they'd go down on their hands and knees with brushes and G.I. the floor, but the trouble of it was we cooked on cook stoves. Number 5 ranges and 3 ranges, whatever they called them, they were great big. There were three of them, and you'd get it lit, and you'd want to be real careful with the coals so you wouldn't drop any coal or anything. If it hit that cement it would splatter and if you walked on it, it would make a black mark. But our pots and pans, of course we were real strict about that, if they were greasy when they washed it, it was washed again. Whenever you wash a pot or pan, if your fingers don't squeak when they go over it, it is dirt. Of course, some of those guys just couldn't get that through their heads. So they had to go over it again. Some of them had to stay all night and get it right.

Joan: So your shift was, did you have to work all three meals? Or two?

Bill: I cooked for a while, and we was on 24 hours and off 24 hours. We'd go to work at noon and get off at noon. Then like I said, we'd be off until the following noon. Of course, cooking all that food, you always smelled like food. South Carolina is very humid, and wet. You'd go home and take your bath and couldn't get dry. She'd always have to take clothes to the laundromat to get them dry because they wouldn't dry on the clothesline. There was a clothesline out back of the place, but they wouldn't get dry. They never felt dry. I tell you, it was quite a place, but it didn't seem like they had storms like they

do up here. They never had storms like that. The coldest I can ever remember it got was about 20 degrees. One time we came home on a furlough, and when we went back, oh my heavens, the wind blew 40 miles an hour down there, and it blew over trees. We said the wind blew 40 miles an hour for days in Kansas. They couldn't believe that.

Joan: You were renting a little house? An apartment?

Bill: An apartment.

Joan: And you were raising the baby and got to see it every other day, it sounds like.

Bill: At night, she'd drive the car out and we'd visit for a while because I couldn't get off the base, oh I don't know how long it was before I could get off base. Then finally, well, after I got out of basic training. Why, I got a pass. They'd give you a pass on the windshield of your car. The MP's would wave you through if you had a pass.

Joan: I assume you had friends and stuff, and for entertainment, what did you do? As a young couple?

Betty: He cheated at playing canasta.

Bill: We'd go to the drive-in movie, you know, the outside drive-in movies. I have to tell you this story. Little Debbie, she was a little tot, we'd go to the movie and first thing she'd do was say, "Mama, I gotta go to the bathroom." So we got tired of that, so we'd just bring the pot along. And popcorn and water, that way we wouldn't have to get out of the car except to empty the pot.

Betty: She didn't have to go near as often, either.

Rosetta: Did you cook after you got married and came home? You'd learned how to cook, did you take over the cooking?

Bill: Well, I cook my own breakfast every morning.

Betty: I don't have to worry about him going hungry if I'm gone.

Bill: And when I get done in the kitchen, it's like it is right now, cleaned up. Here's the thing. I clean the kitchen up, and it's clean when I leave it.

Joan: Does she clean the kitchen when she cooks?

Bill: Yes, she does. I've heard so many stories about, oh man, he cooks and all the stuff is all around. I never...

Betty: About two years ago, I woke up and I heard Bill in the kitchen. I thought, I'm not going to get up if he's cooking, I'll just go back to sleep! So I just stayed in bed. That happened two or three mornings, and I said, "You're cooking your breakfast?" He said, "Well, you've cooked it for me all these years, I figure it was time for me to cook for you."

Four or five months into this cooking, he says one morning, "I'm getting sick and tired of this." I said, "You can do it just 50 more years and then I'll take over." And he does, cook his breakfast.

Bill: Well, I figured, we raised four kids, she had three meals a day.

Joan: And lambing all those years....

Bill: I figured, it was time for her to give it up. If I can't cook my own breakfast, I should go hungry.

Betty: When it comes to supper, unless he's out doing physical labor, you know, we just sort dig around and find whatever we can find.

Bill: Post Toasties or something like that. Cornflakes are pretty good too. And vegetables, we eat vegetables.

Joan: You've had farming here, what changes came about in the 50's and 60's to your farming?

Bill: Well, one big thing I would say, was the difference in tractors. Cabs on tractors! We've talked about it quite often, saying, "How did we ever stand no cabs on tractors?" I can remember in weedy places, the bugs would about drive you insane. The sweat bees, you'd be driving along and turn a corner and one would be here on a spot on your arm or on your neck. And the dust, I don't know how we could even breath. They're always talking about "clean air". How did we all live with all that dust all the time? Breathing that dust? They're talking about it and I don't know. Have you people heard about it? Somebody mentioned something about it that we need to have a machine that would pick up all the dust from the combine out in the field. Have you heard about this? I thought that was just the stupid thing. That the federal government, anybody, would ever even think about it.

Rosetta: Farmers are making too much pollution?

Bill: They said we got to have something to stop this dust. I don't know those hoot-n-nanny's will think of something, but I don't know how.

Joan: In my mind, if you take the dust out of the field, you wouldn't know where the field was.

Bill: There we was farming, kept the farms for years, and the smell of the dust. But I haven't heard of anybody dying.

Joan: Maybe it's changed some now. You talked about fertilizing the garden with chicken manure, and that sort of thing, did you start using fertilizers and pesticides?

Bill: We started using fertilizer and now we're don't use it.

Joan: When were you using the fertilizer?

Bill: The last ten years?

Betty: We and Lewis were the last ones to do it.

Joan: When was that?

Betty: Because we always summer-fallowed.

Joan: What years were we talking about?

Bill: Did Mitchell quit two years ago? He said, "I'm not fertilizing!"

Joan: So the ten years prior to that, so the end of the '90's into the 2000's.

Bill: You know, the anhydrous kills all the bugs and the worms in the grass. What makes ground porous? Worms, and we're killing them all. The only thing that we would have to spray is alfalfa weevils. You have probably heard about this. They are terrible; they kill alfalfa. We're having trouble, I just mentioned pastures a minute ago, we've got bull thistle. I'd say bull thistle has been here 25 years. I can remember when I had six plants down in the pasture, and I couldn't figure out what they were and I dug them out. From then on, everybody had bull thistle.

Betty: And Bill and Mitchell dug for years trying to get on top of it. There's too much of the pasture where the water runs down through.

Bill: And finally, we started spraying for it. I hate it, I hate it, but there's nothing that will eat that crap. And that musk thistle. It's the worst. You let it grow up in one stand and it will get four of five feet high! And if you don't do it, there won't be no pasture. It will take the pasture over. We just get the sprayer and everything ready to go. We use a four-wheeler and drive around the pasture all summer long and if there's a bull thistle come up, spray it. You can't spray it with an airplane.

Joan: Isolates spraying.

Bill: Spot spraying. I've got a four-wheeler out here with 18,000 miles on it. Most of it is spraying up and down pastures. You can't imagine! I'd ride until my butt hurt, I'm about out of it. I told Mitchell, "I'm 81, I'm too old to do that anymore." But somebody's got to do it.

Joan: Well, I commend you for not using the airplane.

Bill: What good is it if your neighbor doesn't take care of his end? If your neighbor doesn't take care of it, and you're getting rid of yours...and you know what the seed off of that looks like don't you? It's like a puff ball, it's like a dandelion, when the wind blows; it's all over. And bindweed, when I was a kid, we'd have a little bindweed, and we'd go out and put stuff on it to kill it. Now it's all over the country, you've got to spray for it. That's the reason Mitchell is spraying our land today, that's the only way you can kill it. You've got to spray it.

Joan: So in the 50's and 60's you did not have those pernicious weeds. Or you could take care of them by hand.

Bill: I think we've had bull thistle probably 25 years, and they all said it came, blew in, from Mexico.

Joan: It comes from vehicles too, I think.

Betty: It comes from hauling prairie hay, and alfalfa and cattle, sheep and everything else. We didn't used to have dandelions in the country.

Bill: We didn't have these alfalfa weevils until what, 25 years ago? I'd plant alfalfa and never do nothing to it. Now, it's alfalfa weevils.

Joan: So 25 years ago was about 1980 then?

Bill: We used to have a few aphids in it, but aphids would never bother it, we had ladybugs.

Joan: Well again, if you're using a pesticide, it would kill ladybugs.

Bill: So it would kill the ladybugs, but what do you do? If you don't spray alfalfa, weevil will take the first cutting and sometimes kill it.

Joan: What about water? Have you irrigated, not irrigated?

Bill: I've never irrigated

Joan: You never irrigated. How does that work? How many years did you have a good crop, a bad crop?

Bill: It's been good and bad. This irrigation thing, you know they always talk about a shortage of water, and I hope that they don't wait until it's too late, until they run out of water, that's all I think about it. The well in the pasture has never went down. But you know, when it stays dry, water comes from someplace. And you know these wells pump a lot of water. I feel like we're kind of lucky. Around here there's no irrigation. People who are close to that, might lose their water. Our well, if you drop a plug box down, the well is about 70 feet. If you drop a plug box down about 20 feet below the ground is water. It's right there. We've got plenty of water, and it's fairly good water. It's good tasting water.

Joan: Okay, when you were a kid, you mentioned once that your dad hired some people for harvest. Was that...

Bill: Arkansas, people would come out. People come out by the truckload. They wanted jobs. He hired a couple.

Joan: How about since you've run the farm? Did you bring in seasonal help at all?

Bill: I started having help, but the last help I had, he said he was sick, so Betty took him to town. We worried about it until we went to town and called on his mother to see where Joe was. She said, "I don't know, he's not here." Went out and found him in the pool hall. So I told Betty, "I'm doing it myself." So I just worked from early morning to way late.

Betty: Our kids were just little. We couldn't just go off and leave them, you know.

Bill: So I just wasn't going to put up with that.

Joan: So when was that, your last help? Was that when the kids were...

Bill: That's been so long ago.

Joan: Was this when your kids were little or something?

Betty: Yes. But not baby-babies.

Bill: And I had other things to do. I'd get out on the tractor and show him how to do it, then that afternoon he told me he was sick and it turned out he was down at the pool hall drinking beer. I said, "I'll do it myself." So I'd get up when I could just barely see to start farming, and farm until I couldn't see at night. I could just do it myself, but we got along excellent after that.

Joan: You grow some wheat also?

Bill: Wheat, alfalfa, milo.

Joan: Somebody else mentioned the change in farming. You used to farm from sunup to sundown, but now the day's been extended because you've got lights on your tractor.

Betty: Bill never did. He said when it's dark, it's time to quit.

Bill: We don't combine at night either. You know, the Good Lord says you got to rest a little bit. And when it's not light, you rest, so you won't have accidents. There's some that keep working all night and all day and I hope...

Betty: That's okay, it's alright for them.

Bill: That alright for them, but not for me.

Joan: Betty, did you always stay home? Or did you go to work to supplement the farm?

Bill: When all the kids were here, we did all the combining. Betty drove a truck, my daughters drove a truck. Mitchell drove one combine for a while and I drove the other one. Oh yes, we did it all ourselves. When the kids got older, of course. Betty drove a truck for years. The girls, Debbie, drove truck. And Debbie drove a truck for Herman Katz when she got older and after Lisa got older, and she could take over. And Hermie Katz, she drove a truck for Hermie. I'll never forget, Debbie got a ticket. Well, you know these old trucks they used to run. You'd roll up to a stop sign and never quite stop. Nobody coming so you'd ease on the highway. Highway patrolman stopped her, because she'd never stopped at the stop sign. Well she said, "you just have to keep it running or it won't go. It would heat up.

The truck would get hot, you know. *garbled* But from then on, she just stopped. If she was a little late, she was late getting back with the truck. But we used to haul with a pickup. Can you imagine that? Wheat out of the harvest field in pickups. Pickup loads. Then we had one big truck, an old truck that held 350 bushels. We'd always keep the pickup going to keep from having to drive the big truck in. And Lisa drove the pickup. Oh boy, the Lord was good to us.

Joan: What were your yields? How many bushels?

Bill: Oh, I'd say anywhere from 20 probably to 50 (bushels an acre). We had some hailed out wheat one year, and a tornado went through Schmidt, did you hear that?

Joan: 1970?

Bill: I've got a quarter over here; it was flat on the ground. It made 49 ½ bushel an acre. One person had to walk in front of the combine and pull the tin out of the way, and they had to cut it one way because it was all flat. This lady, her shin right here was just blood from walking in that stubble and pulling that tin away from the combine. Do you remember that?

Betty: No, we got that custom cut for a few years.

Bill: Yes, we got that custom cut.

Betty: You didn't complain about it; you just did it.

Joan: So that was in 1970, that tornado. We just talked about that last night at the library.

Bill: It was just west of Schmidt's. We had a round granary on that quarter over there. When it took that round granary and just twisted it up and put it over on the guy's field. And he come over, and he said, "When in the hell are you going to get that granary off my field?" I said, "You can get it off yourself, I've got enough on my own." We got three truckloads of tin, big truckloads, off of my corner over there. But that was his word, that was terrible I thought. Everybody had stuff on their fields. From Schmidt clear to my quarter and past. Why he would say something like that I don't know. But the old granary disappeared out there on the hill.

Joan: Did you see that tornado or anything?

Bill: No, I don't remember.

Betty: You were coming back from Larned. Wasn't that the one we saw?

Bill: Is that it? I know we went over to Charles or who was it? Bob...

Betty: That was the next day.

Joan: Bob Cross?

Bill: No, Bob Schmidt. I never felt so sorry for a man in my life. There he stood, with his shed tore down and his wrenches, ...oh, he was down on his hands and knees, picking up some stuff. I felt so sorry. Where do you start? Of course there were a lot of people went over there and helped him. That's terrible. I'll tell you, I think about it a lot. These storms, here we've lived here where we've had this place ever since we were married and Dad had it for 29 years. In 30 seconds, it can all be gone. That's heartbreaking. It's like those people in floods and stuff. Takes everything you got and the house. It is kind of a cruel world.

Joan: It can be. And your son is taking over now?

Bill: He took over.

Betty: He rents all the ground.

Bill: Yes, he rents all the ground.

Joan: Does it look as if your grandchildren will then take over?

Bill: No. He's got two boys, and they ain't a bit interested in farming. They're both in Kansas City.

Joan: You may have to wait for a great-grandchild.

Rosetta: So when you we talked to Boyd Mundhenke, they had a Century Farm because it had been in the same family for a hundred years. It had been in your family for over a hundred years too? But you never filled out the paperwork for the Century Farm?

Bill: I never did it. You see, I bought part of it, and part of it Dad and Mother gave me. Originally, there was an old house sitting down here about at this draw. And the old boy that owned it must have owned several sections all the way around. He was a big sheep rancher. This house had a porch on the west, on the south and on the east. So he could get up, and the porches were six feet high. He would get up on his porch and look around at all his land. He didn't want any trees around here. Betty, I think, could give you an idea what the old house looked like. This old house had a dumb waiter in it. The people who lived upstairs had a maid or whatever it was. They'd fix the food and send it up on this dumb waiter. I told Dad, why did they ever tear it down? If they'd taken care of it, it would be quite a thing to look at. The windows were about this wide, (*gesturing five feet*) and they went from the bottom of the floor, to the top of the ceiling. The basement must have been a half-basement, they called it back then. You know what I'm talking about? But I guess that guy that owned all this land around here was quite a character.

Rosetta: Who was he?

Bill: I have no idea.

Rosetta: I'm going to read some stuff and try to find out who owned the land around here. (*Subsequent research revealed Harry Upson built it in 1902.*)

Bill: Well, I could tell you a little story, I don't know if she knows about this or not, but Vernon Nystrom told me that his dad lived in a dugout. I can just about point it out to you, it's that place over there where the draw... He lived in a dugout for two years. Finally they got scared, they didn't think he was on the right property, so that's the reason the place got moved back where it's at. Otherwise, it would have been right there on the corner. It's where they homesteaded.

Betty: We have the papers.

Bill: They was afraid they wasn't on the right place. So that's the reason why they picked up stakes and moved the place back where it's at down there. Vernon took us out and showed us right where the dugout was.

Rosetta: All I know is I have the homestead papers and it doesn't say anything like that. Well never mind, we're not going to get into family, but we have the homestead papers where it shows he had to prove up. It shows where the land was, and they did live in a dugout until they got the house built. But it doesn't show them moving, but you can get the homestead papers for this place, and it will show you where everything was and how they had to prove it up.

Joan: Does it show where the dugout was on the property? That's what he's saying, that the dugout was moved.

Bill: You see, he wasn't sure they built in the right spot. You can't imagine.

Betty: She knows, she's got the papers that say it.

Rosetta: We're not going to go any further.

Joan: You should have him show you where he says the dugout was. That would be interesting to know.

Rosetta: And you can get the homestead papers for this place, and it will tell you when it was settled, it will show you where the house was, it will show you if they had a dugout before. To prove it up, you had to have proof of residence. When you homesteaded it. And you know, like the Carlsons were some of the families that said, "Yes, my great-great-grandfather was on that property, except when he left for like five months to go work someplace." It tells all of that. But you can get the homestead papers.

Bill: Well, I'll be.

Joan: You ask her how to do it in the library sometime. Well, there is so much interesting stuff to tell us! Churches, where do you go to church?

Bill: The Methodist Church.

Joan: You go to the Baptist Church. Have you seen changes in the church from the '50's to now.

Betty: We weren't there in the '50's. We went to the Methodist Church. Yes, they built a new church. And then we went to the Christian Church several years. We were church floaters there for awhile.

Joan: Did all the churches back then have full time ministers?

Betty: You know, when I was little, my folks took Billie (Billie Lund, Betty's sister) and I to Sunday School. I don't know why. And you know, that was always a mystery.

Bill: I think we had Sunday School in that white building right south of the church. What was that called?

Betty: You went to Sunday School there?

Bill: The Methodist Church. Mrs. Lott was the main character.

Betty: It must have been when he fell in love with her.

Joan: Now what church are we talking about here?

Rosetta: Methodist, the Kinsley Methodist.

Joan: And you said you did everything in Kinsley. So doctors, dentists, hospital, all that was Kinsley. That's why we need to interview more with you about hospitals and things. Do you remember anything about health care? Or the changes that you saw in that? There's a new hospital put in 1949, right? Up in 5th Street. And your children were born...

Betty: Debbie in South Carolina and the rest of them here.

Joan: In the hospital?

Betty: Yes. (aside) Didn't you get your tonsils out in the doctor's office?

Bill: I got my tonsils taken out in Dr. (A. C.) Armitage right above the, well, you know where Western Auto is? You know those stairs that go up? That's where Dr. Armitage was. I'll never forget. One morning we went to town, Mom and Dad said, "Well, Bill, you're going to get your tonsils taken out."

Rosetta: It was above the jewelry store, there was a jewelry store.

Bill: Well, that's where West's was, I think. Once the grocery store was right there too. The Western Auto, the stairs on the outside...

Rosetta: Okay, I'm going the other way.

Bill: Where the stairs go up, that's where the doctor's office was. His name was Dr. Armitage. And all I can think of, I got all the ice cream I could eat, and I couldn't eat any ice cream after he took my tonsils out. Right there in the office!

Joan: How old were you about then?

Bill: Probably five.

Joan: Just a little guy.

Bill: But I was scared to death.

Joan: Well, they didn't tell you until you were in the car!

Bill: Do you remember Dr. Armitage?

Rosetta: No, I've done research, and I remember Dr. Armitage...the doctors moved quite often.

Bill: Dr. Armitage was the one who use to drive up to Dodge City to do doctoring up there also.

Joan: Oh he did...

Bill: He sure did, and they always said how fast he could make it to Dodge City. And what kind of car did he have? I don't remember what it was called. Terraplane, or some big fancy automobile back then. He could make it to Dodge City in 40 minutes or whatever it was, I don't know.

Joan: Let me go on here with one other question that we usually ask people. Living out here in the country, you maybe don't have a lot of input, but we're asking people about minorities in Kinsley? The Hispanic community and the black community.

Bill: We didn't have any troubles with minorities.

Betty: There was just the Winchesters.

Bill: They was nice people.

Joan: Is there anything else before we summarize? Any questions? Is there any other changes you saw during that period of the '50's and '60's? Is there anything you'd like to mention?

Bill: Let me say something about farming. I'll just mention the tractors. There's tractors now that look like a locomotive. They'll pull 50 foot tools, well, they are for big farmers. We don't have that kind of stuff, our tools are 20 feet. The combines, well we have a big combine, a 30 footer, but now it isn't nothing for them to work three or four hundred acres in a day with one tractor. And I can remember when Betty and I had a John Deere tractor and it would take me probably a long two days to work 80 acres. Now they work three to four hundred in a day.

Betty: Well, think how long it took them with a horse.

Bill: So I mean those are the changes that...

Joan: Changes in the tractors, and we talked a little bit about the pesticides and fertilizers and water. And you talked about changing what you were growing. That you went to sheep because it was more profitable than the cattle.

Bill: And for the kids.

Joan: And for the kids. Are there any other changes in crops that you did or have you made any...

Bill: Well, not really. We've always raised milo and wheat and alfalfa.

Betty: We just had that 20 acres of alfalfa.

Bill: Yes, 20 acres and I don't even know how much he's got now.

Betty: It was all you could handle.

Joan: I'm trying to think, did you tell us, did you or your father ever have milk cows where you took the cream to town and the eggs to town?

Bill: Yes, and they also used to send cream to Trinidad, Colorado. I don't know if you ever heard of that or not.

Joan: On the train?

Bill: On the train. We'd take it to the depot and we'd take other cans next week and there our cans would be sitting there on the dock ready to come back home. Trinidad, why I remember that I don't know. Trinidad, Colorado.

Joan: Now did any of that go on after you were married? Or was it all before?

Bill: Well, Betty took the Grade A milk in.

Betty: Well, before that it just went to Trinidad.

Bill: Okay, and all the skim milk got fed to the hogs. There was nothing wasted. We'd always make a mash out of the milk and grain, stir it with a paddle in a tub, and then dip it out and feed it to the pigs.

Joan: It must have been fun in the wintertime.

Bill: Well, the thing about it is, we didn't know any better. You just do what you have to do. The kids, Lisa especially, asked what we used to do before we went to school, "Oh Dad, I couldn't ever do that." And I said, "Oh yes you could." They can't imagine that, going out and milking, coming in for breakfast... That's what wrong with kids today, they need a good....

Joan: Was your main meal of the day at lunch?

Bill: The main meal a lot of times was at dinner time, in the summertime. But our main meal a lot of times was breakfast.

Betty: As well as supper, the main meal.

Bill: We had three big meals. But people worked back then.

Betty: But dinner was the biggest. Lunch.

Bill: As we're talking here, my son just mentioned today that if, "If it don't have a seat on it, it ain't gonna get done." So scoop shovels are out."

Betty: Something that's changed is clothes. The fact that, I remember when my sister got this very warm coat called a Chesterfield. It was deep green with a fur collar. My gosh, she put it on and you just couldn't move. I mean, yes, it was warm, you know it was wool. But it was so heavy and just that little standard satiny lining. Clothes now are lighter weight and much warmer.

Bill: Don't talk about clothes. Betty made all the girls' dresses. You could buy a pattern for like 10 cents or something, and she'd make the girls' dresses.

Joan: Now did you use the feed sacks?

Betty: I wore and slept on feed sacks, but no.

Bill: My mother used to make bed sheets out of four feed sacks sewn together. I imagine most everybody did, because you bought feed.

Betty: What would you think about that now.

Bill: I guess it is pretty good material.

Betty: Well, you know, it was good looking.

Bill: Sometimes it is for the better, but sometimes I don't know, them was the good old days.

Betty: Are you sure you didn't have a Miss Henshaw down at the Annex? There were two Henshaws. There was an old Miss. Henshaw, who was very crabby, and there was a young Henshaw. You sure you didn't have one down there?

Bill: The only thing I can remember was Agnes (Ploger) rapped me. I don't know what I did, but she slapped me across the face one day and knocked me plumb out of the seat. Okay, that's something else. If that had happened today, what would have happened?

Joan: Fired.

Bill: I don't know if the folks even knew about it. If they knew about it, I'd have gotten my butt paddled when I got home too. You did something you wasn't supposed to, or she wouldn't have done that. That's what's wrong with kids. The teachers, but maybe they did make it too severe on kids. Maybe that's the reason it stopped. They beat them too much. I don't know, but I can remember in Northside School, the office. Well, the sixth grade was on the southeast corner, and the office right, and I can remember her taking kids through there and hearing the paddle hit their butt. What they did, I don't know, but I can remember that. I can remember me and a kid got in a fight out playing football one day, she went out the north door on the east side, and there she stood with that paddle. It looked like it was about that long...

Joan: That's about five feet.

Bill: It did! But I don't know what's become of that. We got in there and the kid, what he did, I had a new leather coat and he tore the cup, the little buckle or something. Tore it off, but we were playing football, what did you expect. I don't think anything come of that, either.

Betty: Maybe she found out what happened.

Bill: Well, I often wonder what happened to all those teachers.

Joan: They died.

Bill: Well, I know.

Joan: How big was your graduating class? About?

Bill: I can't remember.

Joan: Can you think how many stayed around and lived?

Bill: Well, Maribelle (*Carlson*), Norman (*Elliot*), Kenny (*Dupree*), no Kenny didn't graduate with us.

Joan: Were there quite a few?

Bill: Well, Beverly (*Craft*), Donna Kay (*Anderson Frick*), Dolores (*Hunter Taylor*).

Joan: Well, your class probably had 50? 40?

Bill: Get the book and tell her.

Joan: Oh, we can do that. But the count is up to maybe half a dozen that stayed.

Bill: (I can't get this name... } Well you know those people, I should think.

Joan: Yes.

Betty: And I'm sure you've been in the Taylor house, the woodwork and the floors. I could live there.

Bill: Oh no, this is home.

Betty: Well, I could!

Bill: You go ahead, I'm staying.

Joan: So how has living here in Edwards County on the farm affected your life, how do you feel about the fact you spent your 80 years here?

Bill: Totally satisfied. I wouldn't have had it any other way. I've been very happy with what I do. I was always happy to get up in the morning and go to work. I've heard some people say that they just hate for Monday to come 'cause they have to go to work, but I was never that way, I always liked to go to work. There for a while I worked out in the shop too. What are you doing over there?

Betty: Every day?

Bill: I've been totally happy every day! That's how she provokes me.

Joan: Even when you were birthing the 400 lamb?

Bill: Well there for a while I did the work in the shop quite a while and made the kids different things.

Betty: After he retired. He made really neat stuff, and then he just quit.

Bill: I couldn't stand on my leg that long anymore. Oh I made that thing for the library (*lectern/atlas stand*). How is that? Does that crack worse?

Rosetta: That stand that we have the Atlas on. No, it's still fine, and we're still using it.

Bill: I hated that. I didn't know anything about oak.

Rosetta: That gives it character.

Bill: Somebody said, "Oh boy. You gotta be careful when you buy it, it has to be bought dry."

Betty: But they weren't surprised at all.

Joan: A book worm has opened up a crack.

Betty: I saw that the other day when I came.

Joan: It wasn't dry when they...but it's all laminated now.

Bill: They should dry it properly, they run it through a kiln before they ever build it out of oak. I forget who I talked to about that

Joan: Jerry Anderson? He might know.

Bill: It seems like it was somebody older than that. And they said...

Joan: Oh, but it is fine. It's not falling apart.

Rosetta: It will last for years and years.

Joan: Okay, the decrease in population in Kinsley. You know that has made a lot of changes.

Bill: Well, there just aren't enough young folks here. That's what's wrong.

Betty: Well, look at the decrease in farms.

Bill: The decrease in farms, they're all big. One man like I said, farms all this ground himself.

Betty: I'm talking about there not being houses around.

Bill: Well, that's what I mean, big farms.

Betty: The houses are all gone.

Bill: We've got, of course, Doc (Doctor Robert Wray) down here, he don't farm. And the people right north there a mile, they don't farm. I'm trying to think of the farmers...Bill Kirkwood, he farms right down in here. Of course, Io Kirkwood, you know where Io lives, and the boys. And then Steve's (*Habiger*) got a farm down here where...

Rosetta: It isn't Io but Irwins.

Bill: Irvin, used to live down there.

Betty: Well, anyway, I collected for Heart or something, and after I sent my envelope in after I started collecting, I told them, I said, I won't do this again. If you want me to do the area, fine, but I'll just write you check and I'll be money ahead.

Rosetta: Yes, they wanted us to collect one time, but they aren't home, they don't care... I don't even get out anymore.

Bill: What about this school district I could never understand, I went to school at Nettleton, and Alma lives up here north about a mile, and she went to District 12, because it was a different district.

Betty: That's where the line was.

Bill: That's where the line was. Alma (*Nystrom*) went up there too you know. I always wondered, how come I couldn't have gone to Alma's school? Well, that was just the line I guess.

Rosetta: Just like this is the line for Pawnee County and Edwards County.

Betty: Did you have toilets in Nettleton?

Bill: Yes.

Betty: Indoor toilets?

Bill: Yes.

Betty: Running water?

Bill: Yes.

Betty: Wow! I'm impressed.

Bill: I don't know if you guys know, but the toilet seats were up off of the stool about that much, and when you sat down on them, the water ran. You know what I'm talking about.

Joan: I understand, but I've never heard of that.

Bill: When you sat on them, the water ran, and it went right straight down, I don't know how far, and then they must have had a septic tank. They must have had a crack someplace. Oh yes, we had...

Rosetta: They were oak seats.

Bill: You know what I'm talking about then.

Rosetta: Yes, I'm old. But she's young.

Bill: Now she's real old, but ...

Betty: Did you have water running out of a faucet?

Joan: Did you turn on a faucet to get your water?

Bill: Oh no, we had a fountain.

Joan: A drinking fountain?

Bill: We had a drinking fountain. We'd come in the hall after recess and line up to drink out of a fountain.

Joan: They had running water.

Bill: We had it made, kid.

Rosetta: You know, I remember at Lewis, there were like four or five drinking fountains all together.

Joan: Different heights?

Rosetta: Well, no. They were all the same, so four or five kids could get a drink of water at the same time.

Bill: That's the way it was in the Northside School on the north side of the building. You know what I'm talking about. There were four fountains there, and they ran all the time.

Rosetta: And inside you didn't have just one, you had several. Southside was probably the same, but I

never went.

Betty: Well at our school, we had a bucket with a dipper in it, and everybody took a drink out of the bucket.

Rosetta: Where did you go to school?

Betty: Henderson #3 just across the road.

Bill: Betty always hated that she had to go home for dinner. She wanted to eat lunch with the kids. But she just lived across the road.

Joan: Well, let's wind this up here. What do you see for the future of Edwards County?

Bill: The way this world's going, I just don't know what's going to happen. There are riots all over, it's possible to get closed up one of these days. Down south here, I don't know, I really don't know. I worry about it, I watch the news. Betty won't watch it because she doesn't want to hear that stuff. But things are going on that...we got something to think about.

Joan: Do you think the farms are going to get even bigger? Corporate farms?

Bill: I think so.

Betty: I think they are going to become government farms.

Bill: I think so too, in the future it will become government farms. If it keeps going like it is now. Just like we got a problem with the fuel going up. I just can't imagine putting four or five dollar fuel in a tractor and going out here farming. I don't know how people are going to make it. That's the reason why we're talking about either that or the rich people are going to own it all. Like I said, we're not big farmers. But some of those people, Larry, my brother works with Midway Manufacturing. Some of those people in the North, North Dakota farm five, six, seven thousand acres. You drive in their yard, and you'd think it was a machinery place to buy machinery. They've got that much machinery. He said it isn't nothing to have guys get stuff fifty to ninety feet wide to farm with. That's unheard of!

Betty: They don't want to farm a lot; they just want to farm what's next to them. That's all.

Bill: I tell you, when I got this place bought, the day I got this place bought, I was so tired of being in debt that I'll never forget the day we paid it off. The guy told me, "You're making a mistake. You ought to just keep buying land." But when you're satisfied with what you've got, why go more? That's the way you think.

Joan: About what year did you pay it off?

Bill: In the '80's

Betty: 1987 probably. And thank God that a person's satisfied.

Bill: Like I said, we talked about it before. I said, "Boy, wouldn't it be wonderful if we could own this place someday." Well, when you're satisfied...I could have bought more land easily, right around here

close. But why do it when you're satisfied. The only thing bad about it is the money ain't worth anything anymore. My goodness, money is only worth something when you haven't got it, then it's worth a lot.

Joan: That's true. Well, is there anything else you need to ask? Or do you have anything else you want to add?

Bill: I answered all your questions.

Joan: You were wonderful, I've learned a lot.