

**Interview with Walter C Robbins ID0005 – 29 Sept 2005 – at his home on 8400 W CR400S, Yorktown, IN 47356. Interviewed by his son Walter C Robbins, Jr ID0001. Total time of interview about 1.5 hours.**

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Grandpa Robbins = Oscar Clifton Robbins ID0014

Grandma Robbins = Grace Gertrude Foulke Robbins ID0015

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Sunoco station was owned by Dexter Davis – he lived on Jackson Street [Muncie]

When were you made a Staff Sgt? Not until I was in Europe

I worked in canning factories in Elwood and Tipton – The one in Tipton was a big one owned by a big company. The one in Elwood was called Ray's – Every little town had one then. Ina & Norman and Paul & Mary also worked in the canning factory. I worked there when we were living in Arcadia probably about 1935 or 1936 – they had WPA then.

Was your family living on a farm when you were born? It was a farm about 6 miles from Fortville, but I don't remember it.

Veterinarian married to Alice – Clyde Phillips

Ross that was in outfit with Dad was Rob Ross' son – three boys, no girls – Bob was youngest – Tom, the youngest was the veterinarian – Middle one was head of a grocery store.

When did Grandma Robbins move to Eaton? Soon after Grandpa died and she lived there 1 or 2 years. Then she went to Mary's but not sure when

When did you first get electricity? 1940 – It came from a Coop from Portland – it was on the farm in Fairview. In Henry County, when living in the chicken house, we had 32volt DC electricity. When the house burned they let us live in the chicken house which was about a mile from Scott's farm. When living at Scott's farm is when we saw the Eagle land on the fence. We went from the Chicken house to Scott's farm

Did you listen to the radio? – what were your favorite programs? Amos & Andy and Gildersleeves were the best 2 – listened a lot in the evening – Myron liked to listen to the Cincinnati ballgames on the radio.

Did you go to movies? We went to movies in Noblesville and then to Indianapolis on Saturday nights – all the theaters were on Illinois Street about 20 of them. You could see a double feature for a dime. Four or five of us would go and watch 2 shows at one theater and then go to another one and watch 2 more for another dime and then go home. We did this while living on the Foulke farm. All the movies were westerns – Hop-along Cassidy, Gene Autry, Roy Rogers and Dale Evans

Where did you learn to skate? At Gibson's [Muncie] – probably around 1938 or 1939. Working at McCormick's then. The first time I had any money. Why did you like to skate? It was something to do and to meet girls. It cost 50c or \$1.00 to skate per night – not much.

Did Milton graduate from High School? No, the government made him quit school. They said he was old enough to help farm – he was about 16 – so I had to go to the Army. Then when Milton wouldn't help with the farm grandpa traded it for the Cole farm in Delaware County.

### **Arthur Foulke** [ID0086]

Arthur was a nice guy. He could fix anything. He was out at the farm [Foulke Farm] all the time. Dad and Myron both really liked him. Dad hated it when Arthur got killed – when he killed himself. He helped us all the time on the farm when anything went wrong he was right there – tractors or anything.

He and another guy were in the garage together and half the time he was at the farm and let the other guy take care of the garage. He loved to be on the farm – he was not a farmer but he did everything else. He worked on the windows on the house, the tractors, etc.

He committed suicide – used a shotgun and blew his head off. Grandpa Robbins went there to see him and said it was a mess.

WW1 – His parents, mostly his mother, wouldn't let him go to the service because of their religion – that made him a Conscientious objector and he ended up having to go to prison for so long for not going to the service. People thought that might have been a part of why he killed himself. His parents probably should have let him go to the service – he would have been better off.

Between losing his mother's farm, his wife spending all his money and maybe the prison thing led to his suicide.

Do you know how long he was in prison or where? Don't know maybe until the war ended.

Do you know where he is buried? Arcadia I would guess. I don't know for sure. The other Foulkes are buried at Sheridan – they bought enough plots for all the kids.

Was Arthur a big guy? About my size – not fat or anything. Was he bald? Not that I knew of – he always had a hat on when I saw him. When he came to the farm he would stay for 1 or 2 hours usually – not all day or anything.

### **Amasa J Foulke** [ID0097]

Dad never remembers ever hearing anything about him. The only Foulke he remembers hearing about was Carrie who killed herself about 1908.

### **Henry County Life**

Scott's Farm was about ½ mile west of Cadiz farm in Henry County – the house had a porch built out front – it was a 2-story house

Dad fell between some floor joists – probably when grandpa was building the house after the one burned. He described it and said it left a scar on his tongue – he almost bit it in two. I couldn't see a scar when he showed me his tongue. Doctor said he would have a pocket in his tongue – they didn't sew it up or anything. He was not knocked out or anything – but he did remember that it bled a lot.

Dad has his tonsils out in a little town of Wilkinson in a tiny hospital. He stayed overnight and got ice cream and went home. His dad took him over and left him and came back for him the next day as he remembers. He wasn't having any trouble with his throat – people just had it done then – same thing when I was a child. People had it done because so many people had tonsillitis and getting rid of the tonsils was suppose to make it better – make it easier to breathe, etc. He helped make hay the same day he got back home. Then they used a hay fork and pulled it up into the mow with horses.

A Baker was sheriff – do you remember his first name? No, but he had a daughter – no info about him – he was Grandma Robbins' cousin.

### **McCormicks** [Factory in Albany, Delaware, Indiana]

What did they make? They made refrigerator shelves when dad worked there - Mostly for Crosley but also for Sears and others, but mostly Crosley. The shelves were made of heavy steel wire and dad ran the machine that straightened the wire. Then after being cut the pieces were put into a jig and were welded. They were then smoothed by wire brushes. Then they were dipped into something. During the war they had war contracts and after the war they went into the bolt business and later went out of business.

### **Picking apples - Tomatoes**

Picking Apples: First started probably in 1964 while on strike. Dad first got a job installing roofs on schools in Anderson. Once that job was done he went back to the employment office and they said they needed pickers at Hoosierland Orchards so he went and picked for them for several years. Probably quit picking apples a couple years after he retired. He broke his arm and never picked again. Dad picked for Hoosierland orchards mostly but he also picked a while at an orchard at Yorktown, but not much. Bill Russell, a man that worked with dad, picked with Dad at Hoosierland and he, too, was a good picker and could keep up with Dad.

Why did you like it? Because it looked like you were accomplishing something. He said he used to pick tomatoes and could pick 90 bushel per day. He was also able to pick 100 bushels of apples per day. He was good at and he enjoyed it.

Where did you pick tomatoes? We raised them on the farm at Fariview. Dad and Myron raised them and got the money from them. Myron got married while they were living at Arcadia. When they moved from Arcadia to the Fairfield farm, Grandpa Robbins rented a house for Myron a couple of roads from the Fairview house for him and Irene to live in. He lived there and helped Dad and grandpa farm for a couple of years then moved to Sheridan and began working in a factory. Myron didn't have to go to the service because he had two kids by then.

### **Grandma Foulke** [ID0078]

What did you think of her? She was a mean thing – she never liked grandpa Robbins because he was poor. Grandpa Robbins and Grandma Foulke did not get along at all – she was mean to grandma – she didn't associate with Grandma and Grandpa Robbins much – the only reason Oscar & family was there [at the Foulke farm] was because of Arthur, it wasn't her idea. She didn't like it at all – she lived in the tenant house down the road the Oscar and his family lived in the big farm house. Dad thinks she probably lived in the big house when Robb Ross and Sarah lived there and was running the farm. They farmed it while Robb was in the process of taking her money. He convinced her to sign 2 or 3 notes on the farm

Grandma Foulke was about the same size as Grandma Robbins. Dad couldn't remember any of the kids liking her. She didn't like us because we didn't have anything – Ross was a big wheel to her – that was what she wanted. She wasn't much of a grandma? Not really

Grandpa Robbins mother [Keziah] fell and broke her hip and she stayed in bed the rest of her life. – she got bed sores and lived with Lizzie and her husband at Fishers – Lizzie took care of her – she had been living with them before she broke her hip. Was she nice? She lived so far away we didn't see them much – it was a long trip – they lived on a farm outside of Fishers. She wasn't heavy – Lizzie though was tall and heavy

### **George Foulke** [ID0076]

Dad said he never heard much about him. Dad said he understood that he was hen-pecked. Grandma Robbins wanted to do that with Grandpa but he wouldn't have any of it. Grandma Foulke would run it all – it was all her doing that wouldn't let Arthur go to the service – she was one that didn't want her daughters marrying beneath themselves [Carrie & Grace]. She claimed to be religious – she thought she was a big wheel – George was a farmer – dad didn't know that he did anything else [George died before dad was born]

**Aunt Alice** [Alice Foulke ID0082]

- Didn't get to see them much – they thought they were too good – them and the Ross'
- Clyde Phillips would come over to help with the animals [He was a veterinarian]
- They would go see the Ross' when they were kids sometimes
- Dad didn't know anything about the Phillips family until they moved to the Foulke farm in 1930.
- Clyde Phillips was the #1 vet in Hamilton County – He was very domineering in the marriage – Alice couldn't do anything – He even locked Alice in an upstairs room one time and left her there until her daughter came over and found her – He almost killed her that time.
- After they moved to the Foulke farm, Alice would walk down to see Grandma and was crying all the time because he [Clyde] wouldn't let her do anything
- Grandma Foulke thought Clyde Phillips and Robb Ross were the type of men she wanted for her daughters – they had money and were important people.
- Dad said since they didn't have anything Grandma Foulke didn't like them – Grandpa Robbins had wanted to rent the farm when George died but she wouldn't let him and instead let Robb Ross run it and that was as big a mistake on her part as it had been to not let Arthur go to the service.

-- Myron: Irene and Mary Elizabeth were domineering people and they told Myron what to do – Mary Elizabeth was probably the worse of the two – she ruled the roost

- Grandma Robbins wanted to rule the roost in her home but Grandpa wouldn't let her. Grandma Robbins would get mad sometimes and cry all day and stay in her room over it.
- She didn't want Grandpa to buy a car – she wanted a horse and buggy – all she wanted to do was save money – she didn't want to spend any money for anything – Ina was like that too – she got it from her mother.

--Paul Jarrell was domineering in his marriage with Mary

- He ran around on Mary all the time
- He was a smart alec
- Nobody liked him at Delco Remy [contribution of Walt Jr – he worked with him in Plant 7]
- Paul was a drunk, so was his brother Ralph
- The boys had a bad life – Their father only married their mother to stay out of the service during WW2 and once the war was over he left and divorced her. She married another guy and he let the boys do anything they wanted which was the worse thing that could have happened.
  - They drove his car until they wore it out – anything the boys wanted to do he let them –
  - He was a real nice guy – just a little guy
  - They lived on the road where the canning factory was bout 2 miles south of Elwood.
  - Norma Castetter lived close to them - they lived about a mile apart on that road.

**Grandpa Isaac Robbins** [ID0069]

He had a rupture and it stuck out – it was a hernia – He bought a belt with a ball on it to hold it in. He didn't have it on or something and the rupture busted and that is what killed him – bowels got tangled up – he was 65 years old when he died

-- He cut wood for a living – him and Grandpa [Oscar ID0014] – they might have farmed a little but mostly cut wood

-- At this point on the interview a portion of a previous taping comes through with “Hi Buddy . . .”

### **Christopher Columbus Robbins** [ID0071]

- His wife was the domineering one – she had been a prostitute – married him for his money
- They had a farm up northern Indiana
- She talked Christopher into selling everything and they had an auction to sell all the machinery and tools (they rented the farm). – they got \$3500 and they put it in the bank in a joint account
- They bought a new Ford car and she did all the driving so she said she wanted the car in her name and he said OK.
- The bank account was in both their names – when they sold all the stuff at auction they put the money in the bank – She went to the bank and took all the money out and since the car was in her name she took off with the money and the car.
- She didn't divorce him so he got the divorce from her.
- Sometime before the divorce Dad, Ina and Grandpa Robbins went to visit – She took the kids to town and she spent the day at the elevator – she was going with some guy at the elevator – the whole day she was at the elevator – Dad couldn't remember exactly what the kids did but probably played around the elevator.
- Dad talked about an Amish guy who lived next door to Christopher – He would haul manure and would take his shoes and socks off and wade around in the manure
  - He had a brand new Model T in his barn but had never driven it – Dad had no idea why he had bought it in the first place.
- Christopher was not as big as Grandpa Robbins – He was a carpenter
- After the divorce he came to live with Grandpa [his brother] and his family
- Christopher was never satisfied after the divorce – Grandpa Robbins would pay him but he was worthless as a hired hand
- He wouldn't shave himself – he would go to town to get shaved – Christopher didn't drive so Myron would drive Christopher and Dad into town – Christopher would get his shave and then the three of them would go to a picture show and then come back home
- He lived with them 2 or 3 years
- Then he went down to Noblesville and was a manager of a park where he took care of it and lived there the year round
- Didn't see him anymore after he left
- When his wife left him that just killed him
- He thought the world of her but she didn't think much of him evidently – she just took him
- Dad said that affected him so much that when he got married he never put his cars in his and Mom's name for that reason – he did that for a long time. He said he had gone through all this when he was a kid and it stayed in his mind. He knew he did it to Mom – it wasn't because he hated her or anything – he remembered what happened – she got everything and it just killed him – they might as well have shot him because he was dead after that – and she wasn't anything but a whore
- They never had any kids
- His wife's name was Ethyl

### **William Robbins** [ID0072]

- A binder cut him in half – there were 3 horses hooked to the binder and one of them was real wild – they were trying to hold them down and dad didn't know for sure what happened – whether he slipped or fell or what
- They were cutting wheat or oats and he fell down and the binder ran over him and cut him almost in half.
- A binder had a cutting blade on it much like a sickle mower
- The wheels is what made the binder work – the reason for the three horses
- Grandpa Robbins felt that the accident was partly his fault because he was driving the horses
- They got a board and laid William on it so he could lay flat and keep him together
- William never got married or had any kids

### Aunt Lizzie [ID0073]

- Married a guy much older than her – they didn't have any kids – he was a real nice guy
- He had a farm where the Geist reservoir is now
- They were both real nice
- The kids always like going there to visit – they didn't get to go too much – they would go there and to the Ross' and that was about it.
- His family would also go to see Arthur and his wife too, but mostly Arthur would come to see them – he had a new car

### Hospital in Europe [Dad ID0005]

- Hospital in Paris
- 1:19:10 (time on audio file)
- After leaving Paris he went to England to recuperate and then to a staging area to prepare to go back to the front
  - The staging area was down on the coast
  - There were two separate areas – one for those going back to the front and one for those who had “gone over the hill” Prison [Stockade]
    - Lot of them had gone over the hill – they didn't want to go back to the front.
    - The two places were right together with a fence or something between them.
- While in England he got 50 pounds in back pay which amounted to \$4 per pound
- Dad was in the hospital during the Battle of the Bulge – also while Walt Jr was born
- His outfit had crossed the Rhine River before he was wounded.
- Probably March or April before he got back to his outfit
  - Had to be 2 or 3 months because of the back pay he got
- He was wounded at Inden, Germany
- Dad said he decided to go back to the front because he didn't want to go to the stockade
  
- When he got back to the front he was the only sergeant left in his outfit and he was in charge and hadn't slept in 2 or 3 days
- He finally got a helper, another Staff Sgt, so he went to sleep and hadn't been asleep but a short time when the Lt came and got him and said he had to come back because the other Sgt had shot himself in the foot – Dad thinks he did it so he could go home, or at least get away from the front. He claimed he was cleaning his gun but dad thought that was strange to be cleaning your gun with a bullet in it.
- Dad thinks this incident had to have happened before the Battle of the Bulge, but he couldn't really remember. Anyway, it happened he said – he was the only Sgt
- They had turned dad in to be promoted to a Tech Sgt before he got wounded, but when he got wounded they gave it to someone else
  
- Dad was wounded in the arm with shrapnel – they stitched up his arm. They had operated to remove the shrapnel – it was wrapped around a nerve – he said the pain was awful – he said he was afraid he wouldn't be able to use a gun or anything. As it turned out it didn't amount to anything but it sure did hurt.
- Dad's Lt got shot about the same time going over a fence and got shot in the bottom – he was on the same train to the hospital in Paris that dad was on - the difference was that dad was sitting up and the Lt was lying on his stomach.
- Took a train to Paris in passenger cars
- Took an airplane from England back to Germany

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Audio File: Genealogy/Audio Files/Audio-Acc001067-Interview-WaltRobbinsID0005-29Sept2005.mp3  
Interview Notes: Genealogy/Documents 500-999/Doc0740.pdf