

Interview with Walter C. Robbins ID0005 [Sr]
20 September 2005- at his home
Transcribed by Walter C. Robbins, Jr. ID0001 [Jr]
20 September 2005

Jr - On the records that I have it says that you worked as a service station attendant in 1942 before you went into the service – where did you where were you

Sr - Down there at Walnut and

Jr – at the Sunoco – you worked there before the service and then worked there after the service?

Sr – No, I worked

Jr – That’s where you worked after you got home

Sr – Yeah

Jr – So where did you work before? Because it said

Sr - lets see where did I work at before – I worked someplace because I had already worked in a filling station.

Jr – Was it in Muncie?

Sr – Yeah, I worked there a little bit on Main and Madison

Jr – Main and Madison?

Sr – at that one – but it seems like I worked someplace else after that – I forget where – Heavens that’s a long time ago- gosh

Jr – I know

Jr – Here’s an easy one – you said you learned in your training to use a compass – remember that – remember saying you had to learn to use the compass and how to read it and everything?

Sr – Where did I learn that at – yeah I knew how to

Jr – out in Oregon where you said you learned

Sr – Oh yeah there - yeah it was on - when we was on maneuvers or something – no, anyway we was on some kind of trip where we had to learn to use it

Jr – Did everybody have a compass?

Sr – Yeah – one in each bunch had one – I forget how many was in each bunch but anyway they had one on each one

Jr – Which arm were you wounded in? The left?

Sr – Yeah, no the right – Lets see which is it – no this one here, the left one yeah. [Dad shows me the 2-3 inch scar on the underneath side of his arm between his wrist and elbow]

Jr – When you were in Germany or over there in 1944 did you guys vote for the President?

Sr – No, I didn’t – I don’t know if the rest did or not but I didn’t

Jr – They talked about that they had a way for you guys to vote for President cause that would have been in November. And

Sr – I don’t remember it – Far as I know I didn’t

Jr – You were born outside of Fortville in Hamilton County

Sr – it was about 6 miles from Fortville

Jr – What, 6miles west of Fortville then?

Sr –Well, lets see it would be west – Fortville’s going north and South don’t you – kind of an angle – so it probably would have been south and west of Fortville because we lived back on a county road – probably south a little bit and then north about 6 miles - it would be west 6 miles – south and west

Jr – So then where did you guys move after that?

Sr – Heavens I don’t

Jr – Cicero?

Sr – No not to Cicero – I suspect we moved to Grandmas after that

Jr – Where was that at?

Sr – That was over there by Albany, eh, Cicero – west of Cicero

Jr – Which grandma? – Which one

Sr – Mother’s mother

Jr – Foulke?

Sr – yeah Foulke

Jr – Why did you live there – in their house?

Sr – yeah

Jr – so you lived with them?

Sr – Well, see that's when they had the tenant house

Jr – Oh they had a separate house?

Sr – yeah she lived down in the tenant house which - when they lived there they had a tenant all the time so she moved down to the tenant house and we lived in the big house.

Jr – So your grandpa was already dead then?

Sr – yeah, see he was dead before we ever moved there

Jr – Ok so you guys moved in the big house and she moved down to the tenant house?

Sr – Yeah

Jr – OK - Do you have any idea what year that was?

Sr – See, I was probably about – lets see I was in the - I was a freshman about 15 – 14 or 15 –Heavens I don't remember what year it was –

Jr – Well that's alright –

Sr – Do you have the time Arthur committed suicide? We was living there then.

Jr – No

Sr – See after he committed suicide we moved away because they lost the farm.

Jr – Is that her son?

Sr – yeah – that was her son – Mother's brother – After that then we moved away because they took the farm back cause nobody could buy it – they was cheap enough but nobody had any money.

Jr – Oh, yeah it was during the depression

Sr - Yeah

Jr – So you went to Cicero School at that point – where did you start to school – Cicero? Was that your first school?

Sr – No, I started at Shirley

Jr – You started at Shirley? So how did you get to Shirley then?

Sr – School bus

Sr – I didn't live there then – we lived over by - This is when where we built the silo – this was over by

Jr – Wait a minute you said you were born in Fortville and then you think next you went to Grandmas when you were 14 or 15 you must have went to Shirley first

Sr – Well see - born in Fortville, well then he moved to Cadiz – that's when we lived in Cadiz where the house burned down – we lived there for a long time and then after we left there was when we went to grandmas probably

Jr – OK, so when you lived at Cadiz you went to school at Shirley but you didn't live

Sr – where was we living when – well when I went to school – when I first went to school I went to Shirley first grade of school

Jr – First grade at Shirley

Sr – Well of course after the house burned down then we moved down there by Shirley because Dad lost the farm –then we had to move

Jr – That is when you went to Shirley

Sr – yeah that is when we went down to Shirley

Jr – So where were you living was the house that burned?

Sr – That was at Cadiz

Jr – Ok so you went to Cadiz first

Sr – No, I wasn't old enough to go

Jr – That's what I mean you lived at Cadiz first

Sr – Myron he graduated from Cadiz – him and Ina went both

Jr – So you started the first grade at Shirley and then you moved to Cadiz

Sr – Yeah then I was in the 2nd grade and 3rd 4th maybe I don't know

Jr – At Cadiz – Ok Then from Cadiz

Sr – we moved a dozen times after that – Ina and Myron when we was down there when I went to school there they were going to school at Kennard

Jr – you mean when you were going to school at Shirley

Sr – Yeah because they only had six grades – so they had to go to Kennard because they had a high school – big school

Jr – OK so now did - at the farm at Shirley or at Cadiz did Grandpa own that farm? –

Sr - yeah the one in Cadiz he bought that one – yeah he owned that one

Jr – So then what did he do sell it then?

Sr – no they - he couldn't pay the payment so the mortgage company took it back – he just let it go back cause he had to sell the stock and everything every year to pay the payment on the house so he said to heck with it, forget it and let them have it back and went to renting then

Jr – Ok so then he rented for a long time?

Sr – yeah he rented the rest of the time until I went to service – when we moved to Albany eh Fairview then he bought that one – he rented up to then

Jr – Then he bought the one at Fairview?

Sr – Yeah – I think that was a hundred and forty acres hundred and something – no hundred and two acres I think it was. That was the first one he bought after he lost his first one. Then when I went to service he had to sell that because he couldn't farm it - then he went over there

Jr – south of the our big farm

Sr – Yeah – not the big farm

Jr – what was the people's names that bought that after he sold it –

Sr – Cole wasn't it?

Jr – Cole, yeah, yeah

Sr – he lived – he just traded that farm and let them have the interest, eh the mortgage and then got that one clear. Whatever that little farm and then after I came out of the service he sold that and bought the big farm.

Jr – Ok, so Milton and Esther both lived there in that house with them didn't they?

Sr – Let's see they built a new house across the road

Jr – No, no I mean the one Cole lived in

Sr –oh, yeah

Jr – Esther and Milton both lived there

Sr – Yeah they lived there while I was in the service – yeah

Jr – Then they bought the big farm – that was what 250 acres?

Sr – 189 I think it was – Lets see, no – no it was 140 – because I had a 110 that made 250 acres

Jr – Ok that was the 250 – so that's another question

Jr - What was the last school you went to? You went to Shirley then Cadiz and what was the name of the school

Sr – They had a school down at Indianapolis with the same name - school's not there anymore but I can't think of the name of it.

Jr – But that was over around Fairview somewhere

Sr – No I was out of school by the time we was at Fairview – Esther she went to Green School –

Jr – Green

Sr – Green Twp school and that was the one across the river there off of 28 she went to that one her and Milton
-

Jr – That was over around Fairview

Sr – Yeah – south of Fairview – They called it Green twp School – Green School or Green Twp school

Jr – So , where were you living after - I mean how many schools different schools did you go to after Cadiz?

Sr – Lets see – Cicero I think and only one after that maybe

Jr – You went to Cicero though?

Sr – Yeah

Jr – You did go to Cicero? - Cicero wasn't the last school you went to though

Sr – Lets see, no this other one but I can't think of what you call it

Jr – you started the first grade at Shirley then you moved to Cadiz and at some point

Sr – went to Cadiz 3 or 4 years and then we moved away and went to someplace – always someplace – moved around so darn much you couldn't hardly keep track of it

[Phone rings]

[I lost the first part of the interview after the phone conversation]

...your rent - when you rented usually started the first of March of course in the spring – everything's done with the spring work see so that's when everybody moved March 1 you got to be out or in and so that way he had until March until the end of school to go yet and he didn't want to change schools which I didn't blame him – so he just stayed with his friend and went to school there –when school was out he came back over [this refers to Myron Robbins ID0016, Walter's brother]

Jr – That makes sense – So on your taxes it shows that 1953 it shows that you had 110 + 140 acres so that was yours plus Grandpas – so you farmed both of them

Sr – Yeah I farmed both of them – 250 acres

Jr – So that is the 140 acres – see I was thinking there was more ground than that because – where was it

Sr – Well, there was 189 to start with and he gave Milton that across the road

Jr – That was 43

Sr – Whatever was over there – It think the farm was 189 to begin with or 183 or 189 to begin with he gave Milton that across the road

Jr – that was 43 and 61 acres of it was in Delaware County so the rest of it was in Blackford County then

Sr – it was in both counties – see my farm went to the county line

Jr – Right I knew that – I knew his went over but I didn't know

Sr – his went all the way to the road where mine didn't

Jr – So, when do you think he bought that bigger farm – 45, 46?

Sr – Lets see he bought that – let's see I got out about 46

Jr – 45

Sr – 45 – he bought – probably bought that in 46 I imagine cause after I got home he bought it cause he was living there at that other place then when I came home – when we was living north of Eaton I think he lived there

Jr – yeah he did

Sr – then when he bought that then I bought the one we had to help him – probably been in 46 or 47 along there someplace

Jr – so when do you think he bought that other one then – where Cole lived?

Sr – He right after I went to service which would have been 42 probably sold that in -bought that in the summer of 43 probably – because he had - he couldn't - Milton wouldn't help any so he couldn't do it so he traded it that farm for that one

Jr – because it was a smaller farm?

Sr – yeah so he could handle it but Milton wasn't very much good to work

Jr – He never was

Sr – Un uh – all he wanted to do was mess with that old welder – when he moved there that guy that traded farms he was a welder and that was where Milton got it from that guy they traded farms with and he all he wanted to do was mess with that old welder stuff like that you know - build stuff and this and that instead of farming

Jr – I remember - I can remember going to that farm and Milton had that stuff out there

Sr – had horses there all that stuff and so that's the reason he sold it because he couldn't farm it anymore worth anything so he just sold everything and moved over there - Like I say he traded the mortgage and all then got that one free all free cause he had a mortgage on that other one - that way he was out of debt still could do it himself

Jr – so did he farm that?

Sr – Yeah I think there was only 40 or 80 acres

Jr – It was only 40 some acres

Sr – Yeah, he farmed that - had some milk cows not very much he didn't have much but enough to do it **then** – you couldn't make a living on it now but you could then

Jr – He could make his own - have his own milk stuff like that

Sr – Yeah

[Attached is a copy of the 1955 closing statement being referred to]

Jr – So I got to ask you this – what – this is a closing statement – it is Jan of 1955 but I - its got to be for the 26 acre farm and what – here's you - and then here's the it says the seller so did you buy this on a contract and then sell it to these people? When we bought the big farm?

Sr – the 26 acres?

Jr – Yeah - See, it looks like you bought it on contract from Noel

Sr – No, I bought it with a mortgage and I sold it to the woman who worked at the telephone company – Pittenger or Pittenger

Jr – Bittegnies

Sr – well, anyway they bought the elevator from Jones

Jr – Oh OK – so what's Noel got in this then? That is what I was wondering because these people got some of the money and you got some of the money and these people bought it.

Sr – Well she – she got a mortgage right off the bat on it but I had one at Mutual Home on it –

Jr - I was just wondering what – cause it shows that he's a seller and you're a seller – I just didn't understand what was going on there

Sr – I couldn't tell you that because I sold it to him

Jr – you sold it to them [Bittegnies]

Sr – yeah because she had that \$12,000 in her purse to pay down to the mortgage – they took over the mortgage that was on it and she just paid me the difference.

Jr – I just couldn't figure out what they were

Sr – I don't know what that's got to do with it

Jr –would Noel be the

Sr – I don't even remember who was - who was the agent - Mc something it seems like

Jr – So was Noel - did they happen to be people you bought the big farm from?

Sr – they was Tattman – Tattman had the big farm

Jr – I was just wondering what

Sr – I bought it on contract and then I got a mortgage on it later – but I bought it on a contract the big farm but this one I bought it on a mortgage – the one north of Eaton – I gave \$6500 for it

Jr – You gave \$6500 for

Sr - and I had a mortgage on that

Jr – So what did you sell it for?

Sr – I think I got \$10,500 or that was what I wanted for it

Jr – See that's what the sales price says \$10500

Sr – That's what I wanted for it \$10,500

Jr – See, that's what it shows here and I don't know - I was wondering if you remembered what this person had to do with it

Sr – I don't how they got that because I just sold it to this guy when she had the money in her purse to pay the difference. I said my lands she had all those hundred dollar bills eh thousand dollar well thousand dollar bills - then she had 12 of them and I – she said you know I been carrying them around for two weeks waiting to finish the signing it – God I would've been scared to death – I went to the bank cashed mine I think I had two or three of them what I had for me beside the mortgage whatever it was so I hurried to the bank and put them in the bank right away. God I would have been scared to death to carrying that around for a week – she worked at the telephone company and they lived there at the curve at 67 where the curve was.

And then after that then they bought the elevator. From Jones

Jr – that's when he moved to Muncie

Sr – but I don't know what that \$7859 balance

Jr – to you

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Sr – yeah – so that’s probably what she had to pay the difference I imagine – lets see \$10,500 cash – \$2140 cash – the balance was that apparently on it -

Jr – but what was the name of the person you bought it from?

Sr – I don’t remember

Jr – I thought maybe

Sr – now that might have been – now that might have been Noel but I don’t remember the name I bought it from

Jr – That was what it was – you bought it from them and they bought it from you and they got all three of them on there.

Sr – Well, that might be – that could be there because I was thinking I only gave \$6500 for it so I figure surely all I gave for it – that wouldn’t have been right there – what’s this over here? \$4944

Jr – that must be the balance on your – was that the balance on your mortgage? – Yeah, yeah Mutual Home

Sr – See that’s what I had on it at Mutual Home loan

Jr – Then that’s the cash you ended up with from here - took to the bank

Sr – Yeah apparently

Jr – so you sold \$7895 - \$10,500 OK – that’s probably the person you bought it from

Sr – probably was

[Attached is a copy of the 1955 closing statement being referred to]

Jr – How long did we live there? What 2 or 3 years?

Sr – Yeah, it wasn’t very long

Jr – I didn’t think it – it couldn’t have been very long

Jr – So how long did we live on Centennial? Not very long there either

Sr – Maybe one year about all

Jr – It wasn’t very long - couldn’t have been very long I was trying to figure out the year and

Sr – Probably about a year

Jr – Couldn’t have been very long

Jr – Where were you when you got wounded? Remember what country you were in? You told me Holland one time but actually you were in Inden Germany

Sr – Yeah, I ended up in Germany, yeah

Jr – but that’s where you got wounded

Sr – yeah that’s where we ended up yeah – see we went to France and instead of going to Germany we went to Belgium - well we stayed in Belgium a while and then moved on into Holland and then we came back to Germany and then went on in Germany

Jr – You went through the Siegfried Line

Sr – Yeah all across Germany – But instead of going to Germany first we just went from France right into Belgium cause that’s where they was fighting then and of course when we came back then they were fighting - got out of France into Germany

Jr – Well, that was the questions I had I just wanted to mainly

Sr – I don’t know if I helped you any or not

Jr – I just wanted to make sure - I just wanted to get an idea of the places that you lived and moved and went to school cause I

Sr – Well that was hard times then not like these times

Jr – Yeah, so it was a whole lot different ballgame

Sr - Oh I’d think so

Jr – Whole different ballgame

Sr – Instead of big tractors like they got now it was all horses you had to pull the binder with the horses and you had a thrashing machine to thrash it – Everything was horses

Jr – everything the hard way

Sr – they had them big ole steam engines that run the thrasher with

Jr – A guys got - down on 38 yeah 38, no 36 there's a guy that's got a whole bunch of those sitting out in a field.

Sr – Well see the first ones – when they first started you had a water wagon to keep water

Jr – oh, for the steam?

Sr – But then they got away from that and I think they went to fuel oil or something – anyway they quit having the water wagon cause they still a steam engine but they didn't have the water wagon anymore. But the water wagon always followed the thrasher machine around.

Jr – Yeah, that would take a lot of water to run that thing

Sr – so they always brought that wagon – I imagine the wagon probably holds well probably – it was bigger than those there gas tanks you know we had for gasoline – this thing was bigger than that because it was on four wheels - or yeah just like a regular wagon only had the drum there on it to hold the water. It was closed – it might have held two or three hundred gallons I don't know anyway they always brought that along with them

Jr – Lot of work back then

Sr – Oh, I'd think so

Jr – Well it looks like the Sun might start shining

Sr – It looks like it

[End of interview