

LONG GROVE HISTORICAL SOCIETY. ORAL HISTORY. ROBERT C. HILL
 interviewed by Barbara Turner, April 13, 1989
 (E is Bob Hill and T is Barbara Turner)
 90 min tape. Counter to 812

Introduction on tape. This tape is concerned with the Dairy which was started by Bob Hill's family here in Long Grove and the Smoke House which is located on the corner of Gilmer and Route 83 on the south west corner. Also we will be asking Bob some questions about the whole farming operation which his family was involved in here in what is now Long Grove but was then known as Prairie View (there being no Post Office for Long Grove at that time). I talked to Bob briefly over the phone and I am going to start out with some of the information he gave me before the interview with him. I was asked by the Village Trustees to get some information on the buildings which are at this corner which includes the original Dairy operation for Ferry-Hill Farms.

Bob tells me that the Dairy brick building was built in 1935--the store was in front, the dairy was in back, upstairs was an apartment for the Store Manager, in the basement was a room where they also had some of the meats and brine tanks before they went out to the separate smoke house which is south of the main building. Behind were two buildings: one was the garage for the trucks with which they delivered their milk (Bob tells me there were four trucks); the other building was a repair shop and it had a full time mechanic because in this particular shop were repaired all the farm machinery, trucks and whatever was needed to run the nine farms which were owned by the family at that point. These buildings all exist at the site now. There is no one living upstairs in the building at this time and there is also no operations going on in the back buildings. They are used for storage. (Following is the interview with Mr. Hill.)

B These farms were set up originally so that each member of the family had one and we worked around in such a way that if they were sold, at that time they could equal out the various values of the various farms because of their size. My brothers and sisters were absentee owners and they wanted to have control of their own destiny and I can understand that--the farms weren't actually producing any profit for them and they visualize taking advantage of the farm and investing some other way, and I can't blame them for that. But for myself, this was my home and I wanted to stay here so I kept my farm, and I have kept it all these years and I intend to keep on holding on to it. Anyway that was how this all came about - they were set up in such a way that if the majority of the brothers and sisters wanted to sell, they could do it. As a matter of fact, I think they all agreed that they wanted to see, five out of six.

T Were there just five or six farms?

B No there were actually nine, one in my Mother's name and one in my Dad's name....As a result of this, we got what we thought was a fair price for it at the time. I'm going back now to 1966--that's when we sold all of these farms except the one I am living at.

T Do you mind telling what you got an acre for it?

B. Two thousand dollars

- B Two thousand dollars....We paid \$100 (one hundred) an acre for it. ...we paid a little more than 100 for some of it but most of it we paid one hundred dollars an acre for in 1933.
- T Were they all bought in 1933.
- B No, the first three were bought in 1933 (Oakwood Farm, one down near Prairie View where or next to where the Vernon Township Bldg is, on Port Clinton Road east of the Pegelow Farm, and the farm across from Pegelow--that was 160 acres and from there we went west to Oakwood Farm, the big farm, 520 acres.
- T They have destroyed the farmhouse on the north side of Port Clinton that lovely little Victorian house!
- B They will be burning the other one I think this or next week, Wendell told me. It's pretty crummy.
- T That breaks my heart. Reminds me of the one that was on Route 22. Was that on one of your farms too? They offered it to the His Soc. but just one of the things involved--just moving it would be
- B \$30,000, without going into all the wires and everything and we didn't have a place for it then. I think we called you to see if you had any interest in it. Do you remember when that one was acquired and what its name was? On 22?
- B That was called the Wehrenberg Farm. that was the name of former owners, not necessarily the previous owners but somewhere along the line, his name got attached to the farm. The farm on the corner (NW 22 and 83) was the Tinns Farm North and south west corners (40 acres each). And the man who owned that somewhere along the line, hung himself, the farmer, and the rope was still hanging in the hayloft when we bought it. Middle or late 30s... Of course that's the reason for all the development around here. If I'd been smarter, probably I could have produced better income off this lane and we'd still own a lot of it. But I don't blame my brothers and sisters--they were absentee owners spread all over the country
- T You also owned the farm on the southeast corner where the Knauths farmed for you. Do you remember the acreage on that one, Bob?
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- B 160 and the one next to Fiore's was 140 acres (Wehrenberg) and the Holtje Farm was 213 acres--that's the one on the northeast corner of 22 and 83. Holtje had a garage in Half Day - that's the Promontory development.
- T Then you bought one over on route 60 where Agate Martin lived?
- B In those days it was 59A. That was called the Cold Spring Farm We bought that one. We didn't have it very long. That was a big farm--close to 300 acres, as I recall, some on both sides of the Soo line tracks. I remember it came up to that Cemetery. The Cemetery wanted to buy some of the farm to increase the size but we weren't able to do it at the time, I don't remember what the reason was. We didn't have that one too many years.

- T When did you acquire the one that Lichters were on? the one across the road (from his home). the northwest corner of Gilmer & 83.
- B I would say about 1935, that's as close as I can come.
- T I know from being on the Historical Society Board about the Gridley Cemetery. Mr. Ray (descendent) wanted to give it to the Society and then when they went to check on the Title, it turned out that you owned the Cemetery - so It must have been part of that farm. Was it originally part of the Gridley (Oakwood) Farm).
- B I can't be sure of that. I connected it more with the Oakwood Farm than I did with the one across the road....I think it must have been part of the farm, because when the farms were sold and they were all rehashed and I wound up with this farm, that became part of my farm and that's how I became involved in that.....I thought all they wanted was the part enclosed in the cyclone fence. But it turns out they want a pretty good size piece of that woods.
- T I think they probably wanted enough so they have access and a place to park next to it and take care of it.
- B I don't know what the story on that is but Doris took an interest in that because her son Chris lives there and he loves that woods and we didn't want to give the woods. We took care of that through Mrs. Head. Nelda Head through the Historical Society.
- T That woods is in Wayne Schennum's Inventory of Long Grove's Natural Areas and it is called the Gilmer Savanna and I brought you a copy of his report. It's kind of technical. It lists in latin names the plants that were on it and I thought it would be interesting for you to have and what it does is give it a natural areas rating and it doesn't have much of what is called diversity and consequently it doesn't have a important rating, but it is a site that we are told is managed correctly, the species seeds are in the soil bank and they will come back. And what it needs, Bob, is prescribed burning and I don't know whether you know it or not, but we are doing research on prescribed burning in my nature preserve at the Woodland (third year of burn)and we have about 12 new species that have come back so if you are interested in having it managed, or Chris is, John Clemetsen and I ~~was~~ ~~part~~ of the burning crew - so we can get together with you and explain it all....And this is the same one on your woods here. Look it over - and If you want more explanation, call me and I'll tell you. Since I was coming over, I wanted to bring it to you...To get back to the farm operation.
- B What we are doing now, I can't see that it had big bearing on what we are doing on the road.
- T I'm getting in to the history part of it because I am interested in it and not only am I interested in it but I think Chuck Rome is interested in the history also as they are the firm developing much of the land. He is with St Paul Financial/The Custom Source developing the corners.
- B Some of this is in the interview at Vernon Library.

- T Yes that's great and I asked them if we (LGHS) could have a copy of it and I think they wanted me to get your permission because you had given the interview to them.
- B I only got one copy. I wanted one for every member of the family and I only got one....now the way it has worked out is all right - what I did was send it to members of the family and that it went to Land-O Lakes (family summer home) and I think everyone read it up there last summer.
- T I'd be glad to see that you get more copies...
- B No not necessary as I am going to get the one back.
- T What's I'll do with this is type off copies and get the information of what we've said here to you...but I am going back to more history and I'd like to get into the whole farm and dairy operation now but I'd like to go back and find out why your stepfather got interested and bought out here. Was it to set you up in business?
- B No it was more of an investment. Me could see...he had terrific foresight, he could see...this was all farm land, pure and simple, ((THIS IS Frank Ferry Senior) and we lived in Winnetka at the time and the real estate taxes in Winnetka were getting all out of bounds so he bought some land out here with the thought that he would build a home out here to get relief from all these high taxes (Their Winnetka home was on the Lakeshore). Well of course what happened was after this whole thing was developed and Lake County then their taxes started to catch up with Winnetka. He bought the farms strickly as an investment. He knew that eventually this was going to be future home sites with a lot of people.... They built their home out here just before the war - in early 40s. I built mine in 1938.
- T How did he find this area? As you know, my family...my father came out to this area (his name is Guy Reed) with a group that were looking for a place to have a country club, they were intrigued with the land, bought acreage that was Kildeer Country Club, later Skycrest and now Twin Orchards. He went up the road and bought five acres in a woodland.
- B Did you know that your Dad and my Dad were approached with the idea of buying Kildeer during the war? I think they could have bought it for \$50,000. Dad already had these farms and of course he didn't want any more - and I don't know what your Dad's ideas were. But I don't think too many people know about that. ...We made hay off the fairways during the war, some of ~~the~~ my farmers.
- T To get back to the farms, I know that a lot of the land in this area was part of a lot of holdings that the Insull interests had bought up in the 20s and then he went broke and the land was sold and the land that Dad bought had been owned by them in the 20s.
- B. I didn't know their interests went this far south. The Cuneo Estate in Libertyville was Insull's.
- T. Werre these all when he purchased them dairy farms?
- B Well, they were all just plain dirt farms. I think there had been some dairy operations on some of them. There were barns but no cattle on them. The reason we got into the dairy business was because at the time we lived in Winnetka and the only milk we could get was from

or Borden
and that was pretty thick milk. almost blue. and Dad thought there's got to be a better bottle of milk and there's got to be people willing to pay more for it so that's why we went into Jersey cows. We bought all kinds of Jersey cows down in Crawford County. Dad and I used to go down there with our manager and buy cows - a truckload at a time and that how we came about to Ferry-Hill Farms.

T Would there be different numbers of cows on different farms?

B Yes because they were different in size. The largest was just over 200. We put in automatic ~~milk~~ milking machines on all the dairy farms.

T And if they had other animals, that was up to them?

B We operated on shares and we had hogs, in ^{rare} ~~some~~ cases a sheep or two.

T It would be mostly tractor farming then?

B Yes and we had horses too. On the Oakwood farm we had about six percherons, a farm animal, draft horses.

T Let me go back to some of the buildings that were on some of the farms. I'm familiar with the Gridley home that was called Endwood and also Oakwood that was right across from the Smoke House. Was that house still there when you first came out?

B Oh yes. The dairy manager and his family lived in it.

T And that had quite a complex of buildings. I know that they had a blacksmith shop there....

B And a Bunkhouse for the jockeys. You see, they had race horses there on the farm many years ago. There were two big barns on the property, the cow barn for the dairy and the horse barn - twin barns side by side - maybe 30 yards apart. The horse had all stalls, some individual stalls and some regular tie stalls - that's where we raised the Percherons. We used them mostly for haying and things like that. For heavy work, we used tractors.

T The farm back in the 1880s and 90s was known for a round barn and when I last walked the property before it was developed, I saw its location where the round barn was. There was a gorgeous wall of native field stone, circular that was the foundation on the high side and it was all made of field stone and then the cement area for the cows you could see on the ground. I don't know what has happened to it.

B We never used it for the animals. but it was still there.... Like so many buildings over there, it just fell apart from disuse.

T I know the bricks from the blacksmith shop were salvaged when it was starting to be developed (by Tony Berg) and they are used for the foundation and to hold up the porches on our farmhouse restoration. Most of those bricks came from the Gridley Blacksmith Shop... and down Oakwood Road was another Gridley home which is now

the Abbott research farm. Did you own that farm also?

B No.

T When did Abbott come out?

B There were a couple of brokers whose fathers owned that farm when we bought our farms. We did get the farmer off that farm for, but I can't think of their names although I can visualize them. Then they sold to Abbott.

T I think the Historical Society has recently had an inquiry from the Abbott people wanting to know more about the property & buildings. If you think of anything more, let me know - that's a separate research project. Do you have any pictures of your farms?

B No someone else asked me about that recently - the lady from Vernon library. who came to take pictures. ...Obstentiously you wanted to talk about this thing involving the Smoke House. I'm very interested in this for the reason....

T You'd like to see it preserved?

B No, but I'm so afraid based on former experience that we're not going to have a hell of a lot (excuse me) to say about it...so I've dealt with IDOT and I've gotten along fine with them because I've had to sell them pieces twice now. Anyway going back to maybe the 60s sometime when Commonwealth Edison approached me, Dad was gone then, about the high lines...and they couldn't have come closer to the middle of our farms if they'd gotten down on their hands and knees with a caliper. They wanted right smack through the middle - 8000 feet 210 feet wide right through the middle of about four farms. I said I'm sorry, I don't want that and don't think we can do this. I understand that they have to go in a straight line. They didn't say in so many words--they were very nice about it, very tackful. They said well I'm sorry, you haven't anything to say about it. Those may not have been the very words they used but it was the gist of it. I said if they would put it underground I'll help you dig the ditch. That went over like a cement block too. So they just..this was the way it was going to be. They have eminent domain and they can do it.

T Did they pay well for it?

B It developed into the biggest poker game you ever saw, lasted almost a year. I got the best condemnation proceeding attorney in Chicago to handle it for me, just back and forth, offers and bids and we finally arrived at a price. At that time I thought it was fair. And I think the same thing will happen on this highway

T This is why Long Grove is negotiating with them, and of course, as you know we are fighting 53 - when it was first projected as a 4, 5, 6 lane highway it was coming at the eastern edge of Long Grove, between L G and Buffalo Grove sort of up A M Rd which was at the edge and Long Grove agreed to it then. All of a sudden now they want to come right through, not the center of Long Grove, but through some very valuable wetlands and everyone knows how valuable the wetlands are for water *treasure and other things*. We are certainly fighting it and suggesting alternatives -- we don't know -- so what can we do with this corner,

we don't know but this is what we are asking for. At that corner (Gilmer & 83) hopefully it would stretch further east. It might be taking more of your eastern portion corner there in order to stay out of your two western ones

B I would approve of that.

T The thing is it was to avoid the Cemetery so you know it's going to make it stay that wazy ((east)) so it might just as well start to even out the cirve.

B Then it would stay out of the Snoke house. But you'd have to deal with the new owners of that piece. At one time we owned it.

T At this point, there aren't any homes over there, aren't any buildings.

B There are some a little farther south, back off of 83.

T That's were the road starts to come around west so it seems to me that..... to me it makes reasonable sense to do it taht way.

B I haven't seen a drawing of it. Have they comes out with a drawing of their play yet?

T They did have a drawing at the hearing last fall at Kildeer School so if you are interested, ask Cal if there is a drawing on file. Otherways Burt Mall is going to the meetings. He is the Trustee who is in charge of transportation. As far as the buildings, I did put a little bit on the beginning of this tape about what you told me yesterday about the dairy building built in 1935, apartment upstairs for store manager, two buildings behind it.

B Does this make any difference to IDOY? That's what I'm trying to get at.

T No. but it does if someone says to us you can declare that a historic building. It's over 50 years old now, okay?

B So it is. and this house is 50 years old, last year.

T If we can make a package of the history of this building and can say one of Long Grove's early business buildings and we want it preserved. It was a unique dairy operation with its own Smoke House. Declare it an historic site for Long Grove, it might make a difference. And that is what the lawyer is investigating-- What power do we have to make it an historic site. The Crossroads area was declared an Historic District for Long Grove some years ago. They have an architectural board which reviews changes to building there. This would be similar thing but it would be an historic business district at this little corner. And we'd say, stay away from it - we want to preserve it. And this is why we want as much information as we can have about the history of the building and the operation there. It can justify our saying - okay this is an historic site.....so let's go back to the dairy - its name and when it was formed. Was it formed right away after the farms were purchased?

- B Yes, I told you about the original farms were bought about 1933. At that time, Henry Kreuger owned a dairy over in Willowbrook. CALLED RAVINE Farm there and had a herd of Guernsey cows and the building that Leighton Wilkie bought. He operated there for I don't know how many years before we came out. He had one truck and he delivered raw milk to Highland Park. Back in those days you could do this.
- T. It wasn't pasturized?
- B. He didn't have any pasturizing equipment. He delivered raw milk to Highland Park in one truck. to individual people. I don't know how Dad found out about him and at any rate, we got together and we set up a larger operation with pasturizer to the whole North Shore - not the whole North Shore, from Kenilworth north to Highland Park. At any rate, we bought him out and he became our manager. spelled Krueger. He lived on the farm - in the Oakwood house that we talked about--the three story mansion. And that was the beginning of Ferry- Hill Farm - we changed it from Ravine Farm at that time. and that's how it came about. It doesn't seem important to any body but
- T. but to us.
- B. I think I told you over the phone, we went to this small city in Michigan - I can't come up with the name of it! and bought out a small dairy that was running out of business. We bought all his equipment, the pasturizer, the cooler, the bottler - the whole bit. Brought it back and fixed it up and that's how we got started. This was in 1936. We built the building in 35-36 so this had to come about in 1936 when the building was completed....We had three trucks going out, we had a fourth one for a spare in case needed.
- T. Did the farmers drive the trucks?
- B No we had drivers for each truck. Doris' Dad drove one for awhile. We had a list as long as your arm of drivers over the years, at one time or another.
- T. Did you deliver seven days a week?
- B. I'm trying to think. I think seven days. But to start with, we had frequent delivery. Then when the war came, we cut it down to every other day delivery to conserve on tires and things like that. I forget a lot of it because I haven't thought of it in a long time.
- T. Did you deliver just milk and cream?
- B. No We made our own cottage cheese, buttermilk and things like that. Butter. we didn't make our own butter. We tried but it didn't work out. and whipping cream ...and coffee cream, milk in gallon jugs, glass jugs.
- T. How long did the dairy operation at the corner go on?
- B. Until 1948. My Dad died in January of 1948. At that time, I had the unions looking over one shoulder and the Federal Milk Market Administration looking over the other - telling me how to run my business. Between the two of us, enough of that monkey business.

and we weren't making any money. So I sold the dairy operation, the trucks etc, to Glenora of Wheeling. For your understanding, I had to sign an agreement at that time for at least seven years never to go back into the dairy business and when they gave me that, I said you can make it seven hundred years!... I'd had it by that time. I'd wake up at night worrying about a fly getting into the cooler or something. These things happen sometimes. It worried the heck out of me.

T When did you start adding the smoke house?

B Well, it was a gradual process, Bark, I can't give you exact dates on that, it was a gradual thing.

T Did you deliver ham and bacon too?

B No, we didn't deliver that, we just sold it through the store.

T. Did you have the store from the beginning?

B Yes, the store was there for the purpose of selling dairy products. One thing led to another. Then we started in the meat business. and the smoke house. and that was all done through the store. Every Monday morning, my older brother, Bud, and I would help the butcher - that was part of our job. Ugh, I wouldn't want to go back to that. That's how that all started--hickory smoked ham and bacon. The stuff really sold too. The lady who runs it now still smokes ham and bacon and sells them.

T. The store is noted for all that.

B. I don't know a lot about the operation as I don't believe in fraternizing with your tenants.

T.Actually at the time we are talking about, this whole area was not known as Long Grove but as Prairie View. All our mail came through Prairie View.

B. You know what Lee Hickox used to say about that - "Where do you come from?" "Prairie View, Illinois" "That's so corny, it's cute!" I miss old Prairie View.

T. It Makes me made, they have moved the post office and they don't even say Lincolnshire-Prairie View, but just Lincolnshire!

B Half Day is going to disappear too - being gobbled up by Lincolnshire.

T. Well, as long I'm around and an historian, I talk about all these places because they are a lot more important that what is happening now.

B. When I went down east, I used to have to Connecticut where we had some mills, and people would ask where I came from and I'd say "Prairie View, Illinois" "Well, where's that?" I'd say "You can't miss it--it's right next to Apkakisic!" They looked at me as if I didn't have all four tires on the pavement.

T One of the things we are talking about is the whole transportation system of IDOT. They call it the 2010 AD plan for the Chicago Metropolitan area. We are urging them to turn the Soo line into a commuter line.

B I would love to see this.

T and then there would be a station at Aptakisic. I think it would be just great. The Vernon Library taped, and I taped, Isabel Blocks. You must borrow that tape sometime - she used to be in her father's store there in Aptakisic and she used to be the one who was sent out to flag the train down when they had someone or something for it. They used to call her little Fleetfoot or something like that because she ran so fast.

B Do you remember the maroon colored cars on the train?

B Yes - we've lived here in a very fun time really.

B Well, when we first moved out here, in 33 and bought the farms, the trains would go through and we could hear the whistle. That was before diesel, steam trains. This is something that people today don't know anything about. Of course, there are a lot of youngsters these days who have never seen a steam train.

T One thing I remember as I look back on this, do you remember what the total acreage of the farms might have been?

B IAs I think back, I come up with a figure of 1550. That's pretty darn close.

T I remember the Lichters very well because they had a wonderful vegetable stand on the southeast corner.

B People still ask me about that. Those folks are both gone, you know.

T Does Chris (their grandson who now lives on Bob's farm) raise any vegetables?

B Just for their own use - a small patch.

T A lot of people remember that corner because there was a restaurant there. Did your family build that restaurant. Farm Tearoom.

B No, when we bought that farm, there was a filling station on that corner and the building was covered with tar paper when we bought it because it hadn't been completed. It had a beautiful bar, oak bar inside which I wondered about - I still don't know what happened to it. We were the ones who put the bricks on it - we finished it and of course we put the porch on it when we made a tearoom out of it. Do you remember, Mrs. Anderson had a tea room at the corner of 83 and 45 where Journey's End is now located. That was a farm and she had a little building not much bigger than our living room and that was her tearoom. She did such a good..we had lunch there so often that Dad talked her into coming down here and running ours..It was a bigger operation.

T. Do you remember what year that was?

B No, maybe Doris would. I'm not sure. That goes back a long ways.

T Then the Tearoom closed and I was it antiques first or Player pianos?

B Player piano rolls. Two men had that....It was a filling station first. I lose t rack of the continuity there.

T I think it was the Tearoom next because I remember the porch being on it. most of the time that I ever was aware of it.

B We had a garage under the porch. When we built the porch, we built a garage under it for the milk trucks. It was a place to store them, but that didn't pan out.

T and now, that whole corner being rather low and unbuildable, luckily, it has come to the village as open space, and the Park District and it is a prairie restoration so it'll have walking paths through it at some point and we have been burning that. as a matter, we expect to burn it tomorrow so if you seen smoke over there, we hope its controlled. It's what is called prescribed burning. I took a workshop on prescribed burning and they gave us these little cards which calls us "pyro-ecologists" not pyro-maniacs. WE ARE burning for ecological reasons. I've really gotten involved with a lot of that because I work for and with The Nature Conservancy. I think I probably put you on their mailing list..

B I've on everybody's mailing list. You know I kept track for one solid year - July 15 to July 15. IN the mail, I kept every appeal for contributions I received, had a stack that high, Linda (his daughter) and Bill stopped and took the time to sort them out for me and catagorized them and there were 517, ~~to~~ 559 for one year. 317 were politically involved and from then on missionaries - I couldn't believe it - 559 and this in addition to the ones that I have a ledger for the standards that I give to every year. The Cancer Society, Epilipsy etc.

T Once on their lists--I'm on a lot of environmental, conservation, ecological lists.... and I believe in a lot of them....

B You wouldn't have time for anything else if you just wrote out checks for them. As a matter of fact it's kind of soured me on a lot of them.

T I pretty much give to things in the community. I was talking to Norma Sayles at the Tavern because she was having trouble selling Golf raffle tickets to the one she and the Lions ((end one side of tape) Alice something, can't think of her last name, a friend of a friend of mine - she used to live in Long Grove till her husband died. She and this friend of mine wanted me to buy one. But for several reasons I didn't. For one thing, I'm not a joiner anymore and second is because of my enthysema and double vision, I don't drive at night any more.

T I wouldn't know you had enthysema Bob. You don't smoke any more.

B ~~Yes~~ oh no. I gave it up 14 years ago. but I didn't stop soon enough.

T Have you any idea how much the buildings cost?

B That dairy building only cost me about \$5500. Can you believe that! We used all used brick.

T I wonder if you used the bricks from the old buildings that we did.

B No we bought them from a brick dealer. I don't remember where or when.

T Was that just the dairy building?

B Yes, just the dairy building. The other buildings I don't remember.

T Bob, you were talking about the buildings that were here. I knew that there was a race track here somewhere - a practice track. Where was that?

B Where I'm pointing (out his west living room window, west of the house) is the west end of the ~~skidway~~ oval, just behind the trees - there is a drop off - swale and that's the west end of the oval, goes around through the woods and back of the barn.

T Was it a standard ring?

B Well, I don't know. I can't tell you what kind of horses. But there were jockeys living on the farm,

T Would this be at the time your family acquired it?

B Yes, all the buildings were there then, but the oval had long since disappeared - as a matter of fact, you could hardly tell it.. They were no race horses here when we bought it. ...Directly north of the cow barn was a small building called the Bunkhouse where the jockeys lived.

T I remember it. As a matter of fact, I have a picture of it that came from Mr. Michaels at the Libertyville/Mundelein Historical Society. I believe that the Gridley family when they left here (it might have been the George Gridley family which lived on the Abbott farm) moved to Libertyville. I know that a lot of the furniture that came out of those houses, furnishes the historical house in Libertyville where the Library is (Cook Memorial Library). When I communicated with Mr. Michaels I asked him for any information about the Gridleys and when he ran into items, he would send me copies or loan them to us. and he is the gentlemen who is responsible for getting all the records of Archer School given to us - about 5 or 6 books about the Archer Schoolhouse, going back to the 1800s which is great for us.

B I wish I had pictures of the farms, all the buildings and what we did to them, but we don't have any and it's just all gone.

T Now tell me about Gridley School because I know that was on the property when you came and it was one of the four used little country schools in the area.

B Let's see, when we got the farms, we got the school along with it. I was - Loretta Kelker, Henry Krueger (my manager) and I were the school board. For a certain period, I can't remember how long it was. Henry was the President, Loretta was something else and I was the Clerk. I was responsible for putting up notices of election. We had a teacher named Uranek, her pay was \$75 a month. She was school teacher, nurse, janitor, everything. The foundation was so bad in the school that the kids in the winter wore their overshoes to keep their feet warm. She had to get, Mrs. Uranek, at 5 o'clock in the morning to put the corn cobs in the stove to get the room warm. One room. Chemical toilets that smelled to high heaven - at the back end of the classroom, two doors, boys and girls (east end of the building). As a school board member, I had to check the water supply and it was a dug well, a shallow well, I picked up the board, loose, and there was a frog swimming around in there and this was what the kids were drinking. So of course I sent a sample to Springfield and it came back condemned. The rest of that year, the farmers took turns bringing drinking water in their milk cans. That summer, we build a new well.

T That would have been what year?

B After 1938 when we build our home and were living here, after that year.

T and that school was used until 1946 or 7?

B Somewhere along in there. Just before. Kildeer School. First we had the consolidation - consolidation of four schools. It was voted down by the farmers the first time because their attitude was "By God, these schools were good enough for us, they are good enough for our kids". It took a piece of work to undo that trying to get the consolidation of the four schools - Woodlawn, Schultz, Gridley and Long Grove. Linda went to Woodlawn - the brick building over on 53.

T Why did she go there?

B ~~Because Gridley wasn't~~ Kildeer wasn't built. She never went to Gridley.

T Just for the record, After the consolidation was voted, in order to have what

they thought was a better educational program, they had certain grades in certain schools. So the primary grades were over at Woodlawn, the upper grades at Schultz on 22 and probably the middle grades were here or maybe at Long Grove. I don't remember all the details but I think Gridley was closed because---probably because of the sanitary facilities..... and the well.

B ...the Kildeer gym. It was my parents that gave the money to have the gym attached to the four classrooms.

T Do you remember what it cost?

B I'm sure Dad discussed it but I don't remember.....remember the problem they had with that. When they put the floor down, they drove the nails through the pipes and warped the whole damn floor and they had to replace it. That's probably what Tripp Parson raised the money for.

T When Gridley was no longer used as a school and I think it might have been in 1945 or 46

- B The boy scouts used it for awhile. and then it went down hill fast from then on.
- T I have a picture of it that says Prairie View Legion?
- B Oh yes, the American Legion used it for awhile. Then it was auctioned off. I can't remember the story about that. Pete Lichter bought it for some reason or other. I can't remember why in the world he wanted it. I was bidding against him..I can't remember why he wanted it. These details escape me. I don't know what he had in mind.
- T and then it burned. probably arson.
- B It wouldn't surprise. It was pretty much of a wreck. It never was a good building really. The foundation was horrible - mostly it was old - well over a hundred years.
- T It was the original school put up here, probably in 1938 because the Gridleys came in 1836. ^{1838?}
- B And the man who taught there lived on the farm where Pete was and think he rode horseback over there. Wilcox was his name - I can't remember his first name. He taught there way long before we bought the farm....but you know, Barb, back in those days these kids who went to the one room schools did better in high school than most kids. Because from first grade on, they hearing things they were going to be getting the next year and the next year.
- T I remember Gridley and some of the things we were told about it because some of the Gridley children of course went there and some of the thing they talked about were skating on that pond that was to the west of it. I don't know whether it is still water or just a marsh now. The farm that was south on the curve was one of the Ferry-Hill farms.
- B That was called the Moltje Farm.
- T What do you remember about Endwood, Oakwood. the main house, was it elegant?
- B I think in in main day, it was elegant. There's no question about that. It had nice stairways and bannisters and so forth and a little cupola on top. During the war, this is another story, World War II some officers from Fort Sheridan came out to see me about using our farms for manoeuvres, camping out and all that sort of thing. That was their hearquarters, the big house. They had lookouts up in the cupola.
- T So it was big enough for someone to go into?
- B Oh yes, they had wires spread all over the place for communication. They had a guard at the entrance to our house, on the driveway, with a gun and he stood there all day every day and everytime we went in and out, he wanted to know what was going on. They had four or six big trucks coming in and out of the woods and all over the place. This

was in the winter time. And it was very exciting out here. Some of them when they were off duty were shotting craps on the floor in the store. And when I started taking their money, I said this is not good - you guys don't get very much pay - so I got out of that.

Then one day a Lieutenant wanted to know where our boundary was to the west so he had a jeep and there was that much snow on the ground (several feet) and he said come on, get in and we'll take a look. Well, I'd never seen a jeep before - world war II jeep.

T Just like the one Harold bought which is now up at the lake.

B Well, I'll be darned. Charlie (Parson and Clem(Anton Clemetsen) each bought one a surplus jeep too. Well we went through the field out in back and he showed me where they were going to put the latrines and all that stuff and when we got back, I said I've got to have one of those! That will go anyplace with four wheel drive. That was a whole new experience. I got one of the first civilian ones that came out after the war. This was quite exciting - all this activity out here - hundreds of soldiers all over the place. They didn't bother anybody, they had their big trucks, they camped out, they had tents and all that sort of thing. From Fort Sheridan.

T Should put you on the list for that - they are trying to have Fort Sheridan be made a national park now that it is no longer to be used.

B Don't put me on any more lists !

T Well, that was fun. Any other stor~~ies~~ about living out here? You were one of the early families that moved out here.

B When we first came out, we could invite everyone we knew for a sit-down dinner. Would you like to try that today?

T Remember we used to meet in the cabin. Fund Raisers for the school. We used to have box suppers. Someone would auction off the box suppers and you were involved because you were on the school board at the same time. I was - the Kildeer Board.

B My claim fo fame on the Board was I designed and implym~~en~~ting the septic system at the school.

T Well, that's important.

B It seemed important. I don't know what they are doing now - whether they are hooked up to the city sewer...

T You were involved with that and I set up their library for them l...from one end to another....

B You might say

T Tell me about your job as Manager of the Farms. What was involved with that?

B This was so involved, I can't remember all the details. You can imagine starting from stratch and building up customers. We took

over Henry Krueger's route. We sold his truck and we put in these International trucks. That was the nucleus of the whole thing - his route in Highland Park and then we built on that until we had three routes. I'm not sure if we went beyond Kenilworth or not. We did serve Winnetka, Glencoe, Highland Park. Didn't get to Lake Forest. And we had some out here in the country of course., friends out here - Hickox, Fargoes.

T Were you mostly in the dairy operation and the farms ran themselves?

B I was involved. At one time, I had a little black sachel like a ~~sakeman~~ Doctor's Sachel with all kids of stuff in it - for clipping cow's udders for one things (the health department wouldn't let them have long hair so I had electric clippers that I carried around, and I had a hypodermic set for treating newborn calves for preventing scours. The serum had to be kept in an ice box. These are all things that are coming back to me. I was involved in a lot of ways. I told you about butchering the hogs and stuff. Our main job in butchering the hogs was dehairing them and if you think that wasn't the stuff. The water temperature, we used an old bath tub out of our house in Winnetka and built a brick wall around it for a fire place and it nice because it had a slope at the back - easy to haul the hog out of there.

T The old ones with the claw feet.

B Yes that's what it was, built a fire under there, had to be just the right temperature. If it was too hot, it would scald them and you wouldn't be able to get the hair off and cold you couldn't get it off either. It was a miserable job. We had tools that looked like a disk with a wooden handle on them and used that for scrapping

T Did you have chickens?

B Oh yes, on Oakwood Farm again, we had a big chicken house - a two story job 75 or 80 feet long - had about 7000 chickens at one time. We had eggs on the route and eggs in the store and we sold fryers. We raised young fryers and sold them out of the store. Three for a dollar at one time.

T Remember what the price of milk was?

B Thirty cents a gallon. Jersey. About that much cream (2") on top of the jug. Today you can't get anything in the way of milk for thirty cents.

T Not even a glass!

* * * * *

To anyone listening to the tape, this transcription contains almost all of what is on the tape, a few variations, etc, but facts are accurately recorded. Bob's cat, Spooky can also be heard but was not transcribed.