

Farm life in LaMoille, Illinois
an Oral History

Lester Beatty, Interviewee
Of LaMoille, Illinois

Interview Date: July 3, 1975

Oral History Tape Number: TC OH 62 BEA

Tape Number: 62

Number of Transcribed Pages: 23

Subject(s) Covered: La Moille

Starved Rock Library System History Collection

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Narrator's Name: LESTER BEATTY
Tape Number: 1
Date of Interview: JULY 3, 1975
Place of Interview: LA MOILLE, ILLINOIS
Interviewer's Name: DONALD NORRIS
For: STARVED ROCK LIBRARY SYSTEM ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Q: Donald R. Norris from rural LaMoille and I'm here today to talk with Lester Beatty, also of rural LaMoille. I'm here through the courtesy of the Starved Rock Library System, and this is a record about Lester's life here in the old family farm and we hope to go back to his father, grandfather, and so in a minute, we'll start.

PAUSE

Q: Lester, do you want to start in and tell -- tell us about yourself -- identify yourself and just go right ahead and say anything that you think would be of interest to, well, posterity.

A: Well, I'm Lester Beatty. . .

Q: Talk louder.

A: . . .of rural LaMoille, and I have lived in this house all my life. In fact I was born in this adjoining room right here, and I am the third generation of the Beatty family to have lived in this house.

Q: Do you want to say who your father was and your grandfather?

A: My grandfather was John Francis Beatty, and he migrated to Canada from Ireland in 1842 and he stayed in Canada a short time, then migrated across Lake Ontario to Syracuse, New York, where he started working for a nursery.

Q: I see. Well, now he was -- he was a farmer in Ireland or did he -- in Canada -- he always wanted to be a farmer?

A: He came to Canada when he was ten years old and a little story's involved with that. He was always a little bit embarrassed by having to tell people he was born in Ireland. He thought that the Irish people

were frowned upon.

Q: Is that right?

A: When people asked him where he was born, he always said, "I was raised in Canada." (laughs)

Q: Is that right? Well, now, tell us how he got to Bureau County, Illinois.

A: Well, as I said, he worked for a nursery and the farm that I am now living on was, at that time, owned by Sam Edwards. Sam Edwards had an order of trees coming from this nursery at Syracuse, New York, and transportation was so slow at the time -- in fact the railroad had just come to Mendota -- that they sent a man along with the trees to water them.

Q: Is that possible? Now could you give us the approximate year?

A: That would have been about 1854.

Q: About two years after the railroad was completed at Mendota.

A: Yes, that's right. And he walked out twelve miles from Mendota to tell Mr. Edwards that the shipment of trees had arrived, and in riding back to Mendota on a wagon to pick these trees up, he hired out to him.

Q: Is that right?

A: And that's the way he came to be set up here at this place later.

Q: I see. Tell me again what his first name was.

A: Grandfather's? John Francis.

Q: John. I see. He was single then?

A: Yes.

Q: Well, then will you go a little more forward and how he became -- how he -- well, the procedure by which he became a landowner and decided to settle here.

Well, he met one of Merrick or commonly known as "Yankee" Smith's daughters in the area, LaMoille. "Yankee" Smith was a cabinet maker; they didn't have custom furniture at that time and he made cabinets, and the house that he lived in is still in LaMoille now.-- that young Bill Phillips lives in on south Main Street in LaMoille.

Q: Is that right? Well, now you say "Yankee" Smith. That means he must have come from an eastern. . .

A: From Massachusetts.

Q: From Massachusetts.

A: Right.

Q: Well, now, did your grandfather work for awhile or did he fall heir to some funds or how did he. . .

A: That has always been a question mark. Even my father said that when Mr. Edwards, well he expanded and started another nursery at the west edge of Mendota where Mrs. Florence Koch lives now.

Q: Is that right? Oh, is that so?

A: And well, . .

Q: Northwest Mendota?

A: Yes, that's northwest of Mendota. And he overexpanded and the Depression came and he lost the property.

Q: Is that right?

A: And my father always said he didn't know how his father acquired the financing to purchase the farm, but he did.

Q: Well, now, did he buy an eighty or -- and expand from there or. . .

A: He bought an original eighty. Now I have the original land grant in here, Donald, if you care to see or know anything about it. May we

shut that off?

PAUSE

Q: Go ahead.

A: In referring. . .

Q: _____ a little louder.

A: In referring to the Sam Edwards' nursery, they might say that I have a letterhead here that Mr. Edwards used and the title is "The Evergreens" because he grew a lot of evergreen trees to be transplanted and he also had a fruit farm and here it's called -- and here it's called he he was Samuel Edwards as proprietor of that nursery and LaMoille, Bureau County, Illinois. And on top of the letterhead it says, "Established in 1844." It doesn't say whether he was a squatter here or what.

Q: (laughs) That's real early anyway.

A: Anyway along with that it says, "Screens from bleak winds the great need of the prairies."

Q: Well, that -- that's true. I think we all realize that people settled the prairies sometimes under protest because of the lack of wind protection and firewood and, very often, water.

A: Well, this farm was not acquired all at one time. He acquired it by three different parcels through several years' period and put it all together now in a 240 acre block.

Q: Now, we're speaking about John Francis Beatty, your grandfather.

A: Yes, that's right. And it's also my son's name. We named him that.

Q: Oh, is that so? He's John Francis Beatty II.

A: Well, there'd be two generations between them.

Q: Lester, do you want to tell us something about your grandmother's

background?

A: Well, I mentioned that my grandfather married Catherine Smith, and she was the daughter of "Yankee" or Merrick Smith, as we knew him, and we have that story _____ in there.

Q: _____

PAUSE

A: Grandfather Beatty or Francis or Frank, as he was commonly known, bought the original eighty acres in 1865. All the children -- and all the children were born there except Eliza. In 1878 Francis bought the homestead place, and it remained in the Beatty family. He was very thrifty and had his land paid for in 1885. He paid \$17 an acre for the first eighty acres and \$50 an acre for the next ninety acres on the homestead farm. He also owned the eighty acres across the road, known as the George Crossman land and the original -- then he traded that off on some of the Crossman land on the other side of the road. PAUSE . . . and moved to LaMoille and the farm was divided between the last three boys, Charles, Albert, and Elmer. He was so fair he divided the house and moved part of it to the west eighty. Each paid him a certain amount each year.

Q: Is that right?

A: As the Beatty boys and girls grew up and married, Frank Beatty helped each one of the girls and the boys to acquire some property. He set it up to get their families established. Sam Edwards chose the site for this farm because it was on a nice spot. The water ran every direction out of the yard. It was the watershed between Bureau Creek and our creek to the west. And it's located so that you can see the Bloomington

moraine to the north about four or five miles and you can see it to the west where the Village of Ohio now is. On clear days you can see that.

Q: Lester, will you explain to me and your posterity just what the Bloomington moraine is.

A: The Bloomington moraine was the deposit left by the last glacier that came along in the glacier period. The last one -- the ice came as far as this ridge that extends from Compton towards Ohio. And the water now runs from that north side of that ridge to the Rock River to the south side to the Illinois River.

Q: Is that so? Do you think that was forty million years ago approximately?

A: I can't tell you. (laughs)

Q: (laughs) You don't want to be pinned down.

A: No, not on the time.

Voice from background: Years ago.

A: But it is the watershed between the Rock and the Illinois Rivers.

Q: I see. That's very interesting.

A: Francis Elmer Beatty, commonly known as Elmer Beatty. . .

Q: My father.

A: . . .was born over at the other place in 1875 and he always told the story that they were -- that he was about three years old when they moved over here to the homestead place and since it was so hard to keep track of time, they had no radios and televisions, his sister Eliza had to carry the clock across the field and keep it running all the way across so they wouldn't lose the time. (laughter)

Q: Is that right? Into the other home.

A: Right. Only into this one.

Q: I see. Into this home.

A: Into this one, right here. Yes. Well, my father then met Jennie Hensel and they were married.

Q: Now, where was Jennie's home?

A: Kasbeer. Near Kasbeer. And. . .

Q: She was a farmer's daughter?

A: Right. She was Philip Hensel's daughter and granddaughter of Jimmy Hensel who had the old orchard farm down west of Dover. Well, they moved up here and they were married on January 1, 1900.

Q: That made him 25 years old.

A: Right, that day. And then 365 days later I was born.

Q: Is that right?

A: That would be on December 31.

Q: Is that right? One short day.

A: I was born on the last day of the last week, the last month, the last year, of the last century.

PAUSE

A: The next child born was Walter Wellman. He born in June of 1906, and he is living at the present time in Middletown, Ohio. A third child was born in 1915 but only lived 24 hours. PAUSE I'd like to go back a few years and tell a story about my grandfather. He thought that he had raised four boys and they were cheap hired men so that they -- so that he could use them to pump water for the cattle and when windmills became popular in the area, the windmill dealer tried to sell him one but he wouldn't have any part of it because he said that the boys could

do that. And then the windmill dealer said, "Let me put one up and have you try it for awhile, charge you so much rent for a month or so long or a year and then see how you like it." So he did that and Grandfather paid for the use of the windmill so long, that it would have been cheaper if he had bought it outright to start with. (laughter)

PAUSE

A: Walter Married Martha Beavis of Middletown, Ohio, and they have one son, Walter Wellman Beatty II, and he has a son, Walter Wellman Beatty III, and another son Paul.

Q: I see.

A: And they -- they -- the son and his boys live in Connecticut at the present time. He's working for the. . .

Voice from background: IBM

A: . . .IBM company. That takes care of that.

PAUSE

A: Walter Beatty and Martha own the land down near Kasbeer that originally belonged to Philip Hensel, our grandfather, and it's still part of our family story, I guess, as far as the makeup is concerned. I have the original home of my father and he has the original home of his mother.

Q: Well, that -- that's really great. Lester, will you tell me how your father generated income from this land that he purchased from his brothers and in addition to the fact that he inherited it? What were his crops and what was the procedure?

A: He raised corn, of course, and back in the twenties he raised quite a little wheat and he also had a large hog -- herd of hogs and raised a lot of them for those times. He did a small amount of cattle feeding

but that wasn't -- I don't think he probably made too much money on cattle. He thought hogs were a much better investment for him than the other herds and of course -- as I say, he raised corn, oats, and wheat and that helped to take care of the county treasurer and several other of his -- to the people he owed money carry on the farm, things for the farm.

Q: Well, now, when you talk about his hog project, did he have a fine confinement set up like they have nowadays on some farms?

A: No, it was not. It was very plain for that -- he had a hog shed out here then he would raise two crops of hogs a year and they ran loose -- with the sows and -- until they were weaned and then were put in a different pen by themselves, and that is the way hogs were generally raised at that time. At the present time it's much more refining and they use much less land for grazing purposes than they do now. The price of land prohibits the using of that now.

Q: Now, in addition to his income from hogs, he had corn to sell, no doubt.

A: That's right.

Q: That went into a crib. Do you remember any of the prices?

A: Yes, I remember in 1931 that corn was eleven cents a bushel at the Van Orin elevator and at that time I had become involved with farming part of the land, and my father wouldn't let me sell it. He helped me get me by a little longer because he had sold corn for twelve cents a bushel when he was getting started and he didn't want me to tell a harder luck story than he was told in his time.

Q: Lester, was your -- was your father a believer at all in any of the

fancy, what we call modern, methods of feeding hogs particularly we have today?

A: No, commercial feeds were almost unheard of at that time, and they were so expensive that they weren't much concern and even though they did take longer for a hog mature, the old saying was, "Well, what's time to a hog?" So that they fed them corn, water, a few oats and there was no attempt made to balance the ration.

Q: No attempt to hurry the process particularly.

A: Right.

Q: Lester, can you tell us a little bit about the off-the-farm activities of your father as you remember during his lifetime?

A: Well, he was a road commissioner at -- back in around 1910 and these two iron bridges down here over at Bureau Creek were built under his administration. He also has served as school board member at the LaMoille school and also for the country school before it was dissolved.

Q: Well, now, you talk about his being a school board member in LaMoille. This was grade and high school both?

A: At the time -- at the time the high school was organized in 1922. You see it originally was Allen School -- part of that -- and then it became a district instead of a village school and he was one of the first school board members.

Q: Lester, I understand he had some interest in banking. Can you talk about that?

A: Yes, he was a member of the board of directors of the old LaMoille State Band at the time it was organized until it was dissolved, and it was kind of an embarrassing situation for him because even though the

monetary layout of the country at the time was such that it was the small town banks that were in trouble. Yet he was afraid that people would think it was something that he had personally neglected to do that this happened.

Q: Well, I understand that the Illinois law demanded that private banks be dissolved about 1920 and this -- this brought about the formation of the. . .

A: LaMoille State Bank.

Q: LaMoille State Bank.

PAUSE

A: My mother died in 1948 and Clara and I then moved across the field and with my father, and we established a home for all of us and one of the things he did then was to go to Florida for about two or three months every winter to maybe get established again away from all the family problems that might have come up but -- not that there were any bad problems, I didn't mean it that way -- but then he lived with us until he was almost ninety years of age. He lacked five months of being ninety years of age when he had died and that was really the climax for the Beatty story as far as the generations gone by. PAUSE We go back into my father's life a little bit after his boys had grown up and could make good hired men, he was one of the first men in this neighborhood to buy a corn picker. Both of his boys were having -- were. . .

Q: Allergic?

A: . . .allergic to the corn dust and got boils from it so he bought a corn picker so they wouldn't have to work with the corn and at that

dirt.

Q: Dad wasn't so tough after all, was he?

A: No. No.

Q: Lester, every generation, of course, had always been interested in some means of motivation in common where today it's wheels. Let me ask you -- tell us, how did you get around after you started -- were old enough to have that interest?

A: Well, I would say that I walked to the country school and then after I finished the country school and went to high school in LaMoille, I rode horseback.

Q: Let me ask you, how far was it to the country school?

A: It was a mile and a quarter to the country school.

Q: You took your lunch?

A: Took my lunch. Yes.

Q: That was through the eighth grade?

A: That is right and there are ~~two~~ of my former schoolteachers up there still living -- Mrs. Laura Rambo and Mrs. Orpha Baird Sullivan, school-^{LORA}teachers of mine at that school. Then I went to the high school in LaMoille and it was a three year school at ~~that time~~ and rode horseback and it was pretty hard going some days in the winter to get there but we made it and I might say, too, that in the whole school there were only three boys from the country. The rest of the boys and girls were from the Village of LaMoille. The three boys ~~from~~ the country were Howard Walker, Harold Littlewood, and myself.

Q: Well, now, does that infer, Lester, that the boys weren't interested in school or they had to stay home and work?

A: They had to stay at home to work. They were cheap hired men to have on the farm and since Dad hadn't had an education, he didn't see any great need of one for his sons.

Q: But your father evidently did. He encouraged. . .

A: Well, I give my mother credit for some of that, too.

Voice from background: But he did go to high school.

A: And since LaMoille High School at that time was a three year school, I went the fourth year to Mendota to get full high school credit and I drove an old Model T Ford over there, picked up Harold Collins and Ralph Tellkamp at the junction north of LaMoille and they rode along to school over there.

Q: Lester, tell us from your memory, your experience, well, the purchase price and so on about the first automobile your father ever owned.

A: My father purchased a Model T Ford from Schaihl and Sovall with Mark Tellkamp in LaMoille as the local agent and it was 1914 and I remember it was about two days before the fourth of July so we had really celebrated that fourth of July and he paid \$640 for it. I have the original receipt.

Q: Well, now, what did that involve? Did that involve a top and what kind of lights and windshield?

A: Yes, there was a top. Gas lights -- carbide -- presto lights. And the top was on it. It was all open otherwise.

Q: No windshield?

A: Yes, it had a windshield.

Q: Those were -- those were extra -- those were options.

A: No, they had just become original or part of the equipment. . .

Q: Standard.

A: Standard equipment at that time.

Q: I see. Lester, was your father, by any chance, real adept at driving his new automobile?

A: Well, it was something new for him. He had never had anything to do with the driving of one before, and I remember that when he drove it home, he drove into the driveway of the corn crib that is still out here and shut it off and let it sit there overnight. The next morning went out to get in to use the car and he couldn't remember how to back it up. And since the Model T had a little deal on it you had to learn to do and I had remembered he having the agent tell him how to do it. So it was me who had to tell my father how to back his car out of the shed the first day. (laughter)

Q: Lester, can you describe some detail with this Model T? You said it cost \$640. Now what else? It had. . .

A: It had -- well, the first year that the windshield was standard equipment on the car and it was also the first year that they had doors on the front seat and there was only one door -- it was on the ~~left~~ it was left hand drive and there was right hand door and. . .

Q: That was so side on the left hand was closed in.

A: That's right. It was solid and as I said I told Dad how to back the car out. You had to hold one pedal in neutral and push on the middle one to make it back out of the shed.

Q: Lester, will you describe something about the ^{PARTS} parents of this Model T?

A: Well, I mentioned that it was one of the first years the windshield

was standard equipment and this car had a wooden dash with coil box on it and on the top of this wooden dash was the clamp that held the windshield. And then there was two glass rods that extended through the front end, right behind each lamp and pulled it down there to hold the windshield erect. It was a two-piece windshield that could be folded down and that way you had all the ventilation you wanted.

Q: And cloth top?

A: Right. Cloth top.

Q: Held by straps?

A: Yes, to the same -- same place that this glass rod was attached.

Q: Lester, did you have any incidents that you, say off-the-farm recollections that you can recall for us that might have took place, well, almost anytime during your high school career?

A: Well, one of the high spots in my high school period was the second year of high school when Wash Dunbar [Washington W.], who was a member of the Agricultural Society at the time in Bureau County, suggested that I be a candidate to go to the Boy's State Fair School at Springfield. Each county was given an allocation of two candidates, and Mr. Dunbar was good enough to suggest that I go and it was one of the high spots of my life during that period.

Q: Can you tell us what -- just how did -- what took place?

A: Well, there were lectures there every day from the University of Illinois. It was a part of the extension service at the time. Also, there were some boys there from the ROTC camp at the university and we had military setting up exercises every morning, and we slept on military cots and in military tents at the southwest corner of the fairgrounds in

Springfield.

Q: Now you say this took place during the state fair session?

A: Yes, that's right. The whole period. The whole ten days.

Q: And there was how many boys in total?

A: Two hundred.

Q: Two hundred. From all over the state?

A: Yes. Two from each county.

Q: And you really felt benefit and enjoyed it.

A: Very, very much and remembered Dr. John Dale Robertson. Dr. Robertson talked on venereal disease, and that was something that I'd never heard of before and it was quite a wide awakening for me.

Q: Well, Lester, did you fly down in a 747 or just how did you get there?

A: Well, no, that Model T just mentioned took me to Princeton and then at Princeton I got on the Interurban and went down to Bureau Junction and then I transferred to a Rock Island train to Peoria and then I got back on the Interurban. It took me down to Morton and Lincoln into Springfield and then at the Interurban station, I had to transfer to a streetcar that took us out to the -- about five miles to the north edge of Springfield. (laughter)

Q: You mean you did this all in one day?

A: That is right. We did it -- we got down there about 8 o'clock in the evening. I think we left Princeton about 10:00 in the morning.

Q: Lester, tell us where you finished high school and how's it happened you talk about Mendota. What were you doing in Mendota?

A: They was -- the LaMoille School at that time was a three year high

school and in order to finish full high school course, I went to Mendota for the fourth year of high school. And that -- we drove the Model T Ford over there and I picked up Harold Collins and Ralph Tellkamp down at the junction north of LaMoille and they rode along with me. And one of the key incidents that happened during that fourth year of high school in Mendota was that I found out that there was a girl in the class by the name of Clara Powell. . .

Q: You don't say.

A: . . .and Clara Powell is now Mrs. Lester Beatty for ~~some~~ forty-six and a half years.

Q: Well, isn't that romantic! (laughter) For forty-six and a half years. You must have been pretty good to her. And I'll bet she was pretty good to you.

A: Good to each other.

Q: Lester, did you have a stipulated allowance, for instance, from your parents while you were in school? Just what kind of arrangements. . .

A: No, I did not have any fixed allowance but my father had a few dairy cattle and once in a while he would sell a veal calf and he would endorse the check for that calf over to me and I was to use that and I had to keep the money for that calf for about three months. That's the reason I had some money to spend but I had to prorate it. (laughter)

Q: As I recall, I'm a farmer too, there was a time -- about that time veal calves just didn't bring. . .

A: It brought about ten dollars.

Q: Ten dollars. I see, that's what I was trying to get out of you.

A: Well, I got that -- that had to last me about three months. (laughter)

Q: Well, now, young people, there's a lesson for you in thrift and money management. Ten dollars for three months. How'd you like to live on that kind of an allowance? PAUSE Well, Lester, was high school in Mendota the end of your -- the end of your education?

A: No, it wasn't, fortunately, or I consider it so. I went to a short course at the University of Wisconsin one winter and I liked it so well that due to some family rearrangements due to a death in the family, it became possible for me to go back to the university for the regular course in school. And I was -- went to the middle -- attended middle course and graduated in 1924, and I am now a member of the Half Century Club of the Alumni Association, University of Wisconsin.

Q: Well, that's great. Shall I. . . PAUSE Lester, you had your course in agriculture now and you had your diploma and how -- tell us, obviously you wanted to become a farmer. Just how did you get started farming?

A: Well, I came back home to the home farm and my father was interested in having me take up and go on with the farm and so. . . (NO SOUND FOR AWHILE) (Cat meowing in background) . . .required enough money to buy a tractor and a team of horses and to induce a lady to marry me but then we started farming on our own and on a regular contract basis like all others. That was 1929.

Q: You rented from your father the 240 acres. That meant that he retired from active management?

A: Yes.

Q: Lester, today farmers have a sideline. Did you operate, in a sense, operate some sort of a sideline when. . .

A: Well, I raised hogs and I also got involved in dairying because the

Depression time came in the early thirties and it was about the only means of having a little cash from one week to the next was to be involved with dairying. So I got into some dairy cows and I had two of them and I kept every heifer they raised me and -- until I had a herd of 25 dairy cattle.

Q: They were Holsteins, right?

A: They were Holstein cattle.

Q: Do you remember some of the milk prices, say, at the beginning? The early time?

A: No, the milk prices were -- well, I can't tell you exactly but they were probably in the \$1.80 to \$1.90 a hundred price range.

Q: In other words, it was less than \$2.00 a hundred for raw milk at the farm.

A: That is right.

Q: And out ~~of~~ that you paid -- you paid trucking.

A: Yes, the truck came and picked up the milk.

Q: Did the milk go to a cheese factory?

A: It went to the condensery at Amboy.

Q: I see. Lester, what time -- what time did you have to get around in the morning to handle this milk situation?

A: Well, dairying is a full time job, seven days a week, and we had to get up at 5 o'clock in the morning every day of the year in order to have the milk ready for the truck when it came at 7:00.

Q: Well, in other words, if you were out on New Year's Eve, say, you got up just the same. . .

A: Just as well milk before we went to bed. (laughter)

Q: Well, in other words, you stayed -- spent a lot of evenings at home,

then.

A: That is right. Sure did.

Q: What happened -- well, for entertainment?

A: We didn't have any money to go out and have any entertainment and the -- probably the one thing that got us involved socially in the LaMoille area was the fact that there was a number of them that were playing bridge or liked to play bridge, and a fifty cent deck of cards would keep us going all winter. (laughter)

Q: You didn't gamble for big stakes?

A: No, we didn't.

PAUSE

Q: There you are.

A: One of the highlights of our married life, probably to date, was the birth of our one and only son, who was born April 29, 1934, and it was under extremely difficult circumstances and he's our one and only child.

Q: Now is he -- he grew up successfully and lives at -- where?

A: Yes, he married a girl who lives down west of Cherry, and they live in one of her folks' home farms. That's where they're still located.

Q: Well, now, is he -- he's active with farming?

A: Yes, he is.

Q: And what. . .

Voice from background: Tell him who he married.

A: He married Dolores Lukachko. They were always high school sweethearts, same as I married my high school sweetheart.

Q: Is that so? And they are, you said, active with farming?

A: Right. They are. They have a child, Laura, now and of course she's

the apple of their eyes and the grandparents' eyes, and we're very pleased to have her.

Q: On both sides.

A: That is right. Laura is quite active in school projects. She likes cheerleading and band work and it's all good for her and I think it's good for the grandparents, too.

Q: Now this happens to be July, 1975, tell us Grandfather, tell us how old she is.

A: Laura is twelve years old.

Q: Lester, tell us something about John in his early -- well, just anyplace along. . .

A: Well, John went to school in LaMoille High School and graduated there and then he went to the University of Illinois and got his degree there and also commission from having been in the ROTC. He was commissioned in the army. And then he spent eighteen months in Korea during the Korean rebellion.

Q: I see. That's all interesting. PAUSE Start with that. Lester, tell us -- we've talked about your son now and your granddaughter, tell us about some of your own activities in addition to farming the old farm.

A: Well, I think one of the first things we would have to mention that we tried to take part in Methodist Church activities. I always put it this way that after we were married, Clara's mother made the comment that it would be nice if we would come over to church Sunday and stay for dinner. You know we did that for forty years! (laughter) That's the way my mother-in-law put one over on me. She made a Methodist out of

me. And another -- some of the other activities have been that I served as -- six years as secretary of the Bureau County Farm Bureau and I also served twenty years on the Bureau Service Company board; the last eight I served as president.

Q: I see. Good enough. Well, would you say, Lester, that that invitation to dinner is a case of a way to a man's heart is through his stomach?

A: No, I think she wanted to be -- make sure that her daughter came to her church instead of to mine. (laughter)

Voice from background: I don't think so.

Q: What -- by any chance, Lester, have you had some hobbies along the way that have interested you?

A: Yes, Clara and I are both very much hobby-minded. She likes, oh, china, glassware and I like coins and money. And in order for me to get her to give financial and goodwill towards my hobby, I have to help support hers. (laughter)

Q: Sort of a -- has to be a mutual admiration society arrangement.

A: That's right. I am -- is it on -- I am a member of several coin clubs; I am a member of the American Numismatic Association; I am a member of the Illinois Numismatic Association; in fact, I helped organize the Illinois Numismatic Association and served as -- on its first board as a board member.

Q: What was the year of the organization?

A: In 18 -- 1958.

Q: 1958, I see.

A: And we're also a member of the Bureau County Coin Club and of the Illinois Valley Coin Club.

Q: I see. You're in it -- really in it deep.

A: Well, I guess you could say that. When one of the things that they quote me on is that I like -- said that I liked paper money and that that is my second love and in order to get family support, I say second love; my wife is my first love. I'm also interested in the history of Bureau County and I'm a board member of the Bureau County Historical Society.

Q: Well, Lester, what other hobbies by any chance do you enjoy -- do you and your wife enjoy traveling?

A: Yes, we do enjoy traveling and we've had several very nice trips all over the United States and three trips to Europe and we look back on the things we did and the souvenirs we acquired and they mean a lot to us.

Q: Yes, well, that's just great.

Janet Kankaala
Transcriptionist

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DATE July 3, 1975

Lester Beatty
(INTERVIEWEE)

(for _____)