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Joe Chamberlain Memoir

C354. Chamberlain, Joe (1910-1982)

Interview and memoir

1 tape, 51 mins., 37 pp.

SHAWNEETOWN BANK PROJECT

Joe Chamberlain describes the Shawneetown Bank: its lobby, offices, basement, stairway, signs, employees and exterior. He also describes Shawneetown streets and the 1937 Ohio River flood.

Interview by Horace Q. Waggoner, 1978

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PREFACE

This manuscript is a complete transcription of a tape recorded interview conducted September 28, 1978 by Horace Q. Waggoner for the Oral History Office. This is one of a series of interviews conducted in connection with the Old Shawneetown Bank Project. Memories of a Bank, an oral history and documentary inventory at Old Shawneetown was published in 1979 by the Oral History Office, Sangamon State University. Linda Jett transcribed the tape and Horace Waggoner edited the transcript.

Mr. Chamberlain was born in Shawneetown on December 9, 1910, and was at the time of the interview still a resident, not having moved to New Shawneetown during the exodus of the early 1940's. His primary memories of the bank are from his association with the people involved in the bank operations and in the city's use of the basement.

Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that it is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, narrator and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. Sangamon State University is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for views expressed therein; these are for the reader to judge.

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Joe Chamberlain, September 28, 1978, Shawneetown, Illinois.

Horace Q. Waggoner, Interviewer.

Q. Let's see. Let me ask a few questions and then we'll come back to this sign business.

A. Yes.

Q. When were you born, sir?

A. 1910. December 9.

Q. And where were you born, sir?

A. Out here, about four mile out here in the country.

Q. Just outside Old Shawneetown, then.

A. Yes. Just north of the city here.

Q. When did you move into Old Shawneetown?

A. I moved in here when I was eight years old. Well, hardly eight years old.

Q. Where did you live in relation to the bank then?

A. Well, I lived just over here on this next street. Right directly across here on this next street.

Q. I see. So that would be . . .

A. This is Market Street here. And that, I guess, I believe that's Walnut over there.

Q. I don't know the streets.

A. Well, on this next street.

Q. So, that would be about four blocks from the bank, wouldn't it?

A. About that. Yes. Let's see, one, two, three, four blocks. I've lived here sixty years.

Q. Sixty years in Old Shawneetown. Yes, sir. You went to school here, I guess, then?

A. Oh, yes. Yes.

Q. All the way through. You graduated from high school here, did you?

A. No, I didn't. I didn't finish high school.

Q. What was your occupation, sir?

A. Well, back--During the flood back then, I worked for the city. City police.

Q. Oh, you did.

A. Yes.

Q. The city police?

A. Yes. Since then, I've been a farmer ever since. Till this year. I retired.

Q. So, when you got out of school, you started working for the city.

A. Yes. Yes. Started right out.

Q. I see. What type of farming did you do, sir?

A. Well, I raised corn, wheat, and beans. Things along . . .

Q. General farming.

A. Yes.

Q. Yes, sir. Did you have an account with the bank?

A. Yes. But back--You know, back then nobody had a whole lot of money back in them times. See, I believe--I started working with the city, we got fifty dollars a month. And I think I was the first fellow that ever drew over fifty dollars a month. I finally got a raise for seventy dollars a month.

Q. Yes, sir. And that would have been in the 1920's, I guess?

A. No. That was in . . . I believe, it was 1936, 1936 I went to work.

1936, I went to work for them. In the city. In 1936. Before the 1937 flood, I'm pretty sure, I worked, I was working for the city.

I went to work, I worked farm help, hand, you know, up until then and then, after that, I worked a year or two as a construction worker and I seen I wasn't getting too far. I guess I'd done, probably done better if I had stayed in the construction business, but I just went on my own.

Q. What's your first memory of the bank, First National Bank?

A. Well, back there, when I was just a small lad--See, we lived right across the street down here, on this next street.

Q. Yes, sir.

A. And down on this corner, they was moving the bank, doing something, repairing. But seems to me like we was moving the bank.

Q. Down on the next corner?

A. Yes. But this fellow got mashed--a safe, anyhow, a safe fell on him. Crushed his chest. Fellow by the name of Matt Haynes. I can remember it as well as it was yesterday.

Q. Oh, is that . . .

A. They brought him over there--back then, they had no hospitals, close, you know--and laid him on a cot there on the front porch. It was hot weather. And just a short while he lived. Just a short while.

Q. And this was after the 1937 flood . . .

A. Oh, yes. This was way back there when I just was a small boy. I'd say . . . well . . . probably been 1919 or 1920. It was way back there. 1918, 1919 or 1920. Yes. That was before that went in--hardroad back here. Wasn't no hardroad. It was just a big cobblestone highway come in.

Q. It was cobblestone come in here.

A. Yes. Big, white rock. Oh, yes.

Q. Were you in the bank? At that time, do you recall having been in the bank?

A. Back when I was small, yes, I remember. Yes, I remember.

Q. What do you remember about the inside of the bank?

A. Well, the lobby of the bank, you just walked straight in. It was just a long lobby and the windows. You walked right up to the windows.

Q. Now, that counter in the lobby, was it a straight counter or did it curve?

A. Seems to me like, over to the right, if I'm not--I could be wrong--but seems like the right, there was a--You know, you go back to the office.

Q. Oh, I see. Through a door there.

A. Yes. Yes. This Coffee woman and this Wiederhold or Taylor, Mrs. Curtis Taylor. See, she lived upstairs with her aunt.

Q. Oh, Mrs. Wiederhold?

A. Yes. Mrs. Lawler. Her name was Lawler. Her aunt was a Lawler. And she stayed awhile up there, lived awhile with her aunt. Up in the upstairs. Third floor. Up there. That's where they lived during the 1937 flood.

Q. Oh?

A. The banker and his family. And they had a ladder out the window. Go up there in a boat and climb that ladder and open the window up.

Q. It was a rope ladder, was it?

A. No.

Q. Rope or regular ladder?

A. Just a regular ladder. Yes. I've been there every day. I stayed down there in the courthouse, see.

Q. Oh, you did?

A. Courthouse was on this street, just--down there where the city hall . . .

Q. Yes, sir. About a block away from the bank. Yes, sir.

A. Yes.

Q. And you stayed there during the 1937 flood?

A. Yes. Yes.

Q. In the lobby, do you remember--Now again, the counter when you walked in, was it a straight counter that ran all the way across?

A. It was a straight counter. As you walk in the door, it was a straight counter.

Q. Didn't curve . . .

A. No. It seems there was a bend there, made an "L" shape. Best of my remembrance.

Q. And do you have any remembrance of how many teller positions there might have been there?

A. Well, there were . . . seems as though there were two or three. There was Mr. Galt and Mr. Goetzman, that was his brother-in-law. They're the ones that did most of the business.

Q. I see.

A. Yes. They didn't have as many as they have out here now.

Q. Quite a number of people.

A. Yes. Yes. (laughter)

Q. Lot more money, I guess.

A. Yes.

Q. Do you recall a grillwork above the counter? Iron grillwork of any sort?

A. Yes. I do. But I can't just recall how it was made. But I know there was some kind of iron works. Above, see. It was high. It's not like the one we had out here or they have today.

Q. Just low . . .

A. Yes. It was up, up high. Yes.

Q. I see. Were there windows in it, then, . . .

A. Yes. Just windows.

Q. . . . that the tellers worked at.

A. Teller windows. Yes. I don't know where them fixtures went. I don't know what happened to them.

Q. What pictures are those, sir?

A. The fixtures.

Q. Oh, the fixtures. I see. Yes, sir. No, we haven't traced them down, either. (chuckles) As you went in the front door of the bank, do you recall any furniture in front of the counter, where you could sit and wait if you had . . .

A. There might have been a chair or two. Not too many. One or two.

Q. Do you recall a table in there of any sort?

A. No, I don't. No, I can't recall it. At the present, I don't.

Q. Do you recall what kind of chairs those were? Were they wooden chairs or . . .

A. Seems as though they were.

Q. Wooden. Do you recall any particular seat in them? Were they cloth or . . .

A. No, I don't. See, I would write a check which wasn't too big. It wouldn't take you long to do your business then. There was quite a bit of difference then and . . .

Q. And now.

A. Yes. Yes. I remember, here in, I guess it was 1932 and 1933, we was working on this levee when they rebuilt it. Me and a guy worked together. He said he was gonna save his money. When he got through he was going to go over to East St. Louis; he was gonna stay all winter. He had a sister over there. He was gonna have him a time. I said, "But I'm gonna spend my money." (laughs)

Well, one morning we got up . . . and there wasn't no bank. The bank was closed. (laughs) He could have died. I kidded him for a good while about that.

Q. Did he ever get his money back, do you think?

A. I don't think so. Maybe, maybe ten or twenty dollars, if he got that. Not too much.

Q. That was the moratorium, I guess.

A. Yes. Yes. You remember that, I suppose.

Q. Not too well. I was kind of young at the time. But I do remember it occurring then. Again on the counter, do you recall whether it ran all the way to the wall on the left. As you came in the front door, did the counter go all the way to the wall on the left?

A. Seems to me like it did. I won't say for sure.

Q. Do you remember any openings there? Any gates or doors on that side?

A. Seems to me like the door, the opening was on the right. On the right-hand side as you went in.

Q. And that went into another small room to the right, I guess.

A. Yes.

Q. Do you recall anything about anything in that room? Were there desks or anything of that sort?

A. No. Because, at that time, I'd never been back there, you know, to do any business, borrow any money or anything like that.

Now, I'll tell you a fellow that might enlighten you on that is this barber out here, Millard Holloway.

Q. Yes, sir. I've talked with him.

A. Have you? He's . . .

Q. Yes. He remembers borrowing money from the "snake pit". (laughs)

A. Yes. Yes. (laughter) I don't know how he remembers. But that's the best that I can remember. The way I remember because, like I say, I've been around here ever since I was a small boy.

Q. Yes, sir. But the offices were around to the right, then?

A. To my--Yes. That's the way I . . .

Q. On the left, do you recall a door going back into the back part of the bank against that left wall?

A. No, I don't. I wouldn't say. I really don't. I really don't. It could be that there was one there, but I . . . Maybe Millard or some of these older guys, that's more familiar with it than me . . .

Q. Do you remember Mr. Roedel's office in the bank?

A. Charlie Roedel?

Q. Charlie Roedel's office.

A. Yes. Yes. I remember. He was back there. He was in the back. Him and his father. See, his father, he was a real old, old man at that time. Charlie Roedel. Yes. Do you think he was part of the bank or he was attorney for the bank?

Q. Yes.

A. In other words, a corporation lawyer.

Q. Were you ever in his offices back there?

A. Yes. I was in there a time or two for some reason. I don't remember why, but . . .

Q. Do you recall anything about the arrangement? Where was his desk, for example?

A. Well, I--That I couldn't tell you. All I know is that it was in the back, back of the bank. Him and his--Him and his dad.

Q. Do you remember how many rooms he used back there?

A. No. No, I don't. No, I don't.

Q. When you entered his offices, did you go in the side door at the back of the bank?

A. Yes. Back of the bank.

Q. Into the large hallway there?

A. Yes. And they also, you know, they had a police magistrate's office. Was down underneath there.

Q. Down in the basement?

A. Yes.

Q. I see. So you went in the side door?

A. Went in the first door. Yes.

Q. The side door at the front there?

A. Yes. At the back. Along the side door.

Q. Oh, at the back . . .

A. See, there was a side door there and then there was steps went up one floor.

Q. Yes, sir.

A. That's where the Roedels' office was.

Q. Was there.

A. Yes.

Q. How did you get into the police magistrate's office?

A. Just right off the sidewalk.

Q. Right off the sidewalk, through the door.

A. Off the sidewalk. Yes.

Q. Were you ever in there?

A. Oh, yes. Several times, yes.

Q. How was it arranged? Do you remember?

A. Yes. It just, there was two big rooms there.

Q. Two rooms?

A. Yes. Yes. One in the front where they had the court, cause I had lot of occasions to be in there.

Q. Oh, I see. How did they set it up? Did they have a large table or counter or . . .

A. Yes. And chairs just where we could, if you had to have a police court, you could do that.

Q. So you did it around a large table, then?

A. Yes.

Q. Who was the police magistrate, at that time?

A. Foss, Foss Smyth, we called him. It was . . . What was it, W. T. Smyth? (Addressing Mrs. Chamberlain who was in the next room)

WC. Yes.

A. I believe that was the name. Foss Smyth. Called him Foss Smyth. Smyth. In other words, S-M-Y-T-H, the way he . . .

Q. S-M-Y-T-H.

A. That's the way he spelled his name. Yes.

Q. I see.

A. "Y" instead of an "I." He was police magistrate here for several years. Yes.

Q. Did he have a desk in that room?

A. Oh, yes. Yes. He had . . .

Q. What kind of desk was it, do you recall?

A. Just an old . . .

Q. Flat-top?

A. Yes. Like they had back in those days. Old, old-fashioned desk, I call it.

Q. Where did it sit in the room?

A. Well, it sit, as you go in the door, the last I can remember, it was sitting on the left as you went in the door.

Q. And the table, then, would have been right in front of you, . . .

A. Yes.

Q. . . . I guess, as you went in the door.

A. And they had chairs. We could--Yes, I've took several in there before him.

Q. Well! (laughter)

WC. They used to have elections, hold elections in there in the room next to it, too.

Q. In the room . . .

WC. Yes, next to Foss Smyth's, because I sat on the board. Back when I sat on the board, I was real young.

Q. Now, as you go in the side door, you're in Mr. Smyth's office. Now, would the other room that they used be the one across the bank or would it be toward the back of the bank.

WC. It's toward the back.

Q. Toward the back.

WC. Foss Smyth was here, like the front.

Q. To the left.

WC. And the election board sat in the next room.

Q. Right on that street side?

WC. Yes. On the street side. Yes.

Q. So it was those two rooms on the street side that the city used?

WC. Yes.

A. Yes. But Mr. Smyth's office, he had--There was one room back of . . .

WC. Yes.

A. . . . back of his office. Was more or less a catch-all, I'd say.

Q. Oh, I see. So there was a third room involved?

A. Yes. Yes. There was lots of rooms in that basement.

Q. I assume the floor was wooden at that time?

A. Well, no, I don't think so.

WC. No.

A. The best I remember, I don't believe it was.

Q. Think it was dirt-packed or . . .

A. Or concrete.

Q. Concrete.

A. But seems to me like it was. Now, I never paid--Now, see that's been several years ago . . .

Q. (laughs) Yes, sir.

A. . . . and this has come up. At the time, a few years back, I could have told you just about anything. The whole layout, but these years have went by, which has been--that was forty years ago.

Q. Yes, sir. It's been awhile.

A. And it changes.

Q. In that basement, do you remember where the furnace was?

A. No, I don't but it was . . . seems as though it was back towards these rooms we're talking about or in just behind them or in one of those rooms.

Q. Toward the back of the bank?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you remember where they stored coal down there, for the furnace?

A. No, I don't. It had to be back in one of those rooms. The rooms we're talking about was near the center of the building.

Q. Yes, sir.

A. I'd say near the center--Other than this, where Mr. Roedel had his office. It was to the rear of the . . .

Q. Yes, sir. Behind the lobby.

A. But the back steps, the steps are there, from the street side, where it's going west.

Q. Yes, sir. You went up those . . .

A. You went up those. Yes. Went up those stairs.

Q. When you went up those side stairs and stepped in the door there, do you remember anything about that big hall? Anything . . .

A. Well, there was a long hall there and there was a stairway that went on up to the third story. Up there to the third story.

Q. Was it a straight stairway or did it have a . . .

A. It went--You went in, went right up to the second story, then so forth and so on. Yes. I've been up there several times.

Q. Now, there were steps underneath that stairway going down to the basement, too, weren't there?

A. Yes. I think--I believe so. I believe so.

Q. Was that enclosed, so that you had to go through a door to go down those steps?

A. Oh, yes. Everything was enclosed where it could be locked and fastened up.

Q. I see. But there was a railing on the stairway that went up to the second floor there?

A. Yes. And also there was railing on the front steps out front.

Q. Oh?

A. Right up the center of the steps.

Q. Oh, I see. Those were iron.

A. Iron, iron railing. Everything was iron. Iron. Yes.

Q. In the lobby of the building, do you recall any of the lighting fixtures? Do you recall . . .

A. No. No, I don't. I can't recall how they were installed or or what they looked like.

Q. Do you remember anything about the vault itself? The construction and how the doors were constructed and that sort of thing?

A. Well, you could look back there and see the vault. It was a big, huge vault. But that's about all.

Q. Do you remember what the doors were made of? Were they steel?

A. They were steel.

Q. Were they painted in any way?

A. Yes. They were black.

WC. Black.

A. Yes. There were pretty nice.

Q. Now, those would have been the outer doors . . .

A. Yes. That was the outer doors . . .

Q. There is an inner door, do you recall that?

A. No, I don't because--They let the water get in to them, into the vault before they got their money out during the 1937 flood. It got in there and they got it out. They had it upstairs. Drying a bunch of it out. (laughter)

Q. Do you remember any pictures or anything that might have been around that lobby?

A. No, I sure don't. I don't remember. I--Probably, at times, like I say it's--I can remember more of the outside, you know. How it looked. I remember quite well, all the old timers of a morning, they'd come up waiting for the mail and they'd all line up on those steps, you know, there.

Q. Sit and talk?

A. Yes. Sit and talk and tell their tales, and stories.

Q. Well, on the outside now, you say you know where the--or know of someone that knows where the signs are located?

A. Yes. That's what he told me yesterday. I talked to him about it.

Q. The B-A-N-K up on top of the bank.

A. Yes. That was up above the columns.

Q. Where is that now? Did this person have any idea?

A. It's suppose to be over here at . . . Sparta. Pretty sure. We can go down to talk to him, if you have time. It wouldn't take but a minute.

Q. And this is Mr. Clayton, you say?

A. C. L. Clayton. Yes, he was the mayor here for about fifteen, eighteen years. And he also worked with the State.

I don't know just exactly when they took the signs down there. The way I understood him, that they've got some kind of a factory down there where they redo these signs and bring them back, but they've been gone for years.

He told me that B-A-N-K, the bank, was made out of cypress.

Q. Oh, it was wooden.

A. It was wooden, but the one between the columns was metal. Yes.

Q. And do you remember what it read like? What were the words on that sign?

A. B-A-N-K.

Q. That's the one up top.

A. On top.

Q. Now, the one between the pillars, do you remember what it said?

A. I know it had one, the big letters was B-A-N-K. I wouldn't say that the National Bank, or First National, I'd say it was the First National. I'm not sure. I'm not, I wouldn't be positive there.

Q. We have pictures of it.

A. But I know it says B-A-N-K.

Q. Yes, sir.

A. And that water . . .

Q. Came right up to it. (laughs) Gee whiz.

A. Yes. I looked at that several times. That's where the mark--It should be. I know they sandblasted them columns. If they hadn't sandblasted them, you could probably see the waterline on there. But they'd be some indication where that sign was bolted and hung up there right now, so as to find the exact spot where it hung across there.

Q. Do you ever recall that sign having read "CITY NATIONAL BANK?"

A. (pause) No. It could have been . . . That was back when this fellow got killed. It was, they exchanged buildings, moved on up to the other bank up in the block, up north. And that's when they had that accident. See, it went under.

Q. Oh, it did?

A. Yes.

Q. And they were moving from that bank to the First National Bank?

A. The McKelligott's Bank they called it. Course, I don't know just how that bank was.

Q. Do you remember the McKelligotts living in the, the big bank, the one with the pillars?

A. No, I don't. Their home was right over here in this next block. Down this alley over on the other street.

Q. Yes, sir. But there is a possibility that the City National Bank might have at one time operated in the, in the big building there?

A. It could be. Yes.

Q. That would have been in the twenties sometime, presumably.

A. Yes. It would be. The early, the early twenties was when they . . . Not long after . . . World War I.

Q. That's the time we have the McKelligotts living in the bank and there's a question as to exactly what the operation was. Whether it was City National Bank at that time, their operation, or whether it was still the First National Bank there.

A. Yes. Do you have that . . .

Q. We don't have that information.

A. You don't have that?

Q. No, we haven't been able to "nail that down" as yet.

A. Well . . . I wouldn't know . . . who to . . . for you to--Because . . . Millard Holloway out here, Mr. Holloway, he come to Shawneetown after I did.

Q. Yes, sir.

A. See, I was born right out here and I've been here all my life. Never over three or four miles from town.

Q. Yes, sir.

A. And I haven't been away over two years, two and a half. Through the winter, I'm gone two or three months each year.

Q. Do you ever recall a sign or anything that indicated the First National Bank was operated where the City National Bank building is?

A. No. No, I don't. I sure don't. Like I say we hadn't lived in town here too long then. Just moved in this fall when this accident happened and I knew Mr. Haynes well and--His sister was a school teacher. But--Now, this Elizabeth . . .

Q. Taylor?

A. Taylor. She'll give you some information. I think she has it. She called me the other day and she's got some information. I'm pretty sure, that . . .

Q. I'm supposed to interview her Friday, tomorrow. The week's already gone. My goodness. (laughs)

A. Yes. Because Mrs. Wiederhold, she kept everything like that. She was real old when she passed away.

Q. Yes, I understand . . .

A. And one of the pioneer residents of this country. Her folks. They, I guess, helped settle this country. Eddys. And she could help you a whole lot there because she's not any older than I am, if she's as old. But she's a--She lived--Her aunt raised her.

Q. And for a time, then, they were living in the bank? Her aunt . . .

A. Yes. She stayed with her aunt a lot. Her name was Lawler. He was a mail clerk, or baggaging, you know, for the B & O [Baltimore and Ohio] Railroad Company here. Worked for the railroad company. But Mr. Wiederhold was a businessman here. That was--And Mrs. Wiederhold's husband, landowner, owned around here.

Q. I see.

A. Yes. Fine fellow.

WC. I would say that if Mrs. Wiederhold didn't lose a lot of those pictures and things during the 1937 flood, that she will have them out there. In her home.

A. See that--a lot of people had a lot of that stuff. They lost it, during the 1937 flood. Really a lot of valuable information lost in . . .

Q. There seems to have been a photography shop here in Old Shawneetown that had a tremendous amount of pictures of Old Shawneetown, but it all went down the river during the flood.

A. Now this fellow Clayton, he's got some pictures.

Q. Oh, he does.

A. Papers, pictures of the flood, what it looked like.

Q. Now, is his office down in the city . . .

A. No, he's not the mayor any more.

Q. Oh, I see.

A. Texaco station--the store down . . .

Q. Oh, I see. I've bought gas there a couple times. I wonder if I've talked with him. The fellow that I bought gas from was a young fellow.

A. Yes. That's his son.

Q. I see. I see.

A. Yes. He hasn't been out of the hospital too long. He had a heart attack. And had open heart surgery. But he seems to be getting along fine.

Q. Couple more questions on the bank, now. At one time, apparently on the second level at the top of the steps, away from the two streets, on the north corner of the building . . .

A. Yes.

Q. . . . there was a wooden structure built that they used as a kitchen. Do you recall that?

A. On the north side?

Q. North corner, north corner

A. No, I don't recall that.

Q. You don't recall that at all?

A. I don't recall that. It was back before my time. Have to be.

Q. Well, evidently it was there up until the 1937 flood. People seem to remember it there and think it might have been washed away at that time.

A. Well, there wasn't nothing washed away.

Q. Oh?

A. Not from that bank building. Now, over next to the Harmon's store, the building, there was a little brick building over there. I don't know what it had been, but I believe they stored coal in there and there was an outdoor toilet. I don't know what all. Matter of fact, after the 1937 flood, they went in there and done some work and fixed up and used it for a calaboose, for awhile.

Q. Oh, is that right?

A. Yes.

Q. The city jail?

A. Yes. The jail. Sure did.

Q. And that was just a one-story building, was it?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you remember what it was constructed of?

A. Yes. Brick.

Q. It was brick.

A. It was brick, yes.

Q. What color brick was it?

A. Red brick. Some old, old brick. Just old brick. I don't--it was attached, built to the side of this other building. But--I'm not sure

if it belonged to the other building which was the old McBain building. That was another one of the old timers that settled this part of the country.

Q. McBain?

A. McBain and the Richesons, yes.

Q. But you think it was used for coal storage . . .

A. Yes. I know it was. Yes. It was used for that and they also used it for, like I say, for the calaboose, they called it. (laughter)

Q. Yes, sir. Yes, sir. Do you remember anything about the structure of that, inside? Were you ever inside that building?

A. That little building?

Q. Yes, sir.

A. Yes. It was just a very plain building. Just--Inside.

Q. Was it wide open or did it have partitions in it?

A. It had a partition in it, from the--about the center.

Q. I see.

A. Yes. And east and west wings.

Q. Was there any indication there were ever any stables in that building?

A. No. No, there wasn't.

Q. Nothing at that time. Were there any hallways in the building or was it just the two rooms?

A. No. Two rooms. Just the rooms. And I know we fixed a . . . the west room, the west side of it, pad, lock-up.

Q. I see. And did they establish an office in the other part of it?

A. No. No. They just used them there where, hold them until they had to take them . . .

Q. Up to the courthouse. Yes, sir.

A. Later on, after they was in the process of moving the town--They were settling out there, you see.

Q. Yes, sir.

A. See, this town, the flood didn't destroy it.

Q. Oh?

A. Man destroyed it.

Q. I see. Well!

A. The buildings was moved out or tore down. They wasn't but two or three buildings that left their foundations.

Q. Oh?

A. In the 1937 water, there was down here . . .

WC. See, they opened up the levee, lower levee and let it fill up gradual and it didn't wash anything away.

Q. Oh, I see.

A. Wasn't nothing washed away. There was two or three old buildings that moved.

Q. So, just a governmental decision to make a new town and move.

A. Yes. That was it.

WC. They had a mayor at the time which was . . .

A. Well, they had a young board.

WC. Young town board.

A. Which, if they would have went ahead, they could have built this back. Well, there wasn't no building, all they had to of done was clean up.

WC. Clean it up.

A. And then, they, too, could have built out there. We could have two towns.

See our courthouse, that was where we run into a lot of trouble, moving that. There was, I guess, legal work to be done to move your county seat.

Q. I reckon.

A. In other words, that's what they had to do. They had to establish some kind of line, three or four foot wide, somewhere out through the hills here to connect us. And then, we had to live under that kind of government here for--till we fought it, and fought it, and fought it. Till we got a separation and we got our own government.

Cost us a lot of time and lot of money. But we wasn't getting nothing. Just like we are now. We got a--This fellow that we're talking about, Mr. Clayton, was doing a pretty good job down there. We started with nothing and always had money and we didn't have a blacktop street, but this fellow we got in here now just let it go to pot.

Q. Oh?

A. More weeds--We kept this place cleaned up. Everybody. But they just let it go. We're in a mess now because--Matter of fact, . . . Is that recording now?

Q. Oh. (indicates affirmative)

A. Off the record. Oops. (points to recorder and laughs)

Q. It's on the record now. (laughter) It won't go any further than that.

A. I shouldn't have said that.

Q. Yes, sir. Do you remember anything else about that small building, that outbuilding there?

A. No, other than just a red brick building. Old building.

Q. Were the doors on the side toward the bank?

A. Yes. It faced the bank.

Q. There were no other doors in it, that you recall?

A. Not that I recall. No.

Q. Was the outdoor privy still at the end of it, at that time? Was it still . . .

A. No.

Q. It wasn't there any more.

A. No. No.

Q. Was there a wall behind the bank? Do you recall that at all?

A. A wall behind the bank?

Q. Yes, sir. On the, it would be the west side, I guess.

A. There could have been at one time but I don't remember it. There was an alley, alleyway, about a sixteen foot alley. See, they built a resident behind it, behind the bank.

Q. Who was that?

A. That way Guy Lambert. The guy who owned the ferry here. He built a--There was a residence behind there.

Q. And between the bank and the residence, there was a driveway then that went back?

A. Yes. Oh, yes.

Q. Was it surfaced, do you recall?

A. Well, it was a . . . wasn't blacktop but they kept it in good shape. See, they had to get back to the store. There was a store that this here little building was connected, in between or connected to this building. And they used that highway to get back in, back through there.

Q. To deliver to the store.

A. Yes.

Q. Who owned that store then?

A. Harmon. This guy, his father.

Q. Ralph Harmon?

A. Ralph Harmon's father. Yes, they was there during the 1937 flood.

Q. Okay. Then, the driveway would have gone from Main Street, it would have gone behind this little outbuilding . . .

A. Yes. From the highway 13, north, see.

Q. Yes. Right up to the back of the Harmon's store.

A. Yes.

Q. The Harmon's store was parallel to the bank on Main Street.

A. Right. That's right. Yes. They faced east.

Q. Yes, sir. Yes. Unfortunately, the bank is set at a 45° angle and you say east and somebody else says north and it's all the same thing.

A. Yes. (laughter) East and west will refer to the highway, running east and west.

Q. Yes, sir.

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. Were you ever on the third level of the bank? The one above the lobby?

A. Yes. I've been. The attic. All the way up in there.

Q. On the third level, do you recall anything distinctive about it?

A. No, there's nothing up there to speak of only just a bunch of waste where the pigeons had got in there.

Q. Oh, I see. This was, then, after people had quit living there?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you recall any of the people who lived there after the 1937 flood?

WC. Harry Williams still lived there.

A. Harry did live up there, didn't he? I believe he did. But his son's out here in the nursing home and . . .

Q. What was that last name?

A. Williams. Harry Williams. I'd forgotten about him. (pause)

Q. Did you ever visit while anyone was living up there? Did you ever visit anyone there?

A. I've been up there. I might have been up there when Harry lived up there. I don't know.

Q. Do you remember how they had it arranged? The living quarters?

A. No, I wouldn't say. No, I don't know. I don't--I wouldn't . . . But I remember being up there when someone was there and then later on after they moved out, like I say, the pigeons and whatnot took over. A light or two, you know, broke out.

Q. Yes, sir. Do you remember anything distinctive about the attic?

A. Yes, I do. The timbers, the rafters and whatnot up there. The timbers was heavy timbers. I remember.

Q. So it hadn't been finished out?

A. Oh, no. No.

Q. That attic hadn't been walled.

A. Hadn't been, no. Now, since they done all that work on it--You know, in the last few years, they've worked two or three times on it. I don't know what they've done to it. I haven't been up there. See, that chimney that's in it now is a different one altogether than back there.

Q. Yes, sir.

A. That's a new one. Yes.

Q. Yes. They're beginning the renovation of it.

A. Yes.

Q. As you went up the stairway to that attic, it was a very similar stairway to the ones below, I guess, wasn't it?

A. It was a wooden, wooden stairway.

Q. Wooden stairway that went on up.

A. Yes.

Q. When you got to the . . .

A. Double. Excuse me. It was double, see, to get up to the attic.

Q. What do you mean double?

A. Two flights.

Q. Oh, two flights of stairs to get there. I see. Yes, sir. So there was a landing in the middle of it?

A. Yes. Landing.

Q. So you were headed east when you first started up.

A. Yes, started up.

Q. And then you came to a landing and then you headed back west to go on up. I see. Yes, sir.

A. The first, first landing is where they all lived, see, up there during the 1937 flood. That Max Galt and his family. And there was an old colored fellow--Well, he was janitor there at the bank. He was up there with them.

Q. Oh? What was his name, do you recall?

A. Butch Day. Butch Day. Old colored gentleman.

Q. Yes. I'd hoped to find him but I find he's dead.

A. He's dead, yes. And I understand his son's dead.

Q. Yes. I've talked to Mrs. Stevens--No, Steve Green, Mrs. Steve Green, and she said they both were dead.

A. Yes.

WC. Do you suppose Paul Hundley would be . . .

A. How's . . .

WC. His mind seems like it's real good.

Q. Now, who is this?

A. He's another colored boy. He's been here all his life. And he's--Well, here in New Town. They moved to the New Shawnee when they moved.

WC. But he's in a nursing home up there.

A. He's up there in the nursing home now.

WC. I think he's there and he has a leg off, but he--Mentally, he's all right. I mean . . .

Q. What is his name?

WC. Hundley. Paul Hundley.

A. Paul Hundley. And he lived next door to this . . .

Q. Butch Day?

A. Butch Day.

WC. Yes.

A. Yes.

Q. And do you recall whether Mr. Hundley ever worked for the bank or in the bank?

A. Well, no. I don't. I don't. But he . . .

WC. He might could recall, you know, something about it or something.

A. I'm pretty sure that he . . .

Q. Where is he?

WC. Loretta Nursing Home out here at New Town.

A. If you had time to get ahold of him, could help you some, too.

WC. Because, I'm sure, cause he's seventy . . . seventy-five or six. Something like that. And he's--his mind is real good, so I'm sure he could recall.

Q. Okay. Yes, those people are kind of hard to find. I was looking for Josephine Daniels. That's her maiden name. She's married again. But she moved north some place and no one seems to know where she was. Jacob Daniels was . . .

A. Jacobs. Josephine Jacobs.

Q. Josephine Jacobs. Yes.

A. Yes. Yes.

Q. Yes. Daniel Jacobs. I've got the name backwards. (laughs) Yes. You don't happen to know where she's located now?

A. No. I understood it was up around Chicago but I don't know. The boys are up around Chicago.

WC. Maybe Mrs. Jacobs . . .

A. Yes! But the old lady Jacobs . . . Now, Paul . . .

WC. Paul might could tell you.

Q. I see. Good.

A. He was pretty smart, pretty shrewd. They classed him to be . . . I don't know what you'd call it but he was pretty smart.

WC. Well, I'll tell you what he was, now. He was mama's boy.

Q. Oh? Well!

WC. She washed and ironed for a living and dressed him with--and the cuffs on his shirt and the collars were so stiff that a fly that lit would have slid off.

Q. My goodness.

WC. Now, that's just the way that he went and . . .

A. Another thing, he went and got in some trouble and he faked insanity and beat that. And he went in the service and he stayed two or three years and he beat that. He got out. However, he's not crazy by a long means. Nothing wrong with him. Nothing.

Q. He was smart enough to beat the rap with that.

A. Pretty shrewd. Yes. Pretty well educated. And that's the reason he could help you. I'm pretty sure he could help you on some of these people here. I know--Now, this Jacobs. I knew all the Jacobs.

Q. Did you ever know any Higgins?

A. Yes. Luther Higgins and they used to live right back up here in the north end of town.

Q. Oh, is that right?

A. And the sister was married to Boney Holmes. What was her name, now? She died long time before Boney. That was Luther's . . .

WC. Edith.

A. Edith.

WC. Edith was her first name.

A. She was a Higgins. Course, I know Paul knows them. He could tell you . . . something about them.

Q. The Higgins girls, Mrs. Mary Sherman remembers them cooking for the Allens . . .

A. Yes, yes. Yes.

Q. . . . when they lived in the bank.

A. Yes, they were.

Q. And we've been trying to run them down and haven't. Well, good.

WC. Well, now, Edith is dead. Now, the rest of them I don't know about.

A. I don't know about Luther. They were real light complected. And good people.

Q. Lillian Higgins is the only name that Mrs. Sherman could recall of-- There were three girls, she thought, that used to cook for them.

WC. Edith, Edith was Boney Holmes' wife's name.

A. Edith and Elizabeth are the two that I--I knew them pretty well.

Q. I see. Okay. Let's see, now. Do you recall when they paved the streets around the bank down there? (pause) Main Street . . .

A. The main street?

Q. Do you remember when that was paved?

A. When they topped it, blacktopped it?

Q. Yes.

A. Oh . . . Let's see. They topped that . . . (pause) Well, it was 1922 or 1924. 1922 or 1924. I believe it was 1924 when they run the highway in here. I'm not sure. I believe it was 1924. And then the State took it over up another block. They didn't do much to it. Just right through the center. And then, after the town separated, the village down here topped all these streets.

Q. Now, that wouldn't have been till after 1937.

A. Right. It was after 1937.

Q. So Main Street, except for a strip down the center, was dirt.

A. They was big, big cobblestones. Real big stones in that street. Heavy stones.

Q. Down the middle of the street, you say?

A. Yes. Yes. They just maintained a narrow strip down the middle of the street.

Q. So, that would have been through the business district there?

A. Yes. And then, later on, when the ferry dis[continued], they stopped right there at the corner at the bank. That was as far as the State went. See, they took their sign down then. The sign, the stop sign, the State did, up to the next corner. And after that, they discontinued . . . that first street. I believe it was 1924 when . . .

Q. Okay. Were there still hitching racks, at that time, around the bank? Do you remember?

A. Yes. I can remember when there was hitch racks. Well, they had, there was rings . . .

WC. Rings, iron rings.

A. Rings, iron rings in the sidewalk.

Q. Oh?

WC. Still are, I think, isn't it?

A. Yes. But those were used for stores or business. They had the delivery wagons. Where they tied horses and up on the other corner where I'm talking about, one block north, there was a hitch rack, where they tied their wagons and horses, that run back west for about, almost

half a block, down to the livery stable, the big livery stable. In that block. Then we get up to the corner, next to the levee, that whole block up there was . . .

Q. Beside where the hotel was there?

A. Across from the--Right where the pump house, the city pump house, you know.

Q. I don't recall that.

A. As you go by the levee--Have you been up--You've been up to the levee.

Q. Yes.

A. Over the levee?

Q. No, I haven't.

A. You haven't been over there. Over on the river front? You've been over on the river front?

Q. No, sir.

A. You haven't. Well, it was next to the levee that comes north. That runs north.

Q. I see.

END OF SIDE ONE.

A. That pump's gone there. There was a city pump and a watering trough. Where they watered their horses.

Q. Where was it from the bank, now?

A. Cross the highway. Cross the highway, about the second building. Just below the second building. The Goetzman, the old Goetzman brother's building. This pump hasn't been gone from there too long, if it's gone. It's gone, though.

WC. I believe it is.

Q. This is just past the Posey building there?

A. Just past the Posey building. There was a pump sit there. And they'd water their horses there. A big trough. It hasn't been gone too many years. And then, on down on the next corner, there was a Farmers Union store. Sat over on the . . . the east side of the street.

Q. Now, this would have been next to the John Marshall home down there? Some place in that vicinity?

A. Yes. Go down the street another block over on the east side, there was another big hitch rack . . . down around the Farmers Union store. And then, getting back to your hitch rack, we were speaking of this alley behind the bank and that store we was talking about . . .

Q. Yes, sir.

A. Well, back in there.

Q. Oh, behind the bank?

A. Behind this store. They tied their horses and wagons.

Q. Now, this was the Harmon store?

A. Harmon store. Behind the--there was a Kroger store or something in there. I can remember there was a garage in there. About the first garage I remember in Shawneetown. They was Shaw. But they was hitch racks. I've seen more wagons and teams in this town than you see cars. That don't sound like it was possible, but it was.

Q. Yes, sir. When that's all they had, why . . . (laughter)

A. Yes. But, you know, you can talk to some of these youngsters. They look at you like you . . .

Q. Don't remember that at all.

WC. Like you're crazy.

A. Yes. I rode to Shawneetown in a wagon several times.

Q. Back to the bank, now. Do you recall anything that we haven't covered so far about the bank? Is there anything that struck you about--particularly the inside?

A. Yes. We didn't--There was some big iron posts or ornamental fixtures that sat out on each corner in the front.

Q. On the balustrades there by the big steps.

A. Yes. Yes.

Q. For lighting?

A. No. They wasn't no lights on it, that I can remember. There could have been lights in time, but I don't think there were because it was just big iron.

Q. I see. Tall posts.

A. And I don't know what in the world happened to them. They was running--They stuck way up, went way up in the air, oh, ten or twelve feet, anyhow. Ten or twelve feet high.

Q. There's one there now, on the right-hand one as you face out the door.

A. Yes. I've climbed around--climbed all over them. But there was one on each corner. Yes, several times, when I was a kid. Then, there was a bannister.

Q. Iron bannister?

WC. Iron all the way around. Yes. I've been up there, too. Stood on that.

A. At one time, that was a beautiful building.

Q. Yes, sir. It apparently was.

A. It was, of course . . .

Q. Hopefully, it's going to be again, too.

A. Yes. I would like to see that. And then, open it where the people could get in and appreciate it.

Q. Well, right now, I think the place where the police magistrate was--that room.

A. Yes.

Q. They're working on that now to try to get it, sometime in the next year, to get it fixed up so that they can put a small museum-type operation in there. Cause having people come to visit and not be able to do any more than look at the outside . . .

WC. See anything, only the outside. That's true.

A. I'd like to see them locate the bank signs, if we could find them.

Q. Yes, sir.

A. Go down and talk to C. L. about that.

Q. Do you think he would be home now?

WC. Yes. He'd be there.

A. Yes. I'm sure he would be down there.

Q. Well, maybe we could run on down there and talk to him.

A. Be glad to go with you.

Q. Okay. Good.

A. Be glad to go with you. And if I can think of anything else, I'll . . .
I've told you about all I can . . .

END OF SIDE TWO.

END OF TAPE.