

## **William McCalla**

Transcript of the oral interview with William McCalla conducted by Emily Salvette at the April 9, 2000 meeting of the Pittsfield Township Historical Society meeting as part of a demonstration of oral history techniques. Mr. McCalla reviewed the transcript and made no corrections.



### **Interview Summary**

William McCalla was born on April 5, 1923 in the house known as Broadview Farm, 4100 Stone School Road, Pittsfield Township. He is the son of Charles and Anna (nee Morgan) McCalla who built the farm about 1916. Charles McCalla came from the Trenton, Michigan area. Anna was from Pittsfield Township's well established Morgan family.

Mr. McCalla grew up on Broadview Farm with his five brothers and one sister. He attended Stone School, Roosevelt High School in Ypsilanti., and Michigan State Agricultural Short Course. He married Jean Guy and they raised their 5 children (Judy, JoAnn, Laurie, Chip, and Louise) on Broadview Farm. Mr. McCalla's farming experience ranges from using teams of horses and milking cows by hand, to using cutting-edge farming techniques in raising championship Chester White hogs. Mr. McCalla has retired from farming and sold off all but 12 acres of his holdings. His son Chip still farms near Milan, Michigan.

This interview focuses primarily on changes in farming procedures through the 20th century.

### **Transcript Contents -- Outline**

- Name, family, and Broadview Farm
- Education
- Platt Road gravel pit
- Changes in farming
- Memories of WW II, health care, first car
- Hog farming operation
- Family connections, community groups
- Changes in Pittsfield Township
- Family traditions
- Electricity coming to the farm
- Women working on the farm
- Township farm families

### **William McCalla Interview**

**B:** William McCalla  
**I:** Emily Salvette  
**F:** Unidentified Female

**F2:** Second Unidentified Female  
**F3:** Third Unidentified Female  
**M:** Unidentified Male

[pre-interview remarks about oral history project unrelated to interview]

**I:** Mr. McCalla, are you ready to start?

**B:** I'm ready.

**I:** Do you mind if I call you Bill? Or do you ...?

**B:** No, no. Call me that.

**I:** Or that ...? Okay. You prefer I call you Bill. Okay. First thing I'm going to do is mark the tape. This ... I'm Emily Hopp Salvette and I'm doing an oral history interview with William McCalla on April 9<sup>th</sup>, the year 2000, at the Pittsfield Administration Building. And Mr. McCalla, thank you for being here today and talking with me about this. First, I thought maybe we could start out with your family. You were born in Pittsfield Township?

**B:** Right.

**I:** What were your parents' names?

**B:** Charles and Anna.

**I:** Charles and Anna McCalla?

**B:** My mother, who lived right down the road there, she was a Morgan and the road was named after ... after her. Or after that family rather. They've been there for many, many years, you know.

**I:** Uh-huh.

**B:** There, but that's ... my dad was a ... a hired man for them there, and that's how he met my mother when they got married.

**I:** Oh, I see. Now how many brothers and sisters do you have?

**B:** I have five brothers and one sister. I had them. I've lost two brothers in the last few years here. It's been about ten years now, but, the rest of us, our family is still flowing.

**I:** Have you, um ... did they live in the Township also or ...?

**B:**

Well, ah, quite a bit of the time, but they ... they have since moved out. My one brother moved out by Mason, the oldest brother. And then another one ... we run the feed mill in Ann Arbor also and one brother run that, Raymond, and helped with my dad. He sold insurance and worked up there for ... it's right where --what's the name of the place on the corner of ...? The Farmer's Market, right next to Farmer's Market is Kerrytown, and that's ... that's where our elevator was and that's when it was sold and that's when they changed it over to both of them buildings there, so ...

I:

Do you know when your family originally came to Pittsfield Township?

B:

Oh, I believe about 1914, I guess, there ... in there. '14, '15, yeah.

I:

Where did they come from?

B:

I think my dad started down by Trenton.

I:

Oh, okay.

B:

And our home was built there I think in 1916, there my dad built the, the house in 1915 or 16, when ... it was all ... there was a house there and it was burned down and then they built this other house.

I:

Now that's the house, 4100 ... 4100 Stone School Road?

B:

Right, right.

I:

Broadview Farm is what it's called?

B:

Yeah, yeah.

I:

Okay. Were you born in that house?

B:

Yes, I was.

I:

Interesting. Huh. And you married Jean Guy?

B:

Yeah.

I:

And had how many children?

B:

Five. She was, ah ... she was in Stone School when ... when I was and ... and we have the ... Mrs. Walton was our teacher and I was just telling her son, who's here, Ray, and she was the best teacher that we ever did have, that she just ... when she said something, like everybody understood it, and you, ah, you did what she said, you know. And so... and remembered her very well, you know, so ... that was great. But that's ... and then she went to Ann Arbor High School. I went to Roosevelt in Ypsilanti [sounds like Yspilantah], but I met up with her after that and, then we were married in 1949.

I:

And do you have any children still in the Township? Living in the Township?

**B:**

Yeah, my son. Well, no, he's moved down to Milan now, so he's not really in the Township either. No, I don't have any ... any children living in there. There's one living in Blissfield and one in Deerfield and then one up at Rochester, Michigan -- my oldest daughter. And I have one out in Des Moines, Iowa there. She's busy, she's a editor for a farm magazine out there.

**I:**

I see. I'm going to stop the tape for a second and just make sure that everything's working.

**B:**

All right.

[testing unrelated to interview]

**I:**

Um, what was it like to be in Stone School? I know that's a ... experience some of the Pitts ...lot of people in Pittsfield Township went to Stone School and what was it like when you were there?

**B:**

Well, we had a really nice teacher there too. And my dad, by the way, helped build the Stone School there ... and he was president of the school board there for many years there ... but it was a one-room school. We went up to the fourth grade I believe and in fifth grade you went across the road to the old wooden building that Mrs. Walton was teaching over there, and that was ...

**I:**

So that was the Roosevelt School?

**B:**

Oh, no, no. Roosevelt's in Ypsilanti. That's ...

**I:**

Oh, okay.

**B:**

... the high school.

**I:**

Okay.

**B:**

We went through the eighth grade. We finished eighth grade at Stone School, and then we went to ninth grade into Ypsilanti.

**I:**

Okay.

**I:**

How many kids were in your class?

**B:**

I believe only about eight. I think. Yeah.

**I:**

Uh-hm.

**B:**

Eight or nine maybe. I can't recall that for sure, but something like that.

**I:**

Uh-hm. Do you remember the names of any of your neighbors around ...

**B:** Well ...

**I:** ... around the Township at that time?

**B:** ... Carl Ernst was in our class, one of them, and, oh, I don't know, I can't ... I guess I ... if you'd a told me before, I would have probably remembered him some, but I can't tell you ...

**I:** Sorry (laughs).

**B:** I know a couple of them have passed away already, too, that were in our class, and so ... Yeah, one of them was a ... was a ... is a ... works at the Krogers store up there. Miley, Priscilla Miley, she went to Stone School and there and so she's still there. I see her often.

**I:** Okay. Okay. And, ah, you graduated then from high school at what year, would that have ...?

**B:** '42.

**I:** Okay.

**B:** Yeah.

**I:** Did you go in the military?

**B:** No.

**I:** Go there?

**B:** No. I had the ... from playing football, I had a bone broke in my knee and I wasn't taken. I had two brothers that went to the service and, but I didn't go. But for that, I would have been gone.

**I:** Uh-hm. Uh-hm. Did anyone get farming exemptions? Was that something that was common?

**B:** No ... they did ... they did some of them, yeah. My ... my two other brothers had families. They had two kids apiece there, and I guess that's what ... they were on the farm too, you know, and farming but I'm not ... I just don't recall about that. That was a long time ago, you know.

**I:** Well, you had said that your earliest memory of, um, Pittsfield Township was when you were getting gravel out of the gravel pit.

**B:** Well, that's one of them. And the big gravel pit was at the ... the corner of Platt Road and Ellsworth there. That was a tremendous hole down in there. And I used to go with a team of horses and a wagon and, and load a, load a wagon by hand there, and then the horses would be quite a pull to come up out of there, but I remember hauling many loads. And then when you got back to where you want to dump it in your driveway or in your lane or something, why, you had six-inch boards. You take a chain that goes around and you take that chain off and you would lift up the sideboards and then you'd take each one of them, and that's ... that would let

the gravel fall down. You didn't have to shovel it off by hand, but you had to put all them back together and go back and get another load. So ...

I:

Hm. Well, you farmed with horses?

B:

Yes, we did. Yeah, for ...

I:

Can you talk about that a little bit?

B:

For ...

I:

What was that like?

B:

... for many years there, I would ... bought a new tractor in 1936, one of the first tractors was a co- op tractor and it was there ...come off of a line at Battle Creek. They had just started making there. My dad was a farm bureau representative and he bought the tractor but that ... that took gasoline, and that tractor sit in the garage when we, we had horses to use there and the gasoline was probably about 16 cents a gallon or so back then, but, we had 20 head of horses and we drove, we farmed with horses there for quite a while so ... and had horses ever since there, pretty much but we ... we'd done a lot of things with the tractors and it's unbelievable what, what has happened to ... from then to now, you know, I mean, it's ... And farming in the last two years has made tremendous changes. I mean, it takes a real businessman to farm today. I mean, you just can't do it with 160 acres and think you can own some machinery to get the job done, because it can't ... it can't be done. There my son farms yet, and he farms quite a bit, but he's got really expensive equipment. But he plants 100 acres of corn a day and he can go from there. He's got ... all the grounds has been worked last fall and fertilizer been put on, and he'll put some more fertilizer with the corn, when he plants it, but it has to be timely, and you put in when you ... when you need it to be put in, and he will start probably the 18<sup>th</sup> of this month planting, if it's... if the ground is ready and the ground is dry, it's ready to plant, you know. It would be there. But ... take ... you'd have to be ... if you had somebody had a \$100,000 I wouldn't know how to tell them to start farming. There would be no way they could ... could buy equipment to farm or what they start out with. The tractor's \$100,000 alone for one big tractor and a combine is \$160,000 for that and, let's say, and the corn planter alone is \$26,000 and so you just ... it's just unbelievable what it takes to do it. But you have to have that many acres to pay for that kind of equipment, you know. You can't do it on a small acreage, you know.

I:

When you were then growing up, has it ... it had already started changing, hadn't it? So ...

B:

Well ...

I:

... that you didn't have young people going into farming like, you know, in the centuries before, did they?

B:

No, well, it's a ... I was always working more ground than ... than some of the other neighbors around. I mean, you know, because I had family to look after and was into other things too. We ... we'd make a lot of hay and deliver hay and straw ...to people with horses, you know, and so on. And ... and then we had hogs. I was in the purebred hog business for, oh, 70 years almost. I guess my dad had them before I did, and I showed to the Michigan State Fair for 55 years. But

that was our ... our big thing. We ... we had nearly a thousand head of hogs there, and, well, for up to ninety ... '95 I guess, '96, there, when we finally got rid of them. Our equipment needed to be up to dated and we was close to town there too. Not that we had any complaints. When people would go by the farm, we'd ask them to come in and look at the pigs, if they wanted to see the baby pigs and so on, you know, and ... and so we had pretty good relations with ... with people there doing that. But we ... we sold hogs in several states and around and all over the State of Michigan, we'd deliver them to different people and ... We had two breeds that we ... we raised and ... was quite a ... experience. Our kids grew up in 4-H and they remember showing at the fairs and was something they will always remember, and they ... they're already starting to get their kids involved in it, in 4-H and so on, you know.

I:

Hm. Hm. But most of the people, by the time your kids were growing up in the 60, late 60s and 70s, already it had suburbanized in Pittsfield Township around here or not?

B:

Well, somewhat. So we ... we worked a farm over ... over on State Street there where McDonald's is and ... and, ah, where Bill Knapps is, and ...

I:

Oh, yeah.

B:

... all that ground over there for over ... there the Shenk farm was owned by the Shenk farm brothers then, and ... for many years, you know, before it got growing out there even, you know, and Briarwood, some of Briarwood even, we worked there.

I:

Oh, okay.

B:

It certainly come out and then on State Street, we worked a lot there, and we worked a lot of the Avis Farms where they were back in there. We worked that for many years back over to Lohr Road, you know, so ...

I:

Uh-hm.

B:

Yeah.

I:

When do you, um, remember having the ... the most change? I mean, what decade do you think was the most change oriented for, um, Pittsfield Township? Maybe not just ...

B:

Oh, nothing gets ... compared what's it's been the last ten years, you know.

I:

Yeah.

B:

It's been fantastic, or even five years. But there was a period there where things stood still. I mean, pretty much so. I'd say five, six years anyhow, you know, there that ...

I:

When was that?

B:

Well, let's go back to the last six years ago, or something like that, you know, even ...

I:

Uh-hm.

**B:** ... seven years ago.

**I:** Uh-hm.

**B:** Yet I know ...

**I:** What was it like during the war years? In ...

**B:** Well, we ...

**I:** ... World War II, I mean.

**B:** ... we had trouble, you know, getting gasoline and so on and stuff was rationed and ... but we ... we had our own meat and we had vegetables, you know, and so on, so we were in better shape probably than a lot of people would have been, you know, there ... but it was different, I mean, you ... you know, you couldn't buy ... you know, you had to buy used equipment, you couldn't buy new equipment, you know. It wasn't available, but ... ah, it was ... different kind of way to farm then.

**I:** Uh-hm.

**B:** Yeah.

**I:** Do you remember, um, do you remember any differences in health care in the ... I mean, did ... I presume your wife didn't have her children in Broadview Farms. Did she go to the hospital, or did she have the kids at home?

**B:** Oh, she went to the hospital but was only there for two or three days, you know, and then ...

**I:** Uh-hm.

**B:** ... you know, be ... bring them back home. Yeah, they were all born in the hospital.

**I:** Did you ever have any operations when you were young to ... like the doctor coming in? Do you have any recollections of that, or ...?

**B:** Coming to the house there?

**I:** Yeah.

**B:** Oh, I don't know whether I'd ... I'd busted my leg twice there, and I went to the hospital both times for that, you know, so ...

**I:** Uh-hm. Uh-hm.

**B:** Yeah.

**I:**



Uh-hm. What do you remember about your first car, for example?

**B:** Back in 1941, I got a ... or '40 ... yeah, '41 or so, I bought an old one and had to do some fixing up on it, but I done fine with it, you know, and it run great, you know.

**I:** Were the roads pretty good, or ...?

**B:** Oh, yeah. Oh, they were ... I think back then we were even scraping the roads. My uncle had a big scraper and we'd pull with a tractor and scrape Stone School Road, you know, and so ...

**I:** Oh.

**B:** ... it was decent to go on there, you know.

**I:** Hm. Um, I'm going to ... I, I don't want to do this all by myself, so I ... if the audience has anything ... anything that they would like to ask, um, let's get everybody involved in this. Yes sir.

**M:** I think he was real too ... way too modest. He ought to tell, when he was talking about the pigs being distributed, because of the ... the breeding quality of the pigs. They weren't just being sold as pigs. He was ... he was very modest. You ought to ask him more about that.

**B:** Huh.

**I:** Okay. Let me ask you more about your pigs. That, what kind of ... what kind of stock did you raise and ...?

**B:** We had ...

**I:** ... tell us a little bit more about that.

**B:** ... the Chester Whites. My dad started out with Chester Whites way back in ... and he showed hogs too even. We used to load ... load down to the railroad, down by, well, what is it?, where Marcia lives down there. What do they call that there? Huh?

**F:** Pittsfield Junction.

**B:** Pittsfield Junction. Yeah. We used to load hogs there on a freight car and they'd be taken to a fair, be shown in Ohio -- not by me, but my broth ... my dad did and my brother, oldest brother did, and so on, but that was a long time back, but ... then we started going with trucks but I used to cover seven or eight fairs there, ah, around the state and then to the county fairs and ... and we'd sell breeding stock there, and also they'd come to the farm afterwards. They could see your stock and then come to, back to the farm and we a ... we had a good reputation with ... with the hogs and it was ... was a big ... a big business for us. We not only did the farming, but we had many different buildings and we were the first building to raise our pure-bred hogs on cement slabs. We didn't have them out on the lots. They had to be on the cement, you know, and then they had to have better feet and legs in order to ... to go ahead and be in a breeding program so that was a change there, but it was ... it was quite a ... quite a thrill to go to the state fairs and to the national shows. We showed out to Austin, Minnesota there ... and I think the

greatest pleasure that my mother and dad had, they took the hogs out there, and they ... they had a reserve champion out there to this national show and had a picture of that, and I think they ... they enjoyed that more than anything they've ever done. You know, so ...

I:

Oh, for heaven's sakes.

B:

Yeah.

I:

Well, you say you were on the State Farm Management Tour ... was held at Broadview Farm, you were saying.. When was that?

B:

Oh, boy. I can't remember the year. Maybe back in the late 50s or so and 60s in there, I don't know. Yeah. We had a lot of people come to that there and ... and you know, look over the situation and so on. And we had many people come there to ... for judging contests, there judging teams from around ... from the state college and some of the other ones would come and use some of our hogs for judging and so on.

I:

Hm. Hm.

B:

Yeah.

I:

Well, how many people, ah, did ... did it take to run this operation? How many people did you supervise when it was going?

B:

Mostly, I had probably one man or two men but my kids all grew up knowing how to work, I'll tell you that. They [laughter] ... But I don't think they regret it today, but I ... one daughter was around, I should have had her come along (laughs). But anyhow, they could ... they could load a load of hay and deliver it. One girl is quite small. She's only five foot just like her ... like her mother, but she could ... she could handle bales and take and deliver them, 150 bales on a truck and there'd be no problem, you know. But ... and they still, I'll tell you, they even last year, they ... they come around to help my son one day and unloaded 11 loads of 150 bales each in the barn, and they were tired that night. Okay. They remember doing it anyhow (laughs).

I:

Now you showed me a picture of your extended ... your family as it is now.

B:

Yeah, yeah.

I:

With the grandchildren ...

B:

Yeah, yeah.

I:

... you get those young ones involved? Are they ...?

B:

Well, they're starting to. My son's got two ... he's got two sons, and golly, the one's only 12 years old, but he can handle bales and he runs the tractors and he ... he does the ... does the whole thing, you know. I may ... I think he asks him too much to do, really, but he ... he can not only run them, he knows how to do some work on them also. And so he's ...

I:

Twelve years old.

**B:** ... twelve years old. And he can back a baler up to the wagon just as easy as anything, you know, and hook onto it or ... yeah, they are really good kids.

**I:** And you have on the farm now some horses and ...

**B:** Yes.

**I:** ... and ... but everything is at this point gone? Is that what I understand?

**B:** Well, I have a ... I have a pair of ... of driving horses and I've had the one for quite a long while, and now I've got another one from a fellow... we hook to the buggy and ... and go down the road with them. I even come over here and went to Burger King one night with a horse and buggy (laughs, laughter).

**I:** Did you go through the drive-through window, I hope?

**B:** Yes, I did. Went through the drive- through window. Yeah (laughs, laughter). But, ah, we ... we go around the block and ... many times and I think I'm ... was it New Year's Day, was a nice day and we went, I believe, it was really warm. Either it was ... it was really warm out. I believe it was New Year's Day or something we ... we went for a ride in the buggy.

**I:** Hm. Okay.

**B:** I have a few goats that I monkey around ... and then they have babies and I sell them. And I have a pair of ponies now that I bought here about a month ago or so, and I ... they're broke to drive and to ride and I'll ... I'll monkey with them and then maybe sell them later this summer or something like that. And, it's kind of fun to ... I was ... I've always had livestock and I need to have something I have to ... I have to look after my wife all the time there and it's pretty ... she can't talk at all or anything and so ... She has Alzheimers, it's going on twelve years already and ... but I have helped come ... my kids come when they can and then I have ... hospice comes in twice a week to help we'll clean her up and give her a bath and so on ... you know, so it's ... been pretty well that way, but it's still pretty quiet in the evenings, there. There's a volunteer, two volunteers that come and stay for a while in the evenings too, and that's kind of nice. I guess that's for me to go out someplace, but I don't ever go out and just stay and visit with them, because it's so nice to have somebody to talk to there, so ... Yeah.

**I:** Well, we'll get you out doing oral history interviews.

**B:** (laughs)

**I:** Or something. Do we ... what other questions do we have? Yeah. Tina.

**T:** Is McCalla Feed over toward Chelsea, is that your family?

**B:** Yes. That's a ... that's a nephew of mine there. Ralph run the ... my brother run the store there and he had Belgian horses and his son still has Belgian horses and he shows all around. They ...

they bought a young colt the year before my brother passed away and he -- a stallion -- and he ... he's turned out to be a terrific good ... good horse, and he's the ... he showed at the Indiana State Fair, the Michigan State Fair. In fact, he had the first place four-horse hitch at three different state fairs there two years ago, and he's done every well with him and this ... I think we were offered \$25,000 for this stallion here now, and I just wish my brother could have had another year to have enjoyed that, you know. But he ... they have a ... they have a six-horse hitch and they ... they're doing very well with him, you know. They're up at Chelsea, just outside of Chelsea a little bit there, but, yeah.

**I:**

Let me ... let me just interject here. I need to repeat all the questions before we ... before you answer them so that it gets on that mike, okay?

**B:**

You bet.

**I:**

Okay. Yes, Marcia.

**M:**

Were you or are you a member of the Farm Bureau or the Grange or any of other activities?

**B:**

Not of the Grange but been a member of the Farm Bureau for many, many years and I was on the Board of Directors of the Washtenaw Farm Council over there. My brother was instrumental in moving from the City of Ann Arbor out to that ... that grounds there, you know, and so we've been involved with that for a long time. Yeah.

**I:**

What were some other families who were involved in ... in that? In ...

**B:**

Oh, there's some in ... the Lessor family in Dexter and there's different ones that ... ah, I know of that have been ... been involved with it, you know.

**I:**

Uh-hm.

**B:**

The Burmeisters are up in there. They got involved with it, and ...

**I:**

Yes.

**F:**

We know that farming is a lot of hard work and it takes a lot of time. But what did you do for fun as a ... a young person, either real young or teenager or young adult?

**I:**

What'd you do for fun?

**B:**

We called ... I guess I had a riding horse when I was a kid and I'd ... I'd go riding maybe in the evening or something, a little bit and then on Sundays there, I have some pictures I think maybe over there of my riding horses, or something, but I've had ... and that's ... that's about what it ... what it amounted to. You didn't go to any picture shows and we had a 4-H club, but we'd play baseball maybe on a Sunday or something a bit, you know, but it was ... it was pretty much mostly work, you know.

**I:**

Who ... what 4-H club were you in? Do you remember anything about it?

**B:**

No. I can't ... My dad was the co-leader of it for ... for a long time, but I can't even know what it's called there now.

I:

I wondered if it was still in existence.

B:

Yeah.

I:

Hm.

B:

Well, my kids went through the one in Saline, the Saline 4-H Farmers.

I:

Yeah.

B:

They just celebrated their ... here, a while back, their 50 years, I believe. Yeah. Yeah. And they were involved with that and yes, so ... knew that whole family, you know, the Lutzs.

I:

Yeah. Hm. What do you remember about like ... religious activity and did you go to a church with a lot of other farm families?

B:

No, not really. Went to the West Side there, the Methodist Church, the United ... in Ann Arbor, to the First Methodist, and then we ... we went to the West Side Methodist after they were there and so that's where our whole family's been involved with them over there.

I:

Uh-hm. Uh-hm.

B:

Yeah.

I:

Did you, um ... and this was another question I wanted ... I had forgotten about. The ... was there ever a clash the ... the farm versus suburban or town that ... that you're aware of, that ...?

B:

No, no. I didn't, no. I don't remember growing up with anything like that, you know.

I:

Like those darn city slickers coming out and taking our land or something like that?

B:

No, no. None of that. No.

I:

What ... what, um, what kind of factors do you see, um, is ... as being pretty important in causing the changes that have gone about in Pittsfield Township over the course of your life time? Can you list some factors?

B:

Well, there's only ... I don't know, whether there's three or four farmers left in Pittsfield Township, I believe about now, and ... and maybe who knows in two years. Maybe they won't even be that, you know, but, it's ... it's certainly changed in a ... in big hurry, you know, all the land just being developed. We used to farm down on Ellsworth Road beyond Meijers there on the right all the way down to Golfside there was 300 and some acres there, 400 acres, I believe. That's all being ... and there's one field left there and we disked it last fall, but that's going to be developed, I think. It's left 34 acres that are left there and I believe that's going to be developed

now too, there this coming year, so I'm ... no, but there is so ... that was some more of us that's disappeared.

**I:**

And that's because of demand? I mean, is that what you see? Some ... you know, some other factors might be taxes, um ...

**B:**

Yeah.

**I:**

I don't know.

**B:**

Well, it just seems like there's no end to the housing that's being built. I have no idea where these people are coming from but they ... it's not just on this side of Ann Arbor. Pittsfield it's clear ... clear around the city of Ann Arbor. I mean, they're just as bad out Jackson way or out ... but west of town is just as bad too. There's all kind of building going up out there and certainly, ah, down towards Ypsi here, ah ... the other side of Stony Creek Road and back in there, it's just hundreds of new houses being built off in there. Can't even remember the road there. What's the first road the other side of ... of Stony Creek Road?

**I:**

You're asking the wrong person.

**B:**

(laughs)

**I:**

Does anybody know?

**B:**

It's ...

**M:**

Could it be Munger?

**B:**

Ah, no.

**M:**

Stony Creek, um ...

**B:**

No, it's ... I don't know.

**I:**

I know ... yeah, I know.

**B:**

Yeah. But anyhow I've been down that horse ... There's a fellow gots horses down there, he's got one of my horses really, but he ... I take hay down there to him and it's just a tremendous amount of new homes down there being built. One farmer sold his farm for a million dollars, 180 acres or something like that, and that's all being developed.

**I:**

Uh-hm. Yeah, it's hard to compete with that kind of demand, I mean, it's ...

**B:**

Yeah.

**I:**

How much land do you have left now?

**B:**

Only 12 acres there, yeah.

**I:** Twelve acres there.

**B:** Yeah.

**I:** Okay. Yeah.

**B:** Yeah.

**I:** Yes, ma'am?

**F:** Do you have a plan to preserve your farm?

**I:** Is there a plan to preserve your farm?

**B:** I'm going to stay there till the ... end of my ... end of my lifetime. Yeah (laughs). That's ... that's understood pretty much, and I intend to have some livestock around long as I'm able to take care of it anyhow.

**I:** Are your ... are your children plan ... is there something that the kids are going to try to preserve it? Or are you going to try to sell it into some kind of historic trust or something?

**B:** Oh, I don't know. I can't ... I can't decide for them, you know, what they would do with it after something happens to me, you know, but I ... that's ...that's ... that's pretty hard to say, you know. But then we do have a six grain bins there that hold a lot of grain and my son uses them every year and so ... and other buildings there too, you know. But ...

**I:** Yeah.

**B:** It's just so many things can happen, you know, there ... in the years, and so it's hard to say what would happen there, yeah.

**I:** I can't think ... what else? Yes, ma'am.

**F:** I was thinking back when ... you think back about growing up and raising your family in Pittsfield Township. What are some the traditions that would come to mind? What do they mean ... traditional festivals within the Township, or how your family may have celebrated certain holidays?

**I:** Traditions in the family, and how the family might have celebrated certain holidays in Pittsfield.

**B:** Well, it depends on their ... seems like on the fourth of July, we'd try to celebrate, then maybe go out to a lake with cousins ... an uncle that had a cabin out to Silver Lake and we might spend the ... spend the day out there with a picnic or something like that. But some of the other days, I mean, there's always chores to do. I mean, there was milking cows both morning and night and then that was a ... it was a, you know, you had to take care of them so it wasn't too much time in between there, but ... And we'd have Christmas dinner, you know, there. The family would come together and celebrate that, but some of the other holidays, I guess, you know, Easter we'd try

to have a dinner at Easter time and ... but that's ... It wasn't a ... it wasn't a really big celebration anyhow, you know, but it was ... our family got together on those days, you know.

**I:**

The ... you have a picture of the extend ... your parents with their family and ...

**B:**

Yeah, yeah.

**I:**

... it ... it looks like, well, an army of people. So you're saying that families getting together like that and reunion situation types like that was...

**B:**

We try to get together our family. Every two years we have a ... a kind of a reunion now. And there's a 126 in ... in our family that originated from my mother and dad. At that ... it's 4100 Stone School Road so that's spread around, you know, there, but there are 126 people that ... as a result of that.

**I:**

When did your parents die? When?

**B:**

Oh ...

**I:**

In the 50s? 60s?

**B:**

In the 60s, yes. Yeah.

**I:**

Sixties.

**B:**

Yeah, it was in the 60s that they passed away. My dad was 83 and had a heart attack and ...

**I:**

Uh-hm.

**B:**

... and my mother was three years later.

**I:**

Tell me once again who your parents were, in case I didn't get it on the tape.

**B:**

Well, it was Charles and Anna McCalla. Yeah.

**I:**

And Anna's maiden name ...

**B:**

Was Morgan. Anna Morgan. Yeah.

**I:**

Try to cover our mistakes.

**B:**

Yeah.

**I:**

Any ... do we have any other questions from the audience? Any ... Can anybody think of anything that I should have covered that I didn't?

**B:**

It might be interesting when they acquired electricity and when they didn't have electricity on that farm.



**I:** Yeah. Can you talk about, um, some of the amenities ...

**B:** Well, I can ....

**I:** ... of modern life, and when they came to the farm?

**B:** I can remember ... I can remember carrying lanterns into our cow barn and milking ... milking cows with a lantern and we had lamps in the house. I suppose it's back in the 30s there sometime that we ... we finally got electricity, you know, but it was, you know, light here and a light there. They weren't very close together, I'll tell you that. You had one would go a long ways, you know, and so it was really a big ... big jump you know, when we ... when we got electricity.

**I:** You were milking by hand till when?

**B:** Well, I'd have to kind of guess at that. I suppose it was in \_\_\_\_\_ ... I'd say about '38, '39 or something, they might ... they might a got a milking machine in, but I was milking 23 cows by hand. And my mother would come out and milk cows and she ... she'd done that till she was 70 some years old, you know.

**I:** Uh-hm.

**B:** She was a worker like you couldn't believe, you know, and you could hardly keep her from doing it too. It wasn't she had to do it, she just liked to do it, you know, come out and help. And my grandmother was milking cows and her mother on Morgan Road there till 80 years old, and she was still milking cows. Yeah. They only had a few, I mean, four or five or so, but they ... they come out to milk them, you know.

**I:** Well, it might be a nice chance to ask about the roles of the genders in a farm family like that. I mean, were the women just out there doing just about everything that had to be done, no matter what? And everybody just works? Or was there ...

**B:** Yeah.

**I:** ... specific ... a lot more specific tasking?

**B:** Well, I'll tell you my wife certainly did work. She ... she had a garden, she mowed the lawn, and she drove a tractor on the baler and she notched the baby pigs and give them iron and I don't know how she could have got so much done, but she certainly did, and I ... and so my mother worked, cooked, you know, anytime ... same way with my wife. People come there to buy hogs or something, it was noon time, why they'd come in and sit down and have dinner with us, you know. There was no ifs and ands and buts about that, you know, and so, um, but ... they ... they done a lot of work, you know. She wrote an article about ... my wife did about driving the baler, about the signs that I give (laughs), you know, was ... was published in Farm Journal and so ...

**I:** Uh-hm.

**B:**

... she got a check for \$50 for that, and so that was quite something. She got many letters from around the country relate ... relating to it too, you know. Yeah, she was able to write stories. She ... she was involved with a pork association. She was a ... represented Michigan at the national ... there. In fact, one of my daughters was National Pork Princess there and that's how she met her husband out there from Missouri. But she ... she's got plaques at home where she's served on different committees at the national level and with a lot, with the state level too. We used to do a lot, you know, with ... with pork producers in the state of Michigan, you know.

I:

Uh-hm.

B:

I also showed horses. I raised Belgian horses and sold them for a few years till they got to be so cheap it was hard to ... hard to ... now they're very expensive. I mean, you get a good ... a good draft horse is probably worth a thousand dollars or so. And now that they're in ... But back then, I don't know when I got rid of my horses, the last ones, but three hundred dollars is what I got off a terrific good mare, you know, and this fellow down in Ohio raised five more colts from her, you know, after that, after I'd sold her, and so he's ... he'd done very well with them, yeah.

I:

Yes.

F:

You were related, your ... your mom ... your mom's related to the Morgans that are ... there's Jenny Morgan's farm and then where Greg Crosdell's living now too.

B:

Yeah, yeah.

F:

Was that a Morgan Farm?

B:

Oh, yes, that was the original Morgan Farm, the big house there. Oh, yes. Uh-huh.

F:

And then you're ... so your mom grew up in that ... in that house?

B:

Yes.

F:

Oh!

B:

Yeah, yeah.

F:

Do you remember anything about the people that lived like on my farm, on Textile Road?

B:

Well, the Kaisers were there for quite a while, but I don't know of ... what that farm was called before that. I guess I could ... might have ...

F:

Oh, that was ... supposedly it was Campbell that owned it originally. But that would have been a long time ago.

B:

Yeah, yeah. But I don't know ... I know ... the Kaisers owned it there for quite a while too, theirs and ...

F:

Do you know when they sold it? I still get mail for them.

**B:** Is that right?

**F:** Yeah!

**B:** Is that right, huh?

**F:** It comes to me.

**B:** Oh, boy, that was a long time ago. And Mrs. Kaiser married Jake April I believe, didn't she? Do you recall that? But anyhow ... and they ... so I ... I don't know, ah ... well, I can't tell you them dates.

**F:** This was 30 years ago?

**F2:** \_\_\_\_\_

**F3:** \_\_\_\_\_

**F2:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I:** Tina, what's your address?

**T:** 151 East Textile.

**I:** East Textile.

**T:** It's the corner of Martin and Textile.

**I:** The question is about the farm at Martin and Textile.

**T:** Yeah. Yeah. Especially the older buildings in the area. What was Martin Road named after? Who was the Martin Road named after?

**B:** I can't tell you that either. It's been that way a long time, but I don't know ...

**F:** Was it named Martin or Morgan?

**F2:** Martin. Martin.

**B:** There could have been a Martin down there were Polise (?) lived. There could have been a Martin lived there at one time. That might have been back in those times when they're naming the roads, you know. They're long time leaving their names on them, you know, far as that goes. Yeah.

**I:** Any other questions? Anything else? Well, we've been going along about 50 minutes, or about 45 minutes or so.

**B:**

I: Yeah.

I: Um, we ... oh, yeah, Mr Lillie

M: I have a lot of questions for you. Ones I've never got the answers for. This ... Do you have a picture of the railroad station at the Pittsfield Junction?

I: Do you have a picture of the railroad station at Pittsfield Junction?

M: Right.

I: Ah, I don't recall there that, but maybe one of my brothers might have one like that. I could ... I could probably find that out, but I ... I can remember a picture when we was loading ... when they were loading onto one of the freight cars there, but I don't recall seeing it for a while, but maybe one of my other brothers have that. Uh-huh.

M: We're trying to ... that's one of the missing features of the archives right now, with ...

B: Is that right?

M: ... \_\_\_\_ all of these ...

B: Yeah.

M: ... these historic pictures of World War II, in the archives.

B: Yeah.

M: So any of those kind of things that you might have ...

B: Oh.

M: ... that we could even copy ...

B: Okay.

M: ... would be very ...

B: All right.

I: Mr. Lillie is asking for historic pictures for the Pittsfield Township Archives. Uh- hm.

I: Yes, Ralph. Did you have a question?

M: No.

I: Okay. I have to remark the tape because we don't have the beginning of this interview on tape. So I'm just going to say that, thank you very much. William McCalla who is interviewed at

Pittsfield Administration Building on April 9<sup>th</sup>, the year 2000, by Emily Hopp Salvette. And I appreciate you being here very much. And we'll all be talking, and please don't say anything interesting once the tape has stopped (laughter). Thank you very much.

**B:**

You're welcome.

[clapping]

The End