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AMHERST HARDY

Local History Interview

LOCAL HISTORY

This is the 28th day of February 1990. My name is Robert Williams. I'm visiting today with Mr. Amherst Hardy, a Decatur resident, and we're in the Decatur Public Library for this conversation.

Q. Mr. Hardy, you told me earlier that you are a lifelong resident of Decatur up to this point. Could you tell me a little bit about your early childhood experiences in this community?

A. Yes. I'm not really an old timer. Of course, there are plenty of people older than I still around yet, but probably half of my high school class of 1928 are still living. Yes, I was born in Decatur in 1911 in a house on West William Street where I lived till I was one year old. I recall nothing about that. My first recollection probably is when my father bought a car in 1915, a Jeffrey. We took a few trips in that. There were no paved roads in the state at that time. I believe we went to Wisconsin at one time and into Indiana -- trips were pretty dusty and a good part of the time was spent changing tires. In 1920 we took a trip back to New England. That went all right except the car gave out on the return trip. We had to leave it in Cleveland, Ohio. A friend went back and picked it up for us. But never the less we went into Maine, Vermont, and New Hampshire. That was quite a feat in those days.

Now of my early recollection. I recall World War I. I was in the first grade of school. We were supposed to bring old clothing and snip it up for some reason or other. I believe it was to go into pillows for the soldiers. Whether any of it got there or not I don't know. Another thing we were to save nut shells -- those were suppose to go into gas masks. And then at that time Millikin University has a SATC -- believe that meant Student Army Training Corps. And I remember the barracks buildings on Millikin. At that time I lived in the 1400 of West Macon not far from Millikin. I remember the students drilling and they marched past the house. My father would bring home the newspaper and they would run a map in a window with pins where the front lines of the troops were in France. That is my earliest recollection.

I went to Dennis School. Then it had just four rooms with a little over a hundred students. Then three years at Roosevelt Junior High School and then three years at Decatur High School on North Franklin Street. My first home room in high school was in the Shellabarger Building -- that was the old David Shellabarger home and the old living rooms had been converted into classrooms. It was still standing at the time of my graduation, but was torn down a few years later.

- Q. Just a couple of questions to probe here -- on that trip you took to Maine, that was quite a daring adventure in 1920. You indicated a lot of flat tires. Do you recall at all anything you might have used as a guide for finding the right roads?
- A. Yes, we had what they called the Blue Book. It would say turn right at the tree standing by a church. We were very fortunate -- we had no flat tires on that trip, but the party who went with us had twenty six. But, there were no -- I think we got into Pennsylvania or New York State -- we found McAdam roads. We thought that was something great to get off the gravel. Yes, it was a great trip, but there were no road signs at all or route markers.
- Q. Did you have a Blue Book for the whole trip? Or did you have separate Blue Books as you went along?
- A. I believe we just had the one Blue Book. I don't know if it was an edition for New England or what it was, but it seemed to serve the purpose.
- Q. Was it a photo auto guide that had photographs?
- A. No, it was a hugh book with trees and buildings as guides.
- Q. What kind of a car was that?
- A. That was the 1915 Jeffrey.
- Q. The Jeffrey. Did you recall at all the automobiles made in Decatur? There were a couple made.
- A. Yes, there was the Comet and the Pan American. I believe that was before the war. They didn't apparently have much of a market. The soon folded. They were assembly plants; parts shipped in.
- Q. Where were those plants located? Do you recall?
- A. They were in the northeast part of Decatur. I believe some of the buildings may still be there.
- Q. Is it the old Houdille Hershey building, Essex Wire?
- A. I believe that was one of them. Yes, that must have been the Comet.
- Q. Did you say these were simply assembly plants -- parts manufactured elsewhere?
- A. Yes, they didn't make much here. They were not much of a

success.

Q. You lived in the west part of town on West William Street and West Macon?

A. Yes, West Macon Street is what I remember. Moved there when I was one year old, and I believe all the houses in the block are still standing. It was a good neighborhood, but we were really pioneers. The city really ended at the end of our block. And after the war you'll notice that the 1500 block, there is quite a different style of housing there -- all brick.

Q. What street was that?

A. Macon Street.

Q. I mean where would the 1500 block ...?

A. Taylor Avenue.

Q. Beyond Taylor then was pretty much open?

A. That was open country. That opened up after 1920. Then there was Montgomery Place which was at the foot of the 1500 block. It was an addition owned by R.R. Montgomery and there was a pond down there and a bridge. I think it's still there, but I don't think anyone notices it. As you enter the addition from the 1500 block of Macon Street there's a little bridge there. Well, where those houses are on Dennis were a pond, a lake even a little row boat on it. I remember going down there in the wintertime with a group of boys. I fell through the ice down there. Then my grandfather went down. He had a row boat. Mr. Montgomery had a row boat and when he took it out, I remember my grandfather fell out of the boat, but fortunately those ponds weren't too deep. But he had a good soaking. Then after that the town built up to the west very rapidly.

Q. The pond was filled in then?

A. Yes. It seemed to disappear. I don't remember its passing, but it did go.

Q. You surely remember this the West Main streetcar. Tell me a little about the operation of this streetcar.

A. If I could say if I would go downtown today and see streetcars running, I wouldn't do a double take too fast. It was natural because I took streetcars to school. There were the West Main Street line; ended at McClellan Avenue or actually went on a little further to serve Fairview Park. Of course, that was the way most local transit systems started; had a park at one edge

of town. That was usually built by the electric company. Sometimes they called them electric park. That wasn't the case of the Fairview Park, although I understand Riverside Park which has been gone for a good many years was put up by the utility. It ran lines up there to pick up Sunday business, but West Main Street then also carried the interurban in from Springfield. It would come down West Main Street. The interurban station was over on Wood Street across where the court house is now just west of there; all the interurbans came in there until about 1930 when another station was built on North Van Dyke Street. It is now carpenters' union hall. The West Main Street line was gradually extended on to Oakcrest because it has the interurban line and the needed track. And that was at the extreme end of West William Street. It was a high embankment. It has been cut down now, but the tracks were on top of that. And the interurban ended about at Oakcrest. The method was when you came to the end of the line, the conductor would get off and switch the trolley from one end. turn it around and hook it up with the other end and lower the cow catcher as they called it. And the street car went out. There were a good many lines in town. When I went to Roosevelt Junior High School, I would go to the Transfer House and take the Edward Street car. Then there were a good many others that served the east side: the Eldorado, the Condit line, the North Water line, and then there was the Riverside line that served old Riverside Park, also St. Mary's Hospital, and then the old Decatur Country Club which was at the end of South Jasper Street.

Q. About where Southmoreland is today?

A. Yes. that was a golf course. The streetcar was a nickel. They finally gave way to buses. We had a bus on West Decatur Street and a streetcar on West Main Street and the bus was a lot closer for me so I finally switched to that. There were some wildcat buses that came in that weren't owned by the utility and they went out after a few years.

Q. Were those the Jitney buses?

A. Yes.

Q. Right around the same route, right ahead of the regular bus?

A. Yes. They were buses just slapped together.

Q. Big limousines, big..?

A. No, they tried to make buses out of them.

- Q. When you went to Decatur High School, you said that you graduated in 1929.
- A. 1928.
- Q. When you went there, you said your home room or one of your classes was in the old Shellabarger home.
- A. Yes.
- Q. That was on the corner of Eldorado and Franklin Streets?
- A. Yes.
- Q. It was demolished eventually to make room for the addition on the north part of the school?
- A. The cafeteria was on the second floor of that too.
- Q. It was. Were you active in high school?
- A. No. I wasn't active in anything even in college. Wasn't in sports or anything.
- Q. Did you go directly to Millikin? You told me previously you did graduate from Millikin. Can you tell me a little about your college experience then? You were fairly close to home.
- A. Yes. I could walk over there. The President's home was directly across the street from our house and my father was on the Board of Managers and they were very good friends, President Penney. They would come over to the house and usually have some very enlightening conversations. He was there for two years. I went to Millikin in the Depression. The enrollment was very low. It was probably in the 300's. It was very good. The school kept going alright. Though I was going to say about the streetcars... they stopped. They switched over to buses entirely when they put through the railroad subway on West Main Street at Oakland Avenue. And they thought that would disrupt service. I believe that was about 1937. So they took off all streetcars all over town and substituted buses. The bus service then was part of the utility or the Illinois Power and Light Company.
- Q. Were those streetcars doubled ended so the motorman could go from one end to the other and operate from either direction?
- A. Yes. West Main Street car had a conductor and a motorman for awhile. They finally dropped that.

- Q. There was a passing track, I believe right by the Millikin Home, wasn't there? I still see traces in the pavement.
- A. Yes. the double tracks went out from the Transfer House out to the Millikin Home and then single down to Oakland Avenue and then right in front of Millikin (University) another passing track and then it picked up again at McClellan where I believe the interurbans came in.
- Q. The interurbans didn't go to the Transfer House. Is that right?
- A. They did earlier; they went around it. I've seen pictures where people used the Transfer House as a boarding point, although the station was actually down at Main and Wood Street and Water, between the two.
- Q. When you were at Millikin, did you belong to any fraternal organizations?
- A. No. I was not particularly active. Maybe an English club, something like that.
- Q. What was your major at Millikin?
- A. English. I was at Millikin of the day of football. We had famous Corbett and Musso, George Corbett and Musso who later went to the Chicago Bears. The athletic teams did very good for the size of the school.
- Q. When did you graduate from Millikin?
- A. 1932.
- Q. Did you find it difficult to get work at that time out of college?
- A. No. My father was on the paper. Of course I went to the paper.
- Q. What paper was that?
- A. Herald & Review. A lot of people went on into teaching -- took jobs at \$80 or \$90 a month. All seemed to do well over the years.
- Q. You went to work for your father then at Decatur. Which one?
- A. My father died in 1933. I had been working at odd jobs for the paper. Sometimes the old Herald before consolidation, worked as an office boy.

- Q. Had you worked during your years at college, part time?
- A. No.
- Q. Your father was the editor of the old Herald. That was the morning paper. Was it at that time separate from the Review?
- A. Yes. It was down in the 200 block of Main Street where Good's Store (North Main). He came here in 1908.
- Q. He was a newspaper man then?
- A. Yes. He came out from Massachusetts.
- Q. Does that account for your first name in any way?
- A. Yes. He went to Amherst College.
- Q. I wondered if there was a relationship there. He came from Massachusetts to Decatur?
- A. Yes. He was born in Maine.
- Q. That's why you're going back home earlier on that long journey?
- A. Yes. Relatives were back there.
- Q. You went on to work as a reporter for the Decatur Herald?
- A. Yes, various jobs.
- Q. What kind of a beat did you have?
- A. I guess it was a police beat. Used to hang around the police station. No drug crime at that time; wasn't too exciting. I thought it was. The prohibition era had ended at that time and it would be nice if you could find some person who knew about the life of the speakeasies of Decatur. I missed that. My friends knew where to go.
- Q. Even as young college man you didn't know about that?
- A. I didn't know where to go. Everybody else did. I suppose it's something like buying drugs, but not quite as degrading.
- Q. That was the old court house I suspect, wasn't it when you had your assignment on the police beat?
- A. The sheriff was located in a house next to the old court house and of course the State's Attorney and court rooms were in the old court house. The city hall had just moved across the

street to what is now Security Savings and Loan. The jail was in back of it. In the rear part I remember there was a livery stable next to it which was still operating with horses and a veterinarian.

I guess they were vaccinating pigs right next to the police station. Police radio came in about that time and it was rather a crude affair but was gradually improved. Had an old radio; tubes kept falling out. They had to keep a maintenance man there. I think they had just four squad cars. The sheriff had only six deputies for the whole county. They had to divide up. Two were on nights -they didn't get too many calls.

- Q. Were you living at the time of the last hanging in Decatur or had that taken place?
- A. I was in junior high school at the time of the John Stacey hanging. I was excited about that. That was the last one.
- Q. That was at the old court house, wasn't it? In a court yard, kind of?
- A. Yes. Probably at the jail or just next to it.
- Q. Then you said you also were a telegraph reporter, wire reporter. Is that right?
- A. Yes. The paper expanded - had newspapers in East St. Louis, Champaign, Carbondale. and Edwardsville - had five papers and we had a good news service - Associated Press trunk wire and New York Times. We would set the news there on teletype. And the tape would automatically set the type at the other papers.
- Q. You probably got the news on the Associated Press A-Wire. That ran about twelve hours.
- A. Yes, that was twenty-four hour. Guess the last biggest story was the Kennedy assassination. I believe radio and television were right there and they had it first and somebody called me from the newsroom wanting to know about it. Just then it started coming over the trunk wire; it was shortly after noon and we were about to go to press. We had to hold things. That was pretty tight. We got it out. We ran an extra that afternoon.
- Q. That was about the last extra I remember having been published.
- A. I believe it was. We used to have extras for every prize fight. It would come out at 10:00 at night because the old Herald mail edition went to press at 10:00 and so they just ran the rest of the paper and slapped the prize fight on the front

page.

Q. How was it sold?

A. Had newsboys. These boys would come in. They were willing to pick up a few cents.

Q. They would go out on the streets and sell?

A. Yes. of course. You must understand we had no radios and the prize fight came in over a Morse wire and a man with a megaphone would read that off and call it out to a big crowd assembled in the street. And then the crowd that was still there would be willing to buy the paper. Only a few hundred, but they were glad to have them. Then a few baseball, back in the 20's, each newspaper, when they were separate, had a scoreboard for the three major leagues in the three I league. Then for the World Series they had in the afternoons a special board set up down there to record the plays and that was given out over a megaphone. I guess the biggest day there was the start of World War II. The news came over the radio on Sunday afternoon. I go down to the paper. About everybody was there. Of course censorship didn't allowed too much out on it, but we got out a paper. I don't think we put out an extra.

We were the only source of news. See, there was no radio, radio news, no television. People counted on the newspaper for everything they would hear. They would call the paper even if something would come over the radio. They would always call the newspaper to verify it.

Q. I'm going to have to stop right here.

Side 2 -- Interview with Amherst Hardy on February 28, 1990 at Decatur Public Library.

Q. Mr. Hardy, I interviewed a Jane Lee several weeks ago who I believe had been a telephone operator at the Herald & Review, and she, I remember very clearly, telling me about how busy she had been on the day of the week the mine caved in Moweaqua. Were you on the staff of the newspaper at that time?

A. No. I was in college. My father was on the paper. I remember that very well. I remember he sent reporters, I believe Bob Barracks, down there. He was able to get down into the mine. I remember he came back and was writing the story; he had the effects of the coal mine dust on him at that time. I remember going down to Moweaqua at that time. I didn't get close to any of the action, but one of the buildings down there which was still standing was used as a morgue. I believe it was around Christmas time in 1932. I remember Jane Lee the switchboard

operator. She was very capable.

Q. Who were some of the more interesting people you worked with as members of the staff of your recollection over the years?

A. There was Sam Tucker who was a columnist. He was very controversial. He later went on to Washington as a correspondent.

Q. What made him controversial, Mr. Hardy?

A. His views he would take on. It was during prohibition; he took a strong stand against prohibition and of course, most people thought he was an atheist. He was an interesting man. Then there was Managing Editor Paul Aird. He had been on the old Herald. He was a very good writer. Most of the staff were short termers. They would start on the paper and leave to go to a bigger paper.

Q. It was a stepping stone?

A. Yes. There were some very good men there. Bob Yoder later went to the Chicago Daily News. He wrote some books. He had an interesting humorous style of writing. He kept that up with the Daily News and later had articles in the Saturday Evening Post. Though we had quite a number of society editors, Layah Riggs became somewhat controversial. I don't know why.

Q. I know one thing - it dealt with the possibility of locating a veteran's hospital here in Decatur. Do you remember that?

A. Yes, I think Mr. Lindsay had opposed that and she picked up on that. That was before the second war but even so she ruffled a lot of hairs.

Q. How about Howard Millard?

A. Oh yes. He was Sports Editor and gave much of his time to Decatur's III team.

Q. He was president of one of the leagues for a while?

A. I think he did have an office someplace here. He kept the Decatur team going. It was pretty hard to do. It finally folded long after his death. He promoted Millikin sports. He was an interesting writer. His writing was different from what we have today.

Q. We spoke on the phone about H. Allen Smith. Do you recall anything about him, the American humorist?

A. Yes. I read his books. He lived over here on East Eldorado Street. I didn't know about him being in Decatur until I read his books. He had some connection with St. Patrick's Church. He went to St. Patrick's School and wrote about Father Murphy.

Q. I was thinking he worked for one of the Decatur newspapers. You don't recall?

A. I don't recall that he worked for one of the papers.

Q. The kind of newspaper plant you worked in was the old hot lead brass operation-wasn't it? Did you work at all in production?

A. Yes, it was. No, I remember in the very old days we had the Morse wire and the Herald belonged to the United Press which had the first teletypes. Then we started having teletype setter. We had the old line-a-type operators in the composing room. We had the teletype operator with the typewriter keyboard going much faster in the editorial department. I believe up until the last we had some line-a-types and even the teletypes gave way to the computers after my time.

Q. Did you experience any hardships during the depression years? You were in Decatur during the depression years.

A. No. I lived with my family. I started out in one of my jobs as a bill collector for the paper. Collecting for unpaid classified ads. I learned the town that way. Nobody had any money; my collections were very sparse.

Q. The Roosevelt New Deal program came along during that period and did embark on a lot of public works programs all around the United States. Do you recollect any programs around Decatur?

A. Yes, we had all these alphabetical agencies (WPA, PWA, etc.) which built the Kintner gymnasium at the high school. Of course if we were talking about Sam Tucker, he was very strong on the New Deal.

Q. Pro New Deal, he was?

A. Oh yes, he even went to Washington. He thought FDR was a great President. He sat pretty close and was always promoting anything that came from that office. We had the CCC Camp (Civilian Concentration Corp) located here. They did some work in the parks. It was the WPS that dug the street car tracks

when the street cat stopped running, there were still tracks all over town, especially downtown. And then they took the tracks up. They were very efficient at it after they got going. They could dig a block in no time at all.

Q. Do you remember the old wooden block pavements in parts of downtown?

A. Oh, yes.

Q. Where were those located?

A. West Prairie Avenue. In fact all through downtown. West Prairie Avenue has them. My father may have been responsible for getting them here. They seemed to work well in Springfield, MA where he came from. He thought they would work here. He proceeded. I don't think he had anything to do with putting them in but, he didn't oppose them. It seemed the frost here was severe enough to uproot them. We'd have a rainstorm and they would float away. That was an unpleasant chapter in history.

Q. Was the purpose to make it easier on horses' hoofs, quieter?

A: No, I don't think so. The automobile had come in pretty well when they started laying those blocks. Before that we just had the brick pavement.

Q. You did indicate you had military experience during World War II. Is that correct?

A. Yes.

Q. You were working at the newspaper at the attack on Pearl Harbor?

A. Yes, I was in the Navy about three months later and stayed for four years, so I don't know too much. I did get the paper while I was away; kept in touch with the city that way. But first thing they had shortages of help on the paper and started hiring women at that time.

Q. As reporters?

A. As reporters. It had been an all male bastion up until then although they had women in society departments. They had women not around as reporters at the paper but women were very good if you could keep them.

- Q. Did you volunteer for the Navy?
- A. Yes, Navy was volunteer, no draft.
- Q. That's right, there was no draft, was there?
- A. No, I went in as a radio man. I left San Diego after finishing radio school and went to San Francisco where our ship was still being built. It wasn't finished 'til end of the year or a little after that. It was what we called a hospital evacuation ship. We went out to Pearl Harbor; that was a year after the attack. We took some Marines down to Guadalcanal and then for the next six months we ran between the Salomon Islands and New Zealand.
- Q. Evacuating the wounded and injured and taking them to hospitals in New Zealand?
- A. Yes, bringing in fresh troops was probably most of it at that time. I was subject to sea sickness and down there in the roaring 40's I didn't last very long so they put me on a destroyer tender repair ship, the Espirito Santo in New Hebrides. I was there for a year and came back and was at the Naval air station as a radio operator for a few months. I put in for a commission early in December 1944 and was sent to training in Hollywood, Florida for two months and came back to the amphibian forces to Pearl Harbor and from there in August we left for Japan. The war hadn't ended but it ended as we crossed the date line, August 15. But we went on to Japan and landed troops there.
- Q. You would have been involved in the actual invasion of Japan if the Japanese...?
- A. Yes. It would have been a bad invasion.
- Q. Had you had experience in ham radios before you went into the Navy?
- A. Not much. I had a friend who was. I'm now, not a ham. I'm still interested in radio. I have a short wave radio and a lot of police scanners. I keep the interest there.
- Q. What sparked your interest? Did you have a chance to choose your special field in the Navy?
- A. Yes, you could put down. While I was in college a close friend was a ham operator. It was very primitive in those days. You had to build your own equipment even down to the battery charger. I never got into the technical side of it in the Navy but kept up that interest when I got out. Still do listen in

hams. Took the Morse code up to about eighteen words a minute. Thing is, don't believe the Navy has radio operators any more. It's computerized. Even the hams are computerized too. It prints out on a computer.

Q. Can you still read Morse code?

A. I can read about fifteen to eighteen words a minute. I try every day.

Q. You can pick up on your short wave radio then, can't you?

A. Yes, while in the Navy I had to do it on the typewriter. Now I can take it down by pencil pretty well. I try the typewriter sometime.

Q. When you sailed out of San Francisco on that first trip with your newly-outfitted ship, you were going to Pearl Harbor, I believe you said.

A. Went down to San Diego. I think we took on a thousand Marines there. There was some space left on the ship we took on, I've heard, 65,000 cases of liquor for the Officers' Club at Pearl Harbor.

Q. Did it get there?

A. Well they lost I think a thousand cases. But they said insurance automatically allowed for that.

Q. In that crossing, you say that's about a year after Pearl Harbor, did you have to operate on radio silence on that trip?

A. Oh yes, we never transmitted in our ship.

Q. You used flash signals if you ever sighted a ship?

A. Yes, if we were in a convoy. We used flags or usually flashing lights.

Q. But you had to be very careful about radio transmissions at that time.

A. Yes, on the ship I transferred on at New Herbrides was a radio station. They had speed key operators; we didn't move-stayed in the harbor where we were stationed and we set up communications with other stations in the South Pacific.

Q. That evacuation ship was not a true hospital ship so you could legally then carry troops both ways?

A. Yes, we had four three-inch guns and a five-inch gun and we

were armed. I left ship. It never had any relief. It went up into near Okinawa and finally was hit by a kamikaze, right in the radio shack and I believe it killed thirty-seven on the ship including my best friend who had gone up from third class radio man up to chief, and here's where he got it.

Q. You came back after the war was over. Did you go to work for the newspaper again?

A. Yes.

Q. And continue to work for the combined Decatur Herald and Review by that time until your retirement.

A. Yes.

Q. Who were some of the editors you worked with after the war, do you recall?

A. Well, I probably should mention the columnist, David Felts. He was a brilliant man. He and Sam Tucker had worked together, but after Sam left for Washington, he took over. I remember Buryl Engleman--I was a reporter when Buryl Engleman came back in the 1930's. His father had been superintendent of schools; we were old friends. There was Otto Kyle, he was editorial writer on the Review. His son, Forrest, was sports editor, and took over from Howard Millard later on. On the afternoon paper you had to get down early in the morning; sports was the first thing out because nothing was developing so the first two hours on the telegraph wire were always sports. It stayed on for quite a while if there had been games the night before.

Q. What kinds of changes have you found in the community here that have been most profound as you look back over your years here? Physical make of the town or anything else you might think of.

A. Downtown buildings didn't change for a long time. Finally it seems the last few years the town has changed--old schools are gone. For a while it didn't look like it would even change (the buildings). The main thing is the personnel used to see a building like a shoe store--you knew who the owner was. He was a prominent man in town. Now they bring in chain store--they bring in a young fellow from out of town and ship him on to another store. Now the Penney store, R.C.M. Kraabel was manager of it and he told me once while the other stores in that operation changed managers every few years, he was here for life. He was very active in the community. Even in the banks, although you didn't know him personally, the president of the bank was a prominent name. Now you probably wouldn't know any of them or the theater manager, or any manager downtown.

- Q. Who was the manager of the Lincoln Theater who was there for so many years, do you recall? Theater in general, can you tell me anything about the old movie theater downtown?
- A. After the Lincoln Theater was taken over by Balaban and Katz, they really imitated the Chicago theater. They had two organs, had matinees, they were quite an asset to the downtown. When on the department stores wanted to move from Water Street over near the theater the store solicited funds for moving to cover expenses, the theater was only to glad to get them-brought women in for the matinee shows. Oh, there was the Empress Theater which was vaudeville. As a young boy I went there-always sort of liked live entertainment. They had six or eight acts and sometimes a short movie. In the Lincoln Theater in its early days, they tried to bring one stage show a month with a leading actor or actress. It served for concerts that Millikin would bring for the music club. I remember too in the third grade a symphony orchestra, I believe from Minneapolis would come here and schools would get a special rate to come down in the afternoon and hear the orchestra.
- Q. Did you go to the circus?
- A. Yes, there were circuses here. I never could figure out where they were. They were up in the northern part of town some where maybe. Carnivals too would bring their rides. It may have been in The Elms addition or east of them in the Brenemann Addition. I never figured out where they were. But they were always interesting. The newspaper usually got passes to the circuses and carnivals. My father would get them.
- Q. They were part of advertisement probably in exchange for payment for part of the advertisement in newspapers.
- A. Yes, even the theaters gave out passes to newspapers.
- Q. That's right, the newspaper would pass them to the carriers for doing a good job., I recall.
- A. That was right for circus. I remember the circus press agent coming into town and down to the newspaper and the first thing he would do was get hold of the circulation manager. The circulation manager put high pressure on for tickets for the carriers.
- Q. Mr. Hardy we're just down to the last minute. Its been a delightful hour that I've had a chance to spend with you here conversing and I'm grateful for giving your time and I know the people here at the library will also appreciate this going on file in the local history room and I'm sure others will listen to or read about your comments and will gain some new insights

on what Decatur was like during your growing up and work experience.

A. I would like to say, I started on the paper forty or fifty years ago. Mr. Banton worked on history and suggested that we interview some of the old people here. If we had some that we would be fifty years up on history. We had good pioneer stories. Too bad we didn't do it.

Q. Too bad we didn't have tape recorders fifty years ago to get all these things down. Thanks again, Mr. Hardy, very much.