

March 5, 2008

Interview with George Lee Sandridge

by Richard Anderson

[Material enclosed in brackets [] is not on the audio, but has been included for clarification.]

Richard Anderson: My name is Richard G. Anderson, and it is March the 5th, 2008, about 7:00 PM, and I'm in the process of doing an oral interview with George Lee Sandridge here at my home, 2671 Brownsburg Turnpike, in Brownsburg Virginia. George, do you want to give us your full name?

George Sandridge: George Lee Sandridge.

Richard Anderson: And where do you live? What's your address?

George Sandridge: I live 21 Dutch Hollow Road. That's outskirts of Brownsburg, but I feel like I'm living in Brownsburg.

Richard Anderson: And what was the date of your birth?

George Sandridge: July the 11th, 1931.

Richard Anderson: All right, George. Let's just start with a little bit of your background. How long have you lived in the Brownsburg area?

George Sandridge: Seventy-six years.

Richard Anderson: That's your entire life.

George Sandridge: My entire life.

Richard Anderson: And where have you lived? Have you lived at the same place continuously?

George Sandridge: Well on the same farm.

Richard Anderson: And that's on Dutch Hollow Road.

George Sandridge: Dutch Hollow Road.

Richard Anderson: Were you born in Brownsburg?

George Sandridge: Yes, I was, well, Dutch Hollow, but-

Richard Anderson: You were born at home?

George Sandridge: Yes, at home.

Richard Anderson: Who were your parents?

George Sandridge: My dad was Howard Alton Sandridge, and my mother was Louise Wade Sandridge.

Richard Anderson: Charles [ph?] what was-

George Sandridge: Louise Wade.

Richard Anderson: Harold's middle name?

George Sandridge: Howard.

Richard Anderson: Howard.

George Sandridge: Howard Alton Sandridge.

Richard Anderson: And have they lived here all their lives?

George Sandridge: Yes, they have. My mother and dad have, yes.

Richard Anderson: When did your family first come to Brownsburg area, if you know?

George Sandridge: My grandfather lived at the Slusser place past New Providence Church [Cloverdale at 4216 Hays Creek Road] for a few years, and then he bought a farm on Dutch Hollow. It must have been 19 and '05 or '06 or something like that.

Richard Anderson: So your grandparents were the first family members to live here?

George Sandridge: Yes, my grandfather came from Amherst County.

Richard Anderson: And that was around 1900s?

George Sandridge: Yes, 1905 or something. My dad was born in 1904 out there at the Slusser place, and then shortly after that, my grandfather bought the farm on Dutch Hollow.

Richard Anderson: What's your first memory of Brownsburg or the Brownsburg area?

George Sandridge: Well, I remember when I was a little boy, my dad used to come to the Huffman Store. That was the only place we ever went, really, was to come to Brownsburg to the store on Saturday night, and what I remember about it is he was bringing about 12 dozen egg crates of-- a case of eggs to the store, and he didn't buy much groceries back then, so he would always get some money back.

Richard Anderson: So he was selling eggs to the store.

George Sandridge: Yes, he sold eggs and he buys sugar and coffee and things that you couldn't raise on a farm.

Richard Anderson: How big a family did you all have, brothers and sisters?

George Sandridge: There are four boys in my family. My grandfather had three boys and a girl.

Richard Anderson: Did they all live around here too?

George Sandridge: Two of them lived around here, and two of them went to Staunton.

Richard Anderson: And in your family there were four boys?

George Sandridge: Yes.

Richard Anderson: What were their names?

George Sandridge: Howard, Harold, and Clyde and myself. I was the second.

Richard Anderson: And who were some of your neighbors?

George Sandridge: The Swishers, Doc Swisher, Arland Poole, Friel Poole, Charlie Poole. A lot of Pooles in Dutch Hollow. And Hockmans and that's about it.

Richard Anderson: We talked about the names of other relatives that lived in the Brownsburg area. Did you have uncles or other relatives?

George Sandridge: Well, I had an uncle, my dad's brother Charlie, Uncle Charlie.

Richard Anderson: He lived here?

George Sandridge: He lived in Dutch Hollow too.

Richard Anderson: I see. Anybody else like that?

George Sandridge: No, my aunt, when she got married she married Faidley Guffey and went to Staunton and my uncle went to Staunton. He was the barber in Staunton.

Richard Anderson: What was his name?

George Sandridge: George Larsley.

Richard Anderson: So two stayed and two went to Stuanton.

George Sandridge: Yeah.

Richard Anderson: How about schools? Did you attend Brownsburg School?

George Sandridge: Yeah, the first memory of Brownsburg School, I came to school the last day of school with my brother in the old school, and I was in the first class in the new school in 1938.

Richard Anderson: When you say "the old school" you mean the academy building?

George Sandridge: The old academy, yes. Brother was in the first grade up there and the last day of school I came to school with him.

Richard Anderson: I see, just to find out what it was all about.

George Sandridge: Yes.

Richard Anderson: So when you started school you were in the newer building.

George Sandridge: Yes.

Richard Anderson: What happened to the old building?

George Sandridge: Well, they still used it for other classes. I had-

Richard Anderson: Did you use the old building?

George Sandridge: I think I was first, second, and third grade was in the new building, and the fourth, fifth, and sixth, and seventh was up in the other building, and then the high school was in the new building.

Richard Anderson: So you attended all of your elementary and high school?

George Sandridge: Yep, all of it at Brownsburg, yes.

Richard Anderson: I understand from others that there was no eighth grade, so you went for seven grades in elementary school, and then high school?

George Sandridge: No, I was in the first class to take eighth grade.

Richard Anderson: Is that so? You came when there was an eighth grade, and that was the first?

George Sandridge: Yeah, they put it in the year that we went from seventh to the eighth.

Richard Anderson: When would that have been? You started, you say, in 1938 so was that at the end of World War II?

George Sandridge: It must have been about '45. Oh yeah, 1945, but I graduated in '50.

Richard Anderson: You graduated from high school in 1950.

George Sandridge: Nineteen-fifty.

Richard Anderson: So four back from that would be '46. So the eighth grade was probably '45

George Sandridge: Must have went in yes, in '45.

Richard Anderson: How about the names of teachers? Do you remember any of your teachers?

George Sandridge: Yes, I remember a bunch of them. Mrs. [Ida] Brown was the eighth-grade teacher when I went into the eighth grade. I remember her real well.

Richard Anderson: Why do you remember her real well?

George Sandridge: I don't know, she just helped me a lot.

Richard Anderson: Do you remember your first-grade teacher?

George Sandridge: Yes, Mollie Sue Hull.

Richard Anderson: She became Mollie Sue Whipple?.

George Sandridge: Mollie Sue Whipple, yeah.

Richard Anderson: She was your first-grade teacher.

George Sandridge: And second grade was Mrs. Rubush.

Richard Anderson: How do you spell that? R-O-B-U-S-H?

George Sandridge: I don't know. Rubush. R-U, I believe it's R-U-B-U-S-H.

Richard Anderson: Okay, that sounds about right.

George Sandridge: And Mrs. Williams was my third-grade teacher, and fourth grade, I think we had about four teachers that year. Mrs. [Frances] Buchanan was the fifth-grade teacher, and I think the sixth grade was Mrs. [Nellie] Lowe. I don't know who the seventh was, but I know Mrs. [Ida] Brown was eighth, and then Mr. [Andrew] Lindsey and Reverend Boukenight, and Miss [Alice] Agnor, Miss [Mary] Lauderdale.

Richard Anderson: Those are high school teachers.

George Sandridge: Yeah, they're high school teachers, yes.

Richard Anderson: Did most of the teachers stay there more than one year?

George Sandridge: Oh yes.

Richard Anderson: A lot of them stayed a long time.

George Sandridge: Mrs. Williams was there a long time. Mrs. Buchanan was there a long time, Mrs. Brown was for a long time.

Richard Anderson: And who was the principal when you were going there? Did they have a principal?

George Sandridge: Yeah. Stockner, S-T-O-C-K-N-E-R, yeah. Dan Burger. Oh Miss [Ocie] Trimmer. Yeah, Miss Trimmer. I was in the elementary school when she was there.

Richard Anderson: So she was still the principal at that time?

George Sandridge: Yes, she was there until I was about seventh, eighth grade, something like that.

Richard Anderson: What did you think of her?

George Sandridge: She was great. She was strict. She was real strict.

Richard Anderson: Pretty strict, right?

George Sandridge: She was real strict, yeah. She did things right.

Richard Anderson: I understand she lived in the Brownsburg area.

George Sandridge: Yes, I'm pretty sure she did.

Richard Anderson: Any other particular school memories you'd like to share with us, anything that happened up there that you remember well?

George Sandridge: No, I don't remember anything. I just loved to go to school. I loved to play baseball and basketball.

Richard Anderson: Now how did you get to the school?

George Sandridge: We had a bus that brought us.

Richard Anderson: So you were bussed from home?

George Sandridge: Yes.

Richard Anderson: Did you stay after school for athletic events or activities?

George Sandridge: Yeah, we'd stay after school for basketball and baseball practice and walk home.

Richard Anderson: You walked home.

George Sandridge: Walked home, three miles and a half.

Richard Anderson: But you enjoyed doing that?

George Sandridge: Yes, I did. My brother and I were both on the same team, and we'd walk home after school.

Richard Anderson: So you had some company.

George Sandridge: Yes.

Richard Anderson: Any other activities that you remember particularly doing up there?

George Sandridge: No, not really. Just baseball and basketball.

Richard Anderson: Where there social activities, dances and things like that?

George Sandridge: Yeah, we had class parties I think about every year. Each class would have a party, but I can't remember much about it.

Richard Anderson: Once you graduated, you graduated what year now?

George Sandridge: 1950.

Richard Anderson: Fifty, then you went back to a farm?

George Sandridge: Yes, went to- yeah, been on a farm all my life.

Richard Anderson: So you had been- had you been helping on the farm before you graduated?

George Sandridge: Oh yes, ever since I was about 12 years old.

Richard Anderson: What did you do?

George Sandridge: Cut corn, shocked wheat and barley. Put up hay, and everything.

Richard Anderson: What kind of farm? Was it a general farm?

George Sandridge: It was a dairy farm. We ran a dairy farm for 30 years.

Richard Anderson: So did you help with the milk production?

George Sandridge: Yes.

Richard Anderson: So that was your dad and your brothers, and you all helped on the farm?

George Sandridge: Well, my brothers helped until they finished school, and they all went away and I stayed there and helped my dad to run the farm.

Richard Anderson: So you were the only one who stayed on the farm?

George Sandridge: Yes.

Richard Anderson: Was that a choice that you desired?

George Sandridge: Yeah, I always wanted to be a farmer.

Richard Anderson: So you weren't disappointed by other possibilities?

George Sandridge: No, it was rough, it wasn't much money, but I enjoyed it.

Richard Anderson: And you kept up with that for how long, the farming?

George Sandridge: I'm still in that business.

Richard Anderson: But you're not running a dairy farm at this point?

George Sandridge: No, we sold the dairy in '79. Now we've got beef cattle.

Richard Anderson: Pretty much beef cattle. Any other crops?

George Sandridge: Well, we just put up hay to feed the beef cattle.

Richard Anderson: When you were growing up, did you raise a lot of vegetables and things like that too?

George Sandridge: We raised everything. Like I said, we didn't buy anything when we went to the store. Only thing we bought was sugar and coffee and things that you couldn't raise on a farm.

Richard Anderson: Did you have pigs as well?

George Sandridge: Yeah, had pigs, chickens, guineas, ducks, turkeys, everything. Anything that you could make a nickel on.

Richard Anderson: I see. And of course you had some of it for your own family, and-

George Sandridge: Yes, uh-huh. I used to have ducks when I was a little kid, I raised ducks, and at Easter time I'd sell duck eggs to raise a little bit of money.

Richard Anderson: That must have been fun.

George Sandridge: Yep.

Richard Anderson: How did that phase out? In other words, the raising of all those different types of animals and poultry and so on. Do you still raise poultry?

George Sandridge: No, we got rid of the hogs, and the chickens, and the ducks and everything. I think we did that when we went into the dairy business, because you had enough work to do in the dairy business, you didn't need these other things to do.

Richard Anderson: When did they start the dairy?

George Sandridge: Nineteen forty-eight. Sold it in '78 I believe.

Richard Anderson: So you did that for about 30 years.

George Sandridge: Thirty years, yes.

Richard Anderson: How big a herd was it?

George Sandridge: We had 35 cows.

Richard Anderson: And all the equipment that goes with it, I guess.

George Sandridge: Yeah, we started off milking by hand with six or seven cows, and kept getting bigger, and bigger, until we finally got an electric milker and a pipeline. Had the whole works.

Richard Anderson: So you started out milking by hand?

George Sandridge: By hand, definitely.

Richard Anderson: Did you have help with that?

George Sandridge: Well, my mother, dad, and us boys, we all milked. I think we had ten or twelve cows at one time milking by hand.

Richard Anderson: The milk, where did it go from the farm? How did it get into the markets? Or did you sell milk directly from the farm?

George Sandridge: Yeah, we had this springhouse. Spring water run through the watering trough, and you would milk the cows, and have a separator, and you run the milk through a separator, and get the cream. And put the cream in this watering trough, and then every so often a guy would come by, and pick up the cream, and take it to Staunton Creamery and sell it. That was really our money.

Richard Anderson: So it was cream?

George Sandridge: Yes, it was cream, yes.

Richard Anderson: So they did pick up from you all, and take it Staunton?

George Sandridge: Yeah, a neighbor, he hauled our cream to Staunton.

Richard Anderson: So the mechanization first came sort of like late 40s or early 50s to the farming operation? I want to say mechanization.

George Sandridge: Oh yeah, you mean tractors.

Richard Anderson: Tractors and other equipment like that?

George Sandridge: I would say about 1943, '44.

Richard Anderson: Did you use horses at any point?

George Sandridge: We had horses before that, yes.

Richard Anderson: And they helped with the farming operation?

George Sandridge: Yeah, they did all the work, really.

Richard Anderson: Of course you had to take care of them.

George Sandridge: You had to take care of your horses. When we would get home from school us boys. Mother and Daddy would go out in the field and shuck corn all day, and when we got home from school, we'd have to take the horses and load the corn up on the wagon and take it and put it in the granary.

Richard Anderson: So there was a lot of big corn operation too.

George Sandridge: Yeah, there was. Constantly working.

Richard Anderson: And how was that marketed? Where did the corn go from the farm?

George Sandridge: We didn't sell any. We fed it to the horses.

Richard Anderson: Fed it to the animals.

George Sandridge: Yes, to the chickens and everything we had.

Richard Anderson: To keep the animals going.

George Sandridge: Yes.

Richard Anderson: How many horses did you have?

George Sandridge: Four. We usually had four.

Richard Anderson: And they did most of the heavy work.

George Sandridge: Yeah, they did the plowing and the disking and the planting and everything until we got the first tractors.

Richard Anderson: When did you get the first tractor?

George Sandridge: I think it was 1940.

Richard Anderson: After that did you keep the horses?

George Sandridge: We kept them a few years until they finally faded away. Pretty soon you got another tractor, and you got more machinery, and you finally got rid of the horses.

Richard Anderson: So what other type of machinery was involved in the labor as time went on?

George Sandridge: Well, we went from when they had the horses, you had to stack your hay up in the field, and put it in the wagon, haul it in loose, and put it in a mow, we called it a mow. Then you have to get up there and throw it out, and feed it, and then the square baler would come along and that eliminated a lot of that.

Richard Anderson: So it was hay-baled quicker.

George Sandridge: Hay-baled, yes. And then few years after that round bale come out and that took the labor out of all of it.

Richard Anderson: Did your dad have to hire additional people to help?

George Sandridge: No.

Richard Anderson: Just him.

George Sandridge: Him and I did it all after my brothers left.

Richard Anderson: My goodness. That must have been quite a job.

George Sandridge: Yeah, it was. Never run out of something to do if you're a farmer.

Richard Anderson: Let's switch subjects a little bit. Did you attend any of the area churches? If so which ones?

George Sandridge: Yes, I attended New Providence [Presbyterian] Church all my life.

Richard Anderson: Your parents go there too?

George Sandridge: Yes, uh-huh.

Richard Anderson: You started as a child?

George Sandridge: Yes, I did.

Richard Anderson: And what are your memories of going to church?

George Sandridge: I remember Miss Sallie [Reid] McClung was the first Sunday school teacher. She taught us the ten commandments and catechism, and all that kind of stuff. I'll never forget that.

Richard Anderson: How old were you when that took place?

George Sandridge: Probably 6, 5 or 6. Probably younger than that.

Richard Anderson: So you started pretty early.

George Sandridge: Yes.

Richard Anderson: And did you go to the Sunday school classes regularly then?

George Sandridge: Yes.

Richard Anderson: How many children would be attending Sunday school when you were growing up?

George Sandridge: I'd say ten. Ten in each class, yes.

Richard Anderson: I meant to ask that question about schools. How big were your school classes?

George Sandridge: I think it was about 25 or 30 in the grades, and then as you got up when I graduated wasn't but 11.

Richard Anderson: Only 11 in your graduating class.

George Sandridge: Eleven in the class.

Richard Anderson: And where did those students come from? Did they come just from the Brownsburg area or elsewhere?

George Sandridge: Well they came from most of them was from Brownsburg, Raphine, and this area until Rockbridge Baths Elementary School closed, then the Rockbridge Baths kids all come here.

Richard Anderson: So at some point the elementary school got bigger.

George Sandridge: Yes it did. With Rockbridge Baths, yes. There was about 30-some in the seventh and eighth grade, but when you get up to high school a bunch had dropped out so there was 11.

Richard Anderson: Do you remember any of the ministers?

George Sandridge: Oh yes.

Richard Anderson: Who do you remember in particular?

George Sandridge: I remember I think Locke White better than any, because he was kind of a young guy. I watched him play basketball lots of times.

Richard Anderson: What was his name again?

George Sandridge: Locke White. Reverend Locke White.

Richard Anderson: Is that L-O-C-H?

George Sandridge: L-O uh...

Richard Anderson: That's okay.

George Sandridge: I just know Locke White, and David Walthall was after White.

Richard Anderson: That's all right. Those are the ones you remember most.

George Sandridge: I'm probably forgetting a bunch I know. John Boyd, David Coblentz.

Richard Anderson: Tom Biggs.

George Sandridge: Don Campbell, Tom Biggs, yes.

Richard Anderson: So you've been there for a long time.

George Sandridge: Yes, I remember them all.

Richard Anderson: You also got active in the church itself, didn't you, after you grew up?

George Sandridge: Yes, I went to youth fellowship when I was a teenager.

Richard Anderson: There were youth groups, weren't there?

George Sandridge: Yeah, I was youth advisor for eight years. Served as a deacon for about six years, and an elder about six years. Did most everything.

Richard Anderson: Did most everything that was possible.

George Sandridge: Yeah.

Richard Anderson: How did you get to and from church?

George Sandridge: Well, we had a car then.

Richard Anderson: When did your family first get a car, do you remember?

George Sandridge: I don't-

Richard Anderson: Did you always have a car?

George Sandridge: No, my parents went to church in a horse and buggy.

Richard Anderson: They did?

George Sandridge: Yeah, definitely they had a horse and buggy they went to church. I never did ride in the buggy.

Richard Anderson: You never did that.

George Sandridge: No.

Richard Anderson: So by the time you got going to church or school or whatever, you had an automobile?

George Sandridge: Yeah, I had a car, probably 19-

Richard Anderson: Was that before World War II?

George Sandridge: I can't remember what the first car was. Seems to me like a '34 Ford. I don't know whether that makes sense or not.

Richard Anderson: It's possible. Yeah, it's possible. But anyway, when you were growing up, your family had access to a car.

George Sandridge: Yes, my dad did, yes.

Richard Anderson: So when you went to church you went in the car.

George Sandridge: Yes.

Richard Anderson: Describe what it was like to live in Brownsburg either when you were growing up, or later in life, and what you remember most about living in the Brownsburg area. It's a tough question. It's a broad question, but what do you remember most about growing up in the Brownsburg area?

George Sandridge: Well, I really wasn't in the Brownsburg area not very much until I got to be a teenager, then I started kind of loafing around in here.

Richard Anderson: What was going on in Brownsburg when you were a teenager?

George Sandridge: There wasn't anything going on. We would just gather on here at John Layton's [Whitesell's] store and sit around and talk. Wasn't much to do.

Richard Anderson: So that was sort of a social activity was gathering together and meeting in the stores. What other stores were there?

George Sandridge: Well, the main store was Huffman's, that's where we went all the time. But Supinger's was down on the corner. I think those were the only two at that time. The Farmer's Co-op was down at Dick Barnes' [8 Hays Creek Road]. And one here one time, wasn't it [in the Anderson home at 2671 Brownsburg Turnpike]?

Richard Anderson: A store?

George Sandridge: Right here.

Richard Anderson: I don't know.

George Sandridge: I've heard that.

Richard Anderson: I don't know about it, no.

George Sandridge: Yeah, there was one here. I don't know who ran it, but there was one here. I don't know who ran it, but there was one here. Bosworths had a store down at the Bosworth place. There was five stores in Brownsburg, I think at one time.

Richard Anderson: And when you were growing up?

George Sandridge: When I was growing up the only ones I remember was Huffman's and Supinger's, so the other three had gone out of business.

Richard Anderson: And the Coop.

George Sandridge: Yes. And then John Whitesell's opened up later on, but when I was a teenager, I guess Whitesell's and Huffman's and Supinger's was just three.

Richard Anderson: And people would come to the store and converse.

George Sandridge: Yeah, we'd come home Saturday night, most every Saturday night we'd come to Huffman's store and sit around and drink a drink. Sometimes you'd buy a jar of peanut butter and go home and have peanut butter crackers.

Richard Anderson: Anything else going on? They have music or anything like that?

George Sandridge: No, there wasn't any music.

Richard Anderson: So it was just a way of getting together and seeing people.

George Sandridge: Yes. I guess just to get away from home on Saturday night. One thing I remember is a guy named Harve Matheny. I was just real little when he had a trailer down here where Bob Driver's driveway is? I think he worked on shoes, and I can see that old fellow lots of times. It was a trailer, but I think it had steel wheels on it. Looked like it was just rolled in on steel wheels.

Richard Anderson: And he did horseshoes?

George Sandridge: No, he did shoes, people shoes. Yeah, I think we called him a cobbler, I believe.

Richard Anderson: A cobbler.

George Sandridge: Yeah, I can see him lots of time.

Richard Anderson: Did you buy any of his shoes or wear any of his shoes?

George Sandridge: I don't know. I just know he lived in that trailer and every time that you'd come through Brownsburg, he'd be standing at the Farmer's Coop on the cement down there.

Richard Anderson: He came in though <inaudible>.

George Sandridge: Yeah, I don't know where he came from, but he finally passed away.

Richard Anderson: Did you all go to other places from time to time, like Lexington or Staunton, Fairfield?

George Sandridge: Very seldom went to a few auctions when they had auctions around. We'd go to the auction every once in a while.

Richard Anderson: These were auctions of household goods?

George Sandridge: Yeah, house. We'd go there and stay all day.

Richard Anderson: So did you ride on the train at Raphine from Staunton?

George Sandridge: No I never went on the train.

Richard Anderson: Train Staunton to Lexington?

George Sandridge: No.

Richard Anderson: Was that still operating, do you remember, when you were growing up?

George Sandridge: I don't think so.

Richard Anderson: So it already stopped.

George Sandridge: I hear my daddy talk about they would go to Raphine and get fertilizer off of the train and stuff. At the time I was too young to know anything about it.

Richard Anderson: So that was before your time, really?

George Sandridge: Yes.

Richard Anderson: How did you all keep up with what was going on in the world or the county, or state, nation?

George Sandridge: Well we had an old battery radio that played most of the time, hearing the news.

Richard Anderson: Did you have newspapers?

George Sandridge: I guess we did, I don't remember. I know we had that battery radio and my grandfather, if it was on Sunday, if any music come on he'd turn it off. Said "You ain't supposed to listen to music on Sunday."

Richard Anderson: But you kept up with what was going on in the world by means of the radio.

George Sandridge: By the battery. Didn't have electricity at the time. I did my lessons when I was going to school under a lamp.

Richard Anderson: So when did electricity come along?

George Sandridge: Nineteen- I think about thirty-eight when we got electricity out there.

Richard Anderson: Prior to that?

George Sandridge: That was about the time I started school.

Richard Anderson: But prior to that you were using oil lamps?

George Sandridge: Yes.

Richard Anderson: What was that like?

George Sandridge: It was all right, I guess. You felt like you had a good light, even though you didn't.

Richard Anderson: Did you have fireplaces too?

George Sandridge: No, we just had a woodstove beside of the cooking stove.

Richard Anderson: When it turned dark it got pretty dark, I guess.

George Sandridge: It sure was.

Richard Anderson: Wasn't much activity after dark.

George Sandridge: That's right. I think I remember my mother-- houses weren't solidified or anything. Flies could get in. I can remember my mother shutting the blinds and opening the door, and swatting the flies out of the house. Getting back with a rag and running the flies out.

Richard Anderson: Any individuals male or female that stand out in your memory from growing up or living in Brownsburg? Do you have any particular people that you remember?

George Sandridge: Yeah, I would say Fred Whipple was just inspiring to me, and he was always taking care of everything. Of course he was president of the bank and everywhere you went it was fun when Fred Whipple was around. He was always teasing somebody, cutting up, and I just admired him so much. I'd say if there was anybody in Brownsburg at the top of my list [it would] be Fred Whipple.

Richard Anderson: This may not apply to you completely or very much. If you lived during the Depression years which I put down as 1930 to 1940, do you have any special memories or experiences as a result of the Depression years? Did your family have any-

George Sandridge: <Inaudible> 31, I think Depression started in '28 or '29.

Richard Anderson: Yes, it did.

George Sandridge: And I don't remember anything about it. I remember my dad talking about how bad things were, and he had a drought about the same time.

Richard Anderson: Had a drought?

George Sandridge: Had a drought, yeah, 1930 and '31 I think he had two droughts in a row. And they would plant corn and there wouldn't be anything off of it.

Richard Anderson: Just dries out?

George Sandridge: Just dried up.

Richard Anderson: So economically it was a little tough during those years?

George Sandridge: Bound to have been, yes.

Richard Anderson: But you don't have any recollections of any problems that you personally encountered?

George Sandridge: Not, not really. No.

Richard Anderson: And likewise about World War II. What were your recollections about World War II and how it affected either your family or the neighborhood, or the Brownsburg area?

George Sandridge: Only thing I remember is they had this night watch where people would come up here at the school, and people would watch for airplanes going across. I remember my dad

coming up here, and I forgot what they called it, but some kind of night watch. If a plane went across, they was supposed to call somebody and tell them there's a plane in the air.

Richard Anderson: Did they have any special facility for that, or was it just from the ground? In other words, there wasn't any air towers.

George Sandridge: I don't think they had anything. They just if they saw a plane go across they was supposed to report it to somebody.

Richard Anderson: Was that a group of people did that?

George Sandridge: Yeah, I think there was four or five of them would be there.

Richard Anderson: At the same time.

George Sandridge: Yes.

Richard Anderson: How about rationing? Do you remember any effects of rationing?

George Sandridge: Of rationing?

Richard Anderson: Of rations?

George Sandridge: Oh, rations? No, I heard about it but I don't remember it. I remember they was rationing gas and stuff. But yeah, I guess I remember rationing, because you had to have stamps to get gas.

Richard Anderson: Did that effect the farming operation at all?

George Sandridge: I think it did, yeah. You had to every once in a while you have to go get more gas to operate your tractors and stuff.

Richard Anderson: What changes have you seen, good or bad in the Brownsburg area through the time you've lived here?

George Sandridge: I've seen a lot. So many people have redid their houses, built new houses, put this new bridge in down the lower end. That was a great help.

Richard Anderson: Which bridge is that?

George Sandridge: Down here. I call it Fin Patterson, where Janis Ayres lives? The Fin Patterson place? Used to be-

Richard Anderson: Across Hays [ph?] Creek?

George Sandridge: Yeah, across Hays Creek, yeah. There was a one-lane bridge down there, and it was in a sharp turn and it's a great help when they put that bridge in.

Richard Anderson: We talked about when electrification started. How about telephones? Did you always have telephones or telephone service?

George Sandridge: I think yeah, we had telephones before electricity.

Richard Anderson: You had that before electricity.

George Sandridge: Yeah, I'm pretty sure we did, because they had the telephone office here over the bank. That's where Mattie Wade and Amelia [Wade] ran the switchboard down there, and every time you wanted to call somebody, you'd have to call the switch board and they'd have to call for you.

Richard Anderson: So that was above the bank building?

George Sandridge: Yes. The old bank.

Richard Anderson: And who were the operators?

George Sandridge: Mattie and Amelia Wade.

Richard Anderson: Were the operators.

George Sandridge: And their brother I believe, Finn Wade used to take care of all the taking care of the lines and everything.

Richard Anderson: How about the paving of the roads? When did that start, or do you remember? Were any roads paved when you were growing up?

George Sandridge: Weren't any hardly paved. Most everything was dirt roads except [Route] 252 here [Brownsburg Turnpike].

Richard Anderson: Right through the center of Brownsburg?

George Sandridge: Yeah.

Richard Anderson: How far did that go? It didn't go very far, did it? I mean it didn't go out to the church. Was the road paved all the way to the church?

George Sandridge: It seemed to me like it was, what I can remember.

Richard Anderson: You remember it being paved?

George Sandridge: Yes.

Richard Anderson: Some people said it was just the central area of Brownsburg that had any paved roads.

George Sandridge: It could be.

Richard Anderson: And some remember when it was started, but it didn't go according-- I think most of them said it didn't go any farther than Hays Creek Bridge.

George Sandridge: Oh right down here?

Richard Anderson: Yeah, it didn't go to the church. And also didn't go much beyond the southern end of town on [Route] 252. Might have gone up to like the Rees farm, but that's about as far as it went. Everything else was a dirt road. I just asked that for your benefit.

George Sandridge: I don't-

Richard Anderson: Certainly Dutch Hollow Road was not paved.

George Sandridge: Oh that's right. Dutch Hollow and Hays Creek Road wasn't paved, and Walker's Creek Road wasn't paved.

Richard Anderson: Let's talk a little bit about the businesses in Brownsburg. You talked a little bit about them before, you mentioned gas stations and so on. Where there any other businesses beside gas stations and maybe a grocery store?

George Sandridge: No, <audio skips> Huffman's and the Farmer's Coop, and the Supingers. That's-- I know they had businesses years ago. Saddle shops and all kinds of stuff, but that was before my time.

Richard Anderson: I see. Where there any repair shops?

George Sandridge: They had a blacksmith. Walter Potter had a blacksmith shop up here.

Richard Anderson: Where was that located?

George Sandridge: Up around Brownsburg in the sharp turn [2610 Brownsburg Turnpike]. He shoed, built shoe horses and repaired harness, and anything like that. That's about the only repair shop I know of.

Richard Anderson: How about Mr. [Herbert] Carwell?

George Sandridge: Yeah, he did run a garage down there. Mr. Carwell, yeah.

Richard Anderson: And that was to repair automobiles.

George Sandridge: Yes.

Richard Anderson: And then the bank was here.

George Sandridge: Yes, the bank.

Richard Anderson: And the telephone company had an office here. Were they always in the bank building, the telephone company, or did they move?

George Sandridge: I think they were always in there, over the bank.

Richard Anderson: How about a barbershop?

George Sandridge: Bud Wade had a barbershop. That's the only one I remember.

Richard Anderson: Is that where the pool hall is?

George Sandridge: Yeah, where the pool hall was. <inaudible> sold it.

Richard Anderson: Did you play pool down there?

George Sandridge: No.

Richard Anderson: You weren't allowed?

George Sandridge: I never did get a haircut there.

Richard Anderson: Oh you never got a haircut either, okay. But it was there.

George Sandridge: My mother cut my hair for 50 years.

Richard Anderson: But that did operate.

George Sandridge: Yeah, the barbershop. I'd go in there and watch them, but I never did shoot pool, or never did get a haircut there.

Richard Anderson: That was a combination barbershop and pool hall.

George Sandridge: Yeah, they had a ball in there. Fred Whipple, and Kenneth Fix, and D.W. Whipple. I just went in there and enjoyed listening to them.

Richard Anderson: So that was sort of a community, social outlet.

George Sandridge: Definitely was. I guess probably the only social place in Brownsburg.

Richard Anderson: And where was the post office when you were growing up?

George Sandridge: I'm pretty sure it was in the Bosworth building right there between the bank and the Bosworth house. That's the only one I remember.

Richard Anderson: It moved later to Whitesell's store?

George Sandridge: Yeah. Yeah, that's right. He left down there when John Layton closed. Well, I think the two things I really miss out of Brownsburg is the bank and the school. I really miss the school and the bank.

Richard Anderson: The school you mean the Brownsburg School. When did it change from just a high school to-- or when did the high school facilities move away?

George Sandridge: Yes, it was a high school and then it was made. Then I think it was a middle school.

Richard Anderson: It was a middle school?

George Sandridge: Yeah, it was a middle school.

Richard Anderson: And then it was just an elementary school.

George Sandridge: And then it went to elementary.

Richard Anderson: And then it closed all together. The Bank of Rockbridge, that had always been here.

George Sandridge: Yes.

Richard Anderson: Who worked in there that you recall? You mentioned Fred Whipple was the president.

George Sandridge: Yeah, Jim Wade, and Margaret Wade, and Jane Wade.

Richard Anderson: They all worked there?

George Sandridge: Yes. And Bill Heffelfinger, Jen Heffelfinger. Yeah, I think she worked there.

Richard Anderson: Did Jen work there?

George Sandridge: I kind of believe she did. I might be wrong, but I know her husband did, Bill Heffelfinger, yeah.

Richard Anderson: So that was sort of a meeting place too, wasn't it?

George Sandridge: Yes, it was.

Richard Anderson: This is another big question. What stands out in your memory as the most significant or important events that occurred in Brownsburg during the time you lived in the area?

George Sandridge: I think one thing stands out in my mind was the agriculture fair that the Ruritan Club had. I don't know what year it was when all the farmers brought in their corn and all their crops and everything and had a fair in the school.

Richard Anderson: At the school?

George Sandridge: The Brownsburg School. And then the Ruritan Club had a horseshow on the baseball diamond. I don't know what year that was. I can remember that real well.

Richard Anderson: Were you still in school at that time?

George Sandridge: I think so. I'm not sure when the Ruritan Club started that thing, '30-

Richard Anderson: When did the Ruritan Club start?

George Sandridge: Thirty-eight, nineteen thirty-eight.

Richard Anderson: So it had to have been after that?

George Sandridge: Yeah, it's probably about '40, '41.

Richard Anderson: Before World War II?

George Sandridge: Yes.

Richard Anderson: Was that just a one-time event?

George Sandridge: I think they had it two or three years up here. And then they got in to agreement with Bustleburg and started to have it together with Bustleburg and they ended up quit having out there, and then we went to Maxwellton.

Richard Anderson: The horse show.

George Sandridge: Yeah, the horse show.

Richard Anderson: Was held at-

George Sandridge: That was just a horse show. What we had up at the schools was kind of a county fair. I could just see corn stacked up all around the building. It was nice.

Richard Anderson: So you've been involved with the Ruritans a number years too, haven't you?

George Sandridge: Fifty years. Fifty years this year. I joined 1958.

Richard Anderson: How big a club was it when you first joined?

George Sandridge: I think about 30, 35 members, probably.

Richard Anderson: And you held most of the offices in the Ruritan club haven't you?

George Sandridge: Yeah, most of them. All of them and plus the District Governor, and yeah, I've been working in Ruritans a long time. One of the things that really meant something to me, the Ruritan Club always sponsored Little League Baseball and Little League Basketball. Going ahead to school up here for 20 years, and get these boys together on a Saturday morning and play Little League Basketball and take them to Bustleburg on Thursday evenings to play baseball for about 20 years. That meant a lot.

Richard Anderson: Did you play on any baseball teams?

George Sandridge: I played for 30 years.

Richard Anderson: What was that Bustleburg?

George Sandridge: Yeah, I played 30 years out there.

Richard Anderson: That was a great community activity.

George Sandridge: Yes it was. When I first started playing out there the stands, bleachers back there was full of old people. People.

Richard Anderson: Most people came to the games, watched the games?

George Sandridge: I mean old people. People 70, 75 years old sitting there. I got a picture of them. My granddaddy and all the Wades, and the Terrells, and people from Rockbridge Baths. It was just an awful crowd out there.

Richard Anderson: One thing I should ask, you did you meet your wife here? I didn't mention anything about your wife. How did you meet your wife?

George Sandridge: My wife now? No, I met her in Fairfield.

Richard Anderson: You've been married more than once.

George Sandridge: Yeah, I was married. I met my other wife lives around here.

Richard Anderson: But she was from here?

George Sandridge: No, she was in Augusta County.

Richard Anderson: What social events did people go to movies or what when they were dating?

George Sandridge: Well once in a while you go to the movies or go to some restaurant somewhere and sit around.

Richard Anderson: And they had cakewalks [ph?].

George Sandridge: Yeah, they had cakewalks.

Richard Anderson: Did that inspire a lot of social activity?.

George Sandridge: Yeah, it had a lot. A lot of people go to cakewalks.

Richard Anderson: And they were held Bustleburg?

George Sandridge: They had quite a few up there at Brownsburg School.

Richard Anderson: And at the school itself.

George Sandridge: Yes.

Richard Anderson: That's interesting. So there were some activities happening right here like that.

George Sandridge: Yeah, youth fellowship did quite a few things.

Richard Anderson: You have how many children?

George Sandridge: Two boys.

Richard Anderson: And they grew up here, right?

George Sandridge: Yes. Both of them live here.

Richard Anderson: Both of them live here now. Do you have any humorous stories you would like to share with us?

George Sandridge: This guy, well I don't know if I'm supposed to call names or not.

Richard Anderson: That's all right.

George Sandridge: Clint Troxell.

Richard Anderson: Clint Troxell.

George Sandridge: Yeah, he was the town bum, really.

Richard Anderson: And where did he live?

George Sandridge: He lived on Hays Creek Road for a while, then the Ruritan Club built him a building right out here outside of Brownsburg. He lived there for a while. He was- he was-

Richard Anderson: He was a character.

George Sandridge: He was an alcoholic. I've seen him stand up next to the store, just stand up and go sleep. Just stand up sleeping. But he called himself a plumber, and every time he'd get a chance to go to town, somebody take him to town, he'd come back drunk every time he come back.

Richard Anderson: And how was he as a plumber?

George Sandridge: He never used a tape line. He took a stick to measure something.

Richard Anderson: Did you ever work for any of the businesses that were here, the stores or anything?

George Sandridge: No, never did.

Richard Anderson: You were always busy on the farm, I'm sure.

George Sandridge: Yeah.

Richard Anderson: Any family history or events you want to mention or anything else regarding your family prior to your own family? If you have anything you want to say about any of your family members? Who do you most-- what is your best memory of-- which family member do you have a close association with, or did you have the closest? Your father? Grandfather?

George Sandridge: I guess my father and mother, yeah, because my grandfather, he died when I was about 12 years old.

Richard Anderson: Were there any other relatives that lived around here when you were growing up besides your uncles?

George Sandridge: No, my grandfather, he came from Amherst County. He was the only Sandridge in this area. He started it all here. He's from Orocono.

Richard Anderson: You have a granddaughter?

George Sandridge: Yeah, she was raised in this area. Mallory Sandridge. [She is my son Kenny's daughter, and she attends Bridgewater College.]

Richard Anderson: So she grew up in this area too?

George Sandridge: Yeah, I'm pretty sure she did.

Richard Anderson: Well, any other subjects that we have overlooked? Anything that you would like to mention?

George Sandridge: Well, I'll probably think of a lot after I leave here.

Richard Anderson: Regarding your life in Brownsburg?

George Sandridge: I've just always been proud of Brownsburg. My address is Raphine, but I go somewhere and somebody say "Where are you from?" I say "I'm from Brownsburg."

Richard Anderson: People recognize Brownsburg a lot sooner than Raphine.

George Sandridge: Yeah.

Richard Anderson: You didn't have any disappointments in growing up and living in Brownsburg did you?

George Sandridge: No.

Richard Anderson: Anything upsetting? So if you had to do it over again, you would do the same thing?

George Sandridge: Yeah, I think so. Yeah. I've always been proud of Brownsburg.

Richard Anderson: Your friends and neighbors, they've all been people that you've admired?

George Sandridge: Yes.

Richard Anderson: Gotten along with?

George Sandridge: Yeah.

Richard Anderson: Well, is there anybody else that you think we should interview? I think we've done now all the people we may have already interviewed, but is there any others that you think we should interview for the Brownsburg Museum project?

George Sandridge: Not really.

Richard Anderson: We've been trying to interview people that lived here for most of their lives.

George Sandridge: Mollie Sue [Whipple]. She has lived here all her life.

Richard Anderson: <Audio skips>

George Sandridge: She, yeah. Mollie Sue [lived here] a long time.

Richard Anderson: Yeah, I think she's been interviewed and a number of others we've been working on. We've done quite a few. If you think of any let us know. What do you think of the Brownsburg Museum project?

George Sandridge: I think it's great. I'm so glad you all are doing that. I just regret that the Ruritan Club didn't do it sooner. We should have been on the ball but we weren't.

Richard Anderson: It's a lot of work.

George Sandridge: It is.

Richard Anderson: It takes a lot of people to keep something like that going, but we're always interesting in preserving some of the history. I mean there's a lot of history here.

George Sandridge: There is, and this tour of homes is a great thing. That means a lot.

Richard Anderson: Did you get into any homes a lot? Did you all visit other families? Did you have times when you'd get together with other families at their homes or things of that nature?

George Sandridge: No, not really.

Richard Anderson: In other words, visitations of various kinds? Did families visit each other?

George Sandridge: Well, we did back then in our [part of the] county, Dutch Hollow. We would walk to the Pooles or to the Swishers or somewhere to visit on a Sunday evening.

Richard Anderson: That's exactly what I'm talking about. <Inaudible>

George Sandridge: We'd walk there but anymore, nobody visits. It's gone.

Richard Anderson: But when you were growing up?

George Sandridge: Yeah, we'd walk up to the Poole's and play with each other.

Richard Anderson: So you had people that you grew up with.

George Sandridge: Yeah, and it seemed like you had time to do it. Now you don't have time to do something like that.

Richard Anderson: Since when did you start driving the school bus? I should have mentioned that earlier.

George Sandridge: Nineteen eighty-eight. I've been driving for 20 years.

Richard Anderson: That's been an experience in and of itself.

George Sandridge: Yes it has. I've enjoyed it. I still enjoy it. I guess I'll drive again next year.

Richard Anderson: What inspired you to go into that business or into that occupation?

George Sandridge: When I was usually by there at the church, they had a school bus out there, and I drove that bus. Took the youth to camps and a whole bunch of places, and after when I was in the dairy business I decided to get into it. I enjoy it. It keeps you busy. You can't go nowhere. If you go somewhere you got to always keep your eye on the watch make sure you get back home take that bus. I enjoy driving people around for the Brownsburg Museum. I really enjoyed that. I get to see a lot of people that I knew.

Richard Anderson: Right, that hadn't been here for a long time. You mentioned the bus at the church. When did that stop using the bus at the church if you know?

George Sandridge: I think about two years ago. You mean the museum?

Richard Anderson: No, the church itself. You said you drove a bus.

George Sandridge: Oh, they haven't had a bus out there for a long time.

Richard Anderson: I don't remember ever seeing it.

George Sandridge: Yeah, they used to have one.

Richard Anderson: And how was that used?

George Sandridge: To take the youth fellowship. We'd go to camps during the summer, and go to meetings somewhere.

Richard Anderson: Did they do that when you were growing up too?

George Sandridge: No, this happened after.

Richard Anderson: After World War II?

George Sandridge: Yeah. We bought a school bus from Lewis Swisher, and kept it up. Ed Patterson was driving once in a while, John Whitesell.

Richard Anderson: That was probably all right for the children.

George Sandridge: Yeah <inaudible>. Mostly used-

Richard Anderson: Did you have Vacation Bible School? Did they have Vacation Bible School?

George Sandridge: Oh yes, always had that.

Richard Anderson: Did you go to those?

George Sandridge: Yeah, my dad had an old truck of some kind and he put a sheet on top of it. Had some kind of benches in it. I can remember riding that thing to Bible School and we'd leave Dutch Hollow and go round through Pisgah and he'd pick up all the Smileys and the Gordons and end up at church [New Providence].

Richard Anderson: It was a pretty big group?

George Sandridge: Probably had 20, 25 kids on it.

Richard Anderson: Wow, so that was a good thing too.

George Sandridge: It was.

Richard Anderson: Had good times back then.

George Sandridge: I guess there wasn't any busses back then. I know there was some kind of an old truck he had. He'd put that sheet on top and haul kids to Bible School.

Richard Anderson: Well, George, thank you for your willingness to participate in this-

George Sandridge: I'm glad to help, but I don't think I-

Richard Anderson: Well, you answered the questions.

George Sandridge: I tried but I probably forgot a lot.

Richard Anderson: It's easy to do. We'll eventually we'll get a transcript of this made, and we'll get a copy to you and you can look it over to see if there are any things that need to be corrected of that nature. If you want to add anything we can always do that.

George Sandridge: Well, okay.

Richard Anderson: You will have an opportunity to see what you said. So anyway, I guess we'll close this interview at this point, and again, thank you for your willingness to participate in our program, and we will keep you posted.

[End of Interview]

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