

December 22, 1994

**BRANCHVILLE RECORDINGS**

**Transcription of audio recordings made in and near Branchville, Indiana, May 27 - 28, 1994.**

**Marion Joseph Saalman;** host

**Howard Joseph Saalman;** audio recordist, *narration*

**Todd Howard Saalman;** transcription, *editing*

*[Elipses (...) indicate a time break; underscore (\_\_\_\_) marks indicate undeciphered words]*

**Howard:** [to the tape recorder] *May the 27th, 1994, a Friday afternoon. Uh, Todd arrived at our home in Flora, Illinois, approximately eight fifteen p.m. on the 26th of May, and today being May the 27th, we left the house in Flora at approximately ten a.m., and drove to Tell City, Indiana, and picked up Marion Saalman. Had dinner with Marion and his wife Toni. We had, uh, a delicious fried chicken dinner, with new potatoes, and uh, fresh, uh green peas with that. And a green lettuce salad. And, uh, strawberry pie, for the dessert! And we arrived at Marion's home at approximately, uh, twelve thirty. It is now two p.m., and we're headed northbound, on Indiana state route 37, uh, to go to Branchville, and, um, look at the cemetery, and oh, hopefully, the old Saalman home place, and Saalman Hollow. We're in route right now.*

...

*Uh, we just turned off of, uh, state route 37, and we're going to see Rosanna. That's Rosanna Gibson, and she's going to, um, take us over to the cemetery at Branchville, the Walker cemetery, because she knows all about the place and uh, considerable history. We're here now.*

...

*Uh, the home we stopped at, Rosanna Gibson, is called the Gibson Apple Farm. Relatively small apple orchard here.*

...

*Uh, we arrived in Branchville at approximately two fifteen, on Friday afternoon, 27th of May.*

...

*Uh, Marion informed us that there, uh, are four creeks coming into the village of Branchville...*

**Marion** [in background]: we just passed the spot where great grammaw Saalman lived ...

**Howard:** and we just passed the spot where, oh, grammaw Saalman used to live.

...

*In the wintertime they traveled the uh, the bed of the creek in order to get in and out of Branchville. That's the only time the uh, creeks were dry enough to travel on.*

...

*Uh, we're just approaching uh, Saalman Hollow, but right at the moment were going to head for Walker cemetery.*

...

**[Walker Cemetery, Branchville, Indiana]**

*We're now entering Branchville Walker Cemetery.*

...

*Uh, just as we entered the um, Branchville Walker Cemetery, we observed the uh, gravestones of uh, Otis Edward Saalman, ummm, born 1914, ummmm, died 1989, and uh, along with that on the headstone is the name of his wife, Agnes Laurent, born in 1918. And just to the left of that gravemarker, is a gravemarker for James Edward Saalman, born 1947, died 1985. He served on the S.S. Lafayette nuclear submarine, and um, he was the son of Otis Edward Saalman. [James was killed in a plane crash].*

**Marion:** ...Joe Saalman's son, first cousins to me and Rosanna.

**Howard:** *Uh, Joe Saalman's son related to Marion Saalman and Rosanna.*

...

**Howard:** *Now the gravemarker is labeled Saalman, John D., born August 30th, 1901, died on September the 12th, 1979, and his wife Lilian E. Saalman, born October 4th, 1906, still living.*

**Marion:** ...Saalman, from eighteen hunderd, eighteen sixty-one. Born in Germany, and he is the father of Dorothea Saalman's husband, which was our great granpaw. Uh, Christian was his name too, wasn't it?

**Howard:** Yeah, um-hm.

...

*We believe the marker, labeled in memory of James Carter Pollard, 1805 to 1873, would be a brother to Nancy Pollard, who married Joseph Saalman.*

...

*We'll check that with Rosanna just in a few moments.*

**Marion:** Did you git that?

...

**Howard:** Uh, grammaw? You say Grammaw Saalman, was related to ...?

**Marion:** Her mother was a Sprinkle.

**Howard:** *Her mother was a Sprinkle. S-P-R-I-N-K-L-E, and a number, of Sprinkle grave martyrs, markers, in this cemetery.*

...

*Uh, we're looking at a gravemarker, for the name Saalman, Columbus C., the son of Christian and Dorothea Saalman, born in Hoym, Germny, Germany, November 23rd, 1853, died March 7th, 1941. Elizabeth J., daughter of John and Mary Sprinkle Howe, H-O-W-E, born near Appalona, Indiana, April 14th, 1852, died September 30th, 1930. That's the mother and father.*

...

*The grave of Dr. J. Elmer Saalman, born May 10, 1880, died August 24th, 1960. He doctored in, uh, Indianapolis, Indiana, uh, during his lifetime.*

...

*I'm now looking at the gravemarker for Mattie, M-A-T-T-I-E, wife of Joseph R. Saalman, January 17th, 1879, uh, died March 4th, 1990, 1919! And the gravemarker at the top is labeled Mattie, and at the bottom are the large letters Saalman. And right next to that gravemarker, is the one labeled Joseph R. Saalman, husband of Martha J., October 16th, 1877, uh, died October 4th, 1960.*

...

The, uh, gravemarker for, um, uh, Joseph R. Saalman, was the son of...who?

**Marion:** Columbus Saalman, over here.

**Howard:** Yeah?

**Marion:** See, he was the son of Columbus Saalman, over there.

**Howard:** *OK, Joseph R. Saalman, was the son of Columbus C. Saalman, and Mattie was Joseph R. Saalman's wife.*

...

**Rosanna:** My mother's name was Ruth, uh, Jane Saalman, and uh, she uh, was married to George Saddler, and she was the daughter of Columbus Saalman, and she passed away in 19 and thirty-fower. And uh, dad raised us kids, they was five of us, and uh, he was a good dad! And then uh, Ida Belle Carr, she was uh, uh, sister to mother, and she was Columbus Saalman's daughter, and she is married to Theodore Carr.

**Howard:** Theodore Carr?

**Rosanna:** See, there's their marker right there.

**Howard:** Oh yeah, ok. Uh-hm.

**Rosanna:** And then Anna Esarey, up here, she was a, a, sister to my mother, and she married Absom Esarey, and uh, there is a Dora Saalman, she married Victor Goldman.

**Howard:** *Ok, that's labeled M. Dora...do you remember what her first name was?*

**Rosanna:** Mary.

**Howard:** *Mary. Dora. Saalman, married, uh, Victor L. Goldman.*

**Rosanna:** This is her granddaughter, right here, this lady right here [*indicating one of two elderly women nearby, also visiting the cemetery*].

**Dorie's grand-daughter:** Uh-huh.

**Marion:** Her mother had married Jerome Goldman, which was the son of Dorie and Victor.

...

**Rosanna:** ...Mabel, uh, Sprinkle, and she is the daughter if Ida, uh, Saalman Carr, and also, Inis Walters, and she is the daughter of Ida Saalman Carr, and the Ransom is a grand-daughter of Ida Carr.

**Howard:** *R-A-N-S-O-M.*

**Rosanna:** Ransom, yes.

**Todd:** And the Galeys, over here?

**Rosanna:** Yes, the Galey is uh, Frank Galey was um, a half brother to our ... uhhhhh...

**Marion:** Parents.

**Rosanna:** Yes! To Emmett Saalman and uh, Ruth Saalman Sadler, and our granmaw Saalman was married to a Galey first, and he died, got killed, and then she married our Columbus Saalman, and had all these children.

**Howard:** *And the name Galey is spelled G-A-L-E-Y.*

**Rosanna:** And this is where the girls all come in. They are the kids and the grandkids of the Galey family, and that's why, so this, all this cluster is all relation.

**Howard:** *And that name of Curl is spelled C-U-R-L, just like you'd expect.*

**Todd:** And the Pollards, how's that...we need to walk, maybe walk up the hill.

**Rosanna:** Uh-huh.

...

**Marion:** Here's Newton and Pollard's dad.

**Howard:** *We're talkin 'bout uh, James Carter Pollard, 1805 to 1873.*

**Marion:** Because I know his name was Jim. That woulda been Newton, uh, its Newton Pollard's dad, I'll betcha's who that is right there.

**Rosanna:** Not the Newton, though, that we knew.

**Marion:** Not the young Newton, the old Newton.

**Rosanna:** The old Newton, yes! The old Newton.

**Marion:** That was, uh, Henry Gardner's \_\_\_\_\_ dad.

**Rosanna:** Yes, Yes.

**Marion:** And I believe that that was, then *his* dad then, and probably her granpaw.

**Todd:** That was the old Newton who, uh, took his life, or the young Newton?

**Rosanna/Marion:** The young Newton.

**Rosanna:** The old Newton, they talk about him in that Esarey history. You know, he was quite a character, I think.

**Marion:** Yeah.

**Howard:** Was he good with a rifle?

**Rosanna:** Oh, I think! Ha Ha! I think they was all *born* with a rifle!

GENERAL LAUGHTER

**Marion:** I'll have to show you where...

**Howard:** I wanna see that!

**Marion:** ...where he hit that tin can?

**Howard:** Yeah-yeah!

**Marion:** I can show you the exact spot, where that happened! And where he was standin at.

**Rosanna:** You have never been to Andersonville, I guess?

**Todd:** No.

**Rosanna:** Well, you must go. You really need, in your lifetime, you need to go once.

**Todd:** I plan to!

...

**Rosanna:** No, Hiram Marcus is his, Anna Saalman's husband.

**Marion:** Oh, that's Anna's husband! Ok.

**Rosanna:** Yes, and this is all their descendants, in here.

**Howard:** *Yeah, we're talking about the, the name of Esarey, E-S-A-R-E-Y, Hiram Marcus and Anna A.*

**Rosanna:** Anna was a, a sister to Columbus Saalman and Joe Saalman.

**Marion:** Neil [*Neil Anthony, grandson of Hermeina Dorothea Saalman and George Herman Vaupel; ed.*] wanted to know more about Annie, and at that time I didn't remember her being buried here, but that's your great-aunt Annie, right there. She was a sister...

**Howard:** *Heh, that was my great Annie, heh heh, their talkin about! Heh Heh!*

**Marion:** She was a sister...

**Howard:** *I'm Howard. And she was a sister to Joe.*

**Marion:** ...to your granpaw.

**Howard:** *My granpaw Saalman.*

**Rosanna:** She was a sister to our granpaw, Columbus.

**Marion:** Yeah, my sister...

**Howard:** *And a sister to grampaw Columbus Saalman, as well.*

...

**Marion:** Now, A'm gonna let you do this...

**Rosanna:** Well, it was their daughter was Kate Esarey, and she married a Lankford. And this is her children, her....

**Todd:** Anna's daughter is Katie.

**Rosanna:** Yes. And that is, uh, her family. Sons and daughters, I think, and maybe, I don't know where her husband is buried, apparently he's not buried in this cemetery, I guess.

**Howard:** *Lankford is spelled capital L-A-N-K-F-O-R-D. Katie. Esarey. Lankford. 1876 to 1969.*

Now who was Marcus Lankford Buddy, was that a son of theirs?

**Rosanna:** I think he was the son of Katie's, and married....

**Marion:** Not very old when he died, was he?

**Howard:** No.

...

**Rosanna:** This is Edna.

**Howard:** *Edna H. Esarey.*

**Rosanna:** And I think that she is a sister to Katie, prob'ly. Yeah, 1881, 1876, yeah. Now this man, Marion, is this right? This Elisha Esarey, he is a brother to Marcus? Or is he a, he is a, I guess he is Anna and Hiram Marcus' son, isn't he?

**Marion:** Prob'ly.

**Rosanna:** 18 and 79. Yeah, I guess he would be their son.

**Howard:** *Elisha. Esarey. March 2nd, 1879 through February 21st, 1968.*

...

**Rosanna:** ...my, uh, husband's aunt, and was married to Anna uh, Saalman and Hiram Marcus Esarey's son, Deke. When she died, her son was going through all of her papers, and she had wrote a letter to her neice, and she said what a shame that Christian Reinhart Saalman does not have a stone in the Branchville cemetery.

She said something needs to be done about it, and she said how many feet from Dorothea's stone there was a rock, and she said if someone will dig that rock up there, there will be a number on the bottom of it, and that is Christian Reinhart Saalman's grave. And uh, she said, two years, I believe, after they came from Germany is when he died.

And uh, so Otis, I called Otis Saalman, told his about it. Well, he came right up, that very evening, he came to my house to read the letter. So he said, 'let's git the cousins together', and I think we asked for five dollars apiece, I think, and we got a hundred dollars and we had the stone put up.

**Howard:** Heh heh heh!

**Rosanna:** Otis took the rock home with him, and he said 'I'm gonna take the rock.', and I said 'good', and now we don't know what happened to the rock. But Ah'm sure he put it in a good spot! Heh heh!

**Marion:** It's around there somewhere!

**Rosanna:** It's on Juban creek someplace.

**Marion:** I've got 'em watchin fer it, they ever see it, well....

**Howard:** *Yeah. And the gravestone they're talking about that was put in its place, is for 'Christian Reinhart Saalman, 1800 to 1861, born in Germany'.*

*[According to Pastor Schöter of the Castle Church Congregation in Ballenstedt, Germany near Hoym(in a letter to Neil Anthony, January, 1993),the names and dates are: Johann Christian Saalman, (7 Jan 1797 - 22 Jul 1861), father of Reinhart Gottfried Christian Saalman (15 Jan 1829 - July, 1864), both born in Hoym.;ed.]*

...

**Marion:** The lot that Dorothea lived on in Branchville, was lot number 16, do you know how the lots are divided up that way?

**Rosanna:** No, I don't. I don't know how...

**Marion:** Lot number 16.

**Rosanna:** See, it was right where Iola lived.

**Marion:** Yeah, I know where it's at! But it was just telling ya, 'bout where that new store's built there.

**Rosanna:** Yeah, uh-huh, a little back, yeah.

**Marion:** Yeah.

**Rosanna:** Just a little back there.

**Marion:** We'll drive kinda slow goin back through town, I'll explain all that stuff, ok?

**Rosanna:** She was a midwife, I guess, for the whole community around.

**Marion:** There's many a person in this cemetery that she delivered.

**Howard:** And that was very common in those years. So Vi's mother did the very same thing, my wife's mother.

**Rosanna:** Is that right?

...

**Rosanna:** I'm not sure, Oddfellows or Eastern, Eastern Stars! Eastern Star Lodge. And he was a Mason.

**Howard:** Her father was a Mason and she was an Eastern Star.

**Rosanna:** See, and then they also had Oddfellows and Rebeccas, and there is a lot of those in this cemetery! Thoses two....

...

**Howard:** Say that again.

**Rosanna:** James L. Pollard, he was known as Lincoln Pollard, and he and his wife divorced after their children were grown, and that's why he is buried here by himself. She is buried in Tell City.

**Todd:** He's the father of one of our...!

**Rosanna:** He's the brother to Joey Pollard, who was the father of young Newton Pollard. I bet that this right here is his dad! Don't you?

**Marion:** No.

**Rosanna:** 18 and 53?

**Marion:** Did you remember my story about the Pollards? I told you about this guy settin on the clift, and I was on top of the clift? That's him!

**Todd:** He threatened to shoot you off the cliff!

**Howard:** That was an ornery trick!

**Marion:** I was on top of the clift, he was settin under there watchin fer a squirrel, and I throwed 'em akerns through the tree he was in, ya know, and they'd fall down by 'em, and I looked over there and there he was, he had his gun, lookin, he'd be lookin at a tree tryin to find that squirrel!



**Rosanna:** I have another little story, I have to tell you this. He had a, he lived in a little shack down along the creek...

**Howard:** Lincoln?

**Rosanna:** This Lincoln, by himself there, and he done a lot a drinkin, you know, card playin and all this stuff ya know, and the woods got on fire behind his house! And they all thought, you know, that, gonna burn Lincoln's house!

We lived here in Branchville, then, and my husband saw him that evening, and he said, 'Lincoln, was you scared?'

Why', he said, 'all I *had* was a pair of socks and a deck a cards!'

GENERAL LAUGHTER

**Howard:** Well, there wasn't anything else to lose!

**Todd:** Is this the same Lincoln who was drinking and he had to relieve himself?

**Marion:** No, that was Newton, old man Newton.

**Howard:** Heh-heh, in the pantry!

**Marion:** Yeah.

**Howard:** He thought he'd gone out the back door, ok....

**Marion:** 'Colder'n hell and smells like cakes and pie!'

GENERAL LAUGHTER

...

**Howard:** Ok, Ed Pollard was a brother to James Lincoln Pollard. Anything else about him?

**Marion:** Well, they were brothers and they farmed together. I got it wrong.

**Rosanna:** Where is Sherman, wait a minute!

**Marion:** Sherman, Sherman.

**Rosanna:** Sherman is Ed's brother. Sherman is buried, is he buried over here?

...

**Howard:** Now, say that again.

**Marion:** Ed Pollard and Sherman was brothers, Lincoln was a cousin to 'em. First cousins.

...

**Howard:** *Now this is Rosanna, talking to Howard Saalman, and this is what she says.*

**Rosanna:** Dwight Esarey, he is the grandson of Anna Saalman Esarey, and he lives in Fairfield, Illinois, and he has, uh, three brothers, and they, part of 'em live in Illinois, and some live in Texas. So they're not very far from you.

**Howard:** No.

**Marion:** Be about second cousins to ya.

**Howard:** *About a second cousin, Marion says.* And we just came through Fairfield this morning.

**Rosanna:** Is that right!

...

**Howard:** *He's a retired agricultural agent, and lives in Fairfield by himself.*

...

**[In the car on a dirt road, next to Juban creek, which flows out of Saalman Hollow.]**

**Marion:** Now this was on an evening in the summertime, when the weather was pretty hot. There wasn't a cloud in the sky, it...right here. But they was a hard storm, that went up the head of this creek, which is about five or six miles from here. And uh, like a cloud burst, and my dad and mother had been down to the store in Branchville, and on their way up the creek, they come around that bend, right back there, and they met a roll a water right back there, comin down the creek.

Well, he went ahead and drove through it up to right along about here, somewhere, and it kept gettin deeper and deeper, so he stopped the car, and he got mother and pushed her up the bank, and he got the little daughter out, I think she, and she was just a, kinda baby then, little more than a baby, 'bout two er three years old. Anyhow, he handed the baby up to her, and she took her.

And dad then, so that time, the water just, a big rise came 'bout that time, and dad was standin on the runnin board, holding his chin up to keep it outa the water, and he grabbed a bush and pulled himself up the creek, right there on the other side, pull hisself up outa the creek.

And when he got up on the creek, he looked around to see about his car, and he, all he could see, was a radiator stickin straight up in the air, goin right down through here, and it went down there around that bend, lodged in a tree top, layin over on its side!

**Todd:** What kind of car was that?

**Marion:** That was a 29 Chevrolet.

**Todd:** Floated 'pretty good', huh?

**Marion:** Yeah, it floated that far. And, but when he looked around, all he could see, he said, was the radiator was sticking straight up in the air! And that's how close he come to gettin killed, all that right there.

**Todd:** Did he ever get his car back out of the tree, or was it...?

**Marion:** Oh yeah, we drug it out, took it to garage, and had it cleaned out. All the winders was broke out of it, he had all new winders put it, but it never was worth a dime after that sand got in the transmission, the motor and everthang, ya know un, they didn't get it cleaned out good, and it didn't last no time but it wasn't worth junkin!

**Todd:** He was headed up here for what reason?

**Marion:** That's where he lived.

**Todd:** The old house, before Otis built the new one?

**Marion:** Yeah.

...

**Marion:** And my grandpaw always told a story about 'im. Uh, he was huntin one day and he saw a deer laying on the side, on the other side of a log, he just see a deer's horns stickin up there. And he went and got 'im a, a hickory limb, sumpin that he could kinda bend and twist, and he crawled up right behind that log, and he jumped over that log, and wrapped that around that deer's horns, you know, around his neck, and killed that deer right there, bare-handed!

**Todd:** That was Juban, did that?

**Marion:** Yeah, old Pete Juban.

...

**[In Saalman Hollow, in the home of Otis Saalman's son, Mark Allan Saalman. Present are Mark's wife, Tammy Lechaner Saalman; their three daughters: Kelly, Sally and Victoria; Otis' widow, Agnes Laurent Saalman; Howard, Marion and Todd.**

**The girls are playing fiddle, flute and electric piano in the background. Later Marion plays Torrie's (Victoria's) small fiddle, too, which he made and gave to her.]**

**Howard:** Tell us who you are, again.

**Agnes:** My name is Agnes Saalman, I'm the wife of Otis E. Saalman, who was quite well-known back here as a historian. Anyway, this, Otis used to tell about this earthquake that went through here in 1811, the night that Abraham Lincoln was born. [*Lincoln was born 1809; New Madrid earthquake, 1812; ed.*]

And we'd been to Reelfoot lake in Tennessee, several times. Have you ever been there? Well, the trees are still growing outa the middle of the body of water, and he farmed that lake. Reelfoot lake.

Anyway, this Roosevelt, that had this young wife, were going down the first trip with a steamboat, down the river, and they got to near Troy, Indiana, when this earthquake hit, and 'course, the natives here, there weren't very many, wondered what in the world that was.

So they laid it on this steamboat goin down the river, that shook everthing up! And they went out with rocks and uh, tree limbs and everthing else, was beatin on it!

Anyway, that's the story of that. His name was, uh, I don't know which ancestor of a, Theodore it was, but it was a Roosevelt. I've got the book!

...

**Howard:** *Uh, we're visiting the home of Mark and Tammy Saalman, and she has three girls.*

*Uh, what's your name? Kelly? Sally? and Victoria! Which we call Torrie, she's the one who played the violin just a little while ago! And now you're listening to Marion Saalman playin the fiddle!*

Give us a little tune on it!

...

**Howard:** *Tammy was just telling me that Mark Saalman works as a geologist for a coal mining company.*

...

**Marion:** ... a corn crib right down there. One night me and muh two cousins 'uz comin from Branchville, and we's on this path over the hill, come through here, and my brother Otis, he was upstairs, sleepin. He heard us acomin, it's about, oh, close to midnight, I guess.

And they'd been a lot a talk a corn theives, people stealin corn outa the crib around here, ya know.

So Otis, he hears us acomin, he jumps outa bed, and runs over here and gits a sack and puts some corn in it, and he gits in the crib, and just as we come up on the other side of the crib, the door flew open and out Otis runs with that sack a corn! Here he come right up through here, ya know, runnin, and we run to the house, and I got the shotgun, that one that was ahingin down there, I guess.

And uh, I come arunnin out, ya know, I was gonna, I didn't want to shoot anybody, but I thought if I could see him off in the distance, I'd shoot over his head or sumpthin, you know. And I had that shotgun, here I come arunnin right past the barn, here, and he was sittin rotchere tween the barn!

He jumped up and grabbed me round the legs, and throwed me, and I throwed the gun, huh ha, right over 'bout, it landed 'bout chere! Then Otis run and picked the gun up, and I was laying back here where he throwed me, ya know, and I didn't know who he was yet! Until he started laughin, he started laughin, he says 'Now who's got the gun?!'.

...

**Howard:** *Marion and Todd and myself just returned from oh, probably a two and a half hour trek into the Saalman Hollow, and for the most part we walked on a dry creek bed, and uh, towering um, cliffs, ...*

[Interview: Marion Saalman, Branchville, Indiana,  
May 27, 1994]

### Driving out of Saalman Hollow

**Marion:** There used to be a big oak tree, stood on that rock there and I mean it was big! It was that big a round and it stood up on, the roots come down over the rock. And one night here, oh, it's probably been 12, 15 years ago, I was out chere, not even that long, 'fore Otis died, and him and I was sittin' on that porch there...we're heading towards there...and I looked out and I said, 'Otis, I says, I wonder how long that tree will stand on that rock agin. And he said, 'Well, it's probably been there a close to a hunnerd years; it'll probably be there 50 mower.'

Well, when I got ready to leave to come home, we went home, and when I opened the door to go in the house, at home, the phone was ringin. And I picked up the phone and it was Otis.

He says, 'Marion, you still want to know how long that tree is going to stand on that rock?'

I says, 'Yeah, why?'

He said that, 'you'd a been five minutes later leaving, it'd a fell right acrost your car; it'd went right acrost the road then.'

Heh-heh! It was just leaning like this, it wasn't a bit a wind er nothin. And that tree fell!

After I said that, we left, right shortly after I'd said that to 'im. And I guess in less than 15 minutes after I said that tree fell over!