

## **Clark Center (Auburn), Illinois**

Oral History Interview of Don Veach by Bill Darr, Marshall High School  
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**BD: How long have you lived here and how much has it changed?**

DV: Well I was born here in 1924 and then I lived here 25 years, left, and came back. I moved back in 1982. And there have been lots of changes, bathrooms, electricity, and stuff like that. But the farm is about the same as when I was born here.

**BD: What year was this school built?**

DV: Well I started to grade school up here in Auburn, when they had the school in Auburn, and went through eight grades there. Then I went to Marshall High School. Is that what you want?

(Skip in tape)

DV: Well everything happened in Auburn. Bill Darr was born here, raised, and stuff like that. It's a close knit community, used to be, more so than it is now. But they have had as high as three grocery stores here, a garage, mill, blacksmiths shop, tavern, post office in its younger years.

**BD: Tell us about the first school. What was the name of the first school you went to?**

DV: I went to the Auburn school up here, just a little two room eight grade school. I think it was just strictly an eight grade school.

**BD: Have there been any natural disasters?**

DV: On this farm?

**BD: No, just in Clark Center.**

DV: Oh we have had a lot of car wrecks, had fights up at the local saloon. And a few boys was killed in the service. But there were no fires that I remember, I mean except there were a few small house fires now and then but no, nothing big.

**BD: What did you do for fun when you were a little kid?**

DV: Oh ride horses, work sheep, slide downhill, play marbles, hide and seek, all that stuff. Handy the over. That's all we had to do we didn't have any television, very few radios.

**BD: What was the name of the first Church in Clark Center?**

DV: Well it was the former Methodist church. The old church used to be out here west of town here about a quarter of a mile. Then they built the new church up here in 1824, a hundred years before I was born.

**BD: What was the name of the gas station, the one that he quit running?**

DV: Well at one time there were 1234 five gas stations in Auburn. I'd sat the last one quit around 1960.

**BD: Do you know their names, the gas stations?**

DV: Well the Shade brothers had a garage up here for years and years. Lawrence Hutchens from Marshall, Mildred Hutchens' husband, he worked up there in the garage for years. And then Hughes had a Shell station down there where Carpenters live. It probably run till 1965 or 1970 before it closed. But you can't buy a gallon of gas in Auburn now. At one time there were five stations where you could buy gas.

**BD: Did Clark Center ever have a water tower?**

DV: Never.

**BD: What year was Clark Center established?**

DV: That I could not answer, but at one time it was supposed to be the county seat of Clark County. Before they moved the Courthouse to Marshall it was supposed to come to Auburn. That's how it got its name Clark Center. But I wouldn't know when it was established.

**BD: Why did you settle in Clark Center?**

DV: Cause I was born here.

**BD: Did they have good farming?**

DV: Oh yeah, farming, livestock.

**BD: Where did you move after you lived here?**

DV: After I left here I went and spent four years in the Army and then I came back and spent three years, no four years at home. Then I married a young girl from Martinsville

and I lived in Martinsville till 1977. Then I moved to Marshall until 1982 then I moved back here.

**BD: Has the town grown any since you have moved here?**

DV: Oh it's just about the same, 75, 80 people. They used to have three grocery stores or two grocery stores up here. They got lots of farm trade around the country, people came in their horse and wagons and buggies, horseback, foot. And they would loaf till bedtime, and then go home.

**BD: Thank you very much; this is Bill Darr signing out.**