

*The
Life &
Times of
Roger Ellis
Weir
12 March 1909
to
11 June 1985*



**ROGER
WEIR**
First
Son
of
Dennis
& Lillie
Weir
1912



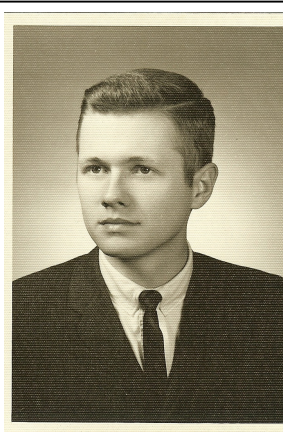
Parents of Roger Weir
Dennis Weir & Lillie *Williams* Weir



born - 01 Jan 1883 died - 28 Jul 1970

born - 28 Aug 1880 died - 07 Apr 1961

Son of Roger Ellis Weir – Carl Eugene Weir



**The life & times of Roger Weir
As known & recorded by his son
Carl Eugene Weir**

This is the memory of Carl E. Weir and known facts about Roger Ellis Weir born 12 March 1909 in Franklin Township, Washington County, Indiana to Dennis Weir & Lillie Dale (Williams) Weir at his parents home. Roger was the second child and the first son of Lilly & Dennis. Roger seemed to have a normal childhood. He had a younger brother Ward that he was very close to. They probably went to grade school near their home – likely near the Beech Grove Church about a mile away from their home. All of the children probably worked on the farm when they were not in school. Roger and Ward drove a Model T Ford to Salem, Indiana to attend high school every week. They drove into Salem on Monday morning with enough money to cover their food and enough gasoline to make 1 round trip back to their home on Friday and return to school on the next Monday.



*Roger at a young age!
About 1910*



One of their typical meals in their boarding room was milk, bread and macaroni & cheese that they cooked in their room. During the summer in his late teens, Roger worked on rebuilding local road by hauling rock for a creek bed and laying it as a foundation for the upper portion of the road surface. To get the Model T Ford truck to climb the hill east of the creek where the rock was being taken, he would have to drive up the hill in reverse since that was the lowest gear the truck had. This kept the gravity feed gas tank

above the engine when going up the hill. That is where Roger got his experience at driving trucks. The girl in the picture above is of one of his high school classmates.

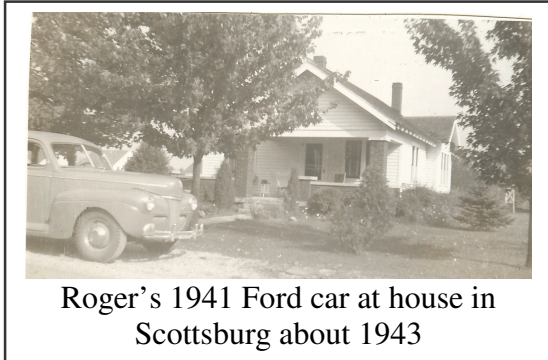
Roger had hoped to go to college and had asked his uncle Dr. Charlie Williams for a loan to pay for his further educations. However, Charlie could not agree to this & Roger had to go to work. Some time before 1930 he moved to Indianapolis, Indiana and lived with his older sister Ruth Higdon, her husband - Lynn Ray Higdon & their daughter Lois Maxine Higdon (age 2 to 3). In 1930 he was working for Link Belt, Inc. as a lathe operator. That type of repetitive work did not satisfy him and he returned to Scott County, Indiana where he married Gladys

Hazel Mercer, a sister of Addie Mae (Mercer) Graham, the wife of Linza E. Graham. A friend he started working with – cutting & hauling timber in Washington & Scott County. After marrying Gladys on 29 Oct 1932, they proceeded to build their new home at 65 Oak Drive on 1 of 5 lots that he had purchased.



Roger & Gladys' home as of 1990

Sometime in the late 1930s or early 1940s he contracted to drive a school bus for the Scott County Schools system. When the 2nd World War started he took a job in Charleston, Indiana with DuPont at



Roger's 1941 Ford car at house in Scottsburg about 1943

their gunpowder plant as a Security Guard. He drove his 1941 Ford car everyday to work with 2 or 3 other men that worked there. They paid him for their



This is Roger's 1941 Ford sedan with his mother Lillie Weir & Florence Williams – Dennie Williams' wife.



portion of fuel with ration cards plus some cash – Gasoline was very scarce during all these war years. His 1941 Ford can be seen at the photo to the right. He also purchased a dump truck and leased it to DuPont for hauling something on the plant's work site.

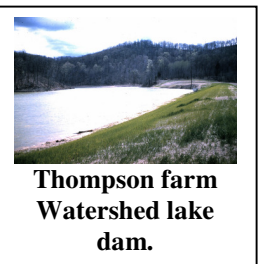
The picture to the left is of one of Roger's school bus: The man in the door looks like Alton Mercer? – I think. Roger worked the midnight shift at DuPont, so Gladys would drive the bus in the mornings with me (Carl Weir) setting on the heater box next to the drivers seat. The route ran down into Vienna and areas south of Scottsburg, where Gladys had grown up. One time the police for some reason stopped Gladys while she was driving the bus one morning on hi-way SR-31. Not knowing what was likely to happen, so I (Carl –age 4 yrs) ask mom if they were going to put us in jail – they didn't!

After the end of WWII Roger started working with Linza Graham again and returned to cutting timber and buying plots of land with large sections of timber standing on them. He purchased property in Scott County, Washington County and Jackson County over the next 5 to 10 years. Roger and Linza Graham bought one large 470 acre tract of land in Washington County known as the Thompson Place, as 50/50 owners. Roger set up a sawmill up on a hill in a wooded area on the

northwest side of the property. He proceeded to cut timber from this property for 1 to 2 years and sold lumber and logs to several buyers including Linze's business – Graham Lumber Company. As Roger did with most of his properties which all had some tillable ground, he would clean up the fencerows and along side the creeks edges and would start farming these properties. Early on in the late 1940s and early 1950s he raised wheat, barley, clover, field corn and harvested straw and hay as byproducts. He also constructed granaries on 2 farms for storage of the corn, wheat and barley products. These were constructed from lumber that he had harvested and sawed. Some time in the early 1950s Roger, stopped cutting timber and devoted most of his efforts on his many farms. By this time he had sold 2 farms owned 3 farms in 3 counties. His headquarters farm was located in Scott County about 4 miles west of Scottsburg; it was known as the Starks Place (that may be who he purchased it from). He constructed 2 ponds on the farm so he could keep livestock – pigs, sheep & a cow. He built 2 sets of granaries with furrowing pins for sows and piglets and had a house & barn on the property. The house was rented to Lee Hines; who worked for Roger for several years in the 1940s & 1950s in timber and farming. The barn was used to store hay & straw and house some of the livestock. Shortly after purchasing this farm he had a dam built across a small ravine to the north of the house and barn and created a ½ acre pond to provide water for livestock. It was stocked with bass and bluegill fish. We did a lot of fishing in that pond when weather was too wet to farm or to just relax a few hours. Later in the mid 1950s he built another small pond on the south side of the farm for watering other livestock.

Roger was a civic minded man and was active on the Scottsburg Water Board which created Scottsburg Lake that now provided the town with most all its' fresh water since the early 1950. I remember Roger driving a caterpillar tractor pulling a sheep's foot roller to compact the dam as it was being built; I think he did that in the late afternoons and on weekends. His name is on a plaque inside of the south main door to the new water plant that still operates today after several upgrades and capacity increases. Any water that left the Scottsburg Lake flowed into the Honeysuckle Creek, where I used to go hunt butterflies, dragonflies, beetles, ants & other insects for my 4-H projects.

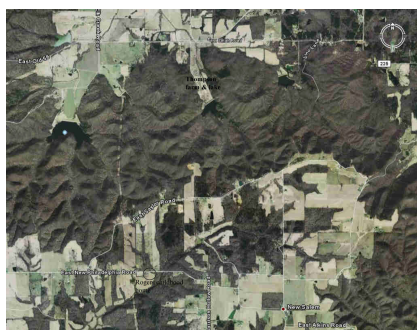
The Thompson Place farm was our biggest piece of farming property and we spent lots of time at that location. In the mid 1950s, the flood control district in southern Indiana started funding dry lake dams to hold back waters from spring rainy seasons that creates flooding. Property owners could elect to have these dams built higher and form permanent lakes on their land but the property owner had to pay for this. We elected to have a 13-acre lake as a permanent lake and would use the water to irrigate our summer crops for the Austin Packing Company –(sweet corn, green beans, cabbage, pumpkins & tomatoes). To pay for the higher dam Roger worked out an agreement to do all the land clearing and



prepared the lake site for the new watershed dam. This meant cutting down all the trees that were below the lakes water line and in the area where the dam would be built. I got to help a lot with that activity.



Thompson farm's lake at lower center



Roger home as a child and Thompson farm

Once the lake was built, full with water & stocked with fish, we had lots of water for fishing and irrigating. As part of my pay for helping Roger on his farms, I got the second crop of green beans and the money from their

sale, which I could use for college. Irrigation was great! Around that same farm we rented or sharecropped several pieces of land and raised wheat and field corn on those lands. Roger always made an effort to improve any property that he farmed. The owners of the land he rented seemed to appreciate that a great deal.

His third farm was west of Austin Indiana about 4 miles on the south side of state road 256. It was a ¼ miles square plot of land that was flat and water laden. Roger had it tilled to get better drainage and over 3 years cleaned the fencerows out and recovered all 40 acres for farming. Then he bought the 40 acres to the west of his first 40 acres from an old man named Harley Ray. Harley lived on land just west across the road of this new 40 acres. Harley had farmed most of his life and was still using his F-12 Farmall steel wheeled tractor that ran on kerosene. He would start it using gasoline and get it warmed up then convert it to kerosene to do his farm work; not that he did much farming any more. Kerosene was a cheaper fuel in those days (1920s to 1950s) since jet planes did not exist yet to increase demand for this type of fuel.



Farmall F-12

Roger on the other hand wanted a more modern farming system. His first farm tractor was a Ferguson model 20 with a hydraulic 3-point hitch system. He bought it from his brother-in-law Randall McClellan that married his younger sister Frances Weir. This tractor would pull Two 12 inch plows. As he got

heavier into farming he moved up to the newer Ferguson model 30 with an extra 3 speed over drive transmission that gave it 12 forward gears and a wider range of speed in the field and faster speeds for moving between farms (I did a lot of that driving between our farms). He had dual rear tires put on that tractor so



Ferguson 20



Ferguson 30 or 35 with Randall McClellan

we could work in wetter grounds for harvesting in the fall as well as for sub-soiling in the spring to drain wet areas in fields that were not tilled. He also entered this tractor in the Scott County Fair's tractor pulling contest a few times because it had lower gearing and the dual rear tires. I don't remember winning any contest but it was sure fun trying. I think we both drove in those pulling contest over several years in the 1950s; we could not do much harm with a 30 to 40 HP tractor. He kept buying new Ferguson tractors as his farming enterprises grow. Once he traded one of his Ferguson models 20 or 30s for a herd of sheep with Ivan Gillispie, a farming neighbored. Then we were in the sheep wool and lamb raising business. They were great for cleaning out underbrush and fencerows on the Starks Place, so Roger said!



Ferguson 65

Roger raised a lot of crops for the local canning company Morgan Packing Company. They included sweet corn, green beans, cabbage, tomatoes and pumpkins. We used our own trucks and wagons to haul these crops to Scottsburg & Austin's packing plants. Roger

believed in rotating his crops and different crops in each field each year. The major grain crops were wheat, barley, clovers, field corn and soybeans, which we combines or picked with our own equipment. He had Allis-Chalmers combines and a New Holland Corn picker. After harvesting wheat, barley, clover and fescue, he would hire some one (some times his brother Ward Weir) to bale up the straw from wheat & barley and the hay from the clover and fescue dry stalks. Roger sold most of the hay. We used the straw for bedding for the sows furrowing pins and sheep bedding. When we would plant soybeans we would inoculate the seed with a fungus that would cause the soybean plant to store nitrogen nodules on its roots and enriched the soil for the next crop. We also had to spread lime on the land at the Thompson farm to reduce its' acidity. To supplement the fertilizer, we would clean out chicken houses for the manure and spread it on our fields to produce greener crops – it had a lot of nitrogen in it.



Addie Mae & Eric Graham helping Roger with green beans harvest!



Roger cutting cabbage as I did a lot of in those days



Harvesting cabbage and loading with pitch forks



Carl & Roger combining wheat

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Cabbage heading for Austin canning factory to make kraut



Loading 1950 Ford cabbage truck – Carl's driving



Roger watching over Carl while he headed out to combine another grain bin full of wheat

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Baling wheat straw

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Farming work for us in the summer months started early with a good breakfast of eggs, bacon, sausage, toast, Oatmeal cereal, or biscuits & gravy and lots of it. Gladys was a great cook and kept us all well feed. We would leave for work on cooler days with 2 sandwiches, a thermos of coffee with cream & sugar &

something sweet for our lunch. That hot coffee and cold bread sandwiches always tasted good when lunchtime came out in the fields. Sometimes Roger would walk with me into the woods and identify every tree species and tell me how many board feet of lumber could be cut from its logs and what type of use the woods could be used for. Locust was good for fence post, cedar was good for storage boxes & furniture, oaks were good for heavy construction, cherry & walnut and maple were good for furniture or veneer products, hickory for handles & bats and many other trees that were found in Indiana.

As an adjunct to the timber business, Roger would find beehives in trees that he was ready to cut down. So he started to collect & maintain beehives on his farms and at his home in town to pollinate his crops and harvested their honey. He even kept some hives at our home in town. The honey & honey comb was a treat to chew on when we extracted the honey in our basement with a hand cranked centrifuge extractor. Roger also like working with woods and constructing buildings on his farms and fabricating wagon beds for hauling grains and truck bed sides for hauling corn, other harvested crops, and some livestock to the markets. He always had lots of oak lumber drying on tobacco sticks; ready to be sized and planed. He built at least 3 granaries. The one dual sided granary he built on a 20-acre plot of ground near & east of Scottsburg Lake was eventually turned into a house and still stand there in 1970's (just east of I-65 on the north side of the road that goes east-west past the lake. This land is now all farmland next to I-65 and north of West Lovers Lane (CR-15-S).

Rogers farming operations center was the Starks' Place about 4 miles west Scottsburg just south of Hwy 56 about ¼ mile. On this 40 acre farm was where he built 2 granaries and a furrowing shed for raising piglets & a feeding slab on the insides between 2 granaries for feeding area & a tool shed on the west side of the dual granary (see the picture to the right). A barn once stood where the circular storage bens now stands. The pond to the north of the house was built in the early 1950s and provided water for all the livestock and lots of bluegill & bass fishing for Roger & I on slow afternoons when it was too wet to farm or set fence post. On this farm he also raised crops,



This is the Starks' place with granary & furrowing pens shed on the north side behind the house and dual granary & tool shed to the southeast of the house. A barn once stood where the circular storage bens now stands and was used to store hay & straw.

which were field corn, tomatoes, wheat, hay & straw. On a neighboring farm to the northeast of the Starks' he share-cropped with Bruce Colwell to raised popcorn. Roger developed friendships with many of the local farmers like Mort Craig, Hubert Craig, Dave Garret, Bob Murphy, the Dean brothers, & Tex Murphy. They all helped each other when harvest time would come. Tex's farm was just south of the Starks farm and he would shear our sheep's wool every year. The Dean brothers operated a new & used farm equipment sale & repair business just north of the Starks place on Hwy 56; Roger would often stop their to get the latest news and pickup a cold Coke & some Snickers candy bars. Roger always had a bag of lemon drop candy with him and would pass them around to his friends & buddies. Hub Craig & his family were family friends of ours and they had a son Larry the same age as me (Carl). We visited their home often in the evening. Hubert ran a sweet corn picker for Morgan Packing Company as well as ran his own farming business. Larry still farms his father's farms in the early 2000's. Mort Craig was one of Roger's closest friends and drove a school bus with Roger. He was killed by his tractor when it turned over on him and crushed his chest. Dave Garret raised cattle – Black Angus – and showed them at local & state fairs & was a big supporter of the 4-H organization in Scott County. Bob Murphy lived down the street from Roger & Gladys' home in Scottsburg. He was good a concrete pourer and block layer as well as a part time farmer. Bob poured the foundations and floors in all of Roger's granaries as well as laying the block wall on the foundations. Bob's son Mike was one of Carl's playmates that worked with Carl to build his first go-carts from Roger's lumber in Roger's work shop behind his home (more about that in "The Life and Times of Carl Weir").

In the early 1960's Roger started up sizing his farming equipment after Carl graduated from collage and started his new job at General Electric in MT. Vernon, Indiana. Roger indicated that this was necessary since Carl was no longer there to help with farming work. He also confided in me that during this period was the most productive time in his business life and made more money in his 50's than at any other time of his life. At the age of 62 he had his first heart attack. This let him know it was time to slow down. He made a quick recovery from this health issue but realized it was time to pare down his farming activities. He proceeded to sell off his farms and go into semi-retirement. However, his therapy for his heart issues was to work in his shop building clocks and musical jewelry boxes from his long held supply of Walnut, Cherry, Oak, & Poplar. He regained his strength by



Some of the clocks that Roger built



using his chain saw to cut down trees and make fire wood for his friends and his own use.

In his younger years, Roger liked to hunt and had dogs and went pheasant hunting with Linze Graham, some of his brother-in-laws & friends. Roger liked to hunt with a Browning semi-automatic shotgun and at the time had a 20 gauge, which was a good one to carry around, as it was much lighter for an automatic. He also taught me how to handle and shoot a shotgun with that one.



Roger Weir after a pheasant hunt in South Dakota 1945



Roger & one of his dogs & a bird house in background



Roger & Carl Weir with pointer dog behind house -Abt.



Carl Weir during his groundhog hunting days abt1959-61

He also trained me on how to use a rifle with a scope for ridding our fields of ground hogs that were eating our cabbage and green bean crops. One Christmas he gave me my own 22 caliber pump rifle and later on he traded-in his 20 gauge Browning shotgun for 2 12-gauge Browning light semi-automatic shotguns and gave one of them to me after I returned from the Army. It was a great gun for hunting rabbit & quail.



A fishing friend & Roger-somewhere

Once in full retirement, he and Gladys, would spend their winters in Florida where they had purchased a house trailer in a mobile home park on the east coast. There he spent much of his time fishing and relaxing with

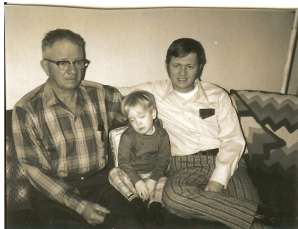


Bernal & Nettie Strouse in Florida

old friends that also come down from Scott Co. and new ones he had made there. This came to an abrupt halt when Gladys' sister, Nettie Strouse, took a bus to

Florida, after Bernal Strouse's passing, and was visiting with them in Florida. Nettie, while crossing a street, was struck by a high-speed car and killed in 1977. Roger & Gladys sold their property in Florida shortly, thereafter and never returned.

As Carl & Judy had moved to California & then on to Arizona, Roger would fly out to visit with them and his grand children Terry & Todd Weir. He enjoyed being with his grand children when they were in Scottsburg any time.



Roger, Todd, & Carl Weir in the living room of Roger's home about 1971



Roger Weir- Son Carl - Grandsons Terry & Todd Weir -
- 3 generations -



Roger, Carl, Terry & Todd Weir on the back patio of Carl & Judy's home in Villa Park, California.

As Roger always did, he would attend the local auction barn and any farm sales that were any where near Scottsburg or Salem, Indiana. He liked to have tool of all kinds, because he felt that you could work on anything if you had the right tools. The result was that he had become a collector of shop tools that ranged in age from new to 100 years old. He had hammers of every description, monkey wrenches used on railroad engines & heavy equipment that he mounted on plywood by manufacture & size, crescent wrenches, logging tongs, pry bars and tool boxes full of specialty tools for metal & woodworking. He had clamps hanging from the rafters in his shop. When he was at those auctions, he was always ready to buy a box of junk for 1 item. He really enjoyed talking with all his friends and neighbors that frequently showed up at them.

That all came to an end in the early 1980s when Roger had a stroke that left him partially paralyzed on one side of his body and made talking difficult. For the next 3 to 4 years he was in & out of nursing homes suffering more minor strokes, which robbed him of all his mobility and left him bedridden until his passing on June 11, 1985 at the age of 76. He is buried in Scottsburg cemetery in the northeast corner, just across the road & a railroad track from his favorite auction house where he & I spent many of an hour of our 20+ years we spent together in Scottsburg. May he rest in peace hearing the auctioneer's chatter his calls for Roger's next bid!

Other Notes & Memories

Roger was a member of the Order of Odd Fellows in Scottsburg for many years. He loved to play cards –like Rook & Eucher (pronounced Yuker) – with his friends there. At their meeting hall over Gladstein’s store at the southwest corner of Main St. & McClain, they would have oyster fries at some of the Saturday night gatherings with some members playing musical instruments, some dancing and some card playing into the night. My uncle Pete- Ivan Mercer played the steel guitar and I’m sure a few beers were downed, also. I always filled up on the fried oysters and catsup. This was all before television in the late 1940.



During or after WWII, Roger went back into the timber cutting business and bought himself a 1941 red Ford pickup with no bed on it. He built a flat bed on it with low side rails to carry his chain saws and timber cutting supplies. The first powered chain saw I remember him having was a 2-man McCullough chain saw that must have weighed about 100+ pounds. As I became big enough to handle the light end of these saws, Roger educated me on how to notch trees and cut them down so they would fall in the direction you wanted them to and how to use aluminum wedges to keep the tree from pinching the saw’s blade and giving a directional boost to the tree as it fell. As we had a wood & coal fired furnace in our home’s basement, we would use fire wood in the furnace some time and it would need to be split with axes or steel chisels and sledge hammers. One time I was using a hand axe to split some smaller pieces of wood and missed the wood and hit my knee with the axe. That was not a pretty sight or a pleasant feeling. I survived it with no longterm effects and learned to respect sharp axes.