

St. Clair, Missouri  
October 22, 1953

Mr. Wm. Phillips  
St. Clair, Missouri

Dear Bro. Phillips:

The following is a short description of my life from birth to the present date.

I was born on December 8, 1878, at Jeffriesburg, Missouri. My parents moved to St. Clair, Missouri, in 1880, and took me along to this little village of about 150 people. It was a growing frontier town, rough at times--Many old-time Democrat and Republican politicians settled their arguments with their fists...or with knives.

I attended the public school in St. Clair, and our teachers were as good as could be found in the County. After several trials I succeeded in getting a third-grade certificate. I taught four years, progressing from Oklahoma, where the salary was \$30.00 a month, to Reedville at \$35.00 per month, then to Salem at \$40.00, and finally to Sand Hill, where the remuneration amounted to \$50.00 per month. The enrollment ranged from 15 to 75 pupils.

During harvest seasons I worked with my good friend, Bro. C. F. Neiheiser, selling and setting up machinery. When Bro. Neiheiser was asked by the International Harvester management to recommend someone to work in the foreign fields, he submitted my name, and within six weeks I was on my way to Europe. I will always have a soft spot in my heart for the School Board of the Salem School, as it released me from my contract and obtained another teacher to finish the term.

I spent 10 weeks visiting the various Harvester plants--which was something for a fellow from a small town in those days, following which I spent four seasons in Germany, six in Austria, and three in the Argentine Republic, with headquarters in Buenos Aires. In 1908 I was married, and Mrs. Dierking and I were sent to Vienna, Austria, where we remained for five years, until my work made me literally a nervous wreck. When I left the Vienna office everyone was sure I couldn't last till we reached New York, but after a period of recuperation I was able to return to work another twenty years for the International Harvester Company out of the East St. Louis and St. Louis offices, and was finally pensioned on account of old age. How conditions have changed since I started work in the implement business in 1898 at \$50.00 per month!

If there are any other details you'd like me to furnish, please let me know.

Fraternally yours,

*John Dierking*