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MSS 179 Robert H. Richards, Jr., Delaware oral history collection, Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware

## **Contact:**

Special Collections, University of Delaware Library  
181 South College Avenue  
Newark, DE 19717-5267  
302.831.2229 / 302.831.1046 (fax)  
<http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec>  
[askspecref@winsor.lib.udel.edu](mailto:askspecref@winsor.lib.udel.edu)

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Interview with W. Emerson Wilson, retired newspaperman, on March 29, 1974, in his home at 22 Boulder Brook Drive, Wilmington, Delaware, by Steven Schoenherr.

Q If you could start by explaining when you first became involved in journalism.

A I was a student at the University of Delaware and went on foreign study in my senior year with the understanding that I would have a job with the DuPont Company in their foreign relations department when I came back from France. But I went in 1929, and in 1930 when I came back the DuPont Company told me that they were not hiring anybody, they were dropping employees they already had. So I was a member of Theta Chi fraternity down at the University of Delaware and Tom Lewis was--or Jim Lewis, rather, was director of advertising for the Hearst publications, and I wrote to him and asked him if I couldn't get a job with him, after I'd tried a number of other things. And he sent me back a letter of introduction to A. O. H. Greer, who was the editor of the Every Evening, and under whom he had started work. So I took the letter into the Every Evening, and while I was waiting to see Greer, I talked to Harry--well, the name will come to me, but he was city editor at the time...

Q Samonisky?

A Samonisky, of course. Harris Samonisky. And he was a University of Delaware graduate and he questioned me and said did I want to get into newspaper work, and I said yes, and he said, "What experience did you have?" Well, I said, I had been editor of the Review at Delaware and in Paris I had worked two weeks on the Chicago Tribune and New York Daily News, Paris Edition. Now the big paper in Paris was of course the New York Herald, but in those days the Chicago Tribune had a full-sized American newspaper in Paris, too. And he said, "Well, we don't have any openings," but he said, "I'll keep you in mind." But I insisted on seeing A.O.H. Greer, and he told me that it wouldn't do me a bit of good. I went in and saw A.O.H. Greer and he said, "Well, it's very nice to hear from Jim Lewis, but we don't have any openings." So I waited for a couple of weeks and Samonisky called me and said, "I understand there's an opening on the Morning News. Try John Malley, who is the city editor." So I went down to the Morning News, saw John Malley, and he said he had just hired somebody to fill that vacancy. But he questioned me and said, "Well, we might have something for you later." So about a week later he called up and said that one of the reporters was sick, I could work for the D.S.E.A. Delaware State Education Association was having its convention in Newark, so would I go down and cover that for the Morning News. And so I said I'd be glad to. Well, it just so happened that while I was covering that I ran into George Branton, who was director of foreign studies, and of course I knew [him] very well, and he told me the University of Delaware was going to start new foreign study courses in Spain and Switzerland and Germany. So I went back and wrote the D.S.E.A. story and also gave 'em this story about the extension of the University of Delaware foreign study. It impressed the managing editor, Charlie Gray, very much that a new man should come back with a big front page story as well as the assignment he was on. So they said they would keep me in mind and whenever a reporter got sick, why I filled in for him, substituted for him, until the first of December when they called me in and told me that Harry Price, the assistant city editor, was going down to cover the legislature, which in those days met for sixty days, and they would need somebody to take his place. So he would leave January the first, but I could go on December 1st to get used to his work.

Q What year was this?

A This was 1930. I'd gotten back from France in August, 1930, and this was December, 1930. So I started out on the Morning News as assistant city editor. Then they told me that when Harry Price came back from the legislature I would be dropped. But when Harry Price did come back from the legislature in April, John Leary had been taken ill and was in the hospital, so I was to become a reporter in his place until he recovered. However, he was from Boston and when he recovered he returned to Boston and I became a regular reporter. And in those days by the way there were only four desk men and four reporters. Now the Morning News alone has--and no photographers--the Morning News alone has about fifty reporters and twelve photographers. Well, I don't want to say alone because they were entirely separate papers in those days; now they're joint. They were both in the same building--the Every Evening and the Morning News. There were four desk men, the city editor and the assistant city editor, and the telegraph editor and the assistant telegraph editor. And then there were four reporters, and that was the whole staff of the paper. Of course there was the managing editor and the sports editor.

Q How were the reporters' responsibilities divided?

A Well, one reporter covered only police. Another reporter covered only the courts, both federal and county courts. And the other two reporters covered city offices--one covered city offices and county offices, and the other one covered the Chamber of Commerce and various--well, in those days you checked all the big companies for new contracts and so forth. So that's how they were split up. I remember the night that the Lindburgh baby was kidnapped. That day, John Hill, one of the reporters, was sick. So we only had three reporters covering the whole city. When I reported to work at 2:00 the city editor said there was the biggest fire in history in Penns Grove. So the police reporter, Clyde Young, was sent over to Penns Grove. And that left two to cover the city, and one of them had to cover police. And so I was left to cover everything in the city except police. And it wasn't until that night that the Lindburgh kidnapping story broke, which didn't affect the reporters at all, but upset the desk men no end because of the stories coming in. But anyhow, with all the excitement that day, I did fail on one story--the Journal got it. So instead of saying that I had done a good job covering the whole city by myself, I got bawled out for missing that one story. Well then in 1933 the Every Evening went out of business, or it was absorbed by the News Journal Company, and that meant an enlargement of the staff and quite a change--reorganization. But it gave us five reporters, as I recall. Then the WPA came in. And we had been working--we went to work in those days, before the WPA, at 2:00 in the afternoon and worked right through 'til 1:00 in the morning except for every third day when you had late police, so instead of going off at 1:00 a.m., you went off at 4:00 a.m.--and you worked from 2:00 p.m. 'til 4:00 a.m. And my salary for the first six months was \$20.00 a week. And after that I was raised to \$25.00 a week. But then the Depression was coming at its height, so we were all given a 10% cut from the president down, so I got \$23.50 a week. Oh, by the way, before that they--under Hoover, who would not allow any federal welfare funds, they had the Mayor's Unemployment Committee so they took 1% of your salary out for that. About that time, Heywood Broun came down to Wilmington to try to form a guild. And I was elected treasurer. Lee Reese, who you know later became president of the company, was a desk man in those days on the Evening Journal, he was the president.

Q What were your impressions of Heywood Broun? What kind of man was he?

A Well, quite an impressive guy with a lot of humor, but very serious in the need for reporters to organize. And he had just one meeting, the initial meeting with him, and there were other guild organizers. Now the guilds by the way became kind of a social organization in which we had dances and so forth and organized to try to get better working conditions. But our committee would be respectfully heard by the president and then completely ignored. Then the WPA, which provided for a five-day week, five-day, forty-hour week for reporters, but not for executives, and then the question was for a long time who was an executive and who wasn't. Why that was declared unconstitutional. So the day that we carried the story in the paper about the Supreme Court decision, the managing editor called me in and said with a--who was an executive, of course--with a broad grin on his face, "Well, Mr. Wilson," he said, "starting tomorrow you will come back to work at 2:00 and work 'til 4:00 a.m., and we'll have no more of this damn foolishness of days off and so forth." And he said, "That's the bad news. But the good news for you is that you will be raised \$1.00 a week." So I was indignant. I said, "Thank you for nothing." And so I immediately said that the guild should call a strike. Lee Reese in the meantime had been promoted from a desk man to an executive. And Elmer Cunningham, who later was managing editor for the Journal (well, the Journal Every Evening, I should say) was the head of the guild. And I went to him, and I said, "Call a meeting at once to decide whether we should have a strike." He said, "No, first you've got to get a majority of the members to say they want a meeting." So I went around with a paper thinking I'd get unanimous signatures, and I only got three members who were willing to call a meeting to discuss it. They were all disgusted, but they didn't want to do anything. So I immediately resigned as treasurer of the guild and have never had anything to do with it since. And the whole guild collapsed immediately. There've been efforts to resuscitate it since, but they never have been able to.

Q Why do you think there was this lack of interest in organization?

A Well, I was a young single man with no responsibilities. And most of the others were married and it was really tough times, and they were scared stiff of a strike. But why they didn't take any action, not even a protest, I'll never know. Well, I was--I covered police for a while and was in on that--the big scandal. I broke the first story on the scandal in which--that resulted in the superintendent of police being fired and the captain of police.

Q What scandal was this?

A Do you want me at this time to go into that detail?

Q Well, just briefly. It's probably been written about--just what year it was, and. . .

A It was 1936, in the very early part of 1936. There was a whorehouse at 811 Tatnall Street, operated by Edna Powell. And I came to work on a Sunday morning and a cop said, "All hell's broken loose. There was a murder in Edna's last night." Now the thing was that all of the houses of prostitution in Wilmington were paying protection money to the superintendent of police.

Q Who was at that time?

A George Black. And when I first started covering police, I couldn't understand all the big stories were held for the reporter on the Journal, and I couldn't get a hold of--of course if there was a fire, you went to a fire, but I mean an inside investigation or something like that. I never got word of it, but the Journal reporter always got it. Well, we found out during the investigation that he was the bagman for the superintendent. He went around and collected the money for him.

Q Who was that?

A George Stengal.

Q O.K. So you got involved in reporting that?

A Yes. I reported the original murder and all the details, and then it gradually blew up until they got the superintendent of police in it. And the captain of police, his son, George Black, Jr., they brought out that he used to call Edna Powell's and ask her to send up a case of beer at 3:00 a.m. in the morning. And he and the cops around the police station would drink this beer and then have the nerve to call her up and ask her to come up and pick up the empties. Well, this was a tremendous investigation. It went over weeks and even months and resulted in a complete reorganization of the department. They brought in Andrew Cavanaugh, who was the superintendent of police in Miami, Florida, but had retired and so forth--he wasn't an old man, but he'd put in enough years there. So he came to Wilmington as superintendent of police. And they closed all the houses of prostitution. Up until then they had been running openly.

Well, after that, I became a political reporter.

Q Did you get any sort of reward for this job? I mean, this was sort of over and above--a little extra reporting on your part, wasn't it?

A Well, I was covering police and all this was happening on the police beat, so. . . . But, well, I didn't get any bonus or anything, but I got recognition and they said--well, I had gone into the intricacies of the situation fairly well, so it might be a good idea to transfer me from police to politics. So I was assigned to cover Democratic politics. So then that became my strong point. Now in those days they never gave anyone a byline unless it was an outstanding story. Nowadays every story in the paper has a byline on it. But it was world-shaking if you got a byline in those days. And I got the Governor McMullin--well this was in 1941, I got my first byline. Gov. Richard C. McMullin was nominated to run for reelection, but he was taken ill, he had a heart attack. The Democrats referred to it as a case of influenza and nobody knew anything that it was serious. But they held a secret meeting and decided that McMullin couldn't run for governor, and Josiah Marvel (sp?) would run in his place. So I got this story and broke it. I'd been tipped off by some friends and so forth. And I got my first byline on that. Then I covered the Democratic state conventions, which were really out of this world, all the finagling that went on. They used to hold them in the old Hotel Richardson down in Dover, and there would be candidates for various offices. And they would have suites in the hotel--the hotel is long-gone--where the liquor flowed like rivers. And well, there were all kinds of--the night before a convention, Dover was

really something, in those days. It was 1942 was the most exciting <sup>Rev</sup> convention. There were two factions running then among the Democrats. Ennals Burrough <sup>[sp?]</sup> was running for the United States Senate. He was a very prominent and very wealthy lawyer. He and Josiah Marvel were the leaders of the conservative faction of the Democratic party. Well in Democratic politics there's--Ivan Culbertson and Garrett Lyons were mavericks of the Democratic party who were fighting the conservatives at the time. And actually, when you look back on it in Roosevelt's day and the liberals and so forth, you would think that conservatives would be something to be looked down upon. But they were the honest men of the Democratic party. Garrett Lyons, who was city chairman of Wilmington, for instance, later became state chairman. In the 1942 election, which was very close, I know that he went to Chester, and in those days you had absentee ballots, and he got 2,000 absentee ballots and forged the notary public's seals on them and sealed them and then on election day, he took them to the clerk of the peace, who was a Democrat, and they were distributed to the polls. But some of these judges of election thought this was an unusual number in their election district that never had an absentee ballot suddenly would get 20 or 30; they were suspicious. And they looked closely at these notary public seals and saw they were forged and called the attorney general and there was a tremendous investigation and Garrett Lyons and the clerk of the peace were arrested for election fraud. And it certainly was a fraud. Well, they went before the court and, well, I'm getting ahead of myself. I should say--well, let's straighten it out. They went before the court and the court decided--their lawyers claiming that the law was unconstitutional--and the Supreme Court decided that the absentee ballot law the way it was written was unconstitutional. So the charges were dropped, 'cause you couldn't violate an unconstitutional law, although there was no question but what they did violate it. But I should say that earlier in one of these meetings of the state committee at Dover, Lyons had made a speech and John Hazard, who was a leader of the Democrats from Wilmington, got up after Lyons sat down and said, "Don't believe a word that fellow said. There's not--he's a liar, there never was a word of truth in anything he said." So I went back to Wilmington and wrote exactly what Hazard's speech was greeted with cheers and boos both. Well, the next morning when I came to work, the city editor, who was Carl Wise, was in a state of flux. He said, "Emmie, you've got us in a terrible jam. You'll have to go see the president," who was Joslin, Harry P. Joslin <sup>Theodore Joslin</sup> --no, wait a minute; I forget Joslin's first name--I should know it--who had been private secretary to President Hoover and had come to the News Journal as president of the company. So we went in to see the president, Joslin, and he said, "Young man, do you realize that you and this paper are being sued for one million dollars for libel?" And he says--and I thought, "My God!" And he said, "Did Jack Hazard call Garrett Lyons a liar and say that there never was a word of truth in him?" I said, "He certainly did." And he said, "Well, we're in trouble." I said, "It's the truth." And he said, "The truth can be libel." I said, "I never knew that." Well, he says, "So our attorney tells us." And I called up Jack Hazard and he said, "I'll go on the stand and prove that Garrett Lyons has always been a liar." So he says, "The truth will help you in your case." Well, the case dragged on and it was dropped immediately when Lyons was arrested for election fraud, because he couldn't come into court with clean hands in that case. Then this Lyons, who by the way Bill Frank might have mentioned to you. . .

Q No, he didn't.

A This Lyons, when the war came on, he and another man started a company here in Delaware making munitions. And he became a millionaire. By the way, at that time--let me say that in 1944 he started a (I think it was '44), he started a liberal, a third party called the Liberal Democrats. And this was financed by Jim Ellison, who gave him the money, it was brought out in the investigation. . .

Q How do you spell Ellison?

A E-l-l-i-s-o-n, Austin Ellison, known as Big Jim and who was the real political boss of the Republican party in Delaware, and who looked like Mayor Daley and talked and acted like Mayor Daley, and who was really a wonderful guy, not the kind of a crook that Lyons was. Well, Jim Ellison slipped Lyons this money to start the Liberal Democratic party, hoping that they would draw enough votes away to elect the Republican party. Well, they did not succeed, but that ended Lyons' role in the Democratic party, until the war came on, and at the end of the war he became a--he was a millionaire. And after the war, by this time in the 1950's, a lot of people had forgotten what happened in 1930. And he started contributing large sums of money to the Democratic party and actually was made state chairman of the Democratic party. Now I had filed as a Democrat, registration, but when he became chairman of the Democratic party, I changed my party designation. But anyhow, I'm getting far afield.

Q He's not living now, is he?

A No, he died some time ago, oh, in the 1960's.

Q O.K. So in the '40's you were a political reporter.

A I was a political reporter. And then . . .

Q May I ask you, did the newspaper change in your perception during the war, World War II? Did it grow in size, or . . .

A Oh, yes, yes. And of course, one thing that--we used to put out a number of extras for a big announcement of anything. And we put out extras for Pearl Harbor. But after that, because of radio, extras were no longer needed. And that was one of the big things that occurred then. Putting out an extra was a lot of fun, but we never put out one I don't think after Pearl Harbor, I'm sure we didn't because everybody was listening to the radio. Well, in 1939 I was assigned to the legislature, to cover the legislature. And there I learned a lot. Oh, that 1939 session was the year that the big matter was a bill to allow the showing of movies on Sunday, which was fought tooth and nail by the churches. Ordinarily the legislature had sixty days; after sixty days the members of the legislature were not paid. But in this case they recessed 'til the summer, not being able to arrive at a--to get the bill passed or to get it actually killed. So they met the last week in August and the first in September, and of course the bill eventually in September did pass. But one vivid memory that I have of that legislative session was on September the 1st, 1939, the members of the house would meet and argue for oh, 15 minutes or so and then recess so as to go listen to the radio, because Hitler--that was the day that Hitler invaded Poland. And we were all on edge to find out whether England and France would declare war the same day, see, which they didn't. They waited three days before they declared war. But that racing out to listen to

the radio, and the excitement of that day. . . . Well, after that we had the Wage and Hour Bill. We were on the 40-hour week and got paid overtime and so forth. But the law did not affect executives. And the city editor was considered as an executive, and the managing editor, but the city editor thought that he ought to come under it. And he wanted his two days off. Everybody on the Morning News had Saturday off, but he worked on Sunday. So he finally got the company to agree that he should have a day off, too, and so they made me city editor on Sunday. Then for a while to switch around the people on the [inaudible]--he was the only actual executive that was affected, but anyhow I was city editor on Sunday, I was state editor on Monday, assistant state editor on Tuesday--these are all desk jobs, you understand--reporter on Wednesday, assistant telegraph on Thursday, and telegraph editor on Friday. So I was a reporter one day a week. I just covered everything. They just switched me back and forth, see. So in that way I missed the '41 session of the legislature. And then '43 came along, they didn't have--they had a fellow, Charlie Rutledge, to send to the legislature who was--I had been covering Democratic politics, he was covering Republican politics. And so they weren't hard up for somebody to cover the legislature, experienced man to cover the legislature, but by 1943 he was gone. And so they told me to cover the legislature in '43, which I did January 'til April. And then Carl Wise resigned as city editor and I became city editor in 1943. And for the next seventeen years I was city editor, which is an administrative job. You get no chance to write anything, except maybe headlines, and after a while writing headlines and reading copy and so forth becomes extremely boring. And it seems as if it took me a long time to decide, but after 17 years I was sick of the job. So I spoke to Lee Reese in '60 and said I'd like to have something else, and he said, "Well, there's gonna be a vacancy on the editorial board," and in '61 I was assigned to the editorial board. And Martin Klaver [sp?] was in charge of editorials. And I consider myself a liberal Democrat, a New Dealer and everything.

Q How do you spell Klaver again?

A K-l-a-v-e-r.

Q And he was head of the editorial department at that time.

A Yeah. Now the paper had changed quite a bit. When I started out as a reporter, it was extremely conservative. I had a terrible time getting into Democratic politics because the Democrats could never get any Democratic stories in the paper. But I proved that I could get Democratic stories in the paper. But by this time the paper was--well, to make a long story short, I didn't like editorial writing either because Klaver would take what I considered an extreme liberal view on a subject. Now we would have a conference, and we'd decide what the editorial stand of the paper would be, with Klaver having the final say. And I was quite often in the minority, maybe the only objector to the stand, but the editorial would--not always, of course, but quite often it would be assigned to me to write an editorial that I didn't approve of at all. But the general gist of the editorial would have been worked out, see, at the conference. And I was to write it. Well, this didn't suit me at all. And then Creed Black--so I was unhappy as an editorial writer. Then Creed Black came--and I should say that as city editor I had developed a--I'd gotten in touch with--and I hadn't done it--let's see, I can't think of a word. It just so happened that the books started coming in, novels and history and so forth, a



few, and I started reviewing them. Well, I had started a column as city editor in which the staff contributed. It was a general staff column because they wanted something in which they could express their opinion.

Q Did the column have a title?

A Yes, "Of This and That." And I wrote some things for it, but I started reviewing the books in this column. And when I reviewed the first few books that came in, why other publishers heard about it and started sending me more books. Well, Creed Black in 1962 was executive editor of the paper. And he said that, "I think we ought to develop a book review page." So he said, "What would you think if I gave you an office in which you were book review editor and developed this page." By the way, when I was an editorial writer, I was also writing feature stories, especially on preservation of old homes and so forth, which is my hobby. And he said, "You write historical features and write an editorial when you want to and submit it to Mr. Klaver, but you no longer have to come under Mr. Klaver's orders, you'll be on your own." So that's what developed, and for the last ten years, even--when Black left, why Chick Hackett came in as president and we stopped the page of book reviews and made it two daily reviews. And then I began writing an historical column which appears in the Morning News on Mondays, and I'm still keeping up since retirement--I mean on Saturdays, I'm still keeping it up since retirement.

Q Have you always been interested in Delaware history?

A Oh, yes.

Q Even as a young reporter?

A That's right. Especially since 1950, when I--when a bunch of us from the paper started the Fort Delaware Society and I was elected as president and I started intensive research into Fort Delaware and then I started also researching other old buildings. So for a time there--I guess I still am considered a fairly good authority on the history of old homes in Delaware.

Q Who else was in this Fort Delaware Society?

A Well, Bill Frank, Lewis Reuben [sp?] was assistant telegraph--a young man, assistant telegraph editor, and he was from Charleston, South Carolina, and he was the most active one in getting it started. He by the way is now professor of creative writing at Chapel Hill, the University of North Carolina. He was--and he's written at least a dozen books on southern writers. And well there was Tom Malone who is still on the paper, and his brother John Malone, and Dr. Henry Clay Reed, and Tony Higgins. However, Tony and Bill helped me get things started, but they never took a very active part in the Fort Delaware Society. We now have 250 members and are quite active.

Q Are you planning to--is this the group planning to help renovate Fort Delaware?

A Well, we have. We have established a museum out there. You haven't been there I see.

Q No, I've been there, yes. It's in the process of being renovated, and I've seen the museum.

A Well, we don't want to restore the fort as is done in Williamsburg, but we wanted to put the remaining windows back in and the stairways back in. And we're doing a room at a time, see. Now of course it's the state that's doing it, but the Fort Delaware Society had to get down to the legislature and lobby to get funds for the fort, because the state park commission considers it as the state park lowest on their totem pole because being on an island it had the least number of visitors. But we had to fight to get appropriations for it, but well, that's another story.

Now in the 1938 campaign, one of the things--well, even before that. In 1937 I covered the Roosevelt-DuPont wedding. As a matter of fact, I came in as a reporter one Sunday and Carl Wise, the city editor, said, "Emmie, I got an assignment for you. I don't know what it is, but it sounds like it might be important. Eugene DuPont called and said he wanted a reporter and photographer to come out to his home on Owls Nest Road, that he had an important story." So he says, "You and Charlie Maker better get out there as soon as possible." So we went out to Owls Nest Road and we were greeted by Mr. DuPont, who showed us into the living room and then he said, "I want you to meet my daughter, Ethel," and he says, "Here's Mr. Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr." He says, "Mrs. DuPont and I want to announce the engagement of our daughter to Mr. Roosevelt." So we took pictures and took the story and went back, and boy it was all over the country and the world the next day. That was one big story. Then of course when Roosevelt--well, the wedding was the same year, 1937, and I covered the wedding from the time Roosevelt arrived until he left on the train at midnight. He was--all these important people were--I left the reception fairly early on orders to get back to the train, which was at Montchanin Station, to check off the arrival at the train of each of the important people. Now, McIntyre, his secretary, came back to the hotel--Mrs. Roosevelt and Roosevelt's mother were the first to arrive, and they were very decorous, but this McIntyre was high as a kite. And James Roosevelt and his gal he married later, they were feeling no pain when they arrived. Well, it was fun. They finally--the train pulled out around 1:30. We covered the wedding at the Christ Church, and just as they were leaving, it started pouring rain, so the reception which--the house was a huge house, as you probably know, it's the Greenville Country Club now, was still not large enough to handle all the people, so they had tents on the lawn. But it was a pretty wet affair, with this rain. Then the next time, 1938, Roosevelt came back for the Swedish Tercentenary, and Prince Gustavus Adolphus, who was the crown prince and his wife were in a Swedish ship out in the Delaware River, but Gustavus, who later became king, was taken ill and he couldn't attend, so he sent his son, Prince Bertel [sp] and Bertel and Roosevelt attended the ceremonies down on--at Fort Christina Park. And then they had a reviewing stand in front of the Public Building. But it just poured, it just poured all day long. And everybody thought, "My God, did Roosevelt always bring rain to Delaware?" The wedding and that one attracted reporters from all over the country. They had a press room--the Grill Room of the Hotel DuPont was the press room for out-of-state reporters. Then in 1938 Roosevelt decided that he was going to purge the conservative Democrats. And Millard Tydings was the senator from Maryland who had voted against New Deal measures. So Roosevelt decided that he would support a congressman from Maryland named Lewis, as I recall, for the senatorship

Millard  
Tydings

in the Maryland primary. And he decided to tour the Eastern Shore in favor of Lewis's candidacy. Well, it was a disaster, because you can't tell Eastern Shore Maryland people how to vote. Now, most of them were going to vote for him, but as far as they were concerned they'd pick their own senator. So I covered that tour. And I saw Roosevelt a number of times, but that's the only time I ever saw him in a bad humor. Oh, he was real burnt, because every place [they were] waving Maryland flags at him. And Tydings must have bought a million Maryland flags. Every town he'd drive through, Maryland flags. And then he had this big meeting, rally, in Easton, and everybody was polite and applauded him. But whenever he would say something about Lewis, they'd all--not all, no, but a large percentage had these Maryland flags that they would wave. And I was in the press box, right in back of Roosevelt, and Jim Farley was sitting in back of Roosevelt, and he leaned over to me and said, "Have you heard how the Dodgers are making out today?" He says, "I'm a hell of a sight more interested in that than I am in this foolishness." And I didn't know how the Dodgers had made out, but I found out for him because some of the people in the press box had radios on which they were listening to the Dodgers' game.

Q In the press box.

A Um hmm. They had portable radios.

Q Did you know the press secretary for Roosevelt, Stephen Early?

A Yes, he was here for the wedding.

Q Do you have any recollections on how Roosevelt handled the press? I mean, did he try to manipulate the press, do you think, through his secretary or through reporters?

A No, I think he was frank, open and aboveboard, except of course he let out a lot of trial balloons, I think. And the press certainly attacked him as much as they attack Nixon, for that matter. All the papers were opposed to Roosevelt's election. Even the New York Times came out for Willkie. But I think he kept his aplomb very well. I mean, he never made any bitter attacks on the press as Nixon has done.

Q Well, any other stories that you can recall? I remember I read one--you wrote an article in 1969 about--of course this is history, but I wanted to--about this scandal of this girl held in a park for two weeks, in 1881? I was wondering in how you were interested to write that little editorial, if you recall anything about that.

A Well, to tell you the truth, I don't recall it. A girl held captive in a park?

Q Yeah. It was in 1881 and it was a big scandal, a big sex scandal, because of the fact of what the police were doing or something--I didn't quite. . .

A Well, I tell you how I get some of my historical columns. I go through some old papers, which we have a file at the News Journal, and I just look up a story that caused a sensation at the time, see. And then I'll check it out with other histories and other papers and throw together a story of my own

about the whole thing. Now, I did have--when I was police reporter I had a very interesting case in which I was supposed to be an undercover detective. There was a woman named Bessie Faulkner who married a man named Klair, and the Garrick Theater then had vaudeville--it was called Dockstader's [sp?] because it was on the Dockstader circuit of vaudeville. And this man was a song and dance man in a vaudeville act. But he met this local woman named Faulkner and his name was Klair, and he married--they got married, and lived fairly happily until World War I came along and he was sent overseas. And when he came home--he had one daughter by her, Pearl Klair--and when he came home he was tipped off by some friends to go out along the Brandywine near Rockland and see what he could see. So he went out and he found his wife and a man named Victor Seichepine, young fellow. . .

Q How do you spell his name?

A S-e-i-c-h-e-p-i-n-e. He was from a French family. I interviewed his father, who spoke with a very broken accent and lived in Rockland, later. Well they were caught in flagrante delicto, so instead of Klair doing the normal thing and shooting Seichepine, he went up the river and shot himself. So this Mrs. Klair then married Victor Seichepine. And as time went on, they had two children, Rowena and Victor. And then the father died under suspicious or let's say unusual circumstances. He was in perfect health and he suddenly died, but they said natural causes and buried him. And six months later Rowena died. Well, now, my father was an insurance man, and he had insured Rowena with the top amount of insurance on a child. And you could only insure--lawfully insure--a child in one insurance company. But they found that she was insured top in six insurance companies. Now he tipped me off to this, see. And of course the insurance companies were--so I was in on the very beginning of it. And I went to the police, and--not much of this story ever got in the paper, but I got some pretty good stories out of it. The police said, "Well, how are we gonna prove--we can get her for too much insurance, but how are we gonna prove that she killed the child?" Well, the thing went on, and Percy Warren Green, the attorney general, finally ordered exhumation of Rowena and Victor. And they found that their bodies were filled with arsenic, enough to cause instant death, practically. So since she had gotten a lot of insurance on her husband and a lot of insurance on her younger daughter, why this was obviously a case that the police had to investigate. Well, this Pearl Klair was the most beautiful girl--she was about 17 at the time, or 16, I guess, maybe--she was the most beautiful girl I've seen in years--I was almost gonna say ever saw. So I went around to the house to talk to Mrs. Seichepine and Pearl was there and--this was before I was married, naturally--and I thought, "My God, that's a beautiful gal." And all of my eyes were for Pearl, see. Well, Bessie was very friendly and so forth, and she just thought it was wonderful to have a reporter come around and see her. And it ended up by my asking Pearl for a date, and Pearl said, "Why, sure." So I took Pearl--my father told me, "Under no circumstances if you go to that Seichepine house drink or eat anything." I took Pearl to a dance at Delaware. I was . . .

[End of side one]

Q O.K., so you were on your first date with Pearl . . .

A Yeah. Well, I took her to the University of Delaware and the other dance, and people's eyes bugged out at this beautiful girl that I had discovered. She may have been 16, but she looked older. However, her conversation was

not--I mean, she was a rather stupid girl, let's say. But anyhow, to get back to the--I went around to the house fairly regularly and the sergeant of detectives called me and said, "We know you're following up this story and you know as much about it as we do, but we cannot--this woman has hired a top lawyer and we can't press any charges against her unless we have some evidence. We have no evidence that she gave the poison to her husband and her child." He said, "Can't you arrange a date with Pearl when the old lady's not there and go through the house and search for poison?" So I said, "Well, I'll try." And so one day I was looking through the house for poison and--not telling Pearl what I was looking for--and I said, "I got a headache, have you got any aspirin," see. And Pearl said, "Well, we'll go look." And we went all around the house and Bessie came in. And that scared me to death 'cause I figured she'd know what I was looking for. And she took me aside and she says, "I don't think I approve of your going around dating my daughter." She said, "She's entirely too young for you." She said, "You must be 26 or so and she's only 16." But she says, "I could give you a good time." She was in her 40's, see. Well, in that time that seemed to be an old lady to me. But, well, she scared me to death. And see, I was still wearing a Theta Chi fraternity pin, I don't know why. But she said, "Give me that pin, I want to see it." So I gave it to her. And she said, "I'm gonna keep it." Well, I was scared enough to say, "All right, all right, I'm not gonna argue with you." And I got out of there and went back and reported to the police I couldn't find any poison but I was in a jam. So the thing went on. They said, "Well, fine. We've got her as larcenies bailee and if we once get her on any charge and bring her in here, we can question her on the other, see. But we gotta have a charge against her, some reason." So they told me to go back the next day. I went back the next day and insisted that she give me back my fraternity pin. She said, "Oh, you naughty boy, here it is." So the case dropped there. Well, I finally decided that the best thing to do was to stay away from that house. I wasn't getting any story and I wasn't getting anything else, except in a jam. So the case more or less dropped. But about a year later she was found--Mrs. Seichepine was found unconscious in the cemetery on the grave of her daughter Rowena. So we decided that that was a big story, and decided that the whole story was gonna break again. But she was taken to the hospital and when she came to, she said she had a stroke or something while she was putting flowers on the grave, and she really did put flowers on the grave at regular intervals--they checked that and found that she did. And it wasn't remorse or anything. So there was no case there. Well to end up the story, this Pearl Klair went to Hollywood and became a movie star known as Bonnie Blair. And she had minor roles, but she did all right.

One other little incident which is of no importance to the history of journalism, but years later when I was married and had two children and was city editor, I got a phone call. And she said, "Emmie, this is your old girl friend, Bonnie Blair, that you knew as Pearl Klair." And she said, "I'm in town at the Hotel DuPont," she said, "I want you to squire me around to the night spots in Wilmington. I'll be waiting for you." I said, "I'm sorry but I'm too busy. I can't do a thing about it." Well, that was a minor thing, but it was. . . .

Q Well, they never convicted the woman.

A No, as far as I know, she's still living, although I haven't heard from either Bonnie Blair or Mrs. Seichepine for--oh, since the 1950's.

Q Any other big stories that you reported that you can remember?

A Well, when I was a reporter, there were a number of--I was in the police station one afternoon and a phone call came in, there was a murder down at Third and Lombard. So this was before they had radio cars--I mean, well radio cars, so instead of calling out for a radio car to go to the scene, they always had two reserve cops in the police station which they sent out. So this reserve cop, Bill Colonna, said, "Come on, Emmie, let's go." And we rushed out and got in a car in the courtyard and drove down to Third and Lombard. We walked into the store. And there was a man lying dead across the counter--at the foot of the counter. And Colonna started--there were some people outside that had come into the store, Colonna got the people out of the store and started looking at the body and I walked into the rear storage room, and I yelled, "Heh, Bill, there's another one!" And there was another man in there who had been shot and killed. Well, that became a--that, by the way, was one of the few stories in those days in which we had a picture, because we had no photographer. But we called Sanborn's studio and he sent over a man who took pictures of the bodies and the site and so forth. The case became famous because it was three gangsters in Philadelphia who had--this storekeeper and his helper had been--it was part of the Mafia, and they were engaged in gambling of some sort and had failed to pay off. And they captured the three guys in Philadelphia and it was quite a long drawn-out murder case. By the way, I also covered a murder case in the Superior Court of a woman, an Italian woman who got in touch with Murder Incorporated in New York and they had sent down a man who had murdered her husband. That was a trial in which the man--the man was found guilty and hanged. It was in the 1930's.

I saw a hanging, by the way, and one--while it wasn't a traumatic experience, one was enough. I had opportunities to go to other hangings, but I didn't. This was a man who raped an eight-year-old girl in Brandywine Park. And I covered the trial and the sensation of the trial was there was a reporter on the Sunday Star--the reporters could sit up in the press box at the courtroom, which meant inside the little fence which keeps the people out. Well, this reporter, Vance from the Sunday Star, it was his niece who had been raped. And so at one time during the trial he jumped out of his seat and went over and gave the defendant a black eye. Well, of course he was in contempt of court and there was quite a struggle as to whether he would go to jail for that. But they let him off with a \$500 fine. And well, the man was found guilty and sentenced to--and I was told to go out and witness the hanging.

Q Where were the hangings done?

A The hangings were done in the courtyard of the old workhouse at Greenbank. So I went out. Father Tucker--this man was not a Catholic; he said he was a complete atheist; he wouldn't have anything to do with any of the Protestant ministers that came in--but Father Tucker went in and took him cigarettes and so he said, "Well, as long as you bring me cigarettes you can come and see me." And he was a mess, this guy--big hefty white man. So I was standing alongside of Father--no, wait a minute, standing in the crowd and then they brought him down the--it was a long corridor to the courtyard. Well, the guards and Father Tucker came with him and then Father Tucker went with him to the bottom of the steps to the scaffold. And he said, "You stay here," to Father Tucker, and he ran up the steps. So Father Tucker came over and stood alongside of me. Well, they put the hood over him and asked him if he had any last words, which they always did in those days, and he said, "No," and they hanged him. But something went wrong, and the rope caught here and something, so that great masses of blood came out from his chin and just

poured down his whole body, see. So it was a horrible thing. Father Tucker got sick. I was feeling not too good myself, but I didn't.

And then I also attended some whippings, lashings, at the workhouse, because when I was covering the courts, Friday, once a month--or it was Saturday. . . yes, hangings were on Fridays and whippings were on Saturday. . . of course it wasn't every Friday, but whenever a hanging did occur, it always occurred on Friday, why I don't know--but the whippings occurred on Saturday, and it was about once a month. Now the whippings that I saw, the story is generally accepted that only Negroes were lashed, or at least the great majority of those lashed were Negroes. The whippings I saw, I would say the majority were white. It was unusual, and some of the biggest, strongest men would cry out; some of the smallest, weakest looking ones would never utter a sound. But the one that really turned my stomach was they had a one-armed man, and of course they manacled them to the post. Well, he only had it for one arm, see, so when they whipped him he would squirm and the whip would come around and hit him--put a gash in his stomach. . . not a gash, but a welt--and I thought that was cruel and inhuman. Now as for lashing in particular, in general I think it is more or less inhuman, but like the former president of the company, Henry T. Klaus, I think it is a deterrent. And I'm not sure . . .

Q Was the public allowed to see these things?

A No, the public was not admitted, but you could get a permit to go to a whipping. Not every application was approved, but reporters could go at any time. You had to get a press pass, but you just went to the clerk of the peace and asked for one and there was never any question about not getting one.

Q How severely were these men whipped? Were they whipped to . . .

A They would raise large welts, but rarely if ever did they break the skin. Now in the old days, the Colonial days, or even post-Civil War days, they would give the prisoner 40 lashes and he'd take the 40 lashes all at a time, but in recent years, I mean from 1910 on--well, 1920 on, let's say--they made the maximum lashes 20 lashes and then they gave 'em 10 one week and 10 the next week. And they were immediately sent to the infirmary and the welts were worked on, and so forth. It was Warden Plummer who--back in the '20's--who made it less barbarous, the whippings less barbarous than they had been before. He got a ruling that the man doing the whipping--which was the warden . . .

Q The warden did the whipping?

A The warden did the whipping, yeah, required by law. He wouldn't bend his elbow, he'd keep it straight. And in the old days they went this way, see, but they did not do that after Warden Plummer.

Q Who did the hanging? Did they have a man employed to do that?

A Well, actually, we don't know. Nobody ever knew because there was a man in the back out of sight who pulled the lever that let the hanging occur. However, the warden had to give the sign for him to pull the lever. Now, whether you could say the warden did the hanging or the man who pulled the lever did the

hanging. The warden always felt it was the man who pulled the lever. Now who he was nobody ever knew, 'cause he was out of sight.

Q Now, did the newspapers report these every week--people who were whipped and hanged?

A Yeah. Um hmm. Oh, yes, a hanging was a big front page story with a complete description of the person's reaction. And of course if he gave a speech from the scaffold as they often did, sometimes saying that they were guilty and they were going to heaven because they had made themselves good with God and so forth. Other times men screaming 'til the last, "I'm innocent." But I mean, I know that from stories. The only one I saw, the man said nothing, and that's the only hanging I attended. Now a fellow named McCloud, Norman McCloud, a reporter on the paper, went to every hanging, including those in Georgetown, and always stayed to get a piece of the rope for a souvenir. That turned me off.

Another macabre part of being a police reporter, you had to go into the morgue. And so I saw most of the dead persons who were murdered or killed in automobile accidents and so forth. There was one man who was pulled out of Shellpot Creek, and the coroner showed me--well, I was there for the autopsy. He had been tortured to death with an ice pick, had been stabbed but not enough to kill him. And you could see these little tiny marks all over his chest until finally they had killed him. But the coroner said--or the medical examiner said it must have taken an hour for him to die, in intense pain. Well, that was another gang slaying. They found that he'd been killed in Pennsylvania and brought down and dumped in Delaware. And the actual man responsible for it was a member of the Mafia in Atlantic City. I don't really remember how that case turned out. I didn't cover the trial or anything. I reported the finding of--or the arrest, because that was about the time I was transferred from police to politics. But I did see the body. Oh, and there was another horrible case. I was on one of those late police affairs, a Sunday night. And they got a call that there was a bad accident on the Philadelphia Pike. Well, that was state police territory but the state police had called in for extra city police to handle the crowds that had gathered around. So I went out with the police car, it was about 2:00 in the morning, and that was the most horrible scene I've found--that I ever encountered. It was a party from Chester who had gone to one of the beach resorts on a joy ride in an open truck with a bunch of straw in it. And there must have been twenty or thirty people in that straw. And as they were going home up the Philadelphia Pike, there was a big truck loaded with flammable gas that collided with them. And the flammable gas went all over into the truck. So there were 16 persons burned to death in that truck. And the rest were all badly injured. So by the time I--I wore a white linen suit in those days, which were very common--when I got out of the police car, a bunch of cops rushed over and said, "Doctor, this way, this way," because there were a lot of wounded laying around and ambulances were just arriving, and so forth. But that was a very horrible sight. You could see the bodies burning in the truck and you couldn't get near the truck because it was just one mass of flames.

But I think the most enjoyable years of my life were those just before retirement when I was more or less independent to do as I pleased and could concentrate on this historical writing.



Q Did you have much cause--well, you consult histories, standard histories that scholars have written, and a lot of time I think reporters sort of deprecate the work that scholars do because it's generally--because it's scholarly it doesn't have a wide readership. And do you see yourself as sort of translating a scholar's work into a more popular medium in writing newspaper stories about history?

A Well, yes and no, because I don't agree that scholarly works are so dense that the general public can't appreciate 'em. I think that John Munroe's books are as good--I mean, as easily read as any newspaper story, myself, and quite as fascinating. Now some get a little dry I admit, but no . . .

Q Are there any other Delaware historians that you consult, or that you think have written very well? I'm thinking of people like Harold Hancock or . . .

A Yeah, Harold Hancock I know very well and I like his work. Henry Clay Reed and I were old friends of long standing. Henry--or Clay, he generally called himself, was a little on the dense side--I mean in his writing, certainly not in his mind. And I don't think that his history--the three volume history--is of any good consequence. Of course he didn't write that himself. He had other people write it. But there is a lot in it that is inexact. I found that--like Scharf's history is the standard history of Delaware. But you'll find he contradicts himself and is inaccurate in a number of places. But whenever I find that there's something I want to write about, I check all these sources before I write it, and in some cases you just have to decide for yourself who's right and who's wrong, see.

Q Were you ever engaged in any primary research yourself?

A Oh, yes, I've written a book on Fort Delaware which was published by the University of Delaware Press. And there I went down to the archives and dug quite a bit of the stuff up, and of course I have a lot of manuscript diaries of prisoners and a whole mess of letters written by prisoners. Right now I'm editing the diaries of Phoebe George Bradford, who lived in Wilmington from--well, the diaries are from 1833 to 1839. I'm doing this for the Historical Society. She was upper class and knew all the better people of Wilmington who she mentions frequently in the diaries, and so it's fascinating digging up these people when she just says "Mrs. Milligan." You wonder who in the hell was Mrs. Milligan. But you find that she was Mrs. John Milligan, the wife of the United States representative. And she had Mrs. Millidane over, well Mrs. Millidane was the wife of Arnold Millidane, the United States senator in those days. Now, you get some hint from the context, but in other cases--in some cases I'm stymied completely. She mentions a Mr. Chandler, and I thought I had him located, but all the Chandlers I've found don't fit. She says Mr. Chandler died in 1834, and I can't find any Mr. Chandler that died in 1834. But I didn't intend to be a newspaperman when I started out. I hoped to go into foreign service and do a lot of traveling. But I've never regretted a minute of being a newspaperman. I've enjoyed every minute of it. Well, not every minute, because there were times when things weren't going exactly right, but I mean every year of it I've enjoyed, and I would--of course newspaper work and the papers are quite different now from what they were when I started. In many ways they're all for the better, and in some other ways, I don't know.

Q When did you sort of retire?

A In September of '72. Now, for instance, I was a Democrat--I mean, I was covering Democratic politics, and Charlie Baker was covering Republican politics. These are the troubles you get into sometimes. Well, Charlie Baker was sick with colitis, so they told--the city editor said to me, "Go see Mayor Bacon because he has an important Republican story." So I went to see Mayor Bacon and he gave me the story that James R. Morford was the candidate for attorney general. And he was very very reluctant to give me the story, because he says, "I know you as a Democrat and you will mess this story up, I know." I said, "Mayor, I lean over backwards in covering political stories to be accurate. My opinions are of no consequence." I made that a strong point, that you wouldn't color a story under any circumstances in those days. They do it today, but we didn't in those days. Well, the next day the story came out, and an important thing was that he had said that Jim Morford was not in favor of a certain thing, I forget what--it was one of the big issues of the campaign. No, he said that Jim Morford was in favor of it, and the story came out and said that Jim Morford was not in favor of it. Well, when I came in I was breathing fire, because I knew what would happen, see. And the city editor said, "Oh, I edited that copy and I read it wrong and I put that not in." I went to see Mayor Bacon the next day, and he said, "I told you you would mess that story up. Why did you do it?" I said, "I didn't do it; it was done on the desk." He said, "I don't believe it." Well, I got Carl Wise to call him and tell him that it was his fault, not mine. But Mayor Bacon never believed that, and he never gave me another story or allowed me to interview him until his death. And he went on to become governor and so forth.

Q Now we were talking about the organization of the paper, and the executive editor was the one who initiated policy, is this right?

A That's right.

Q And we got it up to--well, this Yerxa, was he . . .

A Fendall Yerxa, he came here--he was the city editor of the New York Herald Tribune and he came here in the 1950's, and he changed the paper around completely, and hired more men, liberalized policy, but he left in 1960 to return to the Herald Tribune because the faction in control of the paper which had lost out and caused him to lose his job in the first place had regained control and he went back. However he wasn't long at the Herald Tribune when he went back before the Herald Tribune folded. Since then he's been an ABC news commentator and he's now with the New York Times, Washington Bureau. Now he was succeeded by Creed Black, and Creed Black was responsible for most of the changes which have occurred.

Q Where did he come from?

A He came from Savannah, Georgia, where he was executive editor, but he'd been executive editor in Knoxville, Tennessee. Well, he changed things around considerably. He caused--where it used to be the city editor and assistant city editor, he caused to be a metropolitan editor and named a number of assistants to the metropolitan editor and greatly increased the staff. And he changed the policy of the paper to print everything about the DuPonts, and even dared to attack the University of Delaware. Now, President Perkins of the University of

Delaware objected strenuously to this. And I remember attending a conference in the Hotel DuPont between the trustees and the president of the University of Delaware and some of the directors of the Christiana Securities Company and the top staff of the paper, in which the paper was told to lay off the University of Delaware. And Creed Black said he didn't intend to. So shortly after that Henry B. DuPont announced that there would be a new executive vice president of the company, Charles Hackett, who would come down from DuPont public relations and have complete editorial control of the paper. So with that, Creed Black resigned. Now, despite the changes he made . . .

Q When did he resign?

A 1960. Oh, 1960--well, he came here in 1960. And he was here about four years, so I'd say about 1964. Now, he was not popular with the staff, because he was a--although he had some good ideas, he was a martinet and a cruel administrator. For instance, he fired four members of the News Journal staff--I mean of the Morning News Staff peremptorily and without cause other than they had been given psychiatric tests and were told that they were not fitted for the position, despite the fact that one guy had been there for more than 15 years. That was Lou Gerlach, and Paul McConemy had been there for about 10 years, he was a reporter, and Herb Seiffert was a desk man. And he did fire Jack Gibbons, who was the top political reporter of the day, because he claimed Gibbons was taking money in a public relations job on the side, which he had said that you couldn't do. But it had been done years before that because for instance I was the Wilmington correspondent for the Philadelphia Record and the Wilmington correspondent for the New York Times, and--Delaware correspondent for the New York Times and Delaware correspondent for the Associated Press. And that was additional money that you were getting, see. They paid you so much for a column, what they printed. But Gibbons was doing a public relations for the airport, so he was fired. So this did not make Creed Black very popular with the staff, because no one felt secure. Now, when he left Hackett became executive editor and vice president, and Hackett was an old Wilmington newspaperman who had been editor of the Sunday Star before he went with DuPont public relations, and he brought the paper back to normalcy. He was rather conservative, but never killed any stories. I remember I was frantic to save the old Custom House, and Henry B. DuPont, who had given him this job on the News Journal was one of the leaders to tear it down. So he called me in, Chick, and said, "Emmie, be careful what you write about the Custom House." I said, "Are you cuttin' me off?" He says, "No, but any stories in the future you'll have to give to me to read before they're printed." And they were printed after that. But in other words, he went back to a conservative. And then Sanger came on, and the paper as it exists today--well, when Sanger became president, he announced that it was an entirely new ball game. And it certainly has been an entirely new ball game. They've increased the number of photographers, the number of reporters so that it just doesn't seem sensible to an old-timer like me. And of course they've gone far out in a liberal policy--even dared to support Democrats for election--which the owners of the paper--the editorial page came out in favor of Democrats and on the editorial page was a notice from the owners of the paper coming out for the Republicans. No, there's been a tremendous number of changes caused by Sanger and John Craig, the executive editor.

Now, we were talking about correspondents. As I say, when I was a very young reporter, Charles Gray was the managing editor, and he was the correspondent for the Philadelphia Public Ledger, and he assigned me to cover the Ramsey

trial in Superior Court. This was a trial for alienation of affections against a Mrs. Ramsey, who was either a DuPont in-law, or the wife of a very high DuPont official, who lived in a chateau out in chateau country and whose son had married a chorus girl from New York. And he brought her home and Mrs. Ramsey made life miserable for her, and eventually they broke up. So the chorus girl sued for alienation of affections. James R. Morford, who was later attorney general of Delaware, was the chorus girl's representative--attorney. And it was a sensational trial because it brought out a lot of--washed a lot of dirty linen in public. And I sat there and copied--wrote a complete story columns long, each day, and took it back to the paper. And that story appeared in the Philadelphia Public Ledger word for word, but there never was a word printed in the Morning News. And when I asked the managing editor why, he said, "Well, goodness. We can't print stories about the Duponts." And when I asked him if I couldn't get some extra pay for all these stories in the Philadelphia papers, he said, "You're getting your regular pay from the News Journal, and you're not the correspondent for the Philadelphia Public Ledger." So that was the sort of thing that went on in the early days of the paper.

Q Well, Creed Black, then would be the one who sort of would initiate the changes, liberalizing the paper, and . . .

A Yeah. That's right. It was Creed Black also who insisted everyone take--no, Fendall Yerxes started it, but it never got underway--that everyone take psychiatric tests on aptitude for their jobs. It was the result of these psychiatric tests that Creed Black fired these three men. He was also--he planned to fire a similar number on the evening paper, but Elmer Cunningham blew his top when he heard--first it was to be the Morning News crowd would go, and then a week later the Journal crowd. But Elmer Cunningham, the managing editor of the evening paper, said that if they did anything like that on his staff, he would resign. And there was a tremendous reaction against this, so that there were no firings on the Journal.

Q Can you recall anything about rival papers in Wilmington? You mentioned the Sunday paper at various times. What kind of paper was that?

A Oh, the Sunday Star was down at 2nd and Shipley Street. Joe Martin was the editor. And it printed news of what occurred on Saturday, but it was noted for its features. It had a magazine section. They had some stories on Delaware history which sometimes were more legendary than historical. But it was read fairly well because Wright Dizer ran a political column and there were other columns in the paper which were read pretty avidly. Because Wright really got--well, he was a kind of sour individual. He could never see any good in anyone, but he certainly dug up an awful lot of stuff against a lot of people. So you never could tell what was gonna be in his column. Now, when I first started on the paper, we worked six days a week, 72 hours, I told you the time, and yet there were reporters on the Morning News who would go down on the Sunday Star and work on Saturday, their only day off, for \$5.00 a day. And they would be working seven days a week. Then when I first went on the paper, there was the Every Evening and the Evening Journal were rivals, and we were on the Morning News. Well, we felt that there was--well, we were kind of low on the totam pole because we had to compete against both the Evening Journal and the Every Evening, and if the Every Evening beat the Evening Journal,

they also probably beat us, because--in other words, each day when you went in, you shook to see whether the Journal had picked up a story that had occurred the night before and that you had missed. However, that only went on for three years and then it was the Journal Every Evening when they combined. But there still was an intense rivalry between the papers. We spent more time trying to find out something that happened in the morning that the Journal missed than you would believe possible. And they of course tried to find something that happened in the evening and beat the Morning News. Now, I think it was good because it kept everybody on their toes and when they combined the papers, I think it was under Creed Black, and made it one staff, so that a reporter writes a story, if he's an old Morning News man, he'll write it for the Morning News, and then be astonished when it appears three days later in the Evening Journal. And there's still a few old-timers left. And you never know what paper it's gonna appear in. And it used to be that you just had to be on top of a story and you had to print it the very night that it happened--it had to be in the paper the next day. Now, quite often something that happens at night will appear two days later in the Evening Journal as having happened last Tuesday. This is not true of the police stories, but I mean of meetings and lectures and so forth. So therefore rivalry is out now. And there's no--that whole feeling of getting out and showing the other guy that you can beat him is gone. And I don't want to be too critical of the paper, but I walk in there now and see this tremendous number of reporters sitting around doing nothing--certainly they didn't do that in my day. Bill Frank was complaining about that too.

Q Any other papers that were in Wilmington during your time?

A Well, there was the Labor Herald, which came out once a week. It not only had labor news, but it had political news as well.

Q Did you read that regularly?

A Oh, yeah, we always read the Labor Herald when it came out--I think it came out on Thursday. And it had some very good columnists. But they were the only three newspapers. And of course then most of my time it's been only two, and both owned by the same company. When they first merged, the Every Evening came down to the News Journal for a while, then they moved up to the Every Evening Building and the Morning News was alone in the old building at 4th and Shipley. And they tried to more or less go along on its own, but that didn't work, so we finally went up to the present building. I remember--what made me think of that is I came back from vacation and went to the old building at 4th and Shipley and found it was locked. I thought, "What on earth's going on." And then the watchman told me that they'd moved everything up to the new building.

Q Well, I think we've covered about all of it that I can think of. Can you recommend anyone else that I might talk to that would know the history of the paper, who had worked on it for a long time? I know--I was gonna talk to Cauffman, Sam Cauffman, I don't know, and also Carl Wise, who's in Rehoboth now, evidently, and Lee Reese. But there aren't that many people--you know, old-timers, who are still around that worked on the paper. Unless you could think of someone that might still be around.

A No. Carl Wise was on both papers. I was only on the Morning News. And

Caufman was on both the Every Evening and the Morning News.

Q Were you ever involved in radio or T.V. in Wilmington?

A Yes and no. Along about 1931, Willard Wilson had WDEL, and in those day people D-X'd on radio. D-Xing was hunting for California stations or long-distance stations, see, faraway. Well, people in California liked to D-X too, but generally the eastern stations would go off before you could receive them in California, because you only received long distance at night. And so he had an all night program and he thought that WDEL might be heard even abroad. So I had had this year in France, and he asked me to serve as announcer for a half-hour program in French. So that was my only--I'd forgotten about it completely until Willard Wilson recently brought me in a picture of that affair. And this was before I retired and I ran a feature story for him on the 50th anniversary of WDEL. Their studio was in the old Odd Fellows Building.

Q You mentioned that you didn't take your own pictures when you went out on a story as a reporter.

A Oh, no. We don't now.

Q Right, you don't now, but did you do that back then?

A Never.

Q You hired Sanborn or commissioned Sanborn . . .

A Sanborn until we got a photographer, Charlie Mencker. *Mencker?*

Q And when did he start, do you remember?

A He started about 1935 or 1936, along in there. Then he was mostly on the--well, he worked daytime hours. So the Morning News rarely used him. And the worse trouble was that we had no engraving plant. So if you took a picture at night, and you had the picture, the trouble was getting it engraved. The Globe Engraving Company worked during the daytime, but they--and they would come in on call at night, but they were very sour about having to work overtime, and so unless you had a really worthwhile picture, you tended not to call them. Now this went on until I guess it must have been the 1950's--I think it was under Fendall Yerxa, I may be wrong, but I think it was Fendall Yerxa who installed, or leased a machine that made its own engravings. But then they did away with that in the late 1960's and built a huge engraving plant in the building itself. And so now they do an awful lot of engraving of advertisements and other things other than just pictures. It's a full-time operation now. And of course we get our wire-photos. We had a wire-photo machine put in. I think that was under Yerxa. Before that you had to depend on mats, and the mats were mailed from Philadelphia at 7:00 at night, and they arrived in the News Journal office at around 10:00, or you had to send a messenger over at the post office to pick 'em up. They were sent down on a train, special delivery mail, and delivered to the post office, but we always had an office boy over there waiting for those mats. And if they didn't come in, you had to run it without a picture, which was very irritating for a managing editor. And I may have forgotten to tell you that the managing editor for a time was an

executive, and after the city editor got a five-day week, well the managing editor continued on a six-day week for a time, and then he had--he decided he needed a five-day week. So I was city editor four days a week, and on Sundays--I had Friday off and Saturday off, and was managing editor on Sunday, which was his day off. And I remember--the managing editor of course makes up the front page, and I remember how troublesome it was getting pictures for the front page. And I went to this--Dick Renard, who was city editor of the Journal Every Evening for quite a long time, and I went to an American Press Seminar at Columbia for two weeks in 1950. And that was a very very interesting affair. We learned an awful lot, and we came back with a whole list of recommendations. And the company had paid all our expenses at this seminar--that was in 1950--but they ignored every one of the recommendations for changes that we made. Although all of those recommendations have since been carried out, but they weren't carried out for at least five years after we were at the press seminar. And I remember I--oh, and then I was managing editor whenever the managing editor went on vacation or was sick. I remember one time as managing editor the Andrea Doria ran into the Stockholm or the [inaudible] and the Andrea Doria sank. . . .

[END OF TAPE AND INTERVIEW]