The David and Barbara Pryor Center
for
Arkansas Oral and Visual History

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Arkansas Memories Project

Walter E. Hussman Jr.

Interviewed by Scott Lunsford

December 13, 2011

Little Rock, Arkansas

Objective

Oral history is a collection of an individual's memories and opinions. As such, it is subject to the innate fallibility of memory and is susceptible to inaccuracy. All researchers using these interviews should be aware of this reality and are encouraged to seek corroborating documentation when using any oral history interview.

The Pryor Center's objective is to collect audio and video recordings of interviews along with scanned images of family photographs and documents. These donated materials are carefully preserved, catalogued, and deposited in the Special Collections Department, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville. The transcripts, audio files, video highlight clips, and photographs are made available on the Pryor Center website at http://pryorcenter.uark.edu. The Pryor Center recommends that researchers utilize the audio recordings and highlight clips, in addition to the transcripts, to enhance their connection with the interviewee.

Transcript Methodology

The Pryor Center recognizes that we cannot reproduce the spoken word in a written document; however, we strive to produce a transcript that represents the characteristics and unique qualities of the interviewee's speech pattern, style of speech, regional dialect, and personality. For the first twenty minutes of the interview, we attempt to transcribe verbatim all words and utterances that are spoken, such as uhs and ahs, false starts, and repetitions. Some of these elements are omitted after the first twenty minutes to improve readability.

The Pryor Center transcripts are prepared utilizing the *University of Arkansas Style Manual* for proper names, titles, and terms specific to the university. For all other style elements, we refer to the *Pryor Center Style Manual*, which is based primarily on *The Chicago Manual of Style 16th Edition*. We employ the following guidelines for consistency and readability:

- Em dashes separate repeated/false starts and incomplete/ redirected sentences.
- Ellipses indicate the interruption of one speaker by another.
- Italics identify foreign words or terms and words emphasized by the speaker.
- Question marks enclose proper nouns for which we cannot verify the spelling and words that we cannot understand with certainty.

- Brackets enclose
  - italicized annotations of nonverbal sounds, such as laughter, and audible sounds, such as a doorbell ringing;
  - annotations for clarification and identification; and
  - standard English spelling of informal words.
- Commas are used in a conventional manner where possible to aid in readability.

Citation Information

See the Citation Guide at http://pryorcenter.uark.edu/about.php.

Scott Lunsford interviewed Walter E. Hussman Jr. on December 13, 2011, at the home of Marilynn and Robert Porter in Little Rock, Arkansas. The second part of the interview was conducted on January 18, 2012.

[00:00:00]

Scott Lunsford: We took care of the—uh—Business Hall of Fame section of the interview and . . .

Walter Hussman: Right.

SL: . . . and so now we're—we're gonna start in on—uh—uh—what we normally do for a Pryor Center interview. I—I forgot to mention that today's date is—uh—December 13, and the year is 2011, earlier.

WH: M'kay.

SL: So I—I need to kind of date that.

WH: [*Laughs*] Yeah, all right.

[00:00:23] SL: Um—so we usually start with—uh—where and when you were born.

WH: Yeah, I was born in—uh—Texarkana, Arkansas, on January 5, 1947.

SL: Mh-hmm.

WH: And—uh—I was a war baby. Uh—my dad had been involved at World War II and came home, and—uh—I have a sister that's

twelve years older and a sister that's eight years older, so I think my mother and dad thought they were sort of finished with their family, but—uh—fortunately—uh—for me [*laughs*] they weren't. So . . .

SL: You're kind of the—uh—fall crop of the spring and fall crops, then . . .

WH: Yeah.

SL: . . . I'd say.

WH: Yeah.

[00:01:02] SL: Well—um—so—um—you didn't spend a whole lot of time in Texarkana, though, just a couple of years?

WH: Right. That's right. Uh—uh—Mother and Dad had—uh—got married in Texarkana in 1931, and my dad worked there—uh—you know, at the newspaper and then—and then worked at some of our other papers, like Hot Springs, also. Uh—and then when he went off to World War—uh—II—uh—I guess 1940, [19]41, whenever that was—uh—was off for several years and then came back. And—uh—my dad told me—he said, "You know, I"—he came back to Texarkana, and he said, "You know, I—I—I really love the newspaper business, but I don't really love working for my father-in-law." So he said, "I"—he said, "I decided I wanted to own my own newspaper."

SL: Uh-hmm.

[00:01:56] WH: And—uh—he said, "I looked around to try to find one that was for sale, and I found one I thought I could buy. And I got a ninety-day option on it at a certain price, and I went back to Texarkana to see if I could raise enough money to buy it"—uh—because, you know, he knew quite a few businesspeople there in Texarkana other than his father-in-law, my grandfather. And—uh—he'd been active—had been president of the state Junior Chamber of Commerce and everything.

SL: Uh-hmm.

WH: A very outgoing guy. And he was able to get enough commitments that he went in to see my grandfather and said, "You know—uh—we—we—I've always wanted to own my news—own newspaper, and I've found one in Midland, Texas, that I can buy." And . . .

SL: Uh-hmm.

[00:02:40] WH: . . . uh—so I think my grandfather thought, "Midland, Texas, from Texarkana? Sure, that's not the end of the world, but I imagine you can see it from there." [*Laughter*] So he—uh—he was about to have a fit, though, because my mother was his—was his only child by that marriage. He'd been married previously and had some children, but she was an only

child in their marriage, and he didn't want to see her go off to Midland, Texas, you know. So he told my dad—he said, "You know, I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll sell you one of my newspapers and I—which is closer, and that would be better for us, and we can see our grandchildren and everything." So—uh—so he agreed to sell him the paper in Camden, and—uh—Camden—no, I guess was the second-smallest paper he had. He had *Camden*, *Magnolia*, which were the two small ones; *El Dorado*, *Hot Springs*. So anyway, that's how my dad decided, "Okay, we'll—we'll buy the paper in Camden. We don't have to get other investors to buy the paper in Camden 'cause it's smaller." And so he and my mom bought the paper there, and—uh—they moved—uh—moved to Camden in—uh—1949, when I was two years old. And—uh—my sisters, you know, were—were older, and I think the move was harder for them 'cause they . . .

SL: Sure.

WH: . . . had a lot of friends there in Texarkana.

[00:03:59] SL: Yeah, they were already in the public schools then, I guess, and . . .

WH: Yeah.

SL: . . . had friendships and relationships . . .

WH: Yeah.

SL: . . . already started. Well, you know—um—we're kind of talking about a conversation your father had with—uh—your—uh—grandfather—probably your mother's side of . . .

WH: Right.

SL: . . . the family and . . .

WH: Right.

[00:04:18] SL: . . . and—um—what was—um—what was your—uh—mother's maiden name?

WH: Palmer.

SL: Palmer.

WH: Yeah, Betty Palmer.

SL: Betty Palmer. And her parents' names were . . .

WH: Were—were Clyde Palmer. See, he went by C. E.—Clyde Eber Palmer.

SL: Uh-huh.

WH: C. E. Palmer and Betty Palmer.

[00:04:38] SL: Uh-huh. And—um—it seems like—um—the story goes they were on their way to Cuba. Is that right?

WH: Yeah, Cuba, south Florida, somewhere, I don't know—the story's kind of an oral [*laughs*]—oral tradition. But—uh—yeah, my grandfather worked as a railroad clerk in—uh—Fort Worth. He worked for the railroad. He was from Cedar—I think somewhere

up in Iowa near Cedar Rapids, I think. Any—cl—I think it's Clear Lake, Iowa, was where he was from originally, but he had moved to Fort Worth and was working there. And he met my grandmother. They got married, and they decided to go on their honeymoon. And—uh—so that was 1909 and—uh, you know, weren't any airplanes then, so they went on the train. And so they were—back in those days, the trains would run—uh—during the daylight hours, and they wouldn't run at night because there weren't—you know, the livestock was roaming around. It wasn't all fenced, and so the trains didn't wanna take the risk of running into any livestock. So they'd—they'd stop at sundown, and they'd crank back up at sunrise. [00:05:47] So they got to Texarkana, and—uh—the train stopped, and so they got off, and they went into town. They had dinner and met some people—had a real good time. And they said, "You know, this seems like a really nice town. Why don't we stay here for a few days, and—uh—I mean, the train's gonna come through here all the time. We can get back on it and finish our honeymoon." [*Laughs*] And so apparently—uh—they stayed in Texarkana, and they loved it, and they moved there, you know. And—uh—so he bought into a newspaper there in Texarkana. There were multiple newspapers in Texarkana at the time.

SL: Uh-hmm.

WH: He bought into one of 'em and eventually, I guess, you know, bought the whole thing.

[00:06:25] SL: So he had some entrepreneurial spirit about him that . . .

WH: Yeah. Yeah, you know, I was ten years old when my grandfather died, so I—I knew him not—not extremely well, but I knew him. And—uh—yeah, he was definitely an entrepreneur. I mean, I think he was really—got into the newspaper business 'cause he—he thought it was a really good business, you know.

SL: Uh-hmm.

[00:06:46] WH: And—but he was into other things too, you know. He—he was always—uh—you know, getting leases—oil leases and drilling for oil and doing just about everything he could, trying to figure out a way to—to—uh—invest money and make money.

SL: And that—but that predates the—uh—back then, I guess he'd maybe gotten into the oil business as the El Dorado—uh . . .

WH: Yeah, as . . .

SL: . . . boom was happening.

WH: . . . El Dorado. That's right.

SL: Uh-hmm.

WH: Yeah, yeah.

[00:07:14] SL: Um—well, did you ever—do you—did you get to have any conversations with him as a child?

WH: Oh yeah. Yeah, I—I—you know, my other grandfather—I really did not know him, but I—I did know C. E. Palmer, 'cause he was alive until I was ten years old. And—uh—yeah, he was a—a—a very interesting guy. He—he did a lot of traveling. You know, he was, I think, eighty, eighty-one years old when he died. So he would've been probably, you know—uh—seventy years old when I was born. And by then he and my grandmother were traveling a great deal, so I didn't see him as much because of that. But my mother would drive—drive to Texarkana a lot, and [*dog barks*]—and as I—I was a really young kid, she'd bring me along before I was in school.

SL: Uh-huh.

[00:07:56] WH: So you know, I would get to see him, and I remember going down to the—to the newspaper and, you know, visiting him in his office and, you know, hanging out, you know, down at the newspaper and playing in the ad department, you know, with the pastepots and the [*laughs*] scissors and the—you know, they tried to keep a young kid kind of occupied while they were having a meeting or talking about whether they could

afford to pay a dividend that year or [*laughs*] whatever.

[00:08:22] SL: So—um—early on, you were indoctrinated in the—uh—in the paper business, then.

WH: Yeah.

SL: Just the—before you—probably before you could remember.

WH: Yeah, that's right. That's right.

[00:08:34] SL: Um—so although you weren't raised in Texarkana, you had some Texarkana experiences, then. Was that—didn't Texarkana have an opera house—a kind of a fancy . . .

WH: They did. Yeah, they did.

SL: . . . opera house.

WH: Yeah.

SL: I wonder if that was there in 1909 when they . . .

WH: Could—could have been or it may have come later. I'm not sure. Uh—my sisters both know a lot more about the history of Texarkana than I do 'cause—uh—you know, they were there. And then—and then, of course, when my father went off to the war, you know, my mother was there in Texarkana with—her parents were there, and the—and my—my two sisters were there, too, you know.

[00:09:13] SL: You know, I guess we ought to go ahead and get your sisters' names while we're . . .

WH: Yeah.

SL: . . . mentioning 'em.

WH: My oldest sister's named Gale.

SL: Uh-huh.

WH: Uh—Gale Ann Hussman. And—uh—my other sister's Marilyn. Marilyn Clyde Hussman.

SL: And—um . . .

WH: Although it's Gale Arnold now and Marilyn Augur now. They've—after they married.

[00:09:31] SL: And—and Gale was married to Richard Arnold?

WH: She's married to Richard Arnold. Right.

SL: Uh-huh.

WH: Yeah, there's a little story about that. Richard—uh—when he was in law school at Yale [WH edit: Richard Arnold did his undergraduate studies at Yale University and earned his law degree at Harvard Law School]—uh—was working at the—uh—*Texarkana Gazette* as a reporter.

SL: Mh-hmm.

WH: And—uh—so my grandfather would always have a Christmas party for all the employees of the *Texarkana Gazette*. And—uh—they'd have it in the Grim Hotel, which was right across the street from the newspaper. And so—I don't know—I was

probably twelve years old—something like that. I—no, I was—I had to be younger than that. I guess I was about eight or nine years old. Anyway, I—we'd always go over for the Christmas party from Camden . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

WH: . . . to—to the Texarkana Christmas party. And anyway, I was over there, and I was up at the bar getting a Coke and—and—uh—so I suddenly realized I was standing next to this fellow, and he introduced himself, and he said, "I'm—I'm Richard Arnold." I said, "Yeah." Introduced myself and—uh—he said, "You know, I'd love to meet your sister." [*Laughter*] I said, "Well, that's easy. Come on. Follow me." [*Laughs*] So I actually introduced 'em. [*Laughs*]

SL: Is that right? You're responsible for that.

[00:10:38] WH: Yeah. And what was—what was amazing about that is my sister was a very beautiful young lady in—in high school and college, you know . . .

SL: Uh-hmm.

WH: . . . and won some beauty—won a beauty contest, I think, at one college one time. But anyway, she—uh—she had always dated the star football player—you know, the quarterback or the captain of the football team . . .

SL: Sure.

WH: . . . and had hardly ever dated anybody, you know, who was very intellectual like Richard. But—uh—anyway, so that was—that was an interesting little background on that.

[00:11:12] SL: Richard—uh—uh—should have been a Supreme Court Justice—United States Supreme Court Justice. Should . . .

WH: Could've been a great one for ten years.

SL: Yeah. Um—you know, just a personal aside—um—uh—Richard ran—um—uh—against David Pryor for . . .

WH: Mh-hmm.

SL: . . . the—um—Fourth Congressional District . . .

WH: Right.

SL: . . . seat. And I was involved in that campaign as a—I don't know, I may have been in grade school or maybe seventh grade.

WH: Huh.

SL: And—uh—we were out—we were in Camden, and—uh—there was some kind of political thing going on at a baseball game or something there. And I was handing out Pryor brochures, and I walked up to these three gentlemen that were in suits, and I—I knew nothing [*laughs*], and I . . .

WH: Yeah.

SL: . . . and I [*laughter*] actually gave—gave Richard a . . .

WH: A Pryor brochure.

SL: . . . a Pryor brochure. [*Laughter*]

WH: I can see the wry old smile on his face.

SL: And he just smiled and laughed.

WH: Yeah. [*Laughs*]

SL: He liked it. I mean, it—but that was the first time I ever got to lay eyes on him. But anyway, small—it's a—in some ways, it's a small state, isn't it?

[00:12:24] WH: Yeah, you know, it's amazing. I think they ran—uh—in—was it 1966?

SL: Uh-hmm.

WH: It's amazing how both of those fellows ran at the same time. You think of all the people that have run for congressional districts in Arkansas over the years, and here you had two incredibly talented people who just happened to run at the same time. And one of 'em—course, one of 'em had to lose, and one of 'em's gonna win. So—uh—anyway . . .

[00:12:50] SL: You know, back in those days, too, you had great—there was a great respect for each other . . .

WH: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . across the aisle and—and—uh—almost a camaraderie and a—a caring . . .

WH: Uh-hmm.

SL: . . . for each other that just doesn't seem to exist anymore. It's—it was a more cordial—uh—honorable thing . . .

WH: Yeah.

SL: . . . that people were involved in back then. They really wanted to serve.

WH: Mh-hmm. Right.

[00:13:16] SL: Um—well—uh—so I wanna get back to the—uh—the *Texarkana Gazette* . . .

WH: Mh-hmm.

SL: . . . building or the office where—where—uh—this stuff—uh—started. Is—that's really kind of where the—your newspaper business started was—was there. Is that . . .

WH: Yeah.

SL: That's right, isn't it?

WH: Just kind of hangin' out there as a child. Yeah.

[00:13:39] SL: Well, can you—you know, I—I'm trying to imagine—uh—if you could, describe how a newspaper business looked back then. You know, I—I think of Gutenberg press and . . .

WH: Yeah.

SL: . . . and all this stuff. Uh . . .

WH: Yeah.

SL: Exact—I mean, were people actually setting type . . .

WH: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . individual . . .

WH: Yeah, yeah.

SL: . . . letters and numbers.

[00:14:01] WH: Yeah, they—they were the big old Linotype machines, and they were setting type that way, and the press was an older press, you know. It was a letterpress, and I mentioned we eventually replaced that press. And—uh—and the building, you know, wasn't—it was not a beautiful, modern building. It was—it was what it was, [*laughs*] you know. It was a sturdy building [*laughs*], and it was right downtown. And—but it was just, you know, papers everywhere, and it was—uh—looked—kind of looked the same throughout the—all the departments, the ad department, the newsroom [*laughs*], and—and people were just busy getting the paper out every day. And—but they were always very friendly to me, and you know—uh—so—and I remember we would—uh—I guess they would have—maybe—probably have—be having shareholders' meetings or board meetings or whatever when I would be down there at the paper with 'em. And I can remember we'd—they'd break for lunch, and I'd go down there with 'em. We'd go down to Bryce's

Cafeteria, have lunch, and I never—we didn't have any cafeterias like that in Camden, you know. I couldn't believe an incredible display of food. [*Laughs*]

SL: Uh-huh.

WH: And—uh—so anyway, that's kind of a . . .

[00:15:11] SL: So was it—uh—a noisy place? Was it . . .

WH: Ah, not—not—well, it was when you went back in the production area. Yeah, a lot of clanging and—yeah, there—there was. It—the—the press was a rotary press, so it didn't make anywhere near the racket of that flatbed press in Camden. [*Laughs*] But . . .

SL: Yeah.

WH: But now—yeah, but up in the front offices, you could definitely tell when the—somebody opened the door to the back shop.

SL: Uh-huh.

WH: You could hear, you know, some noise comin' from back there.

[00:15:39] SL: Did it smell like ink or . . .

WH: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . oil or . . .

WH: It was definitely—definitely smelled like ink.

SL: Uh-huh.

WH: Ink. Ink—ink smell throughout the building, including in the—

you know, ad department and the newsroom, et cetera.

[00:15:49] SL: So you were—uh—you—you said that you got to kind of hang out in the ad department, and the—and you mentioned paste buckets.

WH: Oh yeah, yeah. You know, obviously it was fun 'cause you could—back in those days, you know, you'd have all the clip art and—you know, I'd go over and talk to 'em—say, "Well, do—you know, can I cut some of these things out?" You know, I'd just be over there pasting things down, having fun, you know.

[00:16:15] SL: So I guess—I guess I don't quite understand how the pages were replicated. I mean, if—um—you're pasting art onto paper—is that right?

WH: Right, right.

SL: And so how does that transfer to a press that . . .

WH: Well, the—they'd use a photoengraving process, and you take a photo of it, and from that you would engrave a page. And the . . .

SL: Okay.

WH: . . . page—the hot metal would fill in onto the engraved page. So photoengraving was a big leap forward because prior to that it's hard to use many illustrations, you know. And—uh—they had to usually be—be block illustrations like a car, and the—

the—the—the type was already raised on the car image, you know.

SL: Right, right.

[00:16:57] WH: But once—once you got where you could do photoengraving, you could actually take a photograph, transfer that to—through photoengraving into a—a—or a—a—a piece of cardboard that had relief on it, and the metal would pour in there, and you could make the image from that.

[00:17:13] SL: So there was quite a bit of craft . . .

WH: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . involved.

WH: Yeah, and there was a lot of—lot of skill to make the finished product look good.

[00:17:22] SL: Did the—uh—how—how difficult was it to maintain the presses back then.

WH: Oh, it was—it was more difficult, you know. There are more moving parts, and they were heavier, and you know, it was harder for the people that were workin' on 'em because everything was heavier. And once the offset lithography came along, the plates were just very, very light—easy to handle, and—and it was much—it was a cleaner process than—than letterpress printing.

[00:17:49] SL: So—um—your grandfather's office—let's—can we talk—let's talk a little bit more about C. E. Palmer.

WH: Mh-hmm.

SL: Um—what kind of office—I mean, was his office neat? Was he organized or was it kind of . . .

WH: No. I've got a picture in my office. I don't know if I—I was able to send you all that picture or not, but it's a picture of him in his office in 1912, and there's just papers everywhere. I thought, "You know, this is a genetic trait, I guess." [*Laughter*] 'Cause my office is not that neat either.

SL: Yours is the same way, huh?

WH: Yeah. [*Laughs*]

SL: But . . .

[00:18:25] WH: My dad's was the same way.

SL: Uh-huh.

WH: So—uh—yeah, he had a very small—that picture was taken—a very small office he had there—uh—which is still there at the—was still there at the paper when I was young, and—uh—he had a rolltop desk in there. You can see the rolltop desk.

SL: Yeah.

WH: He had a little somethin' in every little cubbyhole. And—uh—but then later he moved into a little bit larger office, and that's the

one I remember.

[00:18:49] SL: How—uh—do you—can you remember how many folks it took to put a paper out in Texarkana back then?

WH: It took, you know, it took a lot in the production area—a lot more than it does nowadays, you know. And—because all the type had to be set, you know.

SL: Uh-hmm.

WH: And the typesetting and it was a slow process to set all the type. And—uh—so you know, I—they're probably in the composing room there, which was where the typesetting was done, thirty, forty, fifty people, you know. And—uh—that was before the advent of cold type, which was—uh—which, you know, increased the speed dramatically.

[00:19:29] SL: So what's the difference between that? Was it—is it hot type and cold type?

WH: Yeah, hot type and cold type.

SL: Okay.

WH: And literally the hot type there was the—these typesetting machines—there was a—a—a bucket full of molten, hot metal, and it would—uh—it would pour into a little chase, and as you typed it would create an impression on that metal. And you would come out with letters on—on—on—on the slugs of type.

The slug would be as wide as a—a column you'd read in the newspaper. And—uh—so you know, you might set type at—uh—six lines a minute, eight lines a minute, or somethin' like that, you know.

SL: Wow.

[End of verbatim transcription]

[00:20:09] WH: Now, you know, you can set a whole page in a couple of minutes. So it's a—was a dramatic increase in speed. And yeah, once cold type came along, everything moved to photography. And so it—with cold type you would actually—you would have film, and you would expose the image of the type on the film. So there would be an *a*, and it would be a, you know, a—it'd be a transparent thing where the light would shine through where the *a* was cut out, and that would expose on the paper. And then the paper would be developed, and you would have all the letters. And it would be a smooth sheet of paper, a very high-quality sheet of paper, but a smooth sheet of paper that'd have all the type on it. You'd take that type, and you would literally take some scissors out and paste it on a page until you got a complete page pasted up. Once the page was completely pasted up, it was fairly smooth, you know. You could actually take one of the pieces of type and pull it off and put it

back on. But then you took that, and you took a photograph . . .

SL: [*Unclear words*].

WH: . . . of the entire page, and from that negative you then take the negative of the entire page. You would put that on a photosensitive piece of aluminum plate, and you would expose again through the image onto the plate. The plate was smooth. It didn't have relief on it like the letterpresses. It was smooth. So once you developed it, you would have a plate, and you'd have the dark image where all the letters were and parts of the photograph and everything. And the rest of it you didn't have—it just was part of the image of the blank plate. And so offset lithography is based on the principle that oil and water do not mix.

SL: Okay.

[00:22:02] WH: And you know that water and oil don't mix if you pour 'em together. So what you would do is you would put ink on this plate while it was spinning around on the press, and then you'd spray water on it. And so the water would wash all the ink away from the parts of the image that weren't dark, but where they were dark, the ink would adhere to those parts. And so as the plate spun around now, you had a clean plate except for the places where the image had been exposed—the type, the

photographs, et cetera. And you would print from that metal plate—that smooth metal plate—onto a cylinder of rubber.

SL: [*Laughs*] Wow.

WH: And then from the cylinder of rubber—the paper would be exposed to the cylinder of rubber. And you'd print from the rubber pl—rubber cylinder onto the paper, and it's kind of like the principle of you taking a stamp. You take a stamp, and you put it on some ink.

SL: Uh-hmm.

[00:23:04] WH: And then you put it, you know, on a piece of paper. And so the rubber with the image on it up against the paper would give you a much better reproduction of the image than if you'd gone from the plate . . .

SL: Plate.

WH: . . . to paper. You could actually print from the plate to paper, but you wouldn't get as good a image as if you offset it from the metal to the paper.

SL: So that's where the offset.

WH: Offset it. Yeah, that's where offset lithography comes from.

[00:23:33] SL: So—all right, this sounds like to me that there's gotta be some kind of chemical management in—during the printing process as you're washing . . .

WH: Oh yeah.

SL: You're washing stuff and . . .

WH: Yes, solutions, solvents and such.

SL: Solutions. And so now you've got all these chemicals that are going somewhere. And did you have . . .

WH: Yeah, you'd neutralize all those. You'd—that's—you'd put 'em in a holding tank and neutralize 'em and—before they would, you know, be disposed of.

[00:24:06] SL: And so you couldn't, like, recycle those or anything. They . . .

WH: Some of it could be recycled, but not a lot.

SL: Uh-huh. So it still sounds like a whole lot of moving parts and a—and still quite a bit of craft and certainly no spell-check.

WH: Yeah. [*Laughter*] That's right. Yeah, there were no—there was no spell-check back in those days.

[00:24:25] SL: So did the typesetters—did they—were—was that a higher-paying job? Was it a . . .

WH: Oh yeah, yeah.

SL: . . . higher skill . . .

WH: Yeah.

SL: . . . because they were . . .

WH: Yeah, yeah, that—there was some skill to that, and plus if they

were good and they didn't make errors, it saved a lot of time because when they made errors, they had to reset the line again. You know, if they made one typo in one word, then they had to reset the whole line. And depending on how many characters were on the line, they may have to reset two lines, you know. So it was a . . .

[00:24:58] SL: Well, was there a tolerance level for mistakes? I mean, if there was a misspelling and it meant—I mean, did you just have to kind of—was it accepted that you would just get some of that at . . .

WH: Yeah, obviously there is—there's an error factor that you had to tolerate, you know. 'Cause it could . . .

SL: Yeah.

WH: Sometimes the machine would make an error. Wouldn't be the operator, it'd be a machine error, you know, 'cause it's a big, clunking process and . . .

SL: Right.

[00:25:24] WH: . . . you might—so anyway, all that changed, though, when cold type came along because now you could proof the things before you actually set it in type.

SL: On the film.

WH: Yeah.

SL: But you're still developing—I mean, you're still—now you're doing film chemicals and . . .

WH: Right.

SL: . . . and those washes, too. And . . .

WH: Right.

[00:25:43] SL: So how many pages—let's—the *Texarkana Gazette*—how many pages did it typically print?

WH: You know, it depends on what part of time. You know, after World War II, economy did really well. Papers got larger and did pretty well until the advent of television, you know. That was in early [19]52, [19]53 and . . .

SL: Right.

[00:26:11] WH: When television first came along, it was sort of a struggling medium, too, you know. It was a really difficult time trying to figure out what to put on television, you know, and I was, I guess, five years old—we put a television station on the air in Texarkana. It was a CBS affiliate which was the best affiliation you could have. That was the strongest network, and I sent 'em a photograph of me pushing the button to turn the station on, you [*laughs*] know, there with my dad. And—but I remember, you know, on Saturdays they would literally—and I guess they probably did this in Little Rock, too—they would

organize, like, you know, somethin' kind of like you'd think of as *American Bandstand* but it was sort of a local edition of it. You'd get kids from the local high school to come down and play music and dance, and there was just so little programming, you know. And there was such a voracious amount of . . .

SL: Time.

WH: . . . time that you had to fill. [00:27:08] And you know, those people that built television stations back in those days—you talk about leap of faith. No one really knew whether or not they'd be profitable or, you know, or what they would develop into. And a lot of newspapers—a lot of television stations lost money the first several years before they became profitable.

[00:27:29] SL: Now, course, then in its infancy it was all over the air.

WH: Right.

SL: So I guess—how did they get—I mean, CBS, for example—assuming they were probably homed in New York.

WH: Right.

SL: Is that right?

WH: Right.

SL: So did—but—and we—I—we all watched programs like *Ed Sullivan* and . . .

WH: Right.

SL: . . . *American Bandstand* or—that's probably a little later, but . . .

WH: Yeah.

[00:28:00] SL: So how did they broadcast—did it—it was just a relay of . . .

WH: Yeah, they would . . .

SL: . . .from tower to tower?

WH: Yeah, yeah. Well, that—yeah, they would relay it by microwave or by telephone lines to get it to all the various stations around the country. And then those stations would broadcast 'em. And my dad used to tell me about how he would get on the train in Texarkana, and—it's the 1950s. You get on a train and—Friday evening and ride the train, and it would arrive in New York Monday mor—Sunday morning. I'm sorry. Sunday morning, you know, about eight o'clock, and he would go down and check in the hotel, get him a *New York Times* or a *Herald Tribune* or whatever and maybe both, read the papers, you know, and take a nap. By the next morning—Monday morning—he was ready to hit the streets at Madison Avenue going out selling advertising—trying to sell advertising for the television station. So it's a lot of the television sales were done market by market, you know.

[00:29:03] Sometimes they'd buy the top fifty markets, the top seventy-five markets, et cetera. And Texarkana was probably between fifty and seventy-five. So he—my dad was a good salesman, and he enjoyed it.

SL: So advertisers in New York would buy time and provide the video or the material for the Texarkana market. Is that . . .

WH: Right, right. A lot of times it—yeah, they would—but they would—that's called national spot. So the networks would carry so many ads during their programs, but then they would give the station owners so many minutes during the hour that they could run their ads. Well you know, you couldn't sell enough local ads to fill all that so this thing called the national spot market developed. So Proctor and Gamble wanted to run an ad on one of their products—they might say they wanted to run in all the markets in Texas or they wanted to run in the top fifty markets or whatever. So what developed later were these—were national-representation firms—national-rep firms—which would represent your station, you know. And so over time it got where they sold a lot of the national spot business. But in the early days, you know, some of it was sold by the station owners or the station management.

[00:30:29] SL: So did—now C. E. also—what—did he dabble in the

radio station market, too?

WH: Yeah, they—he actually, you know, put a radio station on the air. I think it was probably 1933—KCMC radio—and it was, I think, probably the first radio station in Texarkana. And so he'd had that for almost twenty years by the time television came along.

You know, the interesting thing is when radio came along it was sort of a disruptive influence on newspapers, you know. And there was a big controversy about whether to even sell AP content to radio stations. And they finally agreed to do it, and—but the Associated Press was dominated—was—still is dominated by newspaper owners and publishers, and a lot of 'em didn't wanna sell the content to radio [*laughs*] stations, you know.

SL: Well, sure.

[00:31:30] WH: But they finally agreed to do it. And then radio came along, and radio was very profitable, you know. You didn't have to put up nearly as large a tower as you do with a television station, and you didn't have to have as big a transmitter. And so—and you didn't have to have all these cameras and everything. It was all audio. And so anyway, radio disrupted newspaper business a little bit but not too badly. And—but radio got to be very profitable, and then, you know, I guess about twenty years after we started the radio station there, along

came television. So television sort of disrupted the radio business, you know.

SL: Sure.

[00:32:06] WH: And so—and then, course, as well as having an impact on newspapers. Then cable television came along, and it sort of disrupted the television business, you know. And you know, my nephew, who is the vice president and general manager of the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* now, and—he gave a speech up in Batesville recently, and he said, "You know, the company that—WEHCO Media now—you know, it's interesting we've had a history of always investing in disruptive technologies." [*Laughter*] You know, because we started out with newspapers, and we invested in radio, and then we invested in television and invested in cable television. Now the Internet's disrupting everything, and we probably didn't invest as heavily in the Internet as we should have, but we're doing things with the Internet now. So . . .

[00:32:59] SL: Well, did C. E. ever talk about his father or mother?

WH: Not that I recollect. No.

SL: Do you know much about them or their history?

WH: I really—I don't know 'em. No, I really don't.

SL: Nothin' at all.

WH: Yeah.

[00:33:12] SL: And so we should talk about Grandmother Palmer.

WH: Yeah.

SL: And her name was Betty? Is . . .

WH: Bettie Palmer.

SL: Bettie Palmer.

WH: Yeah.

SL: And do you happen to know what her maiden name was?

WH: Mains.

SL: Maines. *M-A-I-N-E-S*?

WH: *M-A-I-N-S*, I believe.

SL: *N-S*.

WH: Yeah.

[00:33:30] SL: And she was from Fort Worth.

WH: Well, she was living there. I think her family originally was from Tennessee. I think was from Cleveland, Tennessee, which is interestingly enough not very far from Chattanooga where we ended up . . .

SL: I know you did some research in Chattanooga.

WH: Yeah.

SL: Is that right?

WH: Yeah, and we ended up—yeah, and then we ended up buying the

paper in Chattanooga.

SL: Right, right, right.

WH: So yeah—but her family was from Tennessee.

[00:33:58] SL: And do you remember any conversations you may have had with her?

WH: Oh yeah, yeah. She—'cause she lived much longer than my—she didn't die until, I think, 1974, so she lived another—you know, he died in 1957.

SL: Wow, so she . . .

WH: So she lived another seventeen years.

[00:34:16] SL: You got to have some time with her, then.

WH: Yeah, yeah. You know, I even went on a trip to Europe when I was thirteen years old with my mother and dad and my grandmother. So we spent eight or ten weeks over in Europe together. Yeah. So—and I would room—I—you know, I'd stay in the same room with her, and my . . .

SL: Sure.

WH: . . . [*laughs*] mother and dad . . .

SL: Yeah, yeah.

WH: . . . had a room to economize. And we went over on the *Queen Mary* boat, you know, and we came back on some other boat. I can't remember what it was, but we weren't flying. We were

[*laughs*] riding boats at the time. That was 1960. And so, yeah, I got to know her much better.

[00:34:54] SL: Well, let's talk about her a little bit. Did she—was she pretty much a housewife? Did she run the household there in Texarkana?

WH: Yeah, yeah, she did, but—although, you know, by the time I came along, my mother had left and moved to Camden. And so there was just she and my grandfather that lived there, you know. So there wasn't a lot of housekeeping. But she didn't work outside the home. There's a missing piece here to all this about Texarkana and grandparents and all that, and that is that when I was two years old and we moved to Camden, my parents decided to have this lady who had been taking care of me, you know, in—up till age two in Texarkana—was from Texarkana—they had her move to Camden. [00:35:46] And her name was Emma Crane, and she was a wonderful lady, very wonderful lady. Anyway, she moved—lived with us, you know, until I was, I don't know, five or six years old. And then she went back to Texarkana. And so you know, she's—she was very involved in raising me as a really young kid. And whenever we'd go over to Texarkana, which was often, you know, I'd not only see my grandparents, but I'd always go see Mrs. Crane, too, you know.

And sometimes I'd stay at her place, you know.

SL: Uh-huh, uh-huh. Well . . .

WH: She was a wonderful person.

[00:36:22] SL: Let's talk a little bit about her, too. I—it sounds like you were close to her, and she had an influence on you.

WH: And she had her own family. She had her own daughters and her own grandchildren and everything, you know. But yeah, she—I was very close to her. And in fact, I can remember—I guess I was about ten years old 'cause it was 1957, and I was over visiting her, you know. And that's where I remember watching Douglas Edwards and the news about the Little Rock integration crisis, you know. So I was—I still remember that, and that's when the evening news was fifteen minutes. And it took up a pretty good part of the fifteen minutes.

[00:37:04] SL: Oh, you bet. So what—was she African American?

WH: No.

SL: No?

WH: No, she was Caucasian.

SL: Uh-huh. And the TV, of course, was black and white.

WH: Oh yeah.

[00:37:15] SL: So—well, I wanna get back to your grandmother.

WH: Sure.

SL: 'Cause it sounds like you probably had greater opportunities to hear her stories or to experience the way she saw things or the way that she ran her house and . . .

WH: Yeah. She was very neat. Very, very tidy, you know. And she was, you know, not extremely talkative, and she was closer to my sisters than she was to me because they lived in Texarkana growing up. I—when I was two years old, I left town, so . . .

SL: Right.

WH: . . . you know, she barely knew me, and I knew her when I left and went to Camden. And so—but yeah, I, of course, got to know her better as I got older, you know. And so I guess that trip to Europe when we were thirteen is the most time I'd ever spent with her, you know. And so—and then when I was fourteen, I went away to school.

[00:38:26] SL: So were there any moments either with C. E. or with Bettie that come to you as kind of aha moments, or was there something that they've said to you that kind of stuck with you growing up or you can recall now that maybe . . .

WH: Yeah.

SL: . . . gave you a perception of the way the world was or . . .

WH: I don't—not—nothing in particular. Nothing really special. The—I can't really think of anything special.

SL: Well, you mentioned that C. E. was pretty active in the community. [00:39:17] What about church and that kind of involvement?

WH: Yeah, they were Presbyterians, and I remember going to the Presbyterian church over there with 'em. And—but—and I 'member the minister they had there, and I'm trying to remember his name right now. He's a wonderful fellow. But nothing really special. I think the fact that I—you know, at age two I moved to Camden, and the first several years I was in Camden I had this other nurse, you know. I probably wasn't as close to my grandparents as a lot of people might be, you know, growing up if they were in the same town or—you know, if I hadn't had this nurse that took care of me.

[00:40:04] SL: Okay. Well, I'll get us out of Texarkana now. [*WH laughs*] But we can—I want you to feel free to go back . . .

WH: Sure.

SL: . . . to Texarkana at any moment if there was . . .

WH: Sure.

SL: . . . you know, just the—even just the road trips going over there. I mean, do you remember the . . .

WH: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . kind of car . . .

WH: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . that you were in?

[00:40:20] WH: Yeah, we had a—we had these cars that had—they didn't have factory air-conditioning then, or we had these new kind of air-conditioners that you could have retrofitted and put in the car.

SL: Yes.

WH: And it would be hot—I mean—especially in the summer going over there. [*Laughs*] And my mother smoked, and she was just a chain-smoker, and you know, she eventually got lung cancer at a pretty elderly age. But I can just remember going over there and open the door to the car and just [*coughs*]—and I'd [*laughs*] be choking for a while . . .

SL: Yeah.

WH: . . . [*unclear words*] for some fresh air. And that's the one part of the trips I didn't like. And it was a pretty curvy road going from Camden to Hope and then Hope to . . .

SL: Were . . .

WH: . . . Texarkana. And that was before there were interstate highways or anything.

[00:41:07] SL: Were they all paved?

WH: Yeah, they were all paved.

SL: Uh-huh. And of course you mentioned earlier sending some programming down the telephone lines and over the air. So I guess you always had a telephone where . . .

WH: Yeah.

SL: . . . whatever house that . . .

WH: Yeah.

SL: . . . you were in.

WH: Mh-hmm. We did.

[00:41:28] SL: And you always had a radio, and you grew up with radio.

WH: Radio. Right. That's right.

[00:41:33] SL: The—what about music? Did—was there—were there any musical instruments in Camden—in your house in Camden?

WH: No. We had a piano, you know. I used to bang around on that thing but never really took piano lessons. And . . .

SL: You did or did not?

WH: No, I did not.

SL: Did not. Uh-huh.

WH: And I wish I had, really. But . . .

[00:41:53] SL: Did your sisters take piano?

WH: Yeah, they took piano, and I think that was why it was there.

And you know, I can remember—you know, my sisters were a good bit older, eight and twelve years older, and so I remember I'd go to—sometimes I'd go to a dance with them, you know, in Camden, you know, and they'd be at a high school dance, and here is a young little six-year-old or [*laughs*] whatever—eight-year-old over there and dancing with my sisters. And I remember the music. You know, it was the music that was popular in the [19]50s, you know. And I—you know, it was a lot of fun listening to that music. You know, twice Elvis Presley came to Camden, and my sisters went to hear him. I didn't get to hear him. I was too young to go.

SL: You were too young . . .

WH: Yeah.

SL: . . . for one thing.

[00:42:37] WH: But they—he was in the local auditorium there. And so music was really starting to change in America, you know, back when I was growing up.

[00:42:49] SL: Yeah, I guess before rock and roll and the rockabilly stuff it was more of a pop music and big-band stuff.

WH: Yeah.

SL: And . . .

WH: Yeah.

[00:42:58] SL: Now, I'm just wondering—what about the African American community in Camden? Now, we've interviewed the Ferguson family there, and Randall Sr. had a restaurant/dance hall that was quite popular that drew people from all over. Did you ever . . .

WH: What was the name of his place? [*Unclear words*]

SL: Did you remember the name? It may have been Ferguson's.

WH: Yeah, I—that's probably a little before—when I was pretty young probably when that was going on. We did have a Teen Town where people would—teenagers would go. [00:43:44] But yeah, Camden was segregated—I mean, the schools were segregated. And the—I went to the Camden Public Schools through the ninth grade, and they were completely segregated. I think maybe the year after I left they became integrated. And so if I'd stayed there . . .

SL: [Nineteen] sixty-one.

WH: . . . for the tenth grade—I think that would've been the first year that maybe the schools were integrated. [00:44:14] And then when I went away to school, that was a private school in New Jersey. It was segregated. And the year after I graduated it was integrated. I was sort of the last wave of [*SL laughs*] kids that went to segregated schools. [00:44:29] It was interesting,

though, because when I was thirteen as I mentioned, I went on this trip to Europe with my parents. I think the way that it kind of transpired is that my mother wanted to go to Europe. My dad had been there in World War II. My mother was fifty years old, and she'd never been to Europe. She wanted to go to Europe. And so this was 1960—she was forty-nine years old. Anyway, so you know, as the trip got closer she said, "You know, I feel badly leaving my mother here." And my—by then my grandmother lived next door to us in Camden. They'd rented a house for her next door. [00:45:04] She was getting older. And so anyway—I think that's correct—she did eventually move to Camden. But—so my dad thought, "Hmm, if I go to [*laughter*] Europe with my mother-in-law [*laughter*], I think I'll ask my son to go." [*Laughter*] So that's how I got invited on this trip to Europe which was very odd because they left in April. So I missed all of April, all of May—I missed the last nine weeks of school, basically. And this was very unusual in a town like Camden—small town, fifteen thousand. Take somebody out of school in the eighth grade to go to Europe. It was very unusual for anybody to go to Europe, let alone . . .

SL: Right.

WH: . . . take a kid out of school and go to Europe. [00:45:46] So

anyway, I went, and it was a great trip. Very educational for me. I mean, here I was, this thirteen-year-old kid, and I was learning about all these different currencies, and my dad was telling me about the war. I mean, 1960—the war had only been over fifteen years. There's still a lot of bomb damage everywhere and everything. And went and stayed in the hotel that he had stayed in in Paris when there were still snipers there and that—you know, the—it was a pretty dicey area when he was there. It was a very interesting trip, and we covered all of Europe. We went to Scandinavia. We went down to southern—you know, went to Italy and Spain and everywhere. But anyway—[00:46:23] so when I came home, I think my dad was feeling a little guilty that, you know, he'd taken me out of school for so long. And so they said, "Well you know, maybe we ought to just leave you over here, and you can stay in Switzerland and go to summer school." [*Laughs*] That's—you know, I was thirteen, and I was like, "My parents are gonna [*laughs*] leave me in Europe? I don't think so." [*Laughs*] I wasn't very excited about that, you know.

SL: Right.

[00:46:50] WH: And so anyway, they took me home. So anyway, I—that summer I went to Phillips Exeter Academy for summer

school.

SL: Now where is that?

WH: That's in New Hampshire. That's where Richard Arnold went to boarding school.

SL: M'kay.

WH: And probably, you know, if not the top, one of the top four or five boarding schools in the United States academically. And so I went to school there, and interestingly enough because of all this I told you about going to segregated schools, I ended up rooming with a black student from Knoxville, Tennessee, in 1960. So Little Rock was three years earlier. You know, I mean this was a big thing . . .

SL: It was still hot.

WH: . . . going on in the South . . .

SL: Yeah.

WH: . . . at the time. [00:47:37] And he and I got to be good friends, and we would talk, you know, and after the lights were out at night, you know, we'd still talk and talk about what was going on back home. And you know, I just—I remember leaving Exeter that summer thinking, "What is all the hullabaloo about, you know? This kid's just like—he's just like any other friend I would've met, you know." And so anyway, that was sort of an

interesting moment for me in my life when I—you know, I mean, a lot of kids weren't even going to school in interracial schools, let alone, you know, rooming with one . . .

SL: Right.

WH: . . . you know.

SL: Right.

[00:48:16] WH: And so anyway, it was a great experience for me. And anyway, I came home—kind of rambling here—but . . .

SL: That's all right.

WH: . . . came home. And so my dad said—I was gonna be in the ninth grade there in Camden, and he had already set it up for me to go to this Exeter school in New Hampshire when I was a junior 'cause, you know, Richard had gone there and, you know, they'd gotten married when I was ten years old. I was thirteen going up there to summer school. And so anyway, so in Camden when I came home from this trip to Europe, they told me, you know, "For you to graduate from junior high school, you gotta take the final exams, you know, even though you missed a fourth of the school year." So I got a tutor and kind of crammed and everything. [00:49:08] And I did really well on the final exams, you know. And—but they gave me a C in every course just 'cause they said, "Well, it's just not right if he gets an A in

the final exam [*laughs*] to give him—hey, he missed a fourth of the school year [*laughs*], you know." So I got a C and . . .

SL: That's terrible.

WH: . . . course it's a—that didn't . . .

SL: That didn't . . .

WH: . . . that didn't [*unclear word*], so I get a C—big deal, you know. So—but the big deal was when I came home from summer school they wanted to enroll me in Latin I in the ninth grade. In the ninth grade in Camden, you get to take Latin or you get to take civics. They said, "No, the requirement is you have to have a B or an A in English in eighth grade or you can't take Latin." And my dad explained—he said, "Look, he's been to this school up in New Hampshire. He's already taken Latin I. He's already taken Algebra I. You know, he really ought to be in Latin II, you know, as opposed—as—you know." "Well, no, he can't be in Latin I. He's gotta be in civics." And he said, "Look, you know, this school he went to, Phillips Exeter Academy, one of the top schools in the United States." They said, "Well, the North Central Accrediting Association doesn't accept—they're not part of the North Central Accrediting Association, so we won't take their credits." Well, my dad kind of, you know, he just kind of thought, "That's ridiculous." And he said . . .

SL: It is.

[00:50:27] WH: . . . "I'm—I've got to—I gotta get this boy out of here [*laughs*] sooner than the eleventh grade." So he went up to Exeter and said, "Can you take him in the tenth grade?" And they said, "No, we really can't. I'm sorry. We're just full, you know." And he said, "I gotta get him somewhere, you know." And they said, "Okay. Well, hold on." They got on the phone, and they started calling around other boarding schools, and they called The Lawrenceville School in New Jersey, and they said, "You think you could take this young man from Arkansas?" "Arkansas? We rarely ever had a student from Arkansas." [*Laughs*] And say—they said, "Sure." So I went away there in the tenth grade, and I liked it there, and I ended up staying there all three years, you know. One of the interesting things about life—it's just chance. Chance has so much to do with—as your journey through life goes along, chance has a lot to do with where you end up, who you end up knowing, who you end up marrying, who—I mean, it's unbelievable.

SL: It is unbelievable. Happenstance.

[00:51:27] WH: And I think about—I've thought about before—if my dad had bought that paper in Midland, Texas, I would've grown up in Midland, Texas.

SL: With . . .

WH: There would've been one family there that had a kid exactly my age, and that would've been George W. Bush. Probably would've met him if our family had owned the newspaper, you know. [*Laughs*] I might have, you know, might have grown up as a friend of his, and I probably never would have set foot in Arkansas. I don't know, you know.

SL: It is. That is.

WH: [*Laughs*] So anyway—a lot of interesting things, and then at Lawrenceville I met a lot of people. I ended up deciding to go to college where I went because I went to Lawrenceville. And so anyway, a lot of different things happened there.

[00:52:12] SL: Well, let's get back to Camden.

WH: Yeah.

SL: I wanna get back to Camden 'cause I wanna talk about a number of things in Camden. So you are in Camden from 1949 until [19]61. Is that right?

WH: Yeah, mh-hmm.

SL: Okay. So Camden's on the Ouachita River.

WH: Right.

[00:52:35] SL: Is that right? Did the Ouachita River play a part of your life at all?

WH: Not too much. We—a little bit—some of the overflow areas created some lakes around there. There's a thing called . . .

SL: Mustin.

WH: . . . Mustin Lake. Yeah.

SL: Been there. Yeah.

[00:52:49] WH: And my family had a house out there. And so we'd always go out there in the summertime. My dad would stay out there, and he'd drive in to work. It was like seven miles into town. And he would always invite his brother down and his family. His brother, my aunt and uncle, and they had two sons, Steve and Jim. And so they'd always come down and spend two weeks in the summer, and I have some great memories of being out there with them. We'd fish and, you know, we'd ski. And it's not a very—you know, you've been to Lake Mustin.

SL: Yeah, yeah.

WH: You know it's not a real big lake, and you don't do a whole lot of [*laughs*] skiing but—and learned to swim and everything, swimming in the lake there. So anyway—and I, you know, kept up with my aunt and uncle their whole lives. And my—one of my cousins is still alive. Steve lives here in Little Rock. And I see him from time to time. [00:53:38] But anyway, Camden—yeah, a lot of memories of going to Mustin Lake and . . .

SL: This is what I remember about Mustin Lake: very large mosquitoes . . .

WH: [*Laughs*] Yeah.

SL: . . . very large bass. Biggest bass I've ever seen . . .

WH: Yeah.

SL: . . . came out of Mustin Lake. Big beaver dam at one end of it.

WH: Yeah.

SL: And I remember the cabins—screened-in porches.

WH: Yeah.

SL: Sleeping porches.

WH: Yeah, those sleeping porches were great. Had the fan at one end, and you'd sleep there, and it was great. [00:54:09] You know, the other thing—off Camden just for a second—is when I was even younger, we would go up to Hot Springs, and my grandparents had a cottage up there at Hot Springs. It was a stone cottage, and it was up on a hill like most houses in Hot Springs were. So you got the breeze coming up off the lake, and it wasn't till air-conditioning came along that people—everybody wanted to be down on the lake. But—and that stone cabin was—the walls were so thick, it would always be pretty cool in there, you know. [00:54:41] And I remember having an uncle—I don't know if he's a—really was an uncle or not.

[*Laughs*] We called him Uncle Frank, and he lived right next door, and I'd go over and play checkers with him, you know, as a young boy. And go down on the dock there at Lake Hamilton and fish with my mom and sometimes with my grandmother, too. And my grandfather was always working. You know, he [*laughs*] wasn't much of a fisherman, I don't think. But anyway—so that's just another lake memory, you know. I remember . . .

SL: Sure.

WH: . . . growing up on Lake Hamilton, and my parents, when they got married in 1931, they went to Hot Springs for their honeymoon, you know. And I don't think the lake had been there very long, but when they went in 1931—I can't remember exactly when they built Lake Hamilton, but I think it was in the late [19]20s or . . .

[00:55:29] SL: I've even fly-fished at the base of the Hamilton dam there, so I've spent some time there, too. Was the airport there next to the lake? There was—you know, it's . . .

WH: Yeah, in Hot Springs?

SL: Uh-huh.

WH: Yeah. Of course, nobody used the airport.

[00:55:45] SL: [*Laughter*] Right, right, right. And were there—

were they racing horses back then . . .

WH: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . too?

WH: Oh yeah. Yeah. I don't have really any memories of the horse races. Being a young child, I couldn't go into the racetrack until you were like fourteen or sixteen or something like that.

SL: Is that right?

WH: Yeah.

[00:56:01] SL: Okay, so back in . . .

WH: Camden.

SL: . . . Camden—describe the house that you grew up in there.

WH: Yeah, it was a house on Clifton Street, and Clifton Street and Cleveland Avenue intersected, and there was a little corner grocery store down there at the corner. And then right across the street was a school called the Cleveland Avenue School. That's where I went to school first grade on. And I remember going to school. I remember going to Vacation Bible School every summer at the Presbyterian church there, and I loved Vacation Bible School. I thought that was just the cat's meow. And [*laughs*] the—but this house that we grew up in—it had a bedroom downstairs with a bath for my mother and dad, and that was the only bathroom downstairs was the one right off

their bedroom that wasn't really accessible from the rest of the house. Had a small kitchen, a small dining room, a small living room. Upstairs there were three bedrooms, and each one of my sisters had a bedroom. And then there was a third bedroom, you know, for me, and Mrs. Crane was in there. And when, course, when I was really small, you know, I was sleeping in another little bed in there. And so the only room in our house that was air-conditioned was my sister Marilyn's room. It was actually the largest room. I'm not sure how she ended up with the largest room being the middle child. [*Laughs*] But anyway, she did.

SL: And air-conditioning.

WH: And it was air-conditioned.

[00:57:39] SL: How come she had air-conditioning?

WH: Well, I think they air-conditioned that room because it was the biggest room, and it was a window unit. And so anyway, when it got really hot, we'd all go upstairs and get in her room, you know, [*laughs*] 'cause it was the one that was air-conditioned. And so anyway, it was great. I remember growing up and had friends on both side of—you know, in the neighborhood both sides of me that were about my age. And there was a big ravine behind our house, and we'd go down there and play, you know,

cowboys and Indians and Army and all that stuff, you know. And so it was a great place to grow up in Camden—a small town like that.

[00:58:18] SL: Was Fook's Gardens . . .

WH: Yeah, Fooks Gardens was there. Yeah. Those were the wealthy people in town.

SL: Yeah.

WH: Yeah. [*Laughs*]

SL: Now, they were some other wealthy people there in town. I—and . . .

WH: The Berg family.

SL: The Berg family.

WH: They owned a lot of timberland.

[00:58:36] SL: Uh-huh. And who was the—wasn't there a famous Jewish character there?

WH: Well, that—Mike Berg was Jewish.

SL: Mike Berg. That's right.

WH: Yeah.

SL: That's right. That's right. Okay.

WH: Yeah.

SL: Yeah, that's right.

[00:58:50] WH: And you know, we were not—I don't think we were

considered wealthy. We certainly weren't in a—you [*laughs*] know, one of the nicer houses in town, but it—the house was fine, you know. And so—course, my grandfather died in 1957. And we—and by then, my dad I think—in about 1956 I think he'd started building a new house in Camden. And it was a very modern house and a much nicer house. And so—but I was ten—my—when we—I guess 1957—we maybe moved in in [19]57, [19]56—I can't remember. Anyway, I was ten; Marilyn was eighteen; Gale was twenty-two. You know, Gale got married in 1957. And so they'd built the house with just three bedrooms, one for my mother and dad and one for each one of my sisters. I really didn't have a bedroom, although I ended up taking one of my sisters' bedrooms 'cause they were gone, you know. [00:59:47] And so we lived there, and it was a house that was designed by Ed Cromwell here in Little Rock. Very, very modern house—split-level, marble floors, lot of glass, and it was a great house. You know, the floors were heated from below, which was kind of a novelty at the time. And we were right next to the—we were very close to the country club . . .

SL: Okay.

WH: . . . which was a nine-hole golf course, and it had a swimming pool and everything. So at age ten when I moved out there, it

was great 'cause there was a small neighborhood there and the Reynolds families were there—two brothers—and they both had some boys. And so I got to be good friends with them. And I remember shortly after, you know, we moved out there the Reynolds boys all had horses. So my dad bought a horse for me. [*Laughs*] And so we would—we'd ride horses some days after school, and then we would ride horses on Saturdays, you know. And so that was a lot of fun.

SL: Now, I wanna backtrack to . . .

Trey Marley: Excuse me, Scott. We should probably change tapes.

SL: Okay.

[Tape stopped]

TM: Speed.

[01:00:55] SL: So Walter, this is tape four . . .

WH: Okay.

SL: . . . today. And we're gonna keep going, but I have a feeling you and I are probably gonna meet again to . . .

WH: Yeah.

SL: . . . do some more.

WH: Okay.

SL: The—we were talking about Mustin Lake and also the house that your dad built—the newer house and the Reynolds next door and

horses. And I want to get back to that. But during the break you started talking about another story, and we decided to go ahead and just roll tape and . . .

[01:01:29] WH: Yeah, we were talking about October the nineteenth, 1991, which was the day after the *Gazette* closed and the first day of publication of the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*. My wife and I had—we adopted all three of our children from Edna Gladney Home, now the Gladney Center, in Fort Worth. And there was a fellow who had lived in Arkansas—worked for Winthrop Rockefeller—named Everett Fulgham, and he was a financial adviser to Winthrop Rockefeller, and he lived in Little Rock for a while. And so he had a son named Buddy Fulgham, who lived here in Little Rock a number of years—now deceased—but he also had a daughter named Carolyn Fulgham. And Carolyn married a—went to SMU, and she ended up marrying a fellow—he went to the University of Texas. They'd met in Dallas. His name was Preston Butcher. And Preston and Carolyn adopted their two children from Edna Gladney. [01:02:33] And we had never met them. We just—but we kept hearing about 'em. Said, "Oh, you know, you all have so much in common. You know the Fulgham family used to live in Little Rock, and they adopted their children from Gladney, and you know, they're

out there in California," and we were going out to California each year on vacations, you know. "I'm surprised you haven't met them, you know." And one year my wife and I went to this—what's called a YPO—Young Presidents' Organization at a YPO university in Berlin, Germany. And there was—those things are big—had five hundred couples.

SL: Wow.

WH: And we were the only ones there from Arkansas so we didn't know a lot of people. And they had, you know, a dinner one night out in a—sort of a outdoor beer garden kind of a place, you know, and everybody was sitting around on park benches. And so we just found a place to sit. And we were sitting at a table with some other people, but they were down at one end of the table, and we were at the other end. And finally these people—they kept kind of staring down there at me. [*SL laughs*] And they finally said, "You know, we hadn't met you yet, but could we ask you a question?" [*Laughter*] And I said, "Sure," you know. And they said, "Are you Preston Butcher's brother?" I said, "No." He said, "Well, you look like you're his brother." And we said, "Really? Well, we've heard of this guy, Preston Butcher, but you know, we've never met him, you know." And so [*SL laughs*] going back to October the nineteenth, 1991, Buddy

Fulgham died, and that was Carolyn's brother. He lived here in Little Rock. And his funeral was that day, October the nineteenth, and so Preston and Carolyn had come back for his funeral. And so you know, they had heard about us; we'd heard about them. We said, "Well, we've got to meet, you know. We gotta get together." [01:04:25] So after that Arkansas/Texas game the—couple of things I remember [*laughs*] about that Arkansas/Texas game. First thing I remember is we won—I think it was 14–13.

SL: Yeah.

WH: [*Laughs*] Anyway, the second thing I remember is trying to drive out of there, and you know, the crowds were so thick. [01:04:44] And there was Bill Clinton. And Bill Clinton looked over, and he waved at me. He gave me this kind of unusual look, and I thought, "Oh my gosh, you know, the *Gazette* has always supported Bill [*laughs*] Clinton." We never really did editorially endorse him. Now we have—you know, he's just announced he's gonna run for president. Now we have the newspaper here in Little Rock. He's looking [*laughs*] at me like, you know, "How did I get so lucky as to have this happen [*laughs*] to me?" you know. But anyway, so—and then we drove on over to the Fulgham's house to meet this Preston and Carolyn

Butcher, and we actually finally got to meet 'em, you know. Sad to meet at a funeral and everything. But anyway, Preston and I have gotten to be really close friends, you know, since that. That was twenty years ago, and we see 'em in California and they'll—you know, I've gone on trips with 'em, and we've just gotten to be really good friends. And people will see us together, and they'll say, "Now, where are you from?" And he said, "Well, I'm from Menlo Park, California." "And where are you from?" I said, "I'm from Little Rock, Arkansas." He said, "How do you guys get to be such good friends?" And either Preston or I will say this—we'll say, "Well, we met at a funeral." [*Laughs*] You never hear of anybody ever saying . . .

SL: No, that's right.

WH: . . . they met at a funeral.

SL: Right. Right.

[01:05:57] WH: And—but Buddy was a great guy, and I knew him pretty well, and anyway, I don't know why that story just kind of popped in my mind when we were talking about . . .

SL: Well, do y'all look like brothers?

WH: We do look a little bit alike, you know, [*laughter*] which is kind of amazing. But anyway, we can go back to Camden and talk about that.

[01:06:16] SL: That was a great day—October 19. I actually stuck a camera in Bill Clinton's face that day before the game. I was traveling with the football team at the time.

WH: Oh, really.

SL: That was a Jack Crowe team . . .

WH: Yeah.

SL: . . . as I remember. Anyway, so you mentioned the Reynolds family.

WH: Mh-hmm.

[01:06:44] SL: Now it seems like I've read that your father—did he go to the same school as Don Reynolds?

WH: He did. That was a different—this is a different Reynolds.

SL: Different Reynolds . . .

WH: Different Reynolds . . .

SL: . . . but it made me think . . .

WH: . . . but—yeah, yeah.

SL: It made me think that . . .

WH: Yeah.

SL: . . . there's a connection there.

[01:07:00] WH: Yeah, my dad—jumping back there a little bit on a flashback—he grew up in a fairly lower-income family in St. Louis. His dad was a railroad engineer. And they lived in the

German part of St. Louis with a big German area in St. Louis. And they lived in these row houses with stoops . . .

SL: Yeah.

WH: . . . you know. And I can remember going up and visiting my grandmother there. I didn't really know my grandfather, but I do remember my grandmother. And also most of my aunts and uncles lived there 'cause most of the Hussman family ended up living in there in St. Louis. And so I had a lot of cousins up there and good memories of going to St. Louis. My dad dropped out of I think it was high school, you know, and went out and worked in the wheat fields in Kansas and things like that and everything. And he eventually—he—I can't remember the fellow's name, but he was sort of a mentor that he got to be close with, and the guy told him, "You really need to go back to school, you know. You're too bright not to, you know, to not even get a high school education." So he talked about going back to high school when he was much older than the other kids, you know . . .

SL: Yeah.

WH: . . . in the school. And he said it was just, you know, very embarrassing, very difficult to do when he first went back, but he was glad he did. And then he went to the University of Missouri. At the University of Missouri, he met my mother. My

mother went to Lindenwood College for, I think, two years, and then she transferred to the University of Missouri. And she was in the journalism school, you know, having a newspaper family. And my dad was—he was in the journalism school, too. And he ended up meeting a fellow who was a fraternity brother of his. They were Pi-K-A's—is that—am I saying that right? Pi-K's? [01:09:00] Anyway, they were fraternity brothers, and his name was Don Reynolds, and they ended up being roommates. And so got to be—well, they ended up being lifelong friends. They were friends for the rest of their lives, you know. And when Don got out of college, he went out and got in the newspaper business, you know. And course, my dad had sort of married into the newspaper business, so they were both in the same business for many years and would see each other at, you know, conventions and meetings and things like that. And Don was—I got to know Don Reynolds pretty well, too, you know, because when I moved back in 1970, Don was still active. And Don was very nice, and he'd—I remember one summer—he had a beautiful home on Lake Tahoe, and he invited—he was gonna be gone maybe traveling abroad or something, and he invited my dad to bring his family out to Lake Tahoe and—when we were living in Camden. And course, Camden in the summer was

brutally hot, and so everybody in my family got kind of excited about it except me. [01:10:04] I wanted to play Little League Baseball.

SL: Okay.

WH: [*Laughs*] So we stayed in Camden and played Little League Baseball. That wasn't very popular with my sisters or [*laughter*] my mother or—but my dad said, "You know, we'll stay, you know. He wants to play baseball." So [*laughs*] anyway, we did that and—but ended up staying at his place at Lake Tahoe years later. And so anyway, I knew Don Reynolds. It's interesting, you know. I'll meet with people sometimes, and they'll be coming to me to ask for a donation to meet the 20 percent matching grant to the Reynolds Foundation. I'm sitting around—they're all talking about the Reynolds thing, and I'm the only person at the table that ever knew Don Reynolds, you know. [*Laughs*] It's kind of funny. But anyway, yeah, he and my dad were really good friends and . . .

[01:10:51] SL: Well you know, they had a—their careers kind of paralleled because . . .

WH: Yeah.

SL: . . . Don also got in the television business.

WH: Right.

SL: Radio.

WH: Right.

SL: And billboard. He did billboards.

WH: Yeah, he did—had billboards, too. He had a TV station in Hot Springs at one point.

SL: Is that right?

[01:11:06] WH: Yeah, I think he finally shut it down 'cause it wasn't—it never did make much money, or maybe it never made any money. I'm not sure. But anyway, so but the Reynolds family in Camden were in the oil and gas business . . .

SL: Okay.

WH: . . . you know. And they would—they'd—so I guess once we moved to our house when I was ten years old, we kind of moved from the—definitely the middle-income part of town to maybe a little bit higher in—you know, to the higher-income part of town. So that's . . .

[01:11:33] SL: You know, in your previous interviews, you talked about your dad and his influence on getting you back to Arkansas and at least giving the family business a trial run and kind of the—there was no formal training involved, but it usually—each day usually started with you meeting—talking with him in his office and . . .

WH: Yeah.

SL: . . . then you would kind of deploy to whatever area he thought you should pay attention to. But why don't we talk a li—we haven't really talked about your dad much. We . . .

WH: Yeah.

[01:12:13] SL: And I'd like to talk about him as a father . . .

WH: Yeah.

SL: . . . rather than as your boss, or as a—now, I do know that you grew up—your family—in your family that the newspaper was the main thing. That it was very, very important, and so I know that . . .

WH: Yeah.

SL: . . . that was a part of your relationship with your father. But we really haven't given him much justice in this talk.

WH: Yeah.

SL: And I know that his influence is [*laughs*] substantial.

WH: Yeah, yeah.

[01:12:49] SL: So why don't we—do you remember your first—what is the first memory you have of your father?

WH: Oh you know, probably, you know, when I was—the first photographic memory—I mean, the first photograph I have that probably is about the time I started remembering things was

when I was five years old when I turned that television station on, you know. And . . .

SL: Big doings.

WH: . . . so that was fun. And—oh, my dad would—you know, I loved baseball. I just loved baseball—loved playing baseball, and he would come to the games, you know. I remember that. And he would throw the ball with me. I loved to go outside and just throw the baseball, you know.

SL: Yeah.

[01:13:35] WH: And I remember him doing that with me, and I ended up—because we lived right next to a golf course, you know, I got where, you know, the horses really were on the weekends, and I'd go play golf, you know, after school. And so I ended up, you know, being a pretty decent golfer. I won the city junior championship and all that kind of stuff. So my dad was a golfer, too, and he liked to play golf. He'd go, you know, play golf with me, or he'd hit balls. You know, we'd hit balls together. And so—trying to think of some of my earliest memories. [01:14:15] When I was nine years old, we decided to take a trip. Now, nine—Gale was twenty-one—I don't think we'd moved into our new house yet, and Gale didn't go on this trip, but Marilyn and I and my mom and dad went. And by then we had a

Cadillac. I remember it was—and it was air-conditioned. Really nice. [*Laughs*] And we drove to Washington, DC, and then we drove up to New York. And we saw some Broadway shows, and we went to all the monuments, and I mean, I was just—I loved going to all these monuments—the Jefferson Memorial, you know, the Washington Monument. [*Laughs*] We went to the, you know, printing and engraving, and I just—I got so excited about going to all those things. And I—you know, it was pretty much two-lane roads pretty much everywhere, and you'd drive through, you know, Arkansas and Tennessee, and we drove through Chattanooga—See Rock City, you know. Good grief, I'd never seen so many signs in my life. See Rock City.

SL: Yeah.

[01:15:19] WH: Burma-Shave signs, you know . . .

SL: You bet.

WH: . . . along the road just everywhere. And so anyway, that was—I got to spend a lot of time with my mother and dad and Marilyn, you know, on that trip, and so a lot of great memories from that trip. I can remember we drove back, and we came back a little different route, and we ended up coming more southerly route. And so it was hot. It was—you know, I was out of school. It was August. And we were somewhere in Arkansas, you know,

past Greenville, Mississippi. I don't know what town we were in. Might've been Monticello or Warren or—I—some little town. I can't remember what town it was. So this would've been 1956, okay? So we said, you know, "Let's stop and get a Dairy Queen," you know. And we said, "Okay, let's do it." So anyway, we stopped, and we got out of the car, and there was a line—people to—you know, standing [*laughs*] in line to get a Dairy Queen. It was blazing hot.

SL: Hot. Yeah.

[01:16:34] WH: And so there were several people in line, and then right in front of us there was a white man and two black men. These guys looked like they'd been working out in a field—all three of 'em, you know.

SL: Yeah.

WH: But it looked like the white guy may have been, you know, their supervisor or something like that. And so anyway, the—several of the white people got the Dairy Queens, and then this guy right in front of us—the white guy went up there, and he said, "I'd like three Brown Derbies." You know, that was the ?light?—vanilla ice cream with chocolate . . .

SL: Yeah.

WH: . . . sauce all over it. [*Laughs*]

SL: Sure.

[01:17:06] WH: And the guy looked at this white guy, and he didn't even look at the black guys. He said, "We don't serve blacks here." And I mean, it was amazing. So the guy said—you know, the guy was trying to buy it and said, you know, "Come on. You need to give us one of these. It's really hot out here." And the guy said, "No, we're not gonna serve black people." So anyway, you know, my dad grew up in Missouri, you know. He didn't have a prejudiced bone in his body. So he walked up there, and he said, "Look, that's not right, you know. You need to sell, you know, you need to sell these people some ice cream." And the guy, you know, refused to do it, you know. And my dad said, "Okay, we're turning around. We're leaving." Said, "We'll find someplace else to buy ice cream other than this." Boy, I mean, that really made an impression on me.

SL: You bet it does.

[01:18:07] WH: And you know, not only did it make an impression about, you know, that it was wrong, you know, but it made an impression on me about my dad, too. I still get a little choked up thinking about it, but anyway, that's a—I think about the things, you know, some of the real strong impressions being with my dad. That's one of the strongest. Anyway, we ended

up, you know, going down to another town and finding some other place and bought some ice cream there. And so I always felt like, you know—I remember him saying, "You know, that's not the"—he told this guy, "it's not the right thing to do." So anyway—and course, I was . . .

SL: That guy—you know, he could've cared less.

WH: Yeah.

[01:18:55] SL: Didn't matter to him. I guess in Camden, you know, you probably didn't grow up with any African American friends. You were probably in an all-white neighborhood . . .

WH: Yeah.

SL: . . . and . . .

WH: That's right.

SL: . . . you know, there was—some of the folks we've interviewed—they did grow up with y—as—before school years, preschool years, they did have African American friends. [01:19:22] And they talked about how, once school started, those relationships started drifting apart because the institutions took them apart. And so they continued to play if they were in the neighborhood, but it became different and less frequent and more segregated. So . . .

WH: Yeah, yeah. It—you know, I don't [*unclear words*]—I don't

really remember having any kids my age that were black friends. Now, and course, we had, you know, black folks that worked for us, you know, and gosh, they were, you know, like typical Southern families. Sometimes they were almost like part of the family, they were . . .

SL: You bet.

WH: . . . so close, you know. [01:20:07] And I remember another great memory of my mother. Every year around Christmastime she would get me, and course, I was—you know, my sisters were, you know, pretty much grown or away at school or whatever. And she'd take me, and we'd go down to the grocery store, and we'd buy a bunch of groceries—four or five sacks of groceries.

SL: Sure.

[01:20:30] WH: And she had found people that lived in, you know, lower-income parts of town. A lot of 'em were black; some of 'em weren't black, you know. And she'd just deliver groceries to people at Christmas, and so that was a—something I, you know, always remember about her. She was a very generous person. So was my dad. He was one of the most generous people I knew, you know, and he'd grown up poor and—you know, not real poor, but in a lower-income family.

[01:20:59] SL: Well, sure. That railroad shacks was pretty tough. I mean . . .

WH: Yeah, and he'd been—he went through the Depression, and so he knew what it was like, you know. I mean, they got married in 1931. It was . . .

SL: That's at the . . .

WH: . . . right in the jaws of the . . .

SL: . . . middle of it.

WH: . . . Depression.

SL: Yeah.

WH: Yeah.

[01:21:17] SL: So did they ever talk much about . . .

WH: You know, my dad talked to me a lot about it from a business standpoint. And this is an interesting story—the—he told me a lot about—a little bit about the business history of the company, and he said when he—pretty soon after they got married, he was working in Texarkana, but the newspaper in Hot Springs had—it had gone into receivership, you know, during the Depression. And the banks—we owed money to the banks, and the banks had taken it over. And the Union National Bank here in Little Rock was one that we owed money to. I'm sure my grandfather had probably borrowed money when he put in a press or bought

the newspaper or whatever . . .

SL: Sure.

[01:22:01] WH: . . . he did, you know. But it wasn't pretty—it wasn't unusual to have a business go into receivership. And he said, you know, they—he went up to Hot Springs to see what he could do to try to improve the fortunes of the paper, and he said he remembered the bank had somebody there—had a representative from the bank, and every check that got signed, the bank had to cosign the check. And so he said, "I still"—and he said, "I still remember where that guy sat—the desk [*laughs*] he sat at." And he said that he came up with an idea. He said, "You know, this is a resort town, and what we need to do is promote this as a resort town. And so people who live here in Hot Springs—they've got a lot of friends probably in other places around, you know, in border states or even around the country." And so he said, "We're gonna come up with a special edition right before the races each year, and we're gonna call it the "mail it away" edition. And so the deal is everybody's gonna come down and give us names of people they want this special edition to be sent to, and pay us, you know, for the copies of the paper and the postage to send it to people. But it's gonna be the biggest and the most special edition we put out all year, and

it's gonna have a lot about Hot Springs and the lakes and the national park and the races and all the appealing things about Hot Springs." Well, he was a great salesman, and he went out and sold a lot of the advertising himself. [01:23:36] And he—that mail it away edition was so successful that it moved the paper into the black.

SL: Wow.

WH: And once it got into the black, it stayed there, and we eventually got the paper out of receivership, you know. But he told me—he said, "You know, once we got out of receivership, and we paid off our bank loans, then we still had the preferred stock." He [*laughs*] said, "the preferred stock was cumulative preferred," which means that you can't pay a dividend on the common stock until you've not only paid the preferred dividend, but you paid all the past preferred dividends that you missed because you couldn't pay 'em in previous years. And he said, "We didn't catch up on the preferred until 1950."

SL: Wow.

WH: So, I mean, it was no common-stock dividends for the owners for a long time. And he was always really proud of what he did in Hot Springs, and I'm, you know, I'm proud of him, too. I think it's great. But he went through the Depression, and he

knew how tough it was, and he was always very conservative and always, you know, wary that we'd get overextended. And he told me something one time about business, and I know we're wanting to get more personal things, but these things keep popping in my head about business.

SL: No, this is personal, too.

[01:24:53] WH: He said, "One thing I learned in the Depression." He said, "If you have a lot of cash and you have a lot of credit, you'll never go broke." And he said, "You'll find, you know, in our company we have too much cash over what you probably learned in business school that we should have, you know. But," he said, "I look it as an insurance policy. We have a big economic downturn, we got a lot of cash. We're not gonna go broke like we did [*laughs*]—like Hot Springs did in the Depression." And he said, "You'll see on the liability side, we owe some money. We got enough cash to pay off all those debts, but the reason we don't pay it off is we want to have good credit."

SL: Insurance. Yeah.

[01:25:39] WH: "And so if we lo—have a five-year loan, and we make every interest payment and every principal payment on time every time," he said, "you'll have good credit, and you'll be able

to borrow in the future." So anyway, I used that principle, you know, when I got into business. And we probably would've—we probably would've lost the newspaper war if I hadn't used that advice. A lot of cash, a lot of credit. In the waning days of the newspaper war, our cash reserve was going down.

SL: I know.

WH: And I probably ought to dig it out and submit it as an exhibit or something [*laughs*], but it was a poker game, you know. And Gannett finally raised their subscription prices, but we didn't raise ours when they did. And they asked me later—they said, "Why didn't you raise your subscription prices when, you know, when we raised ours?" [01:26:36] I said, "Well, we wanted to win." [*Laughter*] And so you know, it was—it kind of scared me. It worried me 'cause our cash was getting lower and lower but—I mean, it was still—there was still plenty but . . .

SL: It was taking a hit.

WH: The decision was to take a hit on the cash and not raise prices, you know. So—but anyway, that was a great, great piece of advice he gave me. The two best pieces of advice he gave me, I think, was that, and the other was that—he said, "In the newspaper business, you're gonna find you're gonna be in situations that you've never been in before. It's uncanny. You

know, you'll be in this business twenty, thirty years, and something will come up, and you think, 'That's never happened before. How can that be, you know.'" And he said, "So," he said, "there's a lot of conflicting things that go on in a newspaper, you know." And he said, "The way I've always sorted that out is that I've realized that we serve different constituencies, you know." He said, "Number one are the readers, then the advertisers, then the employees, then the creditors, and then the shareholders. So," he said, "when you confront one of these dilemmas, remember that. Readers first, advertisers second, employees third, creditors fourth, shareholders last." He said, "If you'll keep those people in that same sequence a priority, everything will work out pretty well. But if you start changing the sequence—if you put the advertisers' interest ahead of the readers—if you put the employees' interest ahead of everybody else—if you put the shareholders' interest above everyone else"—he said, "That's what most businesses do, but the newspaper business is an unusual business. You can't do that. If you do it, things will get messed up." So that was great advice, you know. And a lot of times some real unusual conflict comes up with the readers or advertisers or employees or whatever, and you know, if you go

back to that principle, it kind of sorts itself out.

SL: Puts it in perspective.

WH: Yeah.

[01:28:48] SL: You know, I would assume that, growing up, your father was probably on the road a lot between the properties.

WH: Yeah, he did. He traveled a good bit. He traveled out of state, you know, like those trips to New York on adverti—whenever he'd go to New York, he would always bring me something. You know, some little present and sometimes it'd be a, you know, like a New York Giants baseball outfit for a, you know, eight-year-old or something [*laughs*] like that, you know. Especially when I loved baseball so much. And so I still remember that. But yeah, he did travel a good bit and so—but he still made time for me and for the rest of the family.

[01:29:32] SL: So he entered—was he in the Army or . . .

WH: Yeah.

SL: Army. And he entered in 1941?

WH: I think that's about right. Yeah. And he first was assigned here to Little Rock to Camp Robinson. And he was a public affairs officer. [01:29:51] And my mother tells a funny story—he said when he left Camden to come up here, he said he got his golf clubs [*laughter*] and put 'em in the car, and he said, "I'll be in—

I'll be at Camp Robinson if you need me." [*SL laughs*] Well, what happened is his old buddy, Don Reynolds, that had been moved over to Europe and he was been made publisher of *Yank Magazine*.

SL: That's a big deal.

WH: *Yank Magazine* was a magazine like *Stars and Stripes* was a newspaper that—for the troops and . . .

SL: Yeah.

WH: . . . *Yank Magazine* was a magazine for the troops. And so Don Reynolds put in a request that they transfer Walter Hussman [*SL laughs*] over and he would come—become copublisher of *Yank Magazine*. So that's what happened, and my mother was furious at Don Reynolds. [*Laughter*]

SL: Well, of course.

WH: Maybe he had this idea, maybe he's gonna stay [*laughs*] at Camp Robinson. But anyway, he went over there in World War II, and then I think when he came back, his—kind of his theory was, you know, after people were shooting real bullets at him, he decided, "You know, I just really don't wanna work for my father-in-law anymore. I wanna work for myself [*laughs*], and I wanna own my own business," you know.

[01:31:01] SL: So was he there for—how long was he in Europe

during the war?

WH: Hmm, till the war was over.

SL: Really?

WH: Pretty—I'm—I believe that's right.

[01:31:12] SL: Did he ever talk to you about his war stuff?

WH: He, you know, he talked a little bit about his days in Paris when he got there. And when he got there, they were trying to find newsprint to publish the magazine on. And he talked about staying in the Grand Hotel. And he said—'cause when we went back there in 1960, he made reservations there. He said, "I wanna stay in the place I was in forty—fifteen years ago," you know.

SL: Right.

WH: Sixteen, seventeen years ago. And he talked about how difficult it was to procure newsprint in Paris, you know. And—because there were still skirmishes going on between the Nazi sympathizers and the, you know, the people who were trying to run the Nazis out of France. So that's kind of the main thing, you know, he told me about. He may have spent a good bit of his time in Paris. I think that's where they published the magazine from.

[01:32:16] SL: So how—do you know when he went to France—how

far in the war we were?

WH: It was after the Normandy invasion. Yeah, I know that, 'cause he said . . .

SL: So that's pretty early, really.

WH: Yeah. Yeah, it was after the invasion.

[01:32:32] SL: The—well, the unusual thing about France is that they—the government actually cooperated with the Nazis.

WH: Yeah.

SL: Particularly in arresting the Jews at the time.

WH: Right, right.

SL: So there probably were sympathizers.

WH: Yeah, and I think his feeling was you never knew who you could trust, you know, over there at the time, you know, when he—at least when he got there. Eventually I think Paris was pretty much liberated and—but by the time he got there, it hadn't been completely liberated, and it was still . . .

SL: Right.

WH: . . . mixed bag.

[01:33:10] SL: So—but you didn't detect—and when you look back on it, you didn't really detect any emotional scars . . .

WH: No . . .

SL: . . . from that experience.

WH: . . . not really. No. I didn't detect 'em. There could've been, you know. It's funny, you know, I've got a lot of friends who I went to college with who went to Vietnam, and just now some of 'em are talking about it.

SL: I know.

WH: They didn't talk about it for years and years.

[01:33:35] SL: It's hard for some, and there's some that never will talk about their stuff in the war. Well, it's always interesting—fascinating how folks deal with that kind of stuff.

[01:33:54] WH: One other little memory I have about Camden is that pretty soon after we went down there—moved over there—course, you know, I guess it wasn't too soon 'cause I do remember this. Maybe I was five or six or something at the time. The *Camden News* had been on Washington Street, and my dad found an old dry cleaners—a dry-cleaning plant. It wasn't a dry cleaners, it was a plant where they did dry cleaning. And he decided to move the newspaper down there. Well, you know, he couldn't afford to buy a new press, so he decided to move the press.

SL: Oh!

WH: And this thing was a flatbed—I mean, talk about heavy. And I remember they had to move it down Washington Street at night,

you know, after all—the street could be . . .

SL: Traffic.

[01:34:41] WH: Yeah, cordoned off. And I remember going down there and watching 'em move that press. They'd put these big steel rollers—you know, they'd put one up there and they—you know, a bunch of people would push it.

SL: Wow.

WH: And then they'd get another steel roller that came out the back. They'd put it up there, and they'd push it, and they finally got it down there. Unbelie—some—I wish somebody had taken some photographs of that, or maybe there are some somewhere. I don't know. It was a—but that was sort of a vivid memory of, you know, of—from—come from the newspaper in Camden. [01:35:13] The—one of my closest friends in Camden growing up was a kid named Eddie Parker. And Eddie—I think Eddie still lives in Camden maybe. They had the Monument Works there.

SL: Uh-huh. Okay, that kind of . . .

WH: The Camden Monument Works.

SL: . . . sounds familiar.

WH: And another friend was a fellow named Bo Davies. And his family had an electrical wholesale, you know, supply business. And so . . .

[01:35:38] SL: Did y'all know the McClellans?

WH: John McClellan?

SL: Uh-huh.

WH: Yeah, my dad knew him. I, you know, I didn't know him, but my dad did.

[01:35:45] SL: And I guess at that time was David Pryor's father the sheriff?

WH: Yeah, David Pryor's father had been the—I think was the sheriff. And, you know, speaking of David—when—I guess when I was fourteen I went away to school, and the first year I was away at school we took early European history. Well, you know, early European history went back to, you know, like, Christendom in [*laughs*] 1 BC . . .

SL: Right.

WH: . . . and the . . .

SL: Sure.

WH: . . . Crusades and . . .

SL: Yeah.

WH: . . . all that. So you know, I'd learned all this stuff. And I remember then coming home, and I'd go to the David Pryor Sunday school class, you know. And David'd ask something, and all of a sudden I realized I knew a lot of the things he was

talking about, you know. [*Laughs*]

SL: Uh-huh.

[01:36:34] WH: He says, "Did anybody know this?" And I'd raise my hand. He'd say, "Wow, where'd you learn that?" you know. [*Laughter*] So anyway—but I—that's a—still I remember that, too. David was—he was a great Sunday school teacher. In addition to being great at a lot of other things, he was a good Sunday school teacher.

[01:36:51] SL: What about Dooley Womack? Do you remember the Womacks?

WH: Yeah, I remember Dooley Womack. Yeah.

SL: And the Lindsey family?

WH: Yeah. Yeah, I remember the Lindsey family. Yeah, Camden was a really interesting town 'cause it had all those—you know, some antebellum homes there on Washington Street . . .

SL: Yeah.

WH: . . . and a lot of the big houses there along Washington Street, which was a real nice street.

[01:37:17] SL: Now, were the Tubervilles there, too?

WH: You know, I never knew them.

SL: You didn't?

WH: Yeah.

SL: Okay.

WH: They probably were, I just didn't know 'em.

[01:37:27] SL: It's real—it was really a neat town, wasn't it?

WH: Yeah, and I, you know, I went to Cleveland Avenue School until I was in the, I guess, the fifth grade—fifth, sixth grade—I—fifth or sixth grade, and then they built a new elementary school called Whiteside—Frederick Whiteside School, and I went there. And so I think it was actually named for somebody named Whiteside, but you know, you could conjure up [*laughs*] being a Southern . . .

SL: No.

WH: . . . segregated town.

SL: I think . . .

WH: It was a . . .

SL: Yeah.

WH: But the—yeah, so—and I remember having some great teachers. Had a teacher there named Sarah Yawn in the seventh grade, and she was wonderful.

SL: *Y-A* . . .

WH: *Y-A-W-N*. Sarah Yawn. She lives in Fayetteville now. Or she lives in the Flippo Senior Center—Senior Citizens Center up there . . .

SL: Maybe so, yeah.

WH: . . . which is an interesting place. It takes people, and they come there during the day—various senior citizens. I went up there last year for her birthday, and she was a hundred years old.

SL: Wow.

[01:38:34] WH: She's had her 101st birthday so far this year.

SL: She's still sharp?

WH: She's pretty sharp. In fact, David Pryor and I were both there for her 100th birthday.

SL: I know that story. Yes, I [*WH laughs*] heard that.

[01:38:46] WH: So—but anyway, she was a fabulous teacher. And when I went to Europe in 1960, which I was in the eighth grade, the year after I'd been in her class. Khrushchev was—we had the missile crisis and the U-2 incident and all—no, we didn't—hadn't had the missile crisis—Cuban missile crisis. We'd had the U-2 incident . . .

SL: Yeah.

WH: . . . with Gary Powers and all that. [01:39:09] And my dad was explaining all this geopolitical things to a thirteen-year-old. Anyway, I sat down one night, and I wrote Miss Yawn a letter, you know, 'cause I'd been pretty close to her. And she just

loved that letter. She said, "This is fabulous," you know. So she thought it was probably a good idea I'd [*laughs*] gone to Europe, too. I'd learned a lot [*laughter*] over there. And she saved that letter, and she eventually sent it to—back to me. But I mean, you know, in a small town like that, everybody knows each other, and you'd ended up with some really close relationships with people.

[01:39:41] SL: Well, you know, you talked about the—a racial moment that you had coming back in on a trip with your family. And I'm guessing that you probably didn't—did you see much evidence of segregation in Camden? Was there—were there signs or were there . . .

WH: Oh, I'm sure there were signs, you know, for . . .

SL: But . . .

WH: . . . Colored Only or things like that. I don't remember 'em that much, but I'm sure they were there. I think the only kind of controversy I remember in Camden at the time was the—to integrate the swimming pool. And it was Carnes Park—Jack Carnes, a wealthy guy there—and he had donated money to put a swimming pool in. And it had been whites only, and then, course, then they integrated it, and that caused some controversy. Just mainly a lot of talk. They went ahead and did

it and—is my recollection. But no, it was . . .

SL: Do you remember . . .

WH: . . . you know, it . . .

[01:40:49] SL: Do you remember a separate theater—movie theater or . . .

WH: You know, I don't remember separate—that was—I think there was one movie theater I remember and that was the Malco. I don't think there was a separate movie theater. Camden was a—Camden was kind of an industrial—little bit of an industrial town. We had a paper mill there.

SL: Paper mill. Yeah, that . . .

WH: We had . . .

SL: . . . smell was something else, isn't it?

WH: We had—we'd had the Naval Ammunition Depot, and so you had a lot of people probably from other parts of the country, too, and it wasn't—you know, it's probably not as typically Southern as some towns—maybe some other towns in Arkansas, you know. [01:41:28] But maybe a little better racial attitudes. So no, I think, you know, growing up that way, the—both races sort of accepted that everything was segregated, you know. And . . .

SL: There was that. It wasn't as inflammatory as it became later, but . . .

WH: Yeah.

SL: . . . it was just kind of the way it was.

WH: Yeah.

[01:41:49] SL: You mentioned that you had—you all had employees that were African American.

WH: Oh yeah.

SL: Was that at the newspaper?

WH: Yeah, yeah, at the newspaper. Sure. Yeah.

[01:42:01] SL: What about household staff?

WH: Yeah, yeah, we had some black people that worked [*laughs*] for us there. We had a—sort of a funny story. We had a fellow who was a black man, and he had—I think he'd murdered his wife, and he'd gone to prison. And so anyway, when he got out of prison, you know, we hired him back again, and he worked at the newspaper—I think he maybe delivered down routes. He'd go deliver—if a carrier quit, he'd go deliver those papers. And the—anyway, he always seemed to have a contentious relationship with whoever he was married to. [*Laughter*] So . . .

SL: [*Laughter*] Oops.

[01:42:41] WH: He—so we had this station wagon that we used as kind of a company vehicle to deliver the down routes. You could

put a lot of papers in the back and . . .

SL: Yeah, sure.

WH: . . . everything. And so he was driving that, and his current wife was coming back or maybe it was a girlfriend, but I think it was his wife—was coming back from Little Rock on the Greyhound bus, and it's—you know, he got out there about five, ten miles north of town and saw the bus coming—knew his wife was on there, and he ran the car into the bus. Car rolled about seven times.

SL: Ooh!

[01:43:12] WH: And the bus—it knocked the bus over, and a bunch of people got injured. His wife . . .

SL: Uh-oh.

WH: I think his wife was okay. [*SL laughs*] He came out unscathed, you know. Hardly a scratch on him. Now, I think we—that was it. I think we had to fire him [*laughter*] after that. But I remember that story. But no, we had some—you know, we had black help in our home—domestic help. And people that worked for us for many, many years and very close to our family.

[01:43:39] SL: You know, and they do become part of the family. They did. That was not unusual. So mostly laundry and

maybe . . .

WH: Yeah.

SL: . . . cooking and . . .

WH: Yeah.

SL: . . . housecleaning and . . .

WH: That's right, yeah.

[01:43:57] SL: I guess we should talk a little bit about—you've mentioned Miss Yawn, one of your favorite teachers. What—were there any other . . .

WH: Yeah, a woman . . .

SL: . . . teachers . . .

WH: . . . named Miss Pierce in the eighth grade, and she was the one that did a lot of the tutoring when I came back from Europe that summer and had to take all those exams. And [*clears throat*] I remember my [*laughs*] American history exam—I'll never forget that. Okay, so basically there was a workbook that went with the thing, and so at the end of the workbook—at the end of each chapter, there was like thirty questions, you know, on that chapter.

SL: Yeah.

[01:44:37] WH: And so you know, we didn't use the workbook, but there was a workbook. I found out there was a workbook.

[*Laughter*] So my exam—and I don't think Miss Pierce was the one that decided this had to be done, but for my final exam I had to answer every question in the workbook. There were thirty chapters, and there were thirty questions in each one. There's nine hundred . . .

SL: Nine hundred questions.

WH: . . . questions. It took me about eight hours to do that final exam. You know, I'd have the rest periods and everything. I think it was great that they did that, you know, in retrospect, 'cause once I finished, I thought . . .

SL: You knew a bunch of stuff.

[01:45:13] WH: . . . I thought, "Wow." No, I—you know, that was the first time I think I'd ever felt like I'd really accomplished something academically, you know. Really significant. And so anyway . . .

[01:45:27] SL: Well, we talked—you mentioned how much you loved baseball. Were you involved in any other athletics in public schools?

WH: That was mainly it—you know, baseball. You know, I had played a little bit of football, but nothing very serious. When I went away to school, I played some soccer, and I ran some cross-country. Did some of those things. But I was never a great

athlete, you know—star athlete or anything.

[01:45:57] SL: Well, growing up, you still had the Arkansas Razorback football team, right?

WH: Oh yeah.

SL: They were like . . .

WH: Oh yeah, I was crazy about the Razorbacks. I'd go to every game. My dad would ask—and I'll tell you a couple of things. [01:46:09] One thing I don't want to forget to mention is the Ozark Boys Camp. I went to Ozark Boys Camp . . .

SL: Let's talk about it.

WH: . . . numerous . . .

SL: Go ahead and talk about it.

WH: . . . numerous—several years. I can't remember how many years, but I loved it. Eddie Parker went with me—my friend from Camden. He was miserable. He was so homesick. He hated every day he was there. I loved it. You know, I just loved it.

[01:46:27] SL: Where was it?

WH: Mount Ida. Outside of Mount Ida. It's still there, and it was owned—at that time it was owned by a family out of Houston. And at that time it was a baseball camp.

SL: Oh!

WH: Every cabin was named after a Major League Baseball team.

SL: Oh!

WH: The Phillies, the Orioles, the Yankees, the Dodgers, et cetera. And I mean, course, that just—I just loved it because I loved baseball, you know. Or maybe I loved baseball because I loved Ozark [*laughs*] Boys Camp. I don't know.

SL: Could've. Yeah.

[01:46:54] WH: But anyway, it's a very popular camp. A lot of people in Arkansas have gone there. A lot of people—and some people from Texas. It had other things, you know. It had some swimming and some archery, but it was really mainly baseball. Now, later it became a coed camp and it—you know, the emphasis on baseball kind of moved away from that. I remember going there, and I remember they had the best dessert I'd ever eaten in my life when I went [*laughs*] there. It was called apple crisp.

SL: Yep.

WH: Oh, it was fabulous. And it—you could smell it when they would be cooking it late in the afternoon. And on those days I'd make sure I would go up there and get pretty close to the [*laughs*] front of the line, you know. [*Laughter*] And I remember they would have vespers service maybe every day, you know. We'd

sing songs—sing religious tunes, you know.

[01:47:43] SL: Did you raise the flag every morning?

WH: You know, I can't remember about that.

SL: Okay.

WH: I remember getting up in the morning was not easy. [*Laughter*] So, but anyway, they—and my daughters—I can't remember—my son or my daughters went. Some of our kids ended up going to Ozark Boys Camp one year. I think it was my daughters. Anyway, so I wanted to mention that about Ozark Boys Camp.

[01:48:09] SL: Do you—did you have a counselor there that you were . . .

WH: You know, I can't really remember. I can't really remember 'em very well—not all that close to . . .

[01:48:18] SL: And how many kids were in each cabin?

WH: Oh, there'd be one, two, three, four—be maybe ten or twelve kids in each cabin. Somethin' like—and a counselor.

SL: So you could do a team.

WH: Oh yeah.

SL: Each cabin had their own team.

WH: Oh yeah, yeah, absolutely. [*SL laughs*] Yeah, that's why they were named after different teams.

SL: Yeah, that's what I was just thinking.

WH: [*Laughs*] Yeah.

SL: And that's neat.

WH: Yeah. Yeah, it was a great program. It was hot, though. I mean, course, Arkansas is hot in the summer. I—you'd kind of get used to it after a while.

[01:48:49] SL: What position did you play in baseball?

WH: I played center field. You know, I had a pretty good arm, and I could get the ball all the way back into [*laughs*] the . . .

SL: Yeah.

WH: . . . into the home plate. So—yeah—there's something I wanted to mention about my dad there before I started talking about Ozark Boys Camp, and it's kind of left me here for a minute, but . . .

SL: Well, we'd been talking about domestic help a little bit before that.

WH: Yeah.

SL: And the theater.

[01:49:23] WH: I told you I wanted to mention the *Platter Chatter* show. [*Laughs*]

SL: Okay, let's talk about the *Platter Chatter*.

WH: So we had a—we owned a radio station in Camden called KAMD 910. It was the—910 on the AM dial. It was before FM radio

stations, or at least they didn't have FM stations in places like Camden. Anyway—and so I was—either the summer before I went away to school or the summer after I went away to school—I can't remember. I was about fourteen. So another friend of mine there named Don Broach and I decided we would do a radio show from seven to eight o'clock every night. And we would just play music—you know, play songs one right after the other. And so we called it the *Platter Chatter* show because we'd play a song and then we'd talk about what all the teenagers in town were up to and doing and what was . . .

SL: Neat.

WH: . . . neat and cool and going on and everything. And so [*laughs*] it was amazing. So the guy that ran the radio station said, "You know—listen, I want—I think you can sell some advertising on this. So here's what you do. You go out, and you sell it two dollars a spot—thirty-second spot." And he said, "You can sell"—let's see, it—the show was an hour, and so I think we could sell thirty-second spots—we could sell twenty-eight spots, so it'd take—fourteen minutes would be maximum. And there was a—there were federal—FCC rule about how—maximum number of minutes you could . . .

SL: Right.

WH: . . . have commercial time. [01:51:00] Well, we sold the thing out, you know. And ma—I didn't do all the selling. People like Coca-Cola and people like that just came in and said, "Hey, you know, we want to buy space." And [*laughs*]—'cause it got to be a popular show. And by then nighttime radio was dead. No one was listening to radio at night. They were all watching TV.

SL: Yeah.

WH: You know, this was 1961 . . .

SL: M'kay.

WH: . . . you know. And so I remember—I wish I had that letter—my dad sent me a letter. It said, "Not"—he said, "We haven't sold out a nighttime radio—a nighttime show since the halcyon days of radio [*laughter*] in the 1930s or something like that or 1940s." So anyway [*SL laughs*], that was sort of my first job, and I would go out and sell the advertising. And then we'd do the show at night. And we did that one summer, and that was a lot of fun.

[01:51:58] SL: What kind of music did you play?

WH: Oh, we played what was [*unclear words*] Elvis—I think Elvis Presley by 1961, you know, "Hound Dog," "Heartbreak Hotel," or [*laughs*] whatever—I can't remember. You know, Buddy Holly probably and things like that. You know, music was really

starting to change, and that type of music was gaining popularity, so it was fun. Kind of—you know, probably helped me gain a love of music from just doing that show, you know. So—trying to think about other things about Camden. We talked about those fire escapes at Cleveland Avenue School.

[01:52:36] SL: Yeah. Now, let's just—now, go ahead and describe those fire escapes because I've seen those before, but they're nonexistent now. I never see anything like them . . .

WH: Yeah, since.

SL: . . . now.

WH: Well, they were fire escapes, first and foremost, and that's what they were. And some of 'em went from the ground to the second floor, and some of 'em went from the ground to the third floor, as I recall. And so basically they were made out of probably steel or aluminum, and they were pretty strong. And they would go from the classroom all the way to the ground. And so in the event of a fire, the kids in the classroom would run over to the side and open up the door and jump into this chute. And the chute was like a big slide, and you'd slide all the way down to the ground floor. And so they were—not only—they were there for the—as fire escapes and probably a pretty efficient and safe way to try to evacuate a school like that, but

they were also a lot of fun. I mean, when the school would close, we'd go over there and play in 'em. You know, we'd get in the bottom of 'em and try to climb up to the top and then come riding down 'em. And so . . .

[01:53:54] SL: Did—so during a fire drill, would you get to slide down them?

WH: Yeah, yeah, I, you know, I don't remember very many fire drills. We probably had 'em, but I mainly remember playing in 'em 'cause I—our house was right across the street. So all the neighborhood kids would go over there and play. A good memory.

SL: Probably couldn't do that now.

WH: [*Laughs*] Yeah . . .

SL: Even if they . . .

WH: . . . that's right.

SL: . . . were there. The . . .

WH: Probably be too dangerous.

SL: Liability would be . . .

WH: [*Laughs*] Yeah, that's right.

SL: . . . too tough.

WH: Like seesaws.

[01:54:22] SL: Yeah, yeah. [*WH laughs*] Well, let's see, there's

gotta be some more mom and dad stuff. We—we've gotten some good stories with your dad. And you were talking about how your—was your dad's office kind of like C. E. Palmer's office? Was it . . .

WH: Yeah, it was small office. It was in the corner of the building. It had no windows, you know, 'cause that's kind of the way this building that he'd bought for the *Camden News* was. [01:54:51] And the—I remember when he built this microwave system. That was in the early 1960s and the facsimile machines and everything—*Forbes Magazine* came down and did a small—a short article on . . .

SL: Is that right?

WH: . . . what he was doing. Yeah.

SL: So *Forbes* entered your life.

WH: [*Laughs*] Yeah, early on.

SL: Early on.

WH: And boy, they were—we thought that was really something that this magazine from New York had come down and interviewed my dad, you know. That was kind of a big deal in the family and . . .

[01:55:20] SL: Micro—over a microwave setup?

WH: Yeah.

SL: What . . .

WH: Yeah. So what he did is he built microwave—he built towers connecting Texarkana, Hot Springs, El Dorado, Camden, and Magnolia. And so he ended up having his own private telephone system that connected to all these towns, and those were actually phones you could pick up, and they called it the hot line. And then over that—over those—that communications link, which could be used for phones, you could also transmit, you know, what you'd probably consider like a broadband image today, which was a high-quality fax—facsimile transmission. So you could take type that had been set in one town and transmit it to another town, and it'd come out very high quality, unlike a typical fax machine—doesn't have very good quality 'cause you don't have much . . .

SL: Right.

WH: . . . broadband capacity.

SL: Right.

WH: So it was a—that was an unusual thing and . . .

[01:56:20] SL: So the—that allowed the papers to share stories? Is that—was that . . .

WH: Well, it allowed . . .

SL: . . . the idea?

WH: It allowed—and eventually we were setting almost all the advertising for all the newspapers in El Dorado, and they would ship the ads back to Hot Springs and Texarkana and Camden, and that way we would—the reason he did that is because in those days, to buy a machine that set cold type was extremely expensive, so he couldn't really afford to have one of those machines in every town, but he could afford to have 'em in one town. And he could afford to have a set of operators in one town, you know, and then let all the newspapers share and amortize the cost.

[01:57:00] SL: So was he hanging the microwave apparatus on existing radio and television towers?

WH: No, built his own.

SL: Had to do the own towers, too.

WH: Yeah, built his own towers.

SL: Probably weren't quite the extensive regulations for towers back then . . .

WH: Yeah.

SL: . . . as there are now.

WH: Yeah.

[01:57:20] SL: So—but didn't your father also—was an early adopter of cable?

WH: Yeah.

SL: Television cable.

WH: So I'm—actually, my grandfather got into the cable business in sort of a passive way. He put up some money to help start a company called Midwest Video, and Midwest Video was one of the first companies to get in the cable television business. And they went around to the towns where you pretty much—if you didn't have cable TV, you weren't gonna get any signal at all. So there were sort of these gaps in the United States where they'd put these TV stations. And a good case of that was Greenville, Mississippi.

SL: 'Kay.

[01:58:05] WH: It was too far from Little Rock for anybody to get a signal. It was too far from Jackson. It was too far from Memphis. And it—and Greenville was just too small a town to put a TV station in.

SL: Right.

WH: So if you wanted to watch TV and you're in Greenville . . .

SL: You're out . . .

WH: . . . you're out . . .

SL: . . . of luck.

WH: . . . of luck unless somebody built a really tall tower—could bring

these signals in. And sometimes even a tall tower wouldn't get it. You'd have to pick it up thirty miles towards the station and microwave it back, you know. [01:58:33] And so Midwest Video went around and got franchises in—they got Greenville, Mississippi. They got a lot of these little towns that were kind of out, you know, where people—80, 90, 100 percent of the people were on cable. My grandfather invested in that as a—just an investor. He didn't—no operational. My dad got interested in the business and—in the early [19]60s. And he bought a system at Hope, Arkansas, that had already—somebody else had already built. And he bought it. And then my mother had a half sister. My grandfather, C. E. Palmer, was married before, had a family, had a daughter named Alden, and then later . . .

SL: Good name.

[01:59:21] WH: . . . he married my grandmother, and you know, they had one child, Betty, my mother. And so Alden's son was a guy named David Mooney, and David Mooney went to work for our company in the cable TV business. And David went around and—to get franchises, and we got the original franchises. I think the franchise may have already been let in Camden. I can't remember if we got that one or not, but we got franchises in Hot Springs; Vicksburg, Mississippi; Longview, Texas; Kilgore,

Texas—you know, a number of communities where we actually got the original franchise and planned to build a system. And so we started that in 1964. When I moved back to Arkansas in 1970, we had just under four thousand subscribers, but it was very difficult to build a cable system in 1970 because in 1968 the—up until [19]68 the FCC had frozen new construction of cable TV systems. This was some lobbying by the broadcasters that saw cable as a threat. [02:00:27] And so in 1968 they relaxed some of their regulations, and they said, "Yeah, okay, you can build a cable system in a town like Longview or Hot Springs, Arkansas. And you can carry three networks and one independent and one educational station." I mean . . .

SL: Kind of remember that.

WH: Yeah, good luck trying to sell that. But anyway—so it was a tough slog, you know, but we finally ended up—we bought a couple of systems in special situations. You know, we bought a cable system in Pine Bluff and—about forty cents on the dollar—that Time Warner owned it—got in a big spat with the city of Pine Bluff. They wouldn't turn the system on. Pine—Time Warner went in and promised the moon including allowing the city to buy the system at any time at depreciated cost which was—course, totally didn't make any economic sense.

SL: Right.

[02:01:19] WH: They figured once they got the franchise they'd go back and renegotiate it with those people in Pine Bluff. And they wouldn't renegotiate it, so . . .

SL: Didn't like the deal.

WH: They built the system. They said, "Okay, system's ready. We'll turn it on, but you gotta renegotiate the franchise." And city of Pine Bluff said, "No way we're gonna do that." They sat there with it for several years including the early [19]80s when interest rates—prime rate went to 21.5 percent. Finally, some sharp accountant up in, you know, Rockefeller Center where Time Warner was located said, "We'll never make any money. We'll never get a return on our investment. We got our carrying costs, you know, what we got"—and they'd built a two-way system. There were no two-way systems then. And so we bought it for about forty cents on the dollar and got it and then, course, they—by then they realized, you know, "No one's gonna buy this unless we take this provision out of the contract." And their hard feelings were towards Time Warner, not us. But we bid—we bought it with zero subscribers. We bought the systems in east Arkansas and Forrest City, Marianna, Wynne, and Brinkley. We bought those. I bought those literally at a

bankruptcy auction in 1977. Bankruptcy auction. Anyway, I never bought anything else at a bankruptcy [*laughs*] auction, but I bought four cable systems. And the—we got some—we got the franchise for Searcy also. Got the franchise for Morrilton. This is after I came back to work for our company, and we eventually got our subscribers up to about a hundred and fifteen thousand, you know, so we . . .

[02:02:54] SL: And this is all cable.

WH: All cable, yeah.

SL: And this was at a time when you got the three main stations, the educational TV and . . .

WH: Yeah, over time things changed, you know. CNN came along in 1980. Home Box Office came along on—you know, then there was more programming, and there was more reason to get on cable and . . .

[02:03:14] SL: Well now, wasn't there also a . . .

TM: Excuse me, Scott. We're gonna need to change tapes.

WH: Yeah, ?get on a? . . .

SL: Okay.

WH: . . . drink of water.

SL: Good.

[Tape stopped]

[02:03:19] SL: So this is tape five.

TM: Yes.

SL: And what were we talking about when we last—do . . .

TM: What were we talking about?

SL: We—let's see . . .

TM: It wasn't TV, so . . .

Joy Endicott: Cable. It was cable.

TM: It was cable?

JE: Buying cable [*unclear words*].

SL: Cable. I know what I wanted to—we were talking about towers and cable and microwave, but I remember in one of the interviews you were talking about the KTAL tower.

WH: Yeah, yeah.

[02:03:53] SL: And that was a very tall tower for the time, wasn't it?

WH: Yeah. Yeah, it was the—what happened is in—we had the first station in the market, and then later they created—they started two more stations in Shreveport. So you had two Shreveport stations and one Texarkana station, but the Texarkana station had the best network. It's CBS, which was the dominant network back in those days. And so pretty soon CBS said, "You know, this is not the greatest situation in the world. We need to

be on [*laughs*] one of these Shreveport stations instead of with this Texarkana station 'cause they got a bigger audience."

SL: Market. Yeah, sure.

[02:04:31] WH: And so basically we got a notice from CBS that they were switching to one of the other stations. So my dad scrambled around, and he worked out a deal with NBC, which was the second-best network at the time—second strongest—to become an NBC affiliate if we did certain things: if we built a tower that was over fifteen hundred feet tall, which would . . .

SL: Wow.

WH: . . . be the second-tallest tower in the South; and [*laughs*] if we moved our studios to Shreveport; and the—move the tower to Vivian, Louisiana, which would be kind of midway between Shreveport and Texarkana; and we converted the station to color—it'd be the first color station in the market. So you know, he committed to do all those things, and we became an NBC affiliate. And we changed our call letters from KCMC-TV to KTAL-TV, which stood for Texas/Arkansas/Louisiana. And the TAL—KTAL was what we called it because of the tall tower, you know.

[Tape stopped]

[02:05:36] SL: So I—you know, basically we're talking about all this

stuff because we had started talking about your dad, and it's inseverable. He's inseverable from the business side of the—'cause it's a family business. So even though we're talking business, it's still kind of personal stuff 'cause it was just—you were raised that way, and everyone knew that it was a—business was a big part of the family life. [02:06:05] Also, I detected when you were relating the Dairy Queen story that you were very proud of your father. And I think that—I suspect that he was probably pretty proud of you, too. When you would—when did you first start working in the paper?

WH: You know, I—when I was ten years old, I went down there—had my first wage-paying [*laughs*] job. And I inserted newspapers at the *Camden News,* and I got twenty-five cents an hour, which was the minimum wage at that time. And I'd worked all Saturday morning, and I, you know, I guess I earned a dollar, and I went down to the Chatterbox, which was a little, you know, a little place downtown where you could get a grilled cheese and Coke, you know. I spent most of it. [*laughter*] But I bought my own, you know, I bought my own lunch, and that was fun. And so that was really my first job. I remember working one summer while I was in high school as a proofreader, you know, at the paper.

[02:07:14] SL: The one in Camden.

WH: In the Camden—yeah, at the Camden paper. My first really forty-hour-a-week job was working at the *El Dorado News-Times* as a reporter. I did that the summer after I graduated from high school before I went to college. And I worked forty hours a week, and I would get up every morning, and I'd be at work at eight o'clock. And so it was thirty-two miles to El Dorado, so you know, it took thirty, forty-five minutes or so to get down there. So I would have to get up kind of early, and you know, actually my dad didn't really have breakfast and my—he would be reading the *Gazette* down there. [*Laughs*] And my mother didn't get up that early, so I'd fix breakfast for myself every morning. You know, I'd fix some scrambled eggs and toast and everything. Then I'd hit—get in the car, and I'd drive down there. And I remember, it was a really interesting job. I remember it was really hot that summer. What was that? That would've been like nineteen—let's see, graduated from high school, before I went to college—that would've been 1964. [02:08:22] I remember walking down there to the courthouse in El Dorado 'cause I had certain beats, you know. I covered the courts, and I covered the police beat and everything. Man, you'd walk out on that pavement, and it felt like it was a

hundred and twenty degrees, you know. [*Laughs*] It was probably only a hundred outside, but radiating off . . .

SL: Radiating.

WH: . . . that pavement . . .

SL: Sure.

WH: Yeah. But anyway, I remember at the end of the summer my dad said, "Well, I," you know, he said about being proud—he said, "I'm really proud of you for your work this summer." And I said, "Well, thank you." And said, "Was there something special?" And he said, "What I'm proud of is you never were late a single day." So he wasn't thinking about an article I'd done [*laughs*] or a photograph I'd taken or whatever. But—and, you know, my thinking back, he was right, you know. I mean . . .

SL: That's . . .

[02:09:05] WH: . . . when people go to work, the first thing they've gotta learn is the discipline to get to work on time, you know, and do it every day, you know. So anyway, my dad was interesting. He—now, he was a guy that grew up in a lower-income family. He was—had realized the value of education and had gotten an education. Actually, he never did graduate from college. I don't—he probably got through about his junior year, you know. And he and my mother got married, and so he never

graduated. She had graduated.

[02:09:36] SL: Don Reynolds didn't graduate either, did he?

WH: You know, I'm not sure . . .

SL: I'm not sure . . .

WH: I don't know the answer to that.

SL: . . . he did.

WH: May not have. But anyway, he really cherished education and really wanted me to get a great education, you know. He thought that was really important. And my dad was—he was not only a distinguished-looking guy, he was distinguished, you know. He just—he spoke very well. He really thought about what he was gonna say before he said it, you know. He didn't shoot from the lip as [*laughs*] they say. He had a lot of wisdom. You know, I—my sister and I have talked about what was so special, and he seemed to just have a lot of wisdom about things, you know. When you'd ask him something or ask him for some advice, he didn't give you an answer immediately. He'd think about it, you know, and then he'd respond. So he just—you know—yeah, I was proud of him, you know. He was easy to be proud of, you know. He had accomplished a lot and was somebody—very high integrity, you know. He would never cut a corner, never do anything wrong. And he, you know, he

believed in the American system, you know, of government—capitalism, democracy. You know, he would always say, you know, "Look, you know, this is the law of the land. You know, we may agree with this. We may not agree with this. But in the kind of country we live in, we don't get to choose the laws we wanna agree with and obey, you know. We gotta obey 'em all, you know, if we're gonna be law-abiding citizens," which was maybe a little more in vogue then than it is today. [*Laughs*] But anyway, yeah, he was a—he was somebody easy to look up to.

[02:11:32] SL: So growing up then, what you saw in your father was a really hardworking guy, dedicated and upright guy.

WH: Yeah.

SL: And were—was there ever any discipline issues at home? Were you ever . . .

WH: Oh yeah, you know . . .

SL: I think you got in—didn't you get in trouble some?

WH: Oh yeah, I'd—I would get in trouble. Yeah, I was [*SL laughs*] a little bit rebellious like most kids, you know, and—or maybe more than most [*laughs*] kids, yeah. And the—that's not the reason I went away to school, though. The reason—in fact, when we—we looked at different schools. We looked at—they—

we were looking at three schools. One was Lawrenceville, one was—I probably was going there and didn't realize that I had—really didn't have [*laughs*] a choice, but [*laughter*] they made it seem like I had a choice. One was Castle Heights Military Academy in Lebanon, Tennessee, and one was a school down in St. Stephen's down in Austin, Texas. But anyway, I kind of liked the idea of going to a military school, so you know, you shouldn't let your children make that decision. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah.

[02:12:43] WH: So anyway—but—oh yeah, you know, disciplinary things over the years, and you know, I did—I got into some trouble when I was in boarding school. Almost got kicked out of boarding school, and it was close. And I remember a fellow kind of took me aside who was a history teacher there—young guy. Very young guy. This guy's name was Walker Blanton, and Walker had—was from Marion, North Carolina, and he had gone to Woodberry Forest boarding school—really good school in Virginia. Had then gone to the University of North Carolina. He had been Phi Beta Kappa. He had been president of the Deke fraternity, Delta Kappa Epsilon, which many people think is the best fraternity there, and we don't have one in Arkansas. Some people have never [*laughs*] heard of it. And—but anyway, he—

anyway, just an outstanding guy. And then he left there, and he got—went to Columbia and got his master's in history. And he left there at probably age twenty-four, twenty-five, and he went down to Lawrenceville to teach. And he was hired as a, you know, history instructor. And so anyway, he got there maybe a year before I got there or maybe got there the same year—I can't remember. But by the time I was a senior, I had him in his class—he was a fabulous teacher. Fabulous teacher. And you know, he'd teach American history, and I remember one time he came in, and he said, "Okay," he said, "yesterday I taught the Civil War, and I had taught it from the Northern perspective." He said, "Today we're gonna teach it from the Southern perspective." And he'd pull this thing out, and it was a little Confederate flag, and he draped it over his little podium [*laughs*], and he said—I mean, it was sort of a joke. But he was great—he was a great teacher. [02:14:38] Anyway, so I got in trouble, and so I almost, as I said, I almost got kicked out of boarding school. And so anyway, I didn't, and so I was very grateful. And he could kind of sense what was going on with me, so he called me up to his room. He was a resident master, you know, where they'd stay in the dorms . . .

SL: Sure.

WH: . . . with you and everything. And he sat me down, and he said, "You know, I think you've really gotten off track here, you know. I don't think you grew up this way, and I think you've just gotten where, you know, you kind of lost your moral compass, and you know, you're willing to do things you shouldn't do. You know, probably doing a little bit of lying, a little bit of cheating, a little bit of stealing." He said, "And it's—you shouldn't be doing that." And he said, "So," he said, "I'm gonna offer you some advice, and a lot of kids your age—I give 'em advice. Some of 'em will take it to heart. Some will never take it to heart, you know. But," he said, "you know, you really need to develop a really strong inner core of whatever your moral standards are, you know." And he said, "Most people do it with religion." He said, "I don't think you have to do it with religion, but most people do it with religion. But you need to determine in your own mind what's right and what's wrong. And you need to live by that." And he said, "If you ever violate that, some people will never know you violated it. But one person's gonna know you violated it, and that's the most important person in the world, and that's you." And he said, "You know, you gotta live with yourself. You won't be able to live with yourself very well if you violate those standards." [02:16:21] Boy, I mean, it had such a

huge impact on me. And so the headmaster of the school had written the University of North Carolina saying, you know, "This young man's gotten in some trouble, and we don't think he's probably mature enough to go to the University of North Carolina. We think maybe you should de-admit him." I think—I'm not sure if that's the term or whatever. Anyway, so—and this friend—he'd gone to North Carolina—he said, "I would recommend you—you know, after you think about this some, you write the director of admissions down there." Yeah, I'd met him. That's back in the days when you'd actually have an interview for college.

SL: Sure.

[02:16:56] WH: [*Laughs*] So I wrote him, and anyway, they wrote me back, and they said, "You know, we've considered all this, and we're gonna go ahead and continue to honor your acceptance, and you can come to the University of North Carolina." Well anyway, that Walker Blanton really—he saved my bacon there. I mean, it was a turning point in my life, you know. And so we got to be really good friends after that. He came to Arkansas and went duck hunting with me, and the two of us went out with some other people out to the Wind River Range in Wyoming, and we'd go fishing, you know, pack trips up

in the mountains. And I still keep up with him with Christmas cards and letters, you know, at—usually just around Christmastime. And he's a big hunter. He goes over to Africa and hunts, and that's not something I'm interested in [*laughter*], but he's trying to talk me into doing that. But anyway, he was that kind of mentor that came along at exactly the right time in my life that really helped kind of straighten me out, you know. I was really being way too influenced by the peers, you know, I was keeping company with. And so anyway, another one of those chance things in life that, you know, was very helpful.

[02:18:10] SL: Back in El Dorado when you were—now—so this stuff happened before you went to college.

WH: Right.

SL: And El Dorado happened after you were out of college?

WH: No, that happened right before I went to college.

SL: Right before you went to college.

WH: Yeah.

SL: So fresh with a new moral compass and fortitude . . .

WH: Yeah.

SL: . . . you're . . .

WH: I made it to work every day. [*Laughs*]

SL: You made it to work every day on time.

WH: [*Laughs*] Yeah. [*Laughter*] That's right.

SL: And that impressed your father.

WH: Yeah.

SL: So it is funny how the—how chance stuff—how serendipitous this stuff works out. [02:18:52] So this is intere—what's interesting to me now is the beat reporter, you know. I mean, let's—I think we ought to talk about that a little bit because not everybody knows what a beat report—especially, you know, kids in high school or junior high—they may not know what a beat . . .

WH: Yeah.

SL: . . . reporter is.

WH: Yeah.

SL: So let—and you say your beat was the courts and the police area in El Dorado. Now El Dorado has a pretty fancy, big federal court building there . . .

WH: Yeah.

SL: . . . don't they?

WH: Yeah.

[02:19:27] SL: Is that the court that you were . . .

WH: Yeah, they . . .

SL: . . . messing with?

WH: Yeah, I remember it was a big old fancy building I'd go in. Yeah,

it was much bigger and fancier than the county courthouse we had in Camden.

SL: Yeah, yeah.

WH: And yeah, and I'd do that. And actually I also covered another [*laughs*] beat I had was the civic club meetings, so I'd go to every civic—and the Rotary Club. I'd go to the Kiwanis Club, and I'd write about, you know, whoever made the speech that day and what they said and et cetera, you know.

[02:19:51] SL: So what were your tools?

WH: You know, I had a camera, and it was one of these—wait, it was one of those big old 4x5 cameras and . . .

SL: The big old flash . . .

WH: Yeah.

SL: . . . attachment on it.

WH: Yeah, yeah, it wasn't like the single-reflex cameras [*laughs*] that I later used. And I'd—you know, I had to learn how to do—develop all the pictures and the negatives and . . .

SL: So you . . .

WH: . . . the prints and . . .

SL: . . . spent time in the darkroom.

WH: Yeah, I did. I spent a good bit of time in the darkroom. It was very good training, you know, that summer. And I got to do

some article—I covered one really horrible wreck on the road from El Dorado to Crossett, and I remembered a feature article I did one time where some guy came into town and was doing instinct shooting. You know, where you would shoot by instinct instead of aim. And so you know, even kind of—as a reporter I was trying to learn how to do this and kind of got almost where I, you know, really believed you could [*laughs*] do it, you know. You'd throw up a, you know, a silver dollar, and you'd shoot at it with a BB gun and hit it, you know. You couldn't—you didn't have time to aim, you'd just do it by instinct. [02:20:55] So I did some feature writing and did some, you know, news, you know, breaking-news reporting, and I did mostly beat writing. Beat coverage.

SL: Beat usually means an area of responsibility. And I've always thought it meant, you know, like kind of pounding the pavement and actually walking into a place. Did you have any kind of audio-recording device or did you just take notes?

WH: I think I just took notes.

[02:21:26] SL: And do beat reporters deploy . . .

WH: I was . . .

SL: . . . shorthand or . . .

WH: Some of 'em do, but most of 'em use recording devices now.

And you know, by the time I got to *Forbes*, you know, and started reporting, I had—I always took a little cassette recorder with me everywhere I went. And it wasn't—I mean, it was big. It was like [*laughs*] that [uses hands to indicate size], you know . . .

SL: Right.

WH: . . . with a regular . . .

SL: Right.

WH: . . . cassette.

SL: Right.

[02:21:51] WH: I had one experience that you gotta mention this so I don't forget it. I was—you know, they would say, "Okay, we're gonna go out and talk to so-and-so, so you go—you'll get us—you go do this tomorrow, et cetera." So I was gonna go talk to the CEO of Westinghouse.

[02:22:08] SL: This is when you were working for *Forbes*.

WH: *Forbes*, yeah.

SL: Okay.

WH: Okay. So I'm a twenty-three-year-old guy right out of school.

And I go up to the fifty-second floor of some skyscraper in New York to see the CEO of Westinghouse, you know, who's probably making unbelievable compensation, and I'm making

nine thousand dollars a year. [02:22:28] And—but I've got this tape recorder with me, you know, and I said, "Do you mind if I tape record this?" You know, and so—"No, it's okay." So he—you know, it was amazing, you know, sitting there talking to the guy. The guy is—he's terrified. [*Laughs*] I'm sure once he saw my age, he was even more terrified. [*Laughter*] But he wasn't talking to me, he was talking to *Forbes* magazine, you know. And he's just—he was, you know, not terrified, but he was very nervous, you know. And it was just really a weird experience. Here's this very accomplished, successful businessperson. You know, corporate leader and everything, and here I am asking him questions. And I thought, "This is a really strange [*laughs*] situation."

[02:23:03] SL: Well, he's face to face with the media.

WH: Yeah.

SL: And, you know, *Forbes* was a major—I mean, it was a highly recognizable delivery. I mean . . .

WH: Yeah, especially with investors, I think.

SL: Uh-huh. So you would go into a civic meeting, and you'd snap a picture or two and take as—notes as you could and . . .

WH: Yeah.

SL: . . . then you'd come back into the newspaper office. You'd

develop your film. You'd write the story.

WH: Yeah.

SL: And . . .

WH: On a typewriter.

SL: On a typewriter.

WH: Yeah.

[02:23:46] SL: And you'd hand that to the copy editor. Is that right?

WH: Yeah, or usually in El Dorado, just to the news editor.

SL: To the news editor.

WH: Yeah.

SL: And so did you get stuff published?

WH: Oh yeah.

SL: Did you get stuff printed?

WH: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah.

SL: You get a byline?

WH: You know, I got a byline on that traffic accident and that feature article and everything, but most of the civic club meetings it wouldn't be a byline.

[02:24:12] SL: So for those that don't know what a byline is, it [*WH laughs*]—you actually got credit.

WH: Yeah.

SL: Your name printed with the article that . . .

WH: Yeah.

SL: . . . you had written this article, and you'd covered the . . .

WH: Right.

SL: . . . event.

WH: Right.

[02:24:26] SL: So the horrible wreck that you covered, I guess there was—it was gruesome or . . .

WH: It was—you know, if you drive from El Dorado to Crossett those—that highway's built up, and they call that sort of on a dump, you know. They've had to dump all this soil up to raise it over the bottomlands down there.

SL: Yes, uh-huh.

WH: And so if you run off the road there . . .

SL: It's . . .

WH: Yeah, it's—goes down. And so these people had run off the road and were down—pretty far down in—down the side of this embankment. And you know, the rescue and fire people were there, and they were, you know, trying to form a human chain to bring some of these people up this steep embankment and everything. I got a great photograph of that, and photograph was probably better than the story, you know. [*Laughter*] So

anyway—but it's a great experience.

[02:25:15] SL: And so you'd be there on time every morning, and you would drive back to Camden every night.

WH: Right.

SL: That's a lot of miles.

WH: Yeah, yeah.

SL: Cumulativewise. I mean . . .

WH: Yeah. So—but it was good to work in another town, you know. Yeah. I mean, we owned the paper there, but people didn't know who I was in El Dorado like people did in Camden, you know.

SL: Right.

Robert Porter: [*Unclear words*]

[Tape stopped]

[02:25:40] WH: I wonder how many other states are doing . . .

SL: There are no other states that do what we do.

WH: Is that right? That's . . .

SL: This is a—in fact, you know, when—of course, Barbara and David—we'll just go ahead and get this on tape . . .

WH: Yeah.

SL: But when David retired from the Senate, they had leftover campaign funds.

WH: Yeah, I remember having that money—the seed money to get it going. [*Camera clicks*]

[02:26:03] SL: And they had been to LSU, and they saw the Huey Long collection—oral history collection down there, and they said, "You know what? [*Cell phone dings*] That's what we should do. We should start an oral history project and let the people of Arkansas tell their own stories."

WH: Yeah.

SL: 'Cause back then folks in New York and Washington, DC, and Hollywood were [*camera clicks*] kind of defining what Arkansas was. And that—that's kind of the way the rest of the world viewed Arkansas. It just—the message [*camera clicks*] wasn't getting out . . .

WH: Sure.

SL: . . . that it was a—actually a nice, great place . . .

WH: Yeah.

SL: . . . with great people.

WH: Yeah.

[02:26:36] SL: So that was the seed. But he—they also felt [*camera clicks*] like even back then, that early—they felt like it needed to be visual . . .

WH: Yeah.

SL: . . . as well.

WH: Yeah, yeah, oh yeah.

SL: And it didn't real—that didn't really [*camera clicks*] take hold at first. The only visual stuff were interviews that AETN did with David or David interviewing someone else.

WH: Yeah.

[02:26:58] SL: And so when the Tyson gift came in, that gave us enough money to actually start doing what we're doing now.

And the [*camera clicks*]—there was pretty good resistance in the oral history community about videotaping oral histories. The attitude was [*siren in background*]—and I'm sure you experienced this with Roy back in 2004—it was probably a little microcassette recorder . . .

WH: Yeah.

SL: . . . on the table. And the attitude was maybe the interviewee will forget that the recorder's there.

WH: Yeah.

SL: Just like your *Forbes* interview . . .

WH: Yeah.

SL: . . . with the CEO. You got this recorder there.

WH: Yeah.

SL: He's terrified 'cause he's getting recorded. [02:27:41] They

said they would never—no one would ever talk, first of all, if you put a microphone on 'em or pointed a microphone at 'em; they would certainly never talk if there was a camera in the room, much less lights.

WH: Yeah, well, that shows they're wrong.

SL: It is. [*WH laughs*] It's amazing [c*amera clicks*] because it's just the opposite. Folks really open up. I mean, after the initial, you know, adjustment, they understand that this is really important stuff. The—that they're getting to be a part of and . . .

WH: Yeah.

[02:28:12] SL: Now we have many, many, many nominations, and we're just booked . . .

WH: Yeah.

SL: . . . forever. It'll never end.

WH: You know, I guess this got started after Sam Walton died, didn't it?

SL: Yeah, didn't get Sam. We got . . .

WH: Boy!

SL: We got J. B. Hunt.

WH: Yeah.

SL: We got Harry Ward before he passed. We got [*laughs*] Jennings Osborne.

WH: Yeah.

SL: It was a great story. I don't know if you know all of his story, but it's remarkable.

[02:28:46] WH: Yeah. Well, Sam Walton is gonna go down as one of the most amazing people in American history I think [*laughs*], you know. [*Camera clicks*] I mean, when I—we were up there with the—these newspaper people around the country, and I got 'em a tour of the Crystal Bridges. We went over there and saw that and everything. And they were just saying, "Well, you know, this is pretty amazing." And I said, "You know, you really almost have to—no one thinks about it this way—very few people think about it this way, but the Waltons are almost like the Rockefellers and the Carnegies. And they've created such an enormous fortune, you know. They don't downplay it. They don't talk about it. It's nothing they brag [*laughs*] about or anything, you know. But they have. And it's nice that at least Crystal Bridges is gonna be part of that fortune's legacy, you know." But they really have, you know. And it—to do that, starting out at a dime-store—I mean, to me it's one of the most inspiring business stories you could ever hear of anywhere, you know. Sam Walton was a real inspiration for me, you know. I know—you know, fortunately I got to meet him—got to know

him a little bit, you know. Got to see him in his office a couple of times. So that was neat, and you know, got to be good friends with his son, Jim. But yeah, it's just a—it's too bad, you know, but—that you weren't able to do this with . . .

[02:30:14] SL: You know . . .

WH: . . . Sam. But . . .

SL: . . . we—we're hoping that—we're hoping to get the rest of the family.

WH: Yeah, yeah.

SL: We do have a request in for Alice, and I think that may come to pass. And we're hoping that if her experience is positive that the rest of the family may . . .

WH: Yeah. [*Camera clicks*]

SL: . . . allow this to happen.

WH: 'Cause they can—but just getting them to talk about their dad would be fantastic.

[02:30:36] SL: You know, we've interviewed many people that actually did business with Sam in early days and back when—and knew him when he was doing the dime-store stuff. And it—he is an amazing story and just the stories that—just the interaction he had with the people that we've talked with, you can't help but . . .

WH: Yeah.

SL: . . . be inspired by how he just kept after it.

WH: Yeah.

SL: It's amazing. [02:31:10] So anyway—listen, this is what we're gonna have to do. We're gonna have to get back together and finish.

WH: Yeah. Yeah, we were . . .

SL: Because we really haven't gotten you . . .

WH: We were talking about trying to pick another date and . . .

SL: Yeah. I . . .

WH: I don't know if you've got a calendar or you wanna do that . . .

SL: I do have a calendar. I don't know how complete it is, but we can certainly start blocking out some options. Let's see—actually, I have . . .

TM: Scott, you want to wrap this, and I'll stop tape?

SL: Yeah, okay. So we're gonna have to stop today.

WH: M'kay.

SL: But we're gonna come back later, and we're gonna finish this up and . . .

WH: M'kay.

SL: . . . it probably—it may not be here. We don't know exactly where it'll be, but we'll make it all happen.

WH: M'kay.

SL: So—okay, all right. So y'all can stop tape.

[02:31:54 End of interview]

[Transcribed and edited by Pryor Center staff]