

THIS is Larry Sprunk and the following is an interview that I had with Mr. William T. DePuy of Grafton, North Dakota. The interview was held Thursday, June 24, 1976. It began at approximately 7:30 in the evening and it was held in Mr. DePuy's office in the basement of the Walsh County Bank building in Grafton. The interview with Mr. DePuy is complete on this cassette.

LARRY: See, we make these tape recorded interviews all over North Dakota county by county and then they all go back to the historical society and they'll be kept there for people in the future to listen to if they want to find out about political developments and farm organizations and family histories and so forth. It should o' been done about 20 years ago, ~~but, well,~~ better late than never.

WILLIAM: You're 20 years behind, I suppose, but not necessarily behind either.

LARRY: We still get some good stories from old folks about the IVA organizing and about the NPL and the Farmers Union, and family histories.

I wish I had thought of it, <sup>earlier</sup> ~~but,~~ but that's water downstream now.

When did your family come Mr. DePuy?

WILLIAM: My grandfather came from New York state to Minto in about 1896. He was not really a pioneer here. He was a practicing lawyer in New York when he came to North Dakota where he started his practice.

LARRY: What in the world would draw him here?

WILLIAM: I think, maybe it was a family skeleton. He was quite <sup>well-</sup> ~~to -~~ ~~do~~ do in New York and he was a gambler.

LARRY: Oh?

WILLIAM: He went broke so he just started a new life in North Dakota.

LARRY: Any particular reason Minto?

WILLIAM: No, none that I know of. It just happened to <sup>be</sup> ~~the~~ the place that he came <sup>to.</sup> ~~to.~~ Course, it was <sup>quite</sup> ~~quite~~ a new town at that time and quite an enterprising town, but he was not the only lawyer in the town. Then he moved to Grafton. My father went to school in New York. He went to law school in Albany, New York. He was a graduate of Union College. He's connected with it. That Union College still exists and it's now supported pretty well by General Electric. It's largely an engineering school.

LARRY: What was your grandfather's name.

WILLIAM: William Reamer DePuy.

LARRY: And your father was?

WILLIAM: Herbert C. DePuy.

LARRY: Did the whole family initially come out or did your grandfather come here?

WILLIAM: My grandfather came with his wife and she died very shortly after they came to North Dakota. My father came a year or two later.

LARRY: About '97 or '98?

WILLIAM: About '97 or '08. They didn't come direct to Minto. He went to Vancouver, Washington first. For what purpose I don't know. Then he came back to Minnesota and he trapped for a year before he came to North Dakota.

LARRY: Is that right!

WILLIAM: While he was a graduate lawyer.

LARRY: Oh, he'd gone through school by then?

WILLIAM: Ya. In fact he finished school, I think, by 1894. My great grandfather was a bishop in the <sup>Methodist</sup> church and he was a editor of a Methodist ~~paper~~ <sup>paper</sup> and my father worked for him in New York City.

LARRY: Did your grandfather or any other members of your family have relatives or friends that already come here?

WILLIAM: None that I know of. He just came to a new territory and settled in Minto. I suppose, Minto was settled about 1880. Minto then was not located where it is now. It was located a half of a mile west and a quarter of a mile south of where it is now. At that time it was known as Sandy's Corner and the first settler there was Sandy Thompson. He was a Scotchman and he was my mother's uncle. Sandy's Corner was quite a little settlement. There was a blacksmith shop and a grocery store, and some houses and so forth. Then when the railroad came through, course, it missed Sandy's Corners by half ~~mi~~ a mile or thereabouts and the town ended up at the present location of Minto.

LARRY: If the railroad don't come to you, you go to the railroad?

WILLIAM: That's it!

LARRY: What would make up the bulk of a lawyer's practice at that time?

Were there any particular types of material that he would handle more so than others?

WILLIAM: Well, I think, most of the practice in them days was convey-  
 ing. More real estate work, I think, than anything. ~~There was~~ lots of  
 mortgaging and title researchs and <sup>drawing mortgages and</sup> ~~and~~ deeds would be the larger  
 portion of the practice. Well, of course, after prohibition he tried  
 a lot of bootlegging cases. Somebody told me that Minto had 23 <sup>saloons</sup> ~~saloons~~  
 in it at one time.

LARRY: Is that right?

WILLIAM: That should be sufficient to take care of the needs.

LARRY: It should be. Was your grandfather in before the Polish people  
 came?

WILLIAM: Yes. At that time Minto was largely a Scotch and Irish and  
 English settlement. My mother's people came from Ottawa and they were  
~~Scotch~~ <sup>Scotch</sup>. In fact, her father and mother came from Scotland and lived  
 in Ottawa for awhile. He was a carriage maker and he had a carriage  
 factory in Ottawa. Then it burned down and then he moved to North  
 Dakota out of economic necessity and he raised his family. We had a  
~~wagon~~ <sup>wagon</sup> works in Minto and I can remember it, you know. It was kind  
 of an intransient place, but he made wagons, wagon wheels, and every-  
 thing else.

LARRY: Is that right. Now, this Sandy Thompson was your mother's  
 uncle?

WILLIAM: Ya, right. He would be a brother of my grandfather. My  
 grandfather's name was Sam <sup>Thompson</sup> ~~Thompson~~. They spelled it T-h-o-m-s-o-n.  
 They were Scotch.

LARRY: When had they come in?

WILLIAM: Well, they were here before my father's father came or my  
 grandfather on my father's side. I don't know how.... They came shortly  
 after 1890, see?

LARRY: Yes.

WILLIAM: I <sup>Know,</sup> ~~know~~ my mother was born in 1879 and she was born in Ottawa so they came sometime after that. She was just a young girl when they came.

LARRY: How many came in that family.

WILLIAM: Well, eventually there were nine children, but at the time they came there would o' been three living, three girls, and six of 'em would be born in North Dakota.

LARRY: Mr. DePuy, one of the things that I try to find out from people ~~if~~ if they talk to their parents or grandparents about this, is how they initially felt when they got here, if they were <sup>glad</sup> ~~glad~~ when they come here or if they had misgivings about having come. How did the Thomson's feel and how did your grandfather on your dad's side feel?

WILLIAM: Well, I think, they were all quite satisfied about having made the move. I know, my father and mother used to talk about the early days in Minto and they had very enjoyable times. They were kind o' hold up in the wintertime and not a ~~little~~ great deal of activity. I can remember seeing pictures that they had that they had ski boats patterned after regular sailboats. These were huge things. They'd have masts maybe 20 feet tall on 'em. They went over the prairies, you know. There was no fences in them days so they'd use these ski boats and they were big. I suppose, they'd be 12, 15 feet wide. There'd be just the ~~frame~~ frame, you know, and they'd probably be 20 feet long and they handled just like a sailboat.

LARRY: Is that right.

WILLIAM: That's right and my folks had pictures of 'em. I remember my father telling me of one winter where the snow was so deep on the Main Street of Minto that they tunnelled from store to store rather than trying to remove the snow so they dug tunnels. So it was quite comfortable.

LARRY: I'm not a sea<sup>o</sup>faring man so I can't remember the term, but would these snow boats.... Could you run them....

WILLIAM: Oh, yes! <sup>Tacked</sup> ~~was~~ you mean?

LARRY: Ya.

WILLIAM: Ya, sure.

You tacked it. It had the same kind of sails as a sailboat. It had a <sup>Jib? 143</sup> sail and a main sail. As I remember in the picture, there was several of 'em. Maybe five or six ~~boats~~ boats.

LARRY: Now, did your grandfather here in Minto draw your dad to practice?

WILLIAM: Ya, this is the reason he came to Minto. He came to Minto and they used to practice together. Then my grandfather moved to Grafton and my father stayed in Minto and married my mother. He got practicing in Minto. <sup>They established their practice, but</sup> They had the two offices.

LARRY: Yes.

WILLIAM: And he moved to Grafton and he was elected <sup>States Attorney</sup> ~~...~~ when he moved to Grafton.

LARRY: Your grandfather?

WILLIAM: No, my dad.

LARRY: I was wondering. If the first settlers into that area into Minto were Scotch, Irish, and English, when the Polish people came in, had a lot of the other people left already?

WILLIAM: Oh, I think, the Scotch and Irish people settled mostly in the west side of Minto and the Polish people came in and settled in the Warsaw and Oslo area <sup>east</sup> of there so the two groups were quite divergent, I think, for some time. And of course, lately there's been intermarriage. I shouldn't say lately. In the last 50 years there's been intermingling and so on.

LARRY: But the first few years the identification with nationalities was pretty strong?

WILLIAM: That's right. Very decided, yes. The Scotch were Presbyterians and the Irish were Catholic and the Polish, of course, were largely Catholic too. In those days, you know, the religious differences <sup>were</sup> ~~...~~ quite acute. The Catholic didn't marry a Presbyterian in those days, you know?

LARRY: No! That hasn't changed only in the last **25** or **30** years.

WILLIAM: Ya.

LARRY: Would the Irish-Catholic and Polish-Catholic....

WILLIAM: They had separate churches.

LARRY: Is that right?

WILLIAM: Irish-Catholic and Polish ~~Church~~ Church in Minto. Both of 'em.  
French

LARRY: And then there was a ~~settlement~~ settlement further east yet?

WILLIAM: Well, right east of Grafton.

LARRY: Oh, that's eastward, ya.

WILLIAM: Oak Wood.

LARRY: Oak Wood, ya.

WILLIAM: And they maintained their quality quite well.

LARRY: Did any of these initial homesteaders or the people that came in after your grandfather had come or from what he may have learned handling land transactions ~~come in~~ come in just to "prove up" and then sell the land and take the money that they made and go back to where they had come from?

WILLIAM: Oh, there was some of ~~that~~ that, but most of the people that came and homesteaded or "proved up" on tree claims stayed, I think. Well, there was some of it done and there would be people that would be hired to come and prove up by prearrangement that they would sell their homestead right then, too, after they had "proved up". They were kind of "floaters".

LARRY: I see.

WILLIAM: There was some of that, but not too much. Many of the.... Particularly in the French area and it's not truly a French area anymore, but most of the people of French descent live east of Grafton and still live east of Grafton and many of those farms were "proved up" by grandfathers of the present owners and stayed in the family.

LARRY: Now, I've heard rumors and a couple of people down around Larimore attempted to verify it. I don't know whether I had enough agreement to verify it historically or not, but from what some of the folks told me down there the Larimore family would bring in Black people from the South and have them "prove up" and then they would buy out the.... Was that a prearranged thing around Minto?

WILLIAM: No, not around ~~Minto~~ <sup>Minto</sup> I don't think. I think, most of the

people around Minto that homesteaded came with the idea of staying and becoming residents. Well, I'm sure they did. Well, Sandy Thompson that we speak of homesteaded, but he eventually moved to Canada. Ya, he's been long since dead, but there was the <sup>Bell family and the</sup> Millers and Taylors and <sup>Thomsons</sup> ~~Williams~~. There's quite a few of 'em intermarried, you know.

LARRY: Did the <sup>Scotch, Irish,</sup> ~~Williams~~ and ~~the~~ English that were the initial homesteaders around Minto come in through Canada.

WILLIAM: Ya, they came from Canada. In fact, I think, it was about 1950 my wife and I went up to Montreal and we were driving back through Canada through the northern route and we stopped in <sup>Hembrooke</sup> ~~Williams~~. My wife wanted to do some shopping in this town of maybe 10, 12,000 people. I was just sitting in the car and two very elderly ladies came along, very old, and they stopped and looked at the car because it had a North Dakota license on it. I heard one of 'em say, "North Dakota. That's where Guy Miller settled." Guy Miller must of come here 50 years before these ladies saw this North Dakota license. He must o' been here in 1880 or thereabouts.

LARRY: But they remembered it?

WILLIAM: They remembered that Guy Miller had gone to North Dakota. Course, Guy Miller was still living at that time.

LARRY: Oh, did you know him? *He was a friend of mine.*

WILLIAM: Oh, very well, yes. <sup>^</sup> He became a very wealthy man.

LARRY: Did you pass that along to the ladies?

WILLIAM: Oh, yes!

LARRY: That was a coincidence. When did the Polish people come in then? Was that a pretty tight block o' time? Was that a mass immigration?

WILLIAM: Well, yes. I think, they may have come in the 90's. Pretty much in the 1890's. They didn't come quite as early as the <sup>Scotch</sup> ~~Williams~~ and Irish, but it was quite settled with the Polish people by 1900.

LARRY: Were you born down there?

WILLIAM: I was born in Minto.

LARRY: From what your dad might have told you or your grandfather or

other people in that area was there any sort of distinguishable difference ~~in~~ <sup>in</sup> how they farmed? The Canadian people that had come in ~~in~~ opposition to the Polish people? Would the Polish people tend to have more sheep or do something differently?

WILLIAM: Well, I think, the Polish people farmed more grain farming than the other people. I don't think they raised as many cattle; but, I think, this is more because of the locality settled in.

LARRY: Did the Polish people come for any particular reason. I've talked to a lot of Germans that came to avoid military service and....

WILLIAM: No. I think, they could have. I think, those that came direct from Poland might have come to avoid military service; but, I think, a few of these Polish people came from Wisconsin. They'd be second generation.

LARRY: So it wasn't a straight <sup>migration?</sup> ~~migration~~

WILLIAM: No, it wasn't. I think, probably half of them came from Poland and half of them came from southern Minnesota and Wisconsin.

LARRY: Did they do anything that was ethnically traditional, any particular celebrations?

WILLIAM: Not that I know of and not at that time. I suppose, they had their dances and things.

LARRY: Ya.

WILLIAM: Amusements of that <sup>sort</sup> ~~sort~~ but <sup>I don't think</sup> ~~they~~ they celebrated any special day. Of course, they had a township named after Polaski, who was a great Polish <sup>hero</sup> ~~hero~~ so they had a township named after him.

LARRY: Ya. Did the early settlers that came in, again from what your grandfather might have told you, <sup>come in</sup> ~~come in~~ kind of on their boot straps ~~and~~ without any money to speak of?

WILLIAM: I think that most of 'em didn't have very much money when they came. As I say, he at one time was quite wealthy; but when he came to North Dakota, he was not. He didn't have any great quantity of money. He had enough to get along for a year or so. I'm sure of that. I mean, he



wasn't a poor man but he....

LARRY: But the bulk of it he....

WILLIAM: Ya. Squandered.

LARRY: Do you think that the fact that these settlers came in without having too many resources put them in bad shape for getting started as far as having to mortgage their land?

WILLIAM: Ya, if you look at the records in the courthouse here, for instance, nearly all of them had loans. Comparatively small loans but they mortgaged their property almost as soon as they got it. Well, a \$1,000 on a quarter section would be fairly common. There'd be two mortgages. It'd be like \$800 to a mortgage company, Colonial Mortgage Company in Massachusetts, and then there'd be a \$200 <sup>second</sup> mortgage to the mortgage broker, who handled the mortgage, for instance, for 'em. And of course, the interest rates in those days were high. 10, <sup>12 percent</sup> ~~10~~, were common.

LARRY: Were those folks kind of behind the 8 ball as far as some of the loans that were made. Occassionally I have older folks tell me that if they got a loan for \$100, they actually got 90 and had to pay back 110.

WILLIAM: That was a common practice too. If they got a loan for \$1,000, they got 800 and 200 would be the broker's commission.

LARRY: But they would still pay interest on a 1,000.

WILLIAM: Ya. That was a very common practice or a second mortgage. It was dependent on the broker himself what arrangements you made with him.

LARRY: Were the businessmen or the professional people in Minto primarily English speaking from Canada or were there also Polish there?

WILLIAM: There were also Polish there. The leading merchants of Minto at that time were the <sup>Zuzdrow</sup> brothers from Minto. They would be German or German-Polish and the leading mortgage broker was a man by the name of Phelps. He'd be English. And the Tituss were in the bank and they'd be English. There was the Langosky brothers. They were Polish, of course, and they had the hardware store, and Doctor Evans and Doctor Norton. Many of these people I didn't know at all. They were gone before I was growing

up here.

LARRY: You mentioned that your folks said that <sup>they</sup> ~~had~~ had, considering the conditions, ~~was~~ kind of an enjoyable town in Minto. What kind of social life did that community have?

WILLIAM: Well, dances were common and they had card parties, of course. There was lots of activity centered around the church. My mother was quite religious. She was raised Presbyterian. <sup>Her mother played</sup> ~~was~~ in the Presbyterian Church for 50 years.

LARRY: Oh? Was your dad Presbyterian too?

WILLIAM: No. His grandfather, as I say, was a bishop in the <sup>Methodist</sup> ~~Presbyterian~~ Church. See, the DePuy family were French <sup>Huguenots</sup> ~~Huguenots~~.

LARRY: I was wondering about that.

WILLIAM: They came to America in 1700 and something.

LARRY: To get away probably from the pressure of the French Catholic?

WILLIAM: Ya. They were run out of France actually. They went to Holland and settled and lived there ~~was~~ about one generation.

LARRY: What other things might they have had for socializing? Were there fraternal organizations?

WILLIAM: Oh, ya. Knights of Pithius were one of the big organizations and, of course, the Masonic Lodge was active. I remember reading of the Knights of Pithius, but I don't know whether it still exists or not. It was a very active lodge.

LARRY: It sure was. I've run across more communities in North Dakota where that was one of the bigger fraternal <sup>orders</sup> ~~organizations~~.

WILLIAM: Ya. I think, it was like the Elks now. It was quite social and fraternal and that and, I think, they had the insurance program with it, but there was a Masonic Lodge in Minto.

LARRY: How long did you stay with your family or with your folks in Minto then?

WILLIAM: Well, my father was elected <sup>s</sup> ~~states~~ <sup>a</sup> ~~attorney~~ in 1908 so he would have moved up here in 1909. I was three or four years old. I think, that was the first time I ever saw electric lights was when we came here. We

didn't have electricity.

LARRY: Did they <sup>have it</sup> here in Grafton?

WILLIAM: Oh, ya. The state school had it and the house that we moved into was quite close to the state school. I can remember my mother showing me the lights out on that school lot.

LARRY: At that time was the state school kind of out in the country?

WILLIAM: Yes. Well, it was in the same location it is now.

LARRY: I mean in relation to the town?

WILLIAM: Yes, it was. ~~Between~~ Between the state school and our house there were no other houses and where it is now and where we lived it'd probably be a half mile.

LARRY: I don't know how to say this exactly. Was Grafton kind of a fun place to grow up in as a kid? *Did you enjoy it here?*

WILLIAM: Ya. I'm sure I did, <sup>P</sup>Particularly when I was in high school, because I was interested in athletics and we had a excellent athletic team for a town this size. I played on the football team, <sup>played</sup> ~~twice~~ twice for the city championship. We were pretty good for those days. A lot of activity.

LARRY: Was that much the same time that Lidgerwood had a good team because a couple times Lidgerwood played for the state championship too?

WILLIAM: Well, that would be in the early 20's. Course, I don't remember Lidgerwood.

LARRY: Maybe that was earlier.

WILLIAM: Let's see. Was that when Connie Mobiez played there?

LARRY: Ya.

WILLIAM: Ya. That was the year before when we played there.

LARRY: Was it a pretty good sized high school?

WILLIAM: Ya. The high school was about 200. The town was about 3,000.

LARRY: Tell me, ~~Mr.~~ <sup>at that period</sup> Mr. DePuy, who were some of the more successful businessmen in Grafton, <sup>through</sup> when you were growing up going ~~through~~ elementary school and into high school? Were there any particular stores that were....

WILLIAM: Well, H.O. Hauserman was a very successful druggist. He had the store down at one of the Getz stores, Getz Rexall, and the other

drugstore operated by a man by the name of ~~f~~ Hadley. He was successful. A man by the name of William Chandler was a successful furniture store dealer. Strangely enough, he'd been through bankruptcy and reestablished himself, paid all his debts off even though he didn't have to. He had the undertaking parlor and the furniture store. He died a wealthy man. There was a Jewish merchant by the name of Gus Bayer <sup>? 408</sup> had a clothing store. He was successful. And o' course, the Sprigg family operated the First National Bank. It was quite a large bank at <sup>those</sup> times and the Moore family had the Grafton National Bank, which is now the First National Bank. And the man, who really became a millionaire <sup>here</sup> ~~was~~ was a man by the name of ~~W. C.~~ <sup>? 412</sup> Lestical. He owned the roller mill. It was a big mill and very successful. It failed in about 1929. By that time, you know, milling had gotten away from the smaller towns. He sold it and went up to Winnipeg. He left here a millionaire and went up to Winnipeg and made a fortune.

LARRY: He saw the handwriting on the wall, huh?

WILLIAM: Ya, I guess so. He made a good sale. He became a grain broker <sup>had enough finances and so forth.</sup> up there. Course, he ~~had enough finances and so forth.~~ He donated the park down here. It's named the Lestical Park.

LARRY: This is not very important. I was curious. You mentioned this one fella was the undertaker. <sup>Did they have them carriages,</sup> ~~horse-drawn~~ the ornate funeral wagon?

WILLIAM: Ya. With the glass sides? You could see the casket in there?

LARRY: Ya.

WILLIAM: It had little curtains?

LARRY: Would they have the horses decked out in black?

WILLIAM: I don't really remember. I think, the horses were just livery barn horses. I'm sure that Chandler did not keep horses himself.

LARRY: That's right. Ya. Had you wanted to be a lawyer yourself through school?

WILLIAM: No. It sort of gravitated into it. When I was about <sup>10 12</sup> ~~1~~, ~~10~~ years old and after he got an automobile and had a case, I used to go with him up

to Cavalier and sit in on the law suits more or less just for the ride than to be at the law suit. Sometimes he'd take me and we'd stay overnight and it was kind of an adventure for me. I think, I became interested in law sort of.

LARRY: How many were there in your family?

WILLIAM: Oh, there were three girls and myself.

LARRY: Did this area tend to be a little more Democratic with the Scotch, Irish, and English?

WILLIAM: Well, the Polish were the Democrat<sup>ts</sup>, you know?

LARRY: Oh, they were, huh?

WILLIAM: Among the Polish people were certain leaders. If the leaders were Democratic, the whole community would be Democratic. That's the way it just happened to be.

~~There was a man by the name of John Spragten.~~ There was a man by the name of John Spragten. He was a very staunch Democrat and he was quite a domineering individual. He lived in Minto. <sup>? 458</sup>

LARRY: In Minto?

WILLIAM: Ya.

LARRY: Were these leaders kind of <sup>self-assertive</sup> ~~assertive~~ in taking over leadership?

WILLIAM: Ya, they projected themselves. I don't remember that the Scotch were particularly politically active from a party's standpoint. They were very good citizens. You know, participated in school affairs and town government and things of that sort, but I don't remember that they were <sup>particularly</sup> ~~active~~ active in party affairs.

LARRY: What was the political climate of Grafton? Now, this might have been kind of early for you to have been actively interested, but did the Nonpartisan League catch on in this area?

WILLIAM: No, it didn't. Pretty much stayed by the old parties.

LARRY: Republican and Democrat?

WILLIAM: Ya. I would guess that now it would be pretty evenly divided. My father was a Democrat and in those days in county offices you were elected on a party ticket. I don't really remember it. It wasn't import-

ant to me; but <sup>one year he</sup> when ~~he~~ ran for states attorney, <sup>he</sup> he was elected on both tickets -- <sup>he</sup> he was nominated on both tickets. He ran as a Democrat, filed as a Democrat, but he got enough write-in <sup>votes</sup> ~~votes~~ on the Republican ballot even though there was a Republican that had filed. He was elected. It went to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court said he was <sup>nominated</sup> ~~nominated~~ on both tickets so in the fall he ran against himself.

LARRY: That's kind of a nice vote of confidence!

WILLIAM: Ya.

LARRY: Why do you suppose the League wasn't as successful initially or even through the long term in the Grafton area as it had been in some other parts of North Dakota?

WILLIAM: Because the farmers here were more prosperous and just naturally more conservative because they were prosperous.

LARRY: Is that kind of a <sup>given</sup> in politics, would you say, that <sup>economics</sup> ~~politics~~ at that time determined to a large extent the political dealings of the people?

WILLIAM: I'm sure it had a large impact on the <sup>formation of the</sup> League. And of course, the League would not have been formed had it not been for a man by the name of Townley. He knew how to prevail on people. He had a great gift of persuasion. <sup>And</sup> ~~And~~ I think, he was crook to some extent. <sup>Nevertheless,</sup> ~~He~~ he was a dedicated man.

LARRY: Did he try to organize here?

WILLIAM: Oh, yes. In western Walsh County the League was strong but not in the valley. They just never got a foothold.

LARRY: Did you ever know him or hear him speak?

WILLIAM: I heard him <sup>speak</sup> ~~speak~~ in the twilight of his career? He was just around begging dollars on the street is what he was doing? He would join every Populist movement that came along. He was making his living out of it, but he lost his impact.

LARRY: Do you think that he got kind of <sup>got</sup> a little strange in his later life in terms of the ideologies he perounded?

WILLIAM: I think, he was desperate. He wanted to project himself back into

the main stream of politics and anything that he thought might bring him publicity and so forth he seized upon it as an instrument. Ya. He wasn't strange. He was so terribly ~~anxious~~ <sup>anxious</sup> to become prominent again. And at one time, of course, Townley was quite a wealthy man accepting on the \$15 that these farmers had paid because you get a 100,000 people payin' \$15 a piece is a lot o' money. There was a Ford dealer at a little town of Conway which is <sup>south and</sup> ~~west~~ west of here. He sold 500 Ford automobiles to the Nonpartisan League in one year.

LARRY: Is that right?

WILLIAM: 500 cars.

LARRY: They had that many people out organizing, huh? Why do you suppose Townley never sought a political office himself?

WILLIAM: I don't know why. I really don't know why he didn't. I think, he was just more of an organizer and holding political office would have been restrictive on him.

LARRY: Do you think though that he was the power behind Lemke and Frazier and that he was in there manipulating and pulling strings.

WILLIAM: I don't think that he.... I think, ~~he~~ he made the Nonpartisan League and the Nonpartisan League made them, but I don't think that he would directly have said that Lynn Frazier you be governor or you be senator. I think that he would have sat in with others <sup>in</sup> the League and said that Lynn Frazier is a good man and so forth. I don't think that he was a dictator of who was what. He used Frazier, of course, because he was an affiliation of Frazier. <sup>He</sup> ~~was~~ had a debt of obligation to him because the League was the instrument that put him in office; but, I don't <sup>think</sup> ~~think~~ that Townley was like Daley, for instance.

LARRY: But apparently from what the history books say and some old people have told me when the League was in its initial days in '16 and '17, Townley could have been king of North Dakota?

WILLIAM: Well, I guess, he could o' been. Ya, he had a <sup>tremendous</sup> ~~influence~~ influence. There's no doubt about it; but, of course, he would o' been king of only a majority of the people because nearly half of the state

hated him with a venom.

LARRY: There were no shades of gray?

WILLIAM: No, you either supported him or you were dead against him.

LARRY: Do you think that the Nonpartisan League may have <sup>initiated</sup> ~~initiated~~ hard feelings between country people and townspeople?

WILLIAM: Yes. I think more in the western part of the state. If a businessman was not friendly with the League and expressed himself in opposition with the League, <sup>he was dead</sup> as far as business was concerned. I think, there were boycotts that would break a businessman. The membership to the support of the League to some extent ~~based~~ rested on the fear of retribution 'cause they would try it here, but there was not enough Leaguers to have a big influence on business. The Farmers Union is a good organization, as far as I am concerned, but they were kind of an offshot of this full movement and they were never successful here in Grafton.

LARRY: Oh? Would the townspeople tend to be more IVA and the country people NPL?

WILLIAM: Yes. Grafton, I think, was half and half, but the wealthy people in town were Republicans or later on IVA, Independent Voters Association.

LARRY: Do you know, Mr. DePuy, how the IVA got organized? That never got much coverage or publicity as the NPL did when it organized, but apparently at one time the IVA was quite an organization?

WILLIAM: It was strong. I always thought it was pretty much organized <sup>the group down in Dismarek. I think, it stemmed out of there.</sup> by Patterson and ~~the group down in Dismarek~~ I really don't know. It was not dominant, but it surely was organized in opposition to the League.

LARRY: Did the IVA attract Democrats, too, or did the Democrats tend to stay with the Party and let the Republicans....

WILLIAM: It attracted some Democrats. The Democratic Party became numerically ~~ly~~ small in the 20's. There were quite a few Democrats that were sympathetic to the IVA. I suppose, there were some that leaned toward the League to some extent. The League had some following among the Polish people. I just don't know why. Whether it was <sup>? 655</sup> ~~myth~~ thinking



or what. I think, it was because some of these <sup>122ders</sup>  became sympathetic toward the League. Now, this man <sup>?</sup> ~~Sprackett~~ was an IVA and quite a few of the Democrats followed him.

LARRY: So the Polish people weren't necessarily united?

WILLIAM: Well, generally speaking they were of Democratic origin. They might have dipped off and followed <sup>Sprackett?</sup>  and the IVA and others just stayed Democrats. Now they are still just straight Democrats pretty much.

LARRY: Did your dad seek any political offices?

WILLIAM: He was nominated for governor in 1932. Ran against Bill Langer. Bill Langer beat him.

LARRY: Ya, that's right.

WILLIAM: Course, he give Langer quite a chance. Course, the Democrats had no organization, **N**o money, for one thing. Their organization was purely for patronage purposes. Well, the only Democratic governor we had before that, I think, was John Burke.

LARRY: Ya, and Moses later on.

WILLIAM: That was later on, ya.

LARRY: How do you in restropect evaluate Langer?

WILLIAM: Well, he became a good senator for North Dakota, but he was purely a political hack in my opinion.

LARRY: Opportunist would you say?

WILLIAM: Ya, an opportunist but a servant of the people in small--you know. Actually, I think, the <sup>state as a state</sup>  would have been better off without Still, there are certain things. Like, you look back at the Langer.

moratorium. It did some good, I guess.

LARRY: Do you think in another economic era Langer would have been as successful as he was or did the situation create Langer's popularity and power?

WILLIAM: Well, the depression made Langer the success that he was. He had to have some straw man that he knocked down and, of course, the millers, and the bankers, and the elevator people were what he was using and the

thrust of his political efforts. But of course, as I said, the moratorium declared on foreclosures probably did some good. Although in those days I represented the Federal Land Bank among other things around the state and we foreclosed many mortgages, but we immediately sold the land back to the farmer that we foreclosed on. So nobody was trying to take their land. They just wanted to get what was on the books straightened out so I don't know really how effective this moratorium was, but it was one of the things that made him popular.

LARRY: Made him a saviour to a lot of people.

Well, sure it did.

WILLIAM: <sup>^</sup> ~~And~~ you know, some of the insurance companies were driven to desperation and had to foreclose and take over the land because they weren't getting paid and weren't getting anything out of it, and they had to pay the taxes to protect the mortgage. From their standpoint the insurance commissioners were saying, "Look, we got a bunch o' bad loans on here and either get rid of 'em or foreclose." So they aren't always....

LARRY: Culprits either.

WILLIAM: No. They can't always direct their own destiny either.

LARRY: Were politics more emotional in those days? Were people more apt to be more actively opinionated?

WILLIAM: I think so. I think, we were closer to state government than we are now. I think we were. There was more personal involvement. Maybe that was just because I was ~~more~~ involved to <sup>some</sup> ~~an~~ extent.

LARRY: How about the candidates running for national office? The reason I ask is because I've been working on this project for two and <sup>one-half</sup> ~~one~~ years now and far-and-away the most popular reaction I get from people when we start talking about politics <sup>is, "It</sup> ~~is~~ doesn't make a damned bit o' difference. <sup>"</sup> They're all scoundrels anyway. Was that feeling prevalent in the teens and the <sup>20's and 30's,</sup> ~~20's~~ too, do you think?

WILLIAMS: Well, I can't say for in the teens, but in the 20's I don't think it was. I think that if you were a <sup>Democrat</sup> ~~Republican~~, Woodrow Wilson was a great man and you revered him and if you were a Republican, you hated him. And of course, with Roosevelt you either had to hate him or you had

to love him. He was just that kind of a man. I don't think there was the skepticism about the moral character of people in federal government that there is now. All these scandals and everything.

LARRY: Of every kind.

WILLIAM: Well, they're all alike.

LARRY: Ya.

WILLIAM: Which isn't all really true, I don't think. It's an attitude that we get maybe with some justification. There's some things that go on in Washington that probably went on when Washington was president, I suppose.

LARRY: Ya. That's right.

WILLIAM: I don't remember those days!

LARRY: Was Roosevelt kind of that way? Either he drove a totally positive reaction or a....

WILLIAM: Ya. If he was hated, he was hated desperately. If you didn't like Roosevelt, you didn't just dislike him you hated him desperately. I remember going to Grand Forks one time when he went through. He came in on the railroad and he stood out on the back platform and there was something about the guy almost godly, you know, to me. I thought he'd save the country and, I think, maybe he did. I think, he came along at the time we needed him just like England and Churchill who probably held England together. In <sup>1932</sup> ~~1932~~ we were real close to bankruptcy in this country, political bankruptcy. It was a desperate time. Hitler could o' come along and taken this country over. Roosevelt had a lot o' ideas that I didn't totally agree with, but I know that what he did held the country together.

LARRY: Was he an inspirational leader?

WILLIAM: Well, I guess, maybe he was demagogic to some extent. He was a great showman, of course. You wouldn't remember him?

LARRY: No. That's why I'm curious.

WILLIAM: Well, I didn't have any experience with him, but he was a great

LARRY: But during the Second World War he was in the Senate, wasn't he. because he was investigating the munitions profiteering.

WILLIAM: Yes. He was in the Senate 'til 1944, you see.

LARRY: From '24 'til '44.

WILLIAM: Well, I'm not sure it was '24. It was probably after that. He took Ladd's place, didn't he.

LARRY: That's right.

WILLIAM: I don't remember when Ladd went in. Nye was appointed. He was a newspaper editor at Richardton, North Dakota.

LARRY: Ya, and he had been at ~~Fryburg~~ <sup>Fryburg</sup>. And Ladd was elected on the Republican ticket?

WILLIAM: Ya.

LARRY: Was Nye a statesman? Was he interested in publicity when he was chairing ~~that~~ that committee on munitions profiteering? or war profiteering.

WILLIAM: Ya. I think, he really was a pretty sincere senator. I think, he really beleived in Isolationism and maybe he was right. We've made some awful mistakes since, I guess, not being *i*solationists. He was wrong at that time because if there ever was a war that we should of fought, it was World War II. In fact, I think, he was making an antiwar speech at the time the Japs bombed Pearl Harbor.

LARRY: Ya. I'd like to talk about that more with you, but I also want to get back to something that Mrs. Donnolly had told me. That you had just finished school or just back in Grafton and getting established when John was trying to get the REA or the Farm Bureau rolling?

WILLIAM: That was it. REA.

LARRY: And he went to Washington and they said, "Well, get yourself a lawyer to represent your group." And Mrs. Donnolly said that he said, "I know the man." He came back and ~~asked~~ <sup>asked</sup> you to represent them.

WILLIAM: Ya.

LARRY: Can you tell me, Mr. DePuy, about the background of that and the difficulties that you encountered.

WILLIAM: Well....

LARRY: Because Mrs. Donnelly told me that it wasn't as easy as some people think today.

WILLIAM: No, it was kind of a boot strap operation. Let's see. The REA Act was passed in '35 and activated in '36. It must of been in '38 that her husband Percy....

LARRY: I'm sorry. Her husband, Percy, ya, right.

WILLIAM: He was a very <sup>aggressive</sup> ~~aggressive~~ man and very interested, of course, in improving himself and the community that did speak to me. I acted as attorney for the group, but I didn't even know what the act was about. I knew that the REA group and co-ops were going to form. We opened up an office in my office. We didn't have any money and we went out. Actually, the only membership we took was \$5 and we signed up. We were pretty constrained or restricted in our anticipation. We were just going to organize a co-op in Wells County. This is as far as our thoughts went, you know. Really, the difficulty that we had after we got sufficient membership to justify a loan.... We made several trips to Washington and, of course, made applications for a loan. We employed an engineer and had lines designed and so forth. Well, we had to do that actually before we made applications for a loan. We got a loan allowed, but then we had a great deal of trouble getting a source of power. For some reason or other the city of Grafton was somewhat opposed to furnishing power to us. I don't know whether it was political philosophy or what it was; but, anyway, we had an awful time convincing the City Council and the mayor in Grafton that they should furnish this power even though they were going to make a profit at it. We didn't think that they should make a profit at it, but we recognized that they shouldn't give it to us and they shouldn't have to give it to us. That's about all there really was to it.

LARRY: But your effort became tied into the whole statewide?

WILLIAM: Ya. I drew the first bylaws for the first state association actually. Then we expanded. Three co-ops had been formed. In fact, there had been four. This one here in Wells County, one that went out west in Nelson County called ~~Five Star~~ <sup>Five Star</sup>, one at Hillsboro called the

Red River. The Red River Co-op is a merger of the one that been formed by Grand Forks and Hillsboro. They merged those two. We could see that we weren't going to be large enough and we couldn't depend on Grafton for our source of power for very long because our road was growing and their capacity was pretty steep. The energy was not sufficient and the price was too high anyway. So we got together with Five Star and Red River Co-ops. Five Star had lines. They had a portable generator that sat out behind the barn and furnished the electricity ~~continuously~~ for them. They were very small. We got together and consolidated the three, and then became Nodak and I was selected as attorney for Nodak for the consolidated co-ops. Then after that Nodak was very instrumental with some other North Dakota co-ops and some from Minnesota to form Minkota.

~~WILLIAM:~~ LARRY: When would that have been?

WILLIAM: About in 1944. About that time.

LARRY: Did your effort get any assistance or a lot of assistance from Langer?

WILLIAM: Well, he was very supportive of it. When we'd go to Washington, we'd go to see Langer.

LARRY: I mean that a lot of folks give Langer credit for the REA. Blanket credit almost.

WILLIAM: I was down in Bismarck. The first North Dakota <sup>rural</sup> electric was passed under Moses's administration actually, but there was no opposition. I would say that when Langer got to Washington he was very influential in granting of loans, ya. I think that we have never had anything but good support from ~~any one~~ <sup>anybody</sup> that was ~~in~~ <sup>over in</sup> Washington representing us.

LARRY: It was the kind of thing where you couldn't really lose anything by pushing, I would imagine, being it was unanimously popular.

WILLIAM: It's probably been the <sup>best</sup> ~~most~~ farm legislation that this country has ever adopted.

LARRY: When did you come back to Grafton from college?

WILLIAM: I graduated in '26 and I practiced in Minnewauken for about a

LARRY: How did the Barnyard Loans work? ~~Were~~ they federally insured loans through a bank?

WILLIAM: A Barnyard Loan was made by a agency of the Department of Agriculture. They were direct loans made through county committees of some sort. The local financial institutes had nothing to do with it.

LARRY: Do you think that some of the policies ~~that~~ <sup>that</sup> Roosevelt's administration was responsible for would have been better discontinued when better times and the war started? Roosevelt critics tell me that Roosevelt is the one that started out the Handout Program and made welfare ~~an~~ <sup>a major</sup> industry.

WILLIAM: I suppose this is true, but you are never going to get rid of welfare as such. There are many abuses of the Welfare Program, but that's the fault of the administration of it not necessarily of the program. I can remember when welfare was handled by local municipalities and townships and, I'll tell ya, that was pretty bad. In those days I was ~~City~~ <sup>City</sup> ~~Attorney~~ <sup>Attorney</sup> for Grafton, for instance, and I can remember at some council meetings where we'd sit and argue for hours whether ~~some~~ <sup>some</sup> family should get \$10 a month in grocery allowance with 5 kids, you know. It was just--they were peons and treated as peons actually. Of course, economically ~~ally~~ <sup>cally</sup> this had to be. These towns didn't have the proper means or facilities to take care of 'em. ~~Now~~ <sup>Now</sup> as I say, there are many abuses of the program.

LARRY: Do you think that the farmers during the bad years in the 30's were maybe in better shape because they had feed and were in livestock and could butcher ~~meat~~ <sup>pigs</sup> and so forth than the people in towns in some cases. Were the townspeople in worse shape than the farmers?

WILLIAM: No. I think, the townspeople went to work for WPA. I think, we all suffered alike. Now, as I look back on those times, I was married, of course, during the depression and, you know, \$2 on a Saturday night and you had a ~~big~~ <sup>big</sup> night. With \$2 my wife and I would drive to Grand Forks and ~~have~~ <sup>have</sup> to dinner and go to a show.

LARRY: Oh, is that right?

WILLIAM: Sure. We wouldn't come home with any money, but we'd get along

on \$2. Last week I was in New York and three of us went to lunch and we had a ordinary plate at noon. The bill for three of us at lunch was \$51.

LARRY: Ya. Your \$2 wouldn't have taken you there today.

WILLIAM: No. It was on the 107th floor of the World Trades building. It's a tourist trap because people go there to overlook New York is what you really go there for. There's a \$10 cover charge and we had a drink. The drinks are \$3 a piece. They put 20 percent on the bill for a tip. Anyway, it came to \$51. Oh, then about a 4 ounce steak and a salad. You didn't even satisfy your ~~appetite~~<sup>appetite</sup>, you know.

LARRY: What kind of WPA work was done or PWA work was done in the Grafton area? Was it gravelling roads or construction?

WILLIAM: Well, ya, roads and small dams, City Hall was built. That'd be WPA construction. We got some government help on building the courthouse. We built a courthouse here. I think it was \$400,000. It would cost probably 3,000,000 now. Beautiful building. They built these small dams, ~~masonry~~<sup>masonry</sup> dams. They kept busy and they did something and the people that worked on them were not ashamed. They did shovel work, o' course, but they didn't.... They did a fairly honest day's work for a very limited amount of pay, but they did something.

LARRY: Did the money that filtered through the various work projects in Grafton make any discernable difference in the economy do you think?

WILLIAM: Well, I think it had to. It was all spent here. It had to go to the grocery store and hardware and the doctor, not much to the lawyer, but they didn't....

LARRY: Did you notice any deterioration in morale during the 30's? Were people becoming a little <sup>bit</sup> discouraged?

WILLIAM: Yes. They were discouraged but the morale was fairly high. People were sociable. You know, instead of going out and spending \$10 at a bar you went over to a neighbor's house and played Whist. You visited back and forth. I think, there was a great amount of sociability.

LARRY: Do you think that that has changed since the 30's?

WILLIAM: Oh, yes. I think, maybe some of it could be because I've gotten



older. I don't go anyplace except on business now. Well, I shouldn't say that. My wife and I go out to dinner, but we don't ~~visit~~ visit back and forth <sup>even</sup> with our neighbors like we <sup>did</sup> and we didn't have any money. ~~visit back and forth with our neighbors like we did and we didn't have any money.~~

LARRY: Was there a tighter feeling of community in those days?

WILLIAM: Yes, I think so. Course, even in the small towns everybody is under pressure now to maintain a status or to get rich. I don't know what it is, but you just don't seem to have the time. You aren't as close to your children now as, I think, like when my children were growing up.

LARRY: That's something I wanted to ask you about. When you were a boy at home with your folks and your sisters, what would you do? Did your family enjoy reading? Would you play checkers with your dad? Did your mother play piano or....

WILLIAM: Well, I spent a lot o' time down at my grandparents at Minto. There we played checkers. I spent all summers there when I was real young and I'd go down like Christmas vacations and weekends and stuff like that. That family was great to play checkers or play cards. You know, just a social game of cards. At home we read. The whole family were readers. ~~My father worked maybe 'til 10:00 at night and he'd come home and he'd read 'til 2 or 3:00 in the morning. The result was that he couldn't complain that we read, you know. So everybody in the family read.~~

LARRY: That's changed, too, I think.

WILLIAM: Ya. Except I have a boy in the Air Force and he reads a lot.

LARRY: Oh, I read 'til 3 or 4 in the morning, too, but I don't think that there are too many other people that are that interested or are reading that much.

WILLIAM: No. Course, television is sort of....

LARRY: Ya. Did radio have as dramatic effect on....

WILLIAM: Oh, yes. You had the earphones, of course, to hear. We had a radio with a speaker on it and our basement was full of batteries and battery chargers and everything else. Yes, we listened to the radio and, I think, that did interfere with the reading habits.

LARRY: But you could listen to the radio and....

WILLIAM: read too.

LARRY: Ya, right, or your mother could iron or....

WILLIAM: Ya. It didn't take your whole attention like television does.

LARRY: Could you notice anything in the 20's that made you think that maybe the economy was headed for some trouble before the depression, the banks went under, and the Wall Street took a dive?

WILLIAM: Well, maybe I had sort of an intuition that things weren't going right because it was.... I went to work when I was in the eighth grade on a farm and I worked on that same farm all the ~~time~~ <sup>time</sup> I was in high school then. Sometimes the farmer would only want me for a month and then after school was out and then come back for threshing or something like that. Course, then I had to look for another job like with the contracting. It got harder and harder to get a job as we got into the 20's. Then of course, when I was going to college, why, you'd start looking for a job in April. If you got a job out doing some construction work in the summer, you were pretty lucky actually because not everybody got a job.

LARRY: Were the 20's roaring in North Dakota?

WILLIAM: I don't really think so. I can only speak for myself now. Now, I know that kids that go to college now, for instance, it is nothing for them to go down to the saloon two or three nights a week, but we had.... When I went to school, we would go out and have some drinks the night examinations were over and that'd be it. You'd have a celebration.

LARRY: And the rest of the time it was tow the mark and get your work done?

WILLIAM: Ya, you never even thought of having a drink. I lived a couple o' years in the fraternity house and then I lived downtown because I worked downtown and nobody ever thought of bringing liquor into the fraternity house--no, sir. You just couldn't do it.

LARRY: Now, this was at UND?

WILLIAM: Ya.

LARRY: What time were you there?

WILLIAM: I finished high school in '21 and I finished college in '26.

LARRY: Was east Grand Forks still the place to go if you wanted to....

WILLIAM: If you wanted to drink, ya. Sure. But, you know, you just didn't, you know. I think, part of it was economic and part of it was it just didn't occur to you.

LARRY: Did you play in athletics? Were you athletic at UND?

WILLIAM: Ya. Nothing except intramaurals and things like that.

LARRY: When did independent baseball kind o' fade out in North Dakota? I hear so many stories about the emotional fervor behind the local independent team and how well....

WILLIAM: Well, I can tell you when it faded out here. And that's in the early 30's. The reason it faded out here was that we developed a heck of a good softball team. We killed baseball for many years. We developed a softball team, you know, where we won the state championship for three years and we went to national  ~~tournaments~~ <sup>tournaments</sup> and we used to go to Winnipeg to play and Crookston and Grand Forks. Baseball  ~~just couldn't~~ <sup>just couldn't</sup> survive that; but, I think, that it was about that time--well, no, baseball. Well, ya,  ~~fairly active~~ <sup>fairly active</sup> baseball teams here <sup>were</sup> 'til about the  ~~World War II~~ <sup>World War II</sup> in this area. These teams would have--we didn't. As I say, we killed baseball with softball actually. But they could come to a softball game and pay nothing, you know. Sometimes they'd take up a collection or something. We were sponsored. They didn't have a good baseball team unless you hired a pitcher and maybe a catcher. When I was a kid, they used to have usually four hired players on the city team. Probably about 1920 one of the players that was here was Happy Chandler. Probably came around '18, '19 or '20. He became  ~~Senator~~ <sup>Senator</sup> and  ~~Governor~~ <sup>Governor</sup> of Kentucky and  ~~Baseball~~ <sup>Baseball</sup>  ~~Commissioner~~ <sup>Commissioner</sup>. He played here. In fact, he used to  ~~court~~ <sup>court</sup> my sister around some.

~~LARRY:~~ LARRY: Is that right?

WILLIAM: Ya. He was going to college at the University of Kentucky.

LARRY: He was here in '21?

WILLIAM: He was here in '21, '19, and '20, I think.

LARRY: Oh, is that right? Three years?

WILLIAM: Ya, I'm sure he was here three years.

LARRY: Was he a good ball player?

WILLIAM: Just a fair ball player. He was good enough to be a hired ball player. He wasn't good enough to be in a league, you know, but he ~~was~~ <sup>and another</sup> ~~man~~ <sup>man named</sup> Taylor ~~was~~ came up with a man who had been coach at the university. Andy Gil, I think, his name was. He'd gone to the University of Kentucky and he was the coach at the <sup>u</sup> University and these fellas played ball down there for him. He brought them up here and he played ball here too.

LARRY: Oh, that 's how it worked. The reason I ask is because <sup>I interviewed</sup> ~~the~~ fella that used to coach the Fordville baseball team.... Bill Willer?

WILLIAM: Willer, y

LARRY: Willer, ya.

WILLIAM: Ya, he's a very active guy.

LARRY: Ya. He's a great guy. I really liked him. \*Cause Fordville <sup>believe</sup> used to have a pretty active baseball team and I can ~~believe~~ that he was a pretty good coach and I asked him if he ever saw Hap Chandler play? And he said, "Ya." And I said, "Was he a good baseball player?" And he said, "Shucks, he wasn't that good. We had guys as good as he was."

WILLIAM: Ya, he was a great talker, you know, at a baseball club. He was a average ball player, I would say. He was probably good enough to be hired but....

LARRY: He didn't later become Commissioner of Baseball because he had been an exceptionally <sup>great</sup> ~~player~~ baseball player?

WILLIAM: No, no. He became Commissioner of Baseball because he'd been a good politician.

LARRY: Ya.

WILLIAM: He could project himself and that.  
What do you think of the way agriculture

LARRY: ~~is changing in North~~ is changing in North

Dakota with farms becoming larger and larger and with it going into almost township sized farms?

WILLIAM: Ya. High mechanism. Well, I don't think it's good for the general economy, but it's good for those that survive in farming. We have any number of fellas around here that millionaires.

LARRY: Oh, sure.

WILLIAM: But, you know, it means we're going to be a state of limited population and, I guess, you can't prevent the larger towns from getting a little larger and the smaller towns from just drying up. That's it.

LARRY: Do you think that it will just naturally proceed in this manner until economic or weather conditions bring it down the way it happened in the past or will legislation have to be passed to insure that we don't have a feudal system or land barons?

WILLIAM: I don't think legislation will cure it. I mean, you can't take property away from people. You know, you might have a escalating tax or something like that that might be *confiscatory* above a certain limit, but it seems to be accepted. It seems to be accepted the way it's going. At least around here I don't see any effort in reforming it or being critical of a young fella that's accumulating a lot o' land. It seems to be accepted.

LARRY: Another thing that seems to be facing North Dakota in the future is the control of ~~resource~~ development or the living with resource development. In the western part of the state, I would say, 80 percent of the older folks that I talked to don't like that. Do you think that they had a reason to be concerned or do you think they're over<sup>o</sup>reacting?

WILLIAM: I think, they're over<sup>o</sup>reacting myself and maybe this is because I feel that the production of energy, for instance, that's ~~usable~~ *usable* here and in Minnesota.... If we get a resource that could be turned into energy and that's useable and ~~necessary~~ *necessary* and if ~~it~~ <sup>they're</sup> paid, I certainly beleive that we have any right to take what is a valuable resource to them and what should be a valuable resource and, I think, they should be compensated very adequately. And also, there should be some reclamation

requirements. I have quite a lot of faith that they can restore that land to as good o' condition as it was before the mining. You know, if we're talking about.... I think, that's what we're talking about is coal development.

LARRY: Ya.

WILLIAM: I can see where if I owned a ranch, ~~that I'd say, "Well, I'd like to keep it the way it is."~~ that I'd say, "Well, I'd like to keep it the way it is." But also if I had something would keep people alive in Minneapolis, I think, maybe I'd think that was some obligation too.

LARRY: You're a professional man now. When you travel, for instance, when you were in New York, how do you feel, Mr. DePuy, when somebody asks you.... You know, you're introduced to someone and they say, "Where are you from?" And you say, "North Dakota?"

WILLIAM: I'm not ashamed of it. I've been East four times in the last two months to Boston and Maine three times. I wouldn't live in New York if they gave me the town.

LARRY: What kind of reaction do you generally get among professional people? Do they chuckle?

WILLIAM: No. You mean among the lawyers, for instance?

LARRY: Ya.

WILLIAM: In New York?

LARRY: Ya.

WILLIAM: They accept you. I think that maybe the average lawyer in North Dakota has a better general knowledge of the law than they do because they're all specialists. The last time I was there about a week or ago I did business with a law firm, a very good law firm. They do nothing but bankruptcy work. They wouldn't know how to try a divorce case if you paid them a \$1,000,000 for it. They wouldn't even touch it. The firm doesn't do anything but bankruptcy, but they're good in their field.

LARRY: I would think that would be, if anything, a boring type of.... I mean the repetition of those kind of cases. Do you think that North

Dakota has been overlooked perhaps in terms of the recognition that it may or may not deserve as being a food producer and contributing.

WILLIAM: Yes. I think, the rest of the country doesn't realize the importance of what we're producing, furnishing both physically and economically. Well, you know, you say you're from North Dakota. "Boy, it's cold up there," is the first reaction for some reason or another.

LARRY: I spent three years in the army and I got so many bad reactions to my telling people where I was from that I almost became intimidated by someone asking me where I was from. Many times if you're watching a talk show and if they want to convey the arch of a boondock state, it's North Dakota.

WILLIAM: Ya, that's right. Johnny Carson and Fargo, North Dakota.

LARRY: Ya, ~~that's~~ right.

WILLIAM: Well, many years ago I was listening to a George Gobel show and he mentioned that he'd spent a night at the Hoople Hilton at Hoople, North Dakota.

LARRY: Ya.

THE END

organizer. He surrounded himself with good people, people that were smart and dedicated <sup>to him</sup> and dedicated to the country. [ I don't know if this is interesting particularly; but in ~~the~~ John Moses's term as governor was

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ 1944  
 expiring and he <sup>ran</sup> ~~was~~ for the United States Senate. In September of that year he called me down to the governor's cottage at Spiritwood Lake. I was a very <sup>close</sup> friend of ~~John~~ Moses. He called me and a fellow by the name of <sup>Dave Kelly</sup> ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~, who was Democratic National Committeeman at the time.

We said we'd come down. He didn't say <sup>why</sup> ~~you know~~. He just called and said, "Meet me <sup>tomorrow</sup> at the cottage." He said, "Get a hold of Dave and bring him along." We went down and we had lunch. We went out on the porch and he says, "I was to the doctor a couple days ago and ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ I've got a cancer. I want to know what you fellows think. Should I be a candidate or should I just say that I've given up the idea of running?" He'd already been nominated. In those days the primary was in the spring. Course, what do you say? You can't say, "Well, look, John, you're a ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ <sup>zoner</sup>." Well, he said, "I've got t' go to the hospital and have a operation. Don't know that I'll be able to campaign." So we volunteered to sort of run the campaign. In connection with that I learned later on, <sup>it'd be</sup>

<sup>in October</sup> that there was some <sup>money</sup> ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ in Washington that I could get for Moses's campaign. So I went down to Washington and I had an appointment with a senator by the name of O'Maine from Wyoming. He was head of the Democratic Senate Election Committee. I was to meet him at the office of the Secretary of the Senate so I went over there about noon. <sup>The secretary was</sup> ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ a fellow by the name of <sup>Haley?</sup> ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ and he knew that I was to be there and what I was coming for. He <sup>said they're in</sup> ~~was sitting there~~ and writing a speech for Roosevelt.

He says, "If you want t' go in, <sup>why</sup> I'll take you in and introduce you to <sup>[O'Maine]</sup> him?" I says, "Sure." So I went in ~~there~~ and there was about 20 senators in this <sup>luncheon room</sup> ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~. They were having lunch so he introduced me around and invited me to sit down. I did. They were writing a speech for Roosevelt <sup>that</sup> he was going to <sup>make</sup> ~~be~~ in Syracuse, New York the following week. ~~It~~ It was a speech on "Farm Programs". <sup>S</sup> So they welcomed me since I was from a farm state and they wanted ideas and so forth. They had a fella



there that could mimic Roosevelt. They'd write a phrase or a sentence or a paragraph and then this fella would give it just as Roosevelt would give it. It was the darnedest exhibition you ever saw. Well, it was really writing a speech with a--Judge Rosenbalm<sup>? 929 I think</sup> was his name. He was a Jewish man anyway and a very fine speech writer. But this fella would give this speech in parts and ~~they'd~~<sup>they'd</sup> say, "He wouldn't say that. He'd say something else." They built that speech for Roosevelt and I listened to ~~the~~<sup>the</sup> speech later on radio. It was just exactly the way they put it together. It was about two hours, I suppose, and when ~~we went out~~<sup>going</sup>, we went ~~through~~ through a hallway to the secretary's office. This ~~man~~<sup>O'Maymie</sup> took me by the arm and kind o' held me back and all the rest passed through. He took an envelope out of his pocket and he said, "I beleive in doing business in a hurry." He gave me the envelope and I put it in ~~my~~ my inside pocket and he went out. I was talkin' to ~~the~~<sup>the</sup> secretary and in comes Harry Truman. He was the candidate for vice-president that year. We spent about three hours together just talking.

~~EMERY:~~ Is that right?

WILLIAM: He was going to catch a train that night to St. Louis, ~~country~~<sup>country</sup>. It was a rainy afternoon. He had a raincoat on such as the fireman wear, a rubber raincoat. <sup>(laughs)</sup> He was just as ~~common~~<sup>common</sup> as ~~could~~<sup>could</sup> be. We had a good talk. Then the Secretary of the Senate said, "There's probably some money in New York ~~someplace~~<sup>at a certain place.</sup>. If you go there, maybe you can get some money." Well, I'd checked into a hotel so I went over and checked out. I got a train to New York about 9:00. ~~When I~~<sup>When I</sup> got into New York ~~at~~<sup>it was</sup> mid-night. I went in on the New York Central and that didn't go into New York at the time. You took a ferry across from New Jersey. Course, it ~~was~~<sup>was</sup> about 2:00 in the morning. When I'd got ~~off~~<sup>when I got off the ferry.</sup> ~~of the~~<sup>to the hotel</sup> ~~General~~ I'd opened that envelope and there was \$10,000 in cash. I got off from the lower ~~end~~<sup>east side</sup> of New York and it was about 2:00 in the morning. No taxi, no hotel room, and not too well acquainted with the city. I had to get uptown. ~~And~~<sup>(laughs)</sup> how to get there? I was sure scared. I finally got up to ~~the Democratic Headquarters in a hotel~~<sup>the Democratic Headquarters in a hotel</sup> near Grand Central Station. I got a taxi and ~~got~~<sup>got</sup> up

there to the Democratic Headquarters and by that time it was maybe 4:00 in the morning. There was two secretaries, ladies, working. I told 'em my plight <sup>I had</sup> ~~no~~ room. Well, they would call Mr. <sup>Paullly</sup> ~~Paullly~~. They didn't know where I could get a room. This was during the war, you know, and hotel rooms were at a premium. <sup>So</sup> they'd call Mr. <sup>Paullly</sup> ~~Paullly~~ and maybe he could get me a room. So I don't know where he was, but they called him and he called back then in 15 minutes or so. He said, "Have him go over to the St. Regis. If they call him governor, why, don't have him disclaim it because in order to get him a room I had to say he was the <sup>g</sup>overnor of North Dakota." [laughs]

LARRY: Were you able to get some money from New York then?

WILLIAM: No. I went to a place called Sons of American Liberty. It was on 57th Street. A very interesting place. They had a <sup>7,994</sup> ~~dossier~~ <sup>dossier</sup>, I guess you'd call it, on every member of Congress, every representative and every senator all in file cabinets in a very large room. They wrote speeches. They were writing speeches for candidates that they were supporting for <sup>congressional jobs.</sup> ~~it~~ It was a Jewish organization really. Very fine people. One of them was Mrs. <sup>Drew Pearson</sup> ~~Paerson~~. And I tried to persuade them that Moses had a chance to be elected. They had--Lynn Standbo was running as an Independent. Lynn Standbo was a former commander of the <sup>National</sup> ~~American~~ <sup>American</sup> Legion and, you know, quite common, <sup>a</sup> very patriotic American and would be better known to them than Moses was. Course, ~~I don't think~~ North Dakota <sup>I don't think</sup> ~~had~~ <sup>ever</sup> elected a Democratic senator and they just couldn't conceive that he could be elected. so they were supporting Standbo. They told me that. I think, I convinced them that Moses <sup>had</sup> a chance to be elected, but they already <sup>id</sup> ~~put~~ <sup>Put</sup> their money on Standbo and they were writing his speeches. They'd taken a survey. They'd had a survey made by one of the professional <sup>survey</sup> ~~organizations~~. They'd sampled in Fargo, Bismarck, Dickinson, Williston, Minot, and Grand Forks. These were all towns that had big region organizations and almost all of Standbo's entire vote was in these larger centers. They just didn't analyze that survey as against the vote that he'd gotten in the primary. Of course, he ran

against Gerald Nye on the Republican side and Nye won the nomination. many of the  
 Moses was unopposed on the Democratic side and ~~you know, I remember~~  
 either for Nye or  
 Democrats went over and voted for Standbo, you know, and still were  
 goin' to support Moses in the fall. They thought, well, that we had a  
 case, but they'd already committed themselves so I didn't get any money  
 from them. But I got a ~~nice~~ nice letter after Moses was elected. They  
 wrote and said that I was right. They weren't necessarily wrong. They  
 were happy to see Moses elected, ~~and I was~~. They were actually <sup>anti-Nye</sup> ~~anti-Nye~~.

LARRY: Were the speeches that they wrote unsolicited and were they used  
 by candidates.

WILLIAM: I'm sure Standbo used these speeches. They were Fourth of July  
 type of speeches, very patriotic. Of course, for a fella like Standbo....  
 If you were in the war.... He had a war record. <sup>Incidentally</sup> ~~remember~~ we had  
 Sam Ervin here.

LARRY: Yes, that's what I saw on your marquis ~~out~~ out here. ~~remember~~

WILLIAM: Last week. He was a very interesting character.

LARRY: I interviewed Ervin Schumacher up at Drayton and he had been down  
 to see Ervin. I don't want to intrude on a good memory of your conversation  
 with President Truman, but is the image that Truman has given as kind of  
 a brusque totally up front person and said what was on his mind the way  
 you  
~~per~~ perceived him to be when you....

SIDE II

WILLIAM: Well, he was the kind of fella you'd enjoy sitting and having  
 a glass o' beer with and talking sports and politics and things in general.

LARRY: You'd have been interested in sports, too, from having partici-  
 pated.

WILLIAM: Sure. When I went to the university, I really thought that I  
 was going to the army 'cause I had a commission, but I had another year  
 of law school and I just didn't take it. I was interested in things  
 military though. Of course, he'd been in World War I and he was quite  
 soldierly and very much in favor of Veteran's assistance.

LARRY: Were you reassured then, Mr. DePuy, when Roosevelt died that

*good*

there was a man behind him?

WILLIAM: Yes, I was very happy with Truman.

LARRY: I was old enough to vaguely remember his presidency--probably better than vaguely--but, did he have a good sense of humor? I always have the feeling that Truman could laugh a lot?

WILLIAM: Yes. As I remember him, yes. He enjoyed life. He was a common man and, I don't think, he was above <sup>playing</sup> politics, you know. He was a member of the ~~Democratic~~ <sup>Pendergast</sup> organization in Kansas City, which is kind of a ~~Democratic~~ <sup>Tammany</sup> Hall thing, you know.

LARRY: Ya, questionable outfit.

WILLIAM: Ya. But, I think, <sup>personally</sup> ~~politically~~ he was honest.

LARRY: And kind of rose to the occasion?

WILLIAM: He was a good man for his time.

LARRY: Like Roosevelt had been?

WILLIAM: Ya, right.

LARRY: Let me preface this a little bit by saying I interviewed Math Dahl about a year and a half ago or maybe more than that in Bismarck and about three weeks ago I interviewed ~~John~~ <sup>Rilie</sup> Morgan here in Grafton and both of them told me that they thought the most outstanding governor that they had known was Norman Brunsdale but second was John Moses. They both spoke very highly of John Moses. How <sup>had</sup> ~~did~~ you come to know <sup>John Moses</sup> ~~him~~ and tell me about your recollections of him.

WILLIAM: Well, I would say that he and Norman Brunsdale were both excellent governors, but I would say that John Moses was the greatest governor that North Dakota ever had. Now, he was quite a little older than I was. He went to the University of North Dakota. He came from Norway as a young man. An adult actually. He went to the University of North Dakota and ~~was~~ graduated from law school. ~~and~~ <sup>sp.</sup> He was a member of a fraternity that I later joined. He would come back occasionally and visit at this fraternity house, ~~and~~ I got to know him then and we became friends. Rather close friends for the difference in our ages. Well, he became active in politics. He lived in Hazen in Mercer County and he was ~~States~~ <sup>States</sup> Attorney

out there. When he became <sup>a</sup> candidate the first time, I wrote to him and said if there was anything that I could do, why, I'd be glad to help.

*We* just kind o' renewed <sup>our</sup> friendship. ~~when~~ <sup>he</sup> was defeated the first time ~~he~~ ran.

He ran in '42 <sup>lets see,</sup> '38--so the first time he was elected was in '38. I was nominated for Attorney General so we campaigned together. I went out in the spring with him and we had no opposition in the spring. We campaigned together, ~~and~~ <sup>we</sup> were out for about six weeks and we just naturally

became very good friends. Moses had very poor eyesight. He couldn't drive an automobile. I was really the chauffeur. <sup>[laughs]</sup> We took some awful drives, I'll tell ya! Then in the fall we campaigned together. Well,

then he was elected and I was defeated. He wanted me down in Bismarck so he appointed me **State Tax Commissioner**. I would have never accepted the job as a permanent job because I'd been around Bismarck long enough to know that people <sup>who</sup> ~~had~~ had been fairly prominent in <sup>Politics</sup> ~~Bismarck~~ and then lost a job or something went around looking for doughnut and coffee money.

It just wasn't for me as far as I was concerned, but I agreed to act as **State Tax Commissioner** ~~State Tax Commissioner~~. My job really was to draw up bills for the legisla-

ture. They weren't organized as they are now. They didn't have <sup>interim</sup> ~~interim~~ committees or anything of that sort. There <sup>was</sup> ~~is~~ a fellow by the name of

John Grey, <sup>who</sup> <sup>was</sup> to become tax commissioner and Moses wanted somebody that he would have no difficulty in getting rid of when the time come. <sup>So</sup> the <sup>day</sup> <sup>he</sup> appointed me

I put in a resignation for the time <sup>that</sup> ~~when~~ Grey was to become tax commissioner. <sup>It</sup> <sup>just</sup> ~~was~~ was an understanding. ~~that~~ I wouldn't have

stayed <sup>on</sup> any longer anyway. From that time on I was in Bismarck every week ~~and~~ when the legislature would be in session. <sup>Every</sup> year that Moses was governor, I would go down and draw up bills for the legislature.

Well, then Henry Holt was elected <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> Lieutenant <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> Governor in 1942. He was a Democrat, too, and Henry died in '44, I think it was, and Moses was

a candidate for the <sup>Senate</sup> ~~Senate~~ then. This was before he knew that he had cancer. He appointed me <sup>Lieutenant</sup> ~~Lieutenant~~ Governor, which nobody ever knew. <sup>But</sup> ~~he~~

<sup>he</sup> issued the commission and I took the commission and put it away. ~~he~~ <sup>he</sup>

<sup>never</sup> announced it because if something would happen to him, this is what he

was worried about ~~he~~ <sup>he</sup> wanted me to take his place. He didn't die and his term was up then. ~~and~~ He was elected to the Senate. Well of course, he died in March. He ~~was elected to the Senate and~~ took office in <sup>the Senate</sup> in January and died in March. The day before he died he called me up to say, "Good-bye."

LARRY: ~~Is that right?~~

WILLIAM: Just like, you know, "I'll see you next week."

LARRY: ~~He knew that it was....~~

WILLIAM: ~~Oh, ya.~~ He knew that he was going to die and going to die very shortly. I think, it was harder on me than it was on him.

LARRY: He must o' been quite a man?

WILLIAM: Oh, terrific man. Very intelligent man but enjoyed life. We used to play bridge a lot. <sup>We'd</sup> sit up all night ~~and~~ <sup>ing</sup> played bridge and <sup>he'd</sup> drink a <sup>fifth of</sup> ~~Scotch,~~ <sup>and</sup> Never get drunk. Of course, he was 6'6". Huge man.

LARRY: What was it about him that made it possible for a Democrat <sup>a</sup> in the state that had really had no Democratic organization....

WILLIAM: Well, the Langer organization had become so corrupt actually <sup>of course</sup> and Langer had been convicted, <sup>and</sup> then the conviction reversed, <sup>and</sup> the second trial, <sup>and</sup> the hung jury, <sup>and</sup> then a third trial and acquittal. <sup>and so forth.</sup> It was a realization, although Langer had been acquitted eventually, that there had been a lot of hanky panky going on. The League was falling apart to some extent, times had improved economically, and Moses had the support of fellas like <sup>Rilie</sup> ~~Morgan~~ Morgan, for instance. The League was filing in the Republican primaries and the regular Republicans or what they called the ROC, Republican Organizing Committee, would file also <sup>of course,</sup> in the Republican primary. Well, the League would defeat them and then the ROC would turn around and support Moses because he was a conservative Democrat. His political philosophy was closer to the Republican Organizing Committee's <sup>philosophy</sup> than it was to the <sup>Republican</sup> ~~League~~ League. I suppose, he was in a sense the lesser of two evils. <sup>Although</sup> they didn't support him because he was the lesser of two evils. <sup>They</sup> supported him because he was just a good governor.

He got along <sup>well</sup> ~~with~~ with the legislature. He didn't only appoint Democrats to office. He took <sup>cognizance of</sup> ~~accountance~~ the fact that he had Republican support. He was just a great man. That's all.

LARRY: Was he a good speaker too?

WILLIAM: <sup>Yeah</sup> ~~Yes~~, he could project himself. I wouldn't say that he was a great orator, but he was a well educated man. He was a scholar and he could express himself, but he wasn't flowery or anything of that sort.

LARRY: A fella told me one time that North Dakotans tend to elect non-political types. I can't remember who told me this, but one of the reasons he said that Lemke and Usher Burdick and some of those fellows were attractive to North Dakota voters was because they weren't well dressed, they weren't polished speakers, and they looked like farmers.

WILLIAM: Well, there's something to that. Well, there's 600,000 people in North Dakota and that's all. Someday you'll know every politician in the state and they'll all know you. In other words, I've always been a Democrat, but I don't think I've ever voted a straight Democratic ticket in my life. Even when I was a candidate, I'm sure a lot of Democrats didn't vote for me.

LARRY: Is that representative of North Dakota voters?

WILLIAM: Ya. I think so.

LARRY: Pretty independent?

WILLIAM: I think, they vote pretty much for the individual.

LARRY: Mr. DePuy, anything that you can tell me about political campaigning at that time would be more than <sup>we've</sup> ~~we've~~ got. Can you tell me

what it was like to <sup>campaign</sup> ~~travel~~ on the road for six weeks <sup>at that time</sup>

WILLIAM: <sup>Laughs</sup> This Dave Kelly that I've mentioned before, who was Democratic National Committeeman, consented to be candidate for lieutenant <sup>g</sup>overnor with Moses and the three of us travelled together. When we'd get into a town--we'd have a set routine--Kelly would start off with <sup>his</sup> ~~this~~ little speech, <sup>and</sup> then I'd talk, and then Moses would talk. You know, same thing every night whether we were in New Rockford or Dickinson or Bismarck or wherever we were. Sometimes we had as many as ten stops a day.

in Columbus, for instance, for such and such a day at 10:00 and then ~~we~~  
~~take~~ <sup>would be 2:00</sup> maybe the next meeting at Mohall. You'd have a string of towns  
that you'd make trying to wind up in the largest city in the evening.

LARRY: Would you draw pretty well?

WILLIAM: No.

LARRY: Because you were Democrat<sup>s</sup>?

WILLIAM: ~~So~~ <sup>Yeah.</sup> We'd had very little advertising, ~~though~~. Maybe the local  
paper would have John Moses is going to be here at such and such a time.  
~~and we'd have a few Democrats that'd come out.~~ <sup>The local democrats would come out.</sup> You wouldn't really  
have very many people, but you'd get a little newspaper publicity in  
the local paper. At that time there were many more ~~local~~ <sup>weekly</sup> papers than  
there are now. You'd give the paper your itinerary. The people that  
would come out were largely people that were <sup>either</sup> loyal Democrats, or members  
of the county committee, or people that were lookin' for a job. stop

LARRY: How did Moses campaign then after he got ~~the ...~~

WILLIAM: He didn't campaign.

LARRY: Oh, he didn't?

WILLIAM: No.

LARRY: Oh, that's right. You told me.

WILLIAM: No, he didn't campaign. To my recollection he never made a  
single appearance from the day that he told us he had cancer 'til the  
election.

LARRY: Was his popularity such that he didn't have to or was it vote  
against Nye?

WILLIAM: It was a vote against Nye really and it was a vote for him.  
Of course, Nye and Standbo split the Republican vote pretty much, you see.  
Course, Nye was an <sup>i</sup>solationist. This was during the war and Isolationism  
had become very unpopular so it was pretty destined that he be defeated.

LARRY: Then when Moses died, Nye....

WILLIAM: No. When Moses died, that's when Young was elected.

LARRY: Milt Young, ya, that's right. Nye was elected in?...

WILLIAM: Well, he was first elected in '24 or there abouts.



year.

LARRY: That's right, ya. Did you come back here then when your dad retired?

WILLIAM: He and I went into partnership with another. We had a three man partnership. When I got through college, he never said a word to me about comin' to work with him. He never said a word to me. I went to work for a states attorney out at Minnewauken, \$80 a month, and I lived in a hotel for \$10 a month, and got board for \$30 a month. It cost me \$40 a month that way. I went out in the summertime. I wasn't a very good ball player, but they didn't have very many good ball players in Minnewauken either. I used to get \$5 a game for playin' ball.

LARRY: Is that right?

WILLIAM: Ya. Didn't make very much money but....

LARRY: Another thing I've been wondering about. This has been an educational project for me because I've found<sup>out</sup> a lot of things about North Dakota that I had no idea about.

WILLIAM: Where was your home?

LARRY: I was born at Chaffee and then raised at Enderlin. <sup>My</sup> dad was renting a farm at Chaffee and then he was....

WILLIAM: Well, then you know the Bangerts??

LARRY: Ya. Well, dad knew them real well. Charlie Bangert?

WILLIAM: Charlie, ya.

LARRY: Was a good friend of my dad, ya.

WILLIAM: During the war I worked with Harold.

LARRY: Oh? I just knew him enough to say hi; but dad knew him and thought a lot of him, too, knew him well. And I was always under the naive impression that the depression across North Dakota in the 30's was pretty much the same all over, <sup>Start</sup> but I <sup>have</sup> found ~~out~~ through interviewing all over North Dakota that there were ~~places~~ <sup>in</sup> <sup>omit</sup> ~~North Dakota~~ <sup>North Dakota</sup> where they didn't have a crop for three years or four years?

WILLIAM: ~~Ya.~~ Yeah.

LARRY: And yet, in interviewing <sup>Walsh</sup> ~~up~~ in <sup>Walsh</sup> ~~Walsh~~ County, and <sup>up in Pembina</sup> ~~Walsh~~

and Cavalier Counties, particularly below the plateau, people tell me that they never had a crop failure.

WILLIAM: No. We had poor crops in this area, but we had 20, 25 bushels to the acre. I was out in the summer of '36, very very hot summer, in Rhame, North Dakota with John Moses and he wanted to see somebody. The hotel in Rhame was close to the railroad tracks and there was a balcony on the second floor sort of over the porch. While he was going to see who he was going to see I went up the stairs over at the hotel and got out on his balcony. It was a good place to sit. It was shady and not as hot as it was down on the street anyway. There was an elderly gentleman sitting up there. There was a freight train pulling out of the depot and this man started to cry. He must o' been a man 80 years old, you know. I didn't know why. I was curious and sympathetic. I asked him what the trouble was. He told me how many years he'd been a rancher out there and he said, "The last of my cattle are being shipped out. I sold 'em to the government for \$20 a piece." He was destitute.

LARRY: Did the people in the eastern ~~part~~<sup>tenth</sup> or whatever would comprise the Red River Valley aware of how lucky they were in comparison.

WILLIAM: Oh, ya, I think so. We knew that the western part of the state was suffering terrible. You didn't have to go so very far actually to....

LARRY: Even <sup>western</sup> Walsh County, I guess, was quite a bit different than the....

WILLIAM: Ya. That's right. For some reason or other they didn't get as much rain as we did and soil was light. They just didn't raise crops.

LARRY: What national policies and programs initiated by Roosevelt's New Deal administration do you think were particularly beneficial to farmers and across the board?

WILLIAM: Well of course, I think, the Farm Support Program at the time was beneficial at that time. I'm not necessarily a supporter of it now because, I think, the economy is different now than it was ~~now~~<sup>then</sup>. And the loan programs that they had and Soil Bank. At that time there were little sources of income that the farmers could have and, I think, they kept a lot of farmers going 'til the time ~~the~~<sup>farming became</sup> prosperous industry again.

LARRY: ~~Is that right?~~

WILLIAM: You'd have a series of towns along the railroad. ~~We didn't go along the road.~~ Well, you'd travel by car from maybe Robinson to Turtle Lake and so forth. So one night we had our order and I got up. Moses would always sit in the front <sup>row</sup> ~~where~~ where no one could see him and he could sleep <sup>-[laughs]-</sup> while Kelly and I were talkin'. Well, I got up and I gave his speech, see, and he was sitting there. He woke up just in time to realize what I was doin'! <sup>He was nonplussed</sup> ~~He had been asleep.~~ He didn't know what to say! <sup>[laughs]</sup> Everything that he was supposed to say had been said. <sup>A</sup> It got awfully tiresome. Late hours. Well, we'd be in maybe Jamestown or Valley City having a meeting and drive into Fargo for a radio engagement for 15 or 20 minutes and then drive back to Jamestown. In those <sup>days</sup> ~~the~~ the roads weren't what they are now and the cars weren't what they are now; but, anyway, we ended up <sup>the</sup> with our campaign in Milnor, North Dakota, south of someplace. Fargo, ~~someplace~~ Kelly was making a speech and he would always say, "My name is Dave Kelly and I am candidate for lieutenant governor for the state of North Dakota and I'm running to support ~~the~~ John Moses. I've got a wife and four children and my home is in Grand Forks." He started out and he said, "I've got a wife and four children. I wouldn't give a million dollars for any one of them and I wouldn't give ten cents to have another one either." <sup>[laughs]</sup> ~~that's~~

LARRY: Would you hit some pretty seedy hotels once in awhile?

WILLIAM: Oh, ya. Just whatever was in the town. <sup>omit</sup>

LARRY: How would you set up your tour so that you would hit ~~the~~ Tuttle, Wing, and Robinson down a road?

WILLIAM: Well, it was all done in advance, o' course, you know, at the start of the campaign. This was in the primaries and we had no opposition, you see, actually. It was just a matter of getting acquainted. <sup>We</sup> would write to the county committees in each <sup>county</sup> ~~the~~ the week before we were going to be someplace. We'd decide, well, <sup>well</sup> ~~like~~ ~~we'd~~ campaign in the north-western corner of the state for next week or a week from now and we'd write to the county committee and ask them to set up a meeting in the Town Hall

the main stream of politics and anything that he thought might bring him publicity and so forth he seized upon it as an instrument. Ya. He wasn't strange. He was so terribly <sup>anxious</sup> ~~anxious~~ to become prominent again. And at one time, of course, Townley was quite a wealthy man accepting on the \$15 that these farmers had paid because you get a 100,000 people payin' \$15 a piece is a lot o' money. There was a Ford dealer at a little town of south and Conway which is ~~west~~ west of here. He sold 500 Ford automobiles to the Nonpartisan League in one year.

LARRY: Is that right?

WILLIAM: 500 cars.

LARRY: They had that many people out organizing, huh? Why do you suppose Townley never sought a political office himself?

WILLIAM: I don't know why. I really don't know why he didn't. I think, he was just more of an organizer and holding political office would have been restrictive on him.

LARRY: Do you think though that he was the power behind Lemke and Frazier and that he was in there manipulating and pulling strings.

WILLIAM: I don't think that he.... I think, ~~he~~ he made the Nonpartisan League and the Nonpartisan League made them, but I don't think that he would directly have said that Lynn Frazier you be governor or you be senator. I think that he would have sat in with others in the League and said that Lynn Frazier is a good man and so forth. I don't think that he was a dictator of who was what. He used Frazier, of course, because he was an affiliation of Frazier. <sup>He</sup> ~~he~~ had a debt of obligation to him because the League was the instrument that put him in office; but, I don't ~~think~~ <sup>think</sup> that Townley was like Daley, for instance.

LARRY: But apparently from what the history books say and some old people have told me when the League was in its initial days in '16 and '17, Townley could have been king of North Dakota?

WILLIAM: Well, I guess, he could o' been. Ya, he had a <sup>tremendous</sup> ~~huge~~ influence. There's no doubt about it; but, of course, he would o' been king of only a majority of the people because nearly half of the state

hated him with a venom.

LARRY: There were no shades of gray?

WILLIAM: No, you either supported him or you were dead against him.

LARRY: Do you think that the Nonpartisan League may have <sup>initiated</sup> ~~initiated~~ hard feelings between country people and townspeople?

WILLIAM: Yes. I think more in the western part of the state. If a businessman was not friendly with the League and expressed himself in opposition with the League, <sup>he was dead</sup> as far as business was concerned. I think, there were boycotts that would break a businessman. The membership to the support of the League to some extent ~~rested~~ <sup>rested</sup> on the fear of retribution 'cause they would try it here, but there was not enough Leaguers to have a big influence on business. The Farmers Union is a good organization, as far as I am concerned, but they were kind of an off-shot of this full movement and they were never successful here in Grafton.

LARRY: Oh? Would the townspeople tend to be more IVA and the country people NPL?

WILLIAM: Yes. Grafton, I think, was half and half, but the wealthy people in town were Republicans or later on IVA, Independent Voters Association.

LARRY: Do you know, Mr. DePuy, how the IVA got organized? That never got much coverage or publicity as the NPL did when it organized, but apparently at one time the IVA was quite an organization?

WILLIAM: It was strong. I always thought it was pretty much organized <sup>the group down in Dismarek. I think, it stemmed out of there.</sup> by Patterson and ~~the group down in Dismarek~~ I really don't know. It was not dominant, but it surely was organized in opposition to the League.

LARRY: Did the IVA attract Democrats, too, or did the Democrats tend to stay with the Party and let the Republicans....

WILLIAM: It attracted some Democrats. The Democratic Party became numerically ~~ly~~ small in the 20's. There were quite a few Democrats that were sympathetic to the IVA. I suppose, there were some that leaned toward the League to some extent. The League had some following among the Polish people. I just don't know why. Whether it was <sup>? 655</sup> ~~myth~~ thinking

or what. I think, it was because some of these <sup>leaders</sup> ~~men~~ became sympathetic toward the League. Now, this man <sup>Sprackett?</sup> ~~was~~ was an IVA and quite a few of the Democrats followed him.

LARRY: So the Polish people weren't necessarily united?

WILLIAM: Well, generally speaking they were of Democratic origin. They might have dipped off and followed <sup>Sprackett?</sup> ~~him~~ and the IVA and others just stayed Democrats. Now they are still just straight Democrats pretty much.

LARRY: Did your dad seek any political offices?

WILLIAM: He was nominated for governor in 1932. Ran against Bill Langer. Bill Langer beat him.

LARRY: Ya, that's right.

WILLIAM: Course, he give Langer quite a chance. Course, the Democrats had no organization. No money, for one thing. Their organization was purely for patronage purposes. Well, the only Democratic governor we had before that, I think, was John Burke.

LARRY: Ya, and Moses later on.

WILLIAM: That was later on, ya.

LARRY: How do you in restropect evaluate Langer?

WILLIAM: Well, he became a good senator for North Dakota, but he was purely a political hack in my opinion.

LARRY: Opportunist would you say?

WILLIAM: Ya, an opportunist but a servant of the people in small--you know. Actually, I think, the <sup>state as a state</sup> ~~man~~ would have been better off without Langer. ~~Still, there are certain things. Like you look back at the moratorium. It did some good, I guess.~~

LARRY: Do you think in another economic era Langer would have been as successful as he was or did the situation create Langer's popularity and power?

WILLIAM: Well, the depression made Langer the success that he was. He had to have some straw man that he knocked down and, of course, the millers, and the bankers, and the elevator people were what he was using and the

thrust of his political efforts. But of course, as I said, the moratorium declared on foreclosures probably did some good. Although in those days I represented the Federal Land Bank among other things around the state and we foreclosed many mortgages, but we immediately sold the land back to the farmer that we foreclosed on. So nobody was trying to take their land. They just wanted to get what was on the books straightened out so I don't know really how effective this moratorium was, but it was one of the things that made him popular.

LARRY: Made him a saviour to a lot of people.

Well, sure it did.

WILLIAM: ~~And~~ <sup>And</sup> you know, some of the insurance companies were driven to desperation and had to foreclose and take over the land because they weren't getting paid and weren't getting anything out of it, and they had to pay the taxes to protect the mortgage. From their standpoint the insurance commissioners were saying, "Look, we got a bunch o' bad loans on here and either get rid of 'em or foreclose." So they aren't always....

LARRY: Culprits either.

WILLIAM: No. They can't always direct their own destiny either.

LARRY: Were politics more emotional in those days? Were people more apt to be more actively opinionated?

WILLIAM: I think so. I think, we were closer to state government than we are now. I think we were. There was more personal involvement. Maybe that was just because I was ~~more~~ <sup>some</sup> involved to ~~an~~ <sup>an</sup> extent.

LARRY: How about the candidates running for national office? The reason I ask is because I've been working on this project for two and ~~one-half~~ <sup>one-half</sup> years now and far-and-away the most popular reaction I get from people when we start talking about politics ~~is~~ <sup>is, "It</sup> doesn't make a damned bit o' difference." They're all scoundrels anyway. Was that feeling prevalent in the teens and the ~~20's~~ <sup>20's and 30's,</sup> too, do you think?

WILLIAMS: Well, I can't say for in the teens, but in the 20's I don't think it was. I think that if you were a ~~Democrat~~ <sup>Democrat</sup>, Woodrow Wilson was a great man and you revered him and if you were a Republican, you hated him. And of course, with Roosevelt you either had to hate him or you had

to love him. He was just that kind of a man. I don't think there was the skepticism about the moral character of people in federal government that there is now. All these scandals and everything.

LARRY: Of every kind.

WILLIAM: Well, they're all alike.

LARRY: Ya.

WILLIAM: Which isn't all really true, I don't think. It's an attitude that we get maybe with some justification. There's some things that go on in Washington that probably went on when Washington was president, I suppose.

LARRY: Ya. That's right.

WILLIAM: I don't remember those days!

LARRY: Was Roosevelt kind of that way? Either he drove a totally positive reaction or a....

WILLIAM: Ya. If he was hated, he was hated desperately. If you didn't like Roosevelt, you didn't just dislike him you hated him desperately. I remember going to Grand Forks one time when he went through. He came in on the railroad and he stood out on the back platform and there was something about the guy almost godly, you know, to me. I thought he'd save the country and, I think, maybe he did. I think, he came along at the time we needed him just like England and Churchill who probably held England together. In <sup>1932</sup> ~~1931~~ we were real close to bankruptcy in this country, political bankruptcy. It was a desperate time. Hitler could o' come along and taken this country over. Roosevelt had a lot o' ideas that I didn't totally agree with, but I know that what he did held the country together.

LARRY: Was he an inspirational leader?

WILLIAM: Well, I guess, maybe he was demagogic to some extent. He was a great showman, of course. You wouldn't remember him?

LARRY: No. That's why I'm curious.

WILLIAM: Well, I didn't have any experience with him, but he was a great



organizer. He surrounded himself with good people, people that were smart and dedicated, <sup>to him</sup> and dedicated to the country. [ I don't know if this is interesting particularly, but in ~~the~~ John Moses's term as governor was ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ 1944

expiring and he <sup>ran</sup> for the United States Senate. In September of that year he called me down to the governor's cottage at Spiritwood Lake. I was a very <sup>close</sup> friend of ~~John~~ Moses. He called me and a fellow by the name of <sup>Dave Kelly</sup> ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~, who was Democratic National Committeeman at the time. We said we'd come down. He didn't say, <sup>why</sup> you know. He just called and said, "Meet me <sup>tomorrow</sup> at the cottage." He said, "Get a hold of Dave and bring him along." We went down and we had lunch. We went out on the porch and he says, "I was to the doctor a couple days ago and ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ I've got a cancer. I want to know what you fellows think. Should I be a candidate or should I just say that I've given up the idea of running?" He'd already been nominated. In those days the primary was in the spring. Course, what do you say? You can't say, "Well, look, John, you're a ~~goner~~." Well, he said, "I've got t' go to the hospital and have a operation. Don't know that I'll be able to campaign." So we volunteered to sort of run the campaign. In connection with that I learned later on, <sup>it'd be</sup> that there was some <sup>money</sup> in Washington that I could get for Moses's campaign. So I went down to Washington and I had an appointment with a senator by the name of <sup>876?</sup> O'Maine from Wyoming. He was head of the Democratic Senate Election Committee. I was to meet him at the office of the Secretary of the Senate so I went over there about noon. <sup>The secretary was</sup> ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ a fellow by the name of <sup>Haley?</sup> ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ and he knew that I was to be there and what I was coming for. He <sup>said they're in</sup> ~~was sitting there~~ and writing a speech for Roosevelt. He says, "If you want t' go in, <sup>why</sup> I'll take you in and introduce you to [O'maine] him?" I says, "Sure." So I went in ~~there~~ and there was about 20 senators in this <sup>luncheon room.</sup> ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ They were having lunch so he introduced me around and invited me to sit down. I did. They were writing a speech for Roosevelt. <sup>that</sup> he was going to <sup>make</sup> ~~to~~ in Syracuse, New York the following week. ~~It~~ It was a speech on "Farm Programs". So they welcomed me since I was from a farm state and they wanted ideas and so forth. They had a fella

in October  
^

there that could mimic Roosevelt. They'd write a phrase or a sentence or a paragraph and then this fella would give it just as Roosevelt would give it. It was the darnedest exhibition you ever saw. Well, it was really writing a speech with a--Judge Rosenbalm<sup>7,929 I think</sup> was his name. He was a Jewish man anyway and a very fine speech writer. But this fella would give this speech in parts and ~~he'd~~ <sup>they'd</sup> say, "He wouldn't say that. He'd say something else." They built that speech for Roosevelt and I listened to ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> speech later on radio. It was just exactly the way they put it together. It was about two hours, I suppose, and when ~~we went out~~ <sup>ping</sup>, we went ~~through~~ through a hallway to the secretary's office. This ~~secretary~~ <sup>O'Maymie</sup> took me by the arm and kind o' held me back and all the rest passed through. He took an envelope out of his pocket and he said, "I beleive in doing business in a hurry." He gave me the envelope and I put it in ~~my~~ <sup>the</sup> inside pocket and he went out. I was talkin' to ~~his~~ <sup>the</sup> secretary and in comes Harry Truman. He was the candidate for vice-president that year. We spent about three hours together just talking.

~~HARRY: Is that right?~~

WILLIAM: He was going to catch a train that night to St. Louis, ~~Missouri~~ <sup>country</sup>. It was a rainy afternoon. He had a raincoat on such as the fireman wear, a rubber raincoat. <sup>(laughs)</sup> He was just as ~~common~~ <sup>common</sup> as ~~could~~ <sup>could</sup> be. We had a good talk. Then the Secretary of the Senate said, "There's probably some money in New York ~~someplace~~ <sup>at a certain place.</sup>. If you go there, maybe you can get some money." Well, I'd checked into a hotel so I went over and checked out. I got a train to New York about 9:00. ~~When I~~ <sup>When I</sup> got into New York ~~at~~ <sup>it was</sup> mid-night. I went in on the New York Central and that didn't go into New York at the time. You took a ferry across from New Jersey. Course, it ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> about 2:00 in the morning. When I'd got ~~off~~ <sup>when I got off the ferry.</sup> ~~of the~~ <sup>to the hotel</sup> ~~envelope~~ I'd opened that envelope and there was \$10,000 in cash. I got ~~off~~ <sup>east side</sup> from the lower ~~end~~ <sup>end</sup> of New York and it was about 2:00 in the morning. No taxi, no hotel room, and not too well acquainted with the city. I had to get uptown, ~~and~~ <sup>(laughs)</sup> how to get there? I was sure scared. I finally got up to ~~the Democratic Headquarters in a hotel~~ <sup>the Democratic Headquarters in a hotel</sup> near Grand Central Station. I got a taxi and ~~got~~ <sup>got</sup> up

there to the Democratic Headquarters and by that time it was maybe 4:00 in the morning. There was two secretaries, ladies, working. I told 'em my plight, <sup>I had</sup> no room. Well, they would call Mr. ~~Pauly~~ <sup>Pauly</sup>. They didn't know where I could get a room. This was during the war, you know, and hotel rooms were at a premium, <sup>So</sup> they'd call Mr. ~~Pauly~~ <sup>Pauly</sup> and maybe he could get me a room. So I don't know where he was, but they called him and he called back then in 15 minutes or so. He said, "Have him go over to the St. Regis. If they call him governor, why, don't have him disclaim it because in order to get him a room I had to say he was the <sup>g</sup>overnor of North Dakota." [laughs]

LARRY: Were you able to get some money from New York then?

WILLIAM: No. I went to a place called Sons of American Liberty. It was on 57th Street. A very interesting place. They had a dossier, I guess you'd call it, on every member of Congress, every representative and every senator all in file cabinets in a very large room. They wrote speeches. They were writing speeches for candidates that they were supporting for <sup>congressional jobs.</sup> ~~it~~ It was a Jewish organization really. Very fine people. One of them was Mrs. <sup>Drew Pearson</sup> ~~Dea Pierson~~. And I tried to persuade them that Moses had a chance to be elected. They had--Lynn Standbo was running as an Independent. Lynn Standbo was a former commander of the <sup>National</sup> American ~~Legion~~ Legion and, you know, quite common, <sup>a</sup> very patriotic American and would be better known to them than Moses was. Course, ~~I don't think~~ North Dakota <sup>I don't think</sup> ~~had~~ <sup>ever</sup> elected a Democratic senator and they just couldn't conceive that he could be elected. so they were supporting Standbo. They told me that. I think, I convinced them that Moses <sup>had</sup> a chance to be elected, but they <sup>id</sup> already <sup>Put</sup> their money on Starbo and they were writing his speeches. They'd taken a survey. They'd had a survey made by one of the professional <sup>survey</sup> organizations. They'd sampled in Fargo, Bismarck, Dickinson, Williston, Minot, and Grand Forks. These were all towns that had big region organizations and almost all of Standbo's entire vote was in these larger centers. They just didn't analyze that survey as against the vote that he'd gotten in the primary. Of course, he ran

against Gerald Nye on the Republican side and Nye won the nomination. many of the  
 Moses was unopposed on the Democratic side and, ~~you know, I remember~~  
 either for Nye or  
 Democrats went over and voted for Standbo, you know, and still were  
 goin' to support Moses in the fall. They thought, well, that we had a  
 case, but they'd already committed themselves so I didn't get any money  
 from them. But I got a ~~nice~~ nice letter after Moses was elected. They  
 wrote and said that I was right. They weren't necessarily wrong. They  
 were happy to see Moses elected, ~~against Nye~~. *They were actually anti-NYE.*

LARRY: Were the speeches that they wrote unsolicited and were they used  
 by candidates.

WILLIAM: I'm sure Standbo used these speeches. They were Fourth of July  
 type of speeches, very patriotic. Of course, for a fella like Standbo....  
 If you were in the war.... He had a war record. *Incidentally* ~~we had~~  
 Sam Ervin here.

LARRY: Yes, that's what I saw on your marquis ~~out here~~.

WILLIAM: Last week. He was a very interesting character.

LARRY: I interviewed Ervin Schumacher up at Drayton and he had been down  
 to see Ervin. I don't want to intrude on a good memory of your conversation  
 with President Truman, but is the image that Truman has given as kind of  
 a brusque totally up front person and said what was on his mind the way  
 you  
 perceived him to be when you....

SIDE II

WILLIAM: Well, he was the kind of fella you'd enjoy sitting and having  
 a glass o' beer with and talking sports and politics and things in general.

LARRY: You'd have been interested in sports, too, from having partici-  
 pated.

WILLIAM: Sure. When I went to the university, I really thought that I  
 was going to the army 'cause I had a commission, but I had another year  
 of law school and I just didn't take it. I was interested in things  
 military though. Of course, he'd been in World War I and he was quite  
 soldierly and very much in favor of Veteran's assistance.

LARRY: Were you reassured then, Mr. DePuy, when Roosevelt died that

good

there was a man behind him?

WILLIAM: Yes, I was very happy with Truman.

LARRY: I was old enough to vaguely remember his presidency--probably better than vaguely--but, did he have a good sense of humor? I always have the feeling that Truman could laugh a lot?

WILLIAM: Yes. As I remember him, yes. He enjoyed life. He was a common man and, I don't think, he was above <sup>playing</sup> politics, you know. He was a member of the ~~Democratic~~ <sup>Pendergost</sup> organization in Kansas City, which is kind of a ~~Democratic~~ <sup>Tammany</sup> Hall thing, you know.

LARRY: Ya, questionable outfit.

WILLIAM: Ya. But, I think, <sup>personally</sup> ~~politically~~ he was honest.

LARRY: And kind of rose to the occasion?

WILLIAM: He was a good man for his time.

LARRY: Like Roosevelt had been?

WILLIAM: Ya, right.

LARRY: Let me preface this a little bit by saying I interviewed Math Dahl about a year and a half ago or maybe more than that in Bismarck and about three weeks ago I interviewed ~~John~~ <sup>Rilie</sup> Morgan here in Grafton and both of them told me that they thought the most outstanding governor that they had known was Norman Brundsdale but second was John Moses. They both spoke very highly of John Moses. How <sup>had</sup> ~~did~~ you come to know <sup>John Moses</sup> ~~him~~ and tell me about your recollections of him.

WILLIAM: Well, I would say that he and Norman Brundsdale were both excellent governors, but I would say that John Moses was the greatest governor that North Dakota ever had. Now, he was quite a little older than I was. He went to the University of North Dakota. He came from Norway as a young man. An adult actually. He went to the University of North Dakota and ~~was~~ graduated from law school. ~~and~~ <sup>he</sup> he was a member of a fraternity that I later joined. He would come back occasionally <sup>sp</sup> and visit at this fraternity house, ~~and~~ I got to know him then and we became friends. Rather close friends for the difference in our ages. Well, he became active in politics. He lived in Hazen in Mercer County and he was ~~States~~ <sup>States</sup> Attorney

out there. When he became <sup>a</sup> candidate the first time, I wrote to him and said if there was anything that I could do, why, I'd be glad to help.

*We just* kind o' renewed <sup>our</sup> friendship. ~~then~~ <sup>He</sup> was defeated the first time ~~he~~ ran.

He ran in '42, <sup>let's see</sup> '38--so the first time he was elected was in '38. I was nominated for Attorney General so we campaigned together. I went out in the spring with him and we had no opposition in the spring. We campaigned together, ~~and~~ <sup>we</sup> were out for about six weeks and we just naturally

became very good friends. Moses had very poor eyesight. He couldn't drive an automobile. I was really the chauffeur. <sup>[laughs]</sup> We took some awful drives, I'll tell ya! Then in the fall we campaigned together. Well, then he was elected and I was defeated. He wanted me down in Bismarck so he appointed me **S** **T** **C** Commissioner. I would have never accepted the

job as a permanent job because I'd been around Bismarck ~~long~~ enough to know that people ~~there~~ <sup>who</sup> had been fairly prominent in ~~Bismarck~~ <sup>politics</sup> and then lost a job or something went around looking for doughnut and coffee money.

It just wasn't for me as far as I was concerned, but I agreed to act as **S** **T** **C** Commissioner. My job really was to draw up bills for the legisla-

ture. They weren't organized as they are now. They didn't have <sup>interim</sup> committees or anything of that sort. There <sup>was</sup> a fellow by the name of

John Grey, <sup>who</sup> was to become tax Commissioner and Moses wanted somebody that he would have no difficulty in getting rid of when the time come. <sup>So</sup> they <sup>day</sup>

he appointed me. I put in a resignation for the time ~~when~~ <sup>that</sup> Grey was to become tax commissioner. <sup>It</sup> <sup>just</sup> was an understanding. ~~that~~ I wouldn't have

stayed <sup>on</sup> any longer anyway. From that time on I was in Bismarck every week ~~and~~ when the legislature would be in session. <sup>Every</sup> year that Moses was governor, I would go down and draw up bills for the legislature.

Well, then Henry Holt was elected <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> Lieutenant <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> Governor in 1942. He was a Democrat, too, and Henry died in '44, I think it was, and Moses was a candidate for the <sup>Senate</sup> ~~President~~ then. This was before he knew that he had cancer. He appointed me <sup>Lieutenant</sup> ~~President~~ Governor, which nobody ever knew. <sup>But</sup>

he issued the commission and I took the commission and put it away. <sup>He</sup> ~~never~~

<sup>never</sup> announced it because if something would happen to him, this is what he

was worried about ~~he~~ <sup>he</sup> wanted me to take his place. He didn't die and his term was up then. ~~and~~ <sup>He</sup> was elected to the Senate. Well of course, he died in March. He ~~was elected to the Senate and~~ took office in <sup>the Senate</sup> in January and died in March. The day before he died he called me up to say, "Good-bye."

LARRY: ~~Is that right?~~

WILLIAM: Just like, you know, "I'll see you next week."

LARRY: ~~He knew that it was....~~

WILLIAM: ~~Oh, ya.~~ He knew that he was going to die and going to die very shortly. I think, it was harder on me than it was on him.

LARRY: He must o' been quite a man?

WILLIAM: Oh, terrific man. Very intelligent man but enjoyed life. We used to play bridge a lot. <sup>We'd</sup> sit up all night ~~and~~ <sup>ing</sup> play <sup>he'd</sup> bridge and <sup>he'd</sup> drink a <sup>fifth of</sup> ~~Scotch,~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~Never~~ get drunk. Of course, he was 6'6". Huge man.

LARRY: What was it about him that made it possible for a Democrat ~~in~~ <sup>a</sup> state that had really had no Democratic ~~ic~~ organization....

WILLIAM: Well, the Langer organization had become so corrupt actually <sup>of course</sup> and Langer had been convicted, ~~and~~ then the conviction reversed, ~~and~~ the second trial, ~~and~~ the hung jury, ~~and~~ then a third trial and acquittal. <sup>and so forth.</sup> It was a realization, although Langer had been acquitted eventually, that there had been a lot of hanky panky going on. The League was falling apart to some extent, times had improved economically, and Moses had the support of fellas like <sup>Rilie</sup> ~~Wingo~~ Morgan, for instance. The League was filing in the Republican primaries and the regular Republicans or what they called the ROC, Republican Organizing Committee, would file also <sup>of course,</sup> in the Republican primary. Well, the League would defeat them and then the ROC would turn around and support Moses because he was a conservative Democrat. His political philosophy was closer to the Republican Organizing Committee's <sup>philosophy</sup> than it was to the <sup>Republican</sup> ~~Democratic~~ League. I suppose, he was in a sense the lesser of two evils. <sup>Although</sup> they didn't support him because he was the lesser of two evils. <sup>They</sup> supported him because he was just a good governor.

He got along <sup>well</sup> with the legislature. He didn't ~~only~~ appoint Democrats to office. He took ~~recognition~~ <sup>cognizance</sup> of the fact that he had Republican support. He was just a great man. That's all.

LARRY: Was he a good speaker too?

WILLIAM: <sup>Yeah</sup> ~~ya~~, he could project himself. I wouldn't say that he was a great orator, but he was a well educated man. He was a scholar and he could express himself, but he wasn't flowery or anything of that sort.

LARRY: A fella told me one time that North Dakotans tend to elect non political types. I can't remember who told me this, but one of the reasons he said that Lemke and Usher Burdick and some of those fellows were attractive to North Dakota voters was because they weren't well dressed, they weren't polished speakers, and they looked like farmers.

WILLIAM: Well, there's something to that. Well, there's 600,000 people in North Dakota and that's all. Someday you'll know every politician in the state and they'll all know you. In other words, I've always been a Democrat, but I don't think I've ever voted a straight Democratic ticket in my life. Even when I was a candidate, I'm sure a lot of Democrats didn't vote for me.

LARRY: Is that representative of North Dakota voters?

WILLIAM: Ya. I think so.

LARRY: Pretty independent?

WILLIAM: I think, they vote pretty much for the individual.

LARRY: Mr. DePuy, anything that you can tell me about political campaigning at that time would be more than ~~we've~~ <sup>we've</sup> got. Can you tell me

what it was like to ~~travel~~ <sup>campaign</sup> on the road for six weeks <sup>at that time</sup>

WILLIAM: <sup>[Laughs]</sup> This Dave Kelly that I've mentioned before, who was Democratic National Committeeman, consented to be candidate for lieutenant <sup>g</sup>overnor with Moses and the three of us travelled together. When we'd get into a town--we'd have a set routine--Kelly would start off with <sup>his</sup> ~~this~~ little speech, <sup>and</sup> then I'd talk, and then Moses would talk. You know, same thing every night whether we were in New Rockford or Dickinson or Bismarck or wherever we were. Sometimes we had as many as ten stops a day.



in Columbus, for instance, for such and such a day at 10:00 and then ~~we~~  
~~take~~ <sup>would be 2:00</sup> maybe the next meeting at Mohall. You'd have a string of towns  
 that you'd make trying to wind up in the largest city in the evening.

LARRY: Would you draw pretty well?

WILLIAM: No.

LARRY: Because you were Democrat<sup>s</sup>?

WILLIAM: ~~So~~ <sup>Yeah.</sup> We'd had very little advertising, ~~though~~. Maybe the local  
 paper would have John Moses is going to be here at such and such a time.  
~~and we'd have a few Democrats that'd come out.~~ <sup>The local democrats would come out.</sup> You wouldn't really  
 have very many people, but you'd get a little newspaper publicity in  
 the local paper. At that time there were many more ~~local~~ <sup>weekly</sup> papers than  
 there are now. You'd give the paper your itinerary. The people that  
 would come out were largely people that were <sup>either</sup> loyal Democrats, or members  
 of the county committee, or people that were lookin' for a job. stop

LARRY: How did Moses campaign then after he got ~~the ...~~

WILLIAM: He didn't campaign.

LARRY: Oh, he didn't?

WILLIAM: No.

LARRY: Oh, that's right. You told me.

WILLIAM: No, he didn't campaign. To my recollection he never made a  
 single appearance from the day that he told us he had cancer 'til the  
 election.

LARRY: Was his popularity such that he didn't have to or was it vote  
 against Nye?

WILLIAM: It was a vote against Nye really and it was a vote for him.  
 Of course, Nye and Standbo split the Republican vote pretty much, you see.  
 Course, Nye was an isolationist. This was during the war and Isolationism  
 had become very unpopular so it was pretty destined that he be defeated.

LARRY: Then when Moses died, Nye....

WILLIAM: No. When Moses died, that's when Young was elected.

LARRY: Milt Young, ya, that's right. Nye was elected in?...

WILLIAM: Well, he was first elected in '24 or thereabouts.

year.

LARRY: That's right, ya. Did you come back here then when your dad retired?

WILLIAM: He and I went into partnership with another. We had a three man partnership. When I got through college, he never said a word to me about comin' to work with him. He never said a word to me. I went to work for a states attorney out at Minnewauken, \$80 a month, and I lived in a hotel for \$10 a month, and got board for \$30 a month. It cost me \$40 a month that way. I went out in the summertime. I wasn't a very good ball player, but they didn't have very many good ball players in Minnewauken either. I used to get \$5 a game for playin' ball.

LARRY: Is that right?

WILLIAM: Ya. Didn't make very much money but....

LARRY: Another thing I've been wondering about. This has been an educational project for me because I've found<sup>out</sup> a lot of things about North Dakota that I had no idea about.

WILLIAM: Where was your home?

LARRY: I was born at Chaffee and then raised at Enderlin. <sup>My</sup> dad was renting a farm at Chaffee and then he was....

WILLIAM: Well, then you know the Bangerts??

LARRY: Ya. Well, dad knew them real well. Charlie Bangert?

WILLIAM: Charlie, ya.

LARRY: Was a good friend of my dad, ya.

WILLIAM: During the war I worked with Harold.

LARRY: Oh? I just knew him enough to say hi; but dad knew him and thought a lot of him, too, knew him well. And I was always under the naive impression that the depression across North Dakota in the 30's was pretty much the same all over, but <sup>Start</sup> I <sup>have</sup> found ~~out~~ through interviewing all over North Dakota that there were ~~places~~ <sup>in</sup> ~~North Dakota~~ <sup>omit</sup> where they didn't have a crop for three years or four years?

WILLIAM: ~~Ya.~~ Yeah.

LARRY: And yet, in interviewing <sup>Walsh</sup> ~~up~~ in ~~Walsh~~ <sup>up in Pembina</sup> County, and ~~Walsh~~

and Cavalier Counties, particularly below the plateau, people tell me that they never had a crop failure.

WILLIAM: No. We had poor crops in this area, but we had 20, 25 bushels to the acre. I was out in the summer of '36, very very hot summer, in Rhame, North Dakota with John Moses and he wanted to see somebody. The hotel in Rhame was close to the railroad tracks and there was a balcony on the second floor sort of over the porch. While he was going to see who he was going to see I went up the stairs over at the hotel and got out on his balcony. It was a good place to sit. It was shady and not as hot as it was down on the street anyway. There was an elderly gentleman sitting up there. There was a freight train pulling out of the depot and this man started to cry. He must o' been a man 80 years old, you know. I didn't know why. I was curious and sympathetic. I asked him what the trouble was. He told me how many years he'd been a rancher out there and he said, "The last of my cattle are being shipped out. I sold 'em to the government for \$20 a piece." He was destitute.

LARRY: Did the people in the eastern ~~part~~<sup>tenth</sup> or whatever would comprise the Red River Valley aware of how lucky they were in comparison.

WILLIAM: Oh, ya, I think so. We knew that the western part of the state was suffering terrible. You didn't have to go so very far actually to....

LARRY: Even <sup>western</sup> Walsh County, I guess, was quite a bit different than the....

WILLIAM: Ya. That's right. For some reason or other they didn't get as much rain as we did and soil was light. They just didn't raise crops.

LARRY: What national policies and programs initiated by Roosevelt's New Deal administration do you think were particularly beneficial to farmers and across the board?

WILLIAM: Well of course, I think, the Farm Support Program at the time was beneficial at that time. I'm not necessarily a supporter of it now because, I think, the economy is different now than it was ~~was~~<sup>then</sup>. And the loan programs that they had and Soil Bank. At that time there were little sources of income that the farmers could have and, I think, they kept a lot of farmers going 'til the time ~~was~~<sup>farming became</sup> prosperous industry again.

LARRY: ~~Is that right?~~

WILLIAM: You'd have a series of towns along the railroad. ~~We didn't go along the road.~~ Well, you'd travel by car from maybe Robinson to Turtle Lake and so forth. So one night we had our order and I got up. Moses would always sit in the front, <sup>row</sup> where no one could see him and he could sleep <sup>-[Laughs]-</sup> while Kelly and I were talkin'. Well, I got up and I gave his speech, see, and he was sitting there. He woke up just in time to realize what I was doin'! ~~He had been~~ <sup>He was nonplussed</sup> ~~top.~~ He didn't know what to say! <sup>[Laughs]</sup> Everything that he was supposed to say had been said. <sup>It</sup> It got awfully tiresome. Late hours. Well, we'd be in maybe Jamestown or Valley City having a meeting and drive into Fargo for a radio engagement for 15 or 20 minutes and then drive back to Jamestown. In those <sup>days</sup> ~~the~~ the roads weren't what they are now and the cars weren't what they are now; but, anyway, we ended up <sup>the</sup> ~~with our~~ campaign in Milnor, North Dakota, south of someplace. Fargo, ~~someplace~~ Kelly was making a speech and he would always say, "My name is Dave Kelly and I am candidate for Lieutenant <sup>g</sup>overnor for the state of North Dakota and I'm running to support ~~me~~ John Moses. I've got a wife and four children and my home is in Grand Forks." He started out and he said, "I've got a wife and four children. I wouldn't give a million dollars for any one of them and I wouldn't give ten cents to have another one either." <sup>[Laughs]</sup> ~~that's~~

LARRY: Would you hit some pretty seedy hotels once in awhile?

WILLIAM: Oh, ya. Just whatever was in the town. <sup>omit</sup>

LARRY: How would you set up your tour so that you would hit ~~the~~ Tuttle, Wing, and Robinson down a road?

WILLIAM: Well, it was all done in advance, o' course, you know, at the start of the campaign. This was in the primaries and we had no opposition, you see, actually. It was just a matter of getting acquainted. <sup>We</sup> would write to the county committees in each <sup>county</sup> ~~the~~ the week before we were going to be someplace. We'd decide, well, <sup>Well</sup> ~~like~~ ~~we~~ a campaign in the north-western corner of the state for next week or a week from now and we'd write to the county committee and ask them to set up a meeting in the Town Hall

LARRY: But during the Second World War he was in the Senate, wasn't he. because he was investigating the munitions profiteering.

WILLIAM: Yes. He was in the Senate 'til 1944, you see.

LARRY: From '24 'til '44.

WILLIAM: Well, I'm not sure it was '24. It was probably after that. He took Ladd's place, didn't he.

LARRY: That's right.

WILLIAM: I don't remember when Ladd went in. Nye was appointed. He was a newspaper editor at Richardton, North Dakota.

LARRY: Ya, and he had been at Fryburg ~~Richardton~~. And Ladd was elected on the Republican ticket?

WILLIAM: Ya.

LARRY: Was Nye a statesman? Was he interested in publicity when he was chairing ~~that~~ that committee on munitions profiteering? or war profiteering.

WILLIAM: Ya. I think, he really was a pretty sincere senator. I think, he really beleived in Isolationism and maybe he was right. We've made some awful mistakes since, I guess, not being isolationists. He was wrong at that time because if there ever was a war that we should of fought, it was World War II. In fact, I think, he was making an antiwar speech at the time the Japs bombed Pearl Harbor.

LARRY: Ya. I'd like to talk about that more with you, but I also want to get back to something that Mrs. Donnolly had told me. That you had just finished school or just back in Grafton and getting established when John was trying to get the REA or the Farm Bureau rolling?

WILLIAM: That was it. REA.

LARRY: And he went to Washington and they said, "Well, get yourself a lawyer to represent your group." And Mrs. Donnolly said that he said, "I know the man." He came back and ~~asked~~ <sup>asked</sup> you to represent them.

WILLIAM: Ya.

LARRY: Can you tell me, Mr. DePuy, about the background of that and the difficulties that you encountered.

WILLIAM: Well....

LARRY: Because Mrs. Donnelly told me that it wasn't as easy as some people think today.

WILLIAM: No, it was kind of a boot strap operation. Let's see. The REA Act was passed in '35 and activated in '36. It must of been in '38 that her husband Percy....

LARRY: I'm sorry. Her husband, Percy, ya, right.

WILLIAM: He was a very <sup>aggressive</sup> ~~aggressive~~ man and very interested, of course, in improving himself and the community that did speak to me. I acted as attorney for the group, but I didn't even know what the act was about. I knew that the REA group and co-ops were going to form. We opened up an office in my office. We didn't have any money and we went out. Actually, the only membership we took was \$5 and we signed up. We were pretty constrained or restricted in our anticipation. We were just going to organize a co-op in Wells County. This is as far as our thoughts went, you know. Really, the difficulty that we had after we got sufficient membership to justify a loan.... We made several trips to Washington and, of course, made applications for a loan. We employed an engineer and had lines designed and so forth. Well, we had to do that actually before we made applications for a loan. We got a loan allowed, but then we had a great deal of trouble getting a source of power. For some reason or other the city of Grafton was somewhat opposed to furnishing power to us. I don't know whether it was political philosophy or what it was; but, anyway, we had an awful time convincing the City Council and the mayor in Grafton that they should furnish this power even though they were going to make a profit at it. We didn't think that they should make a profit at it, but we recognized that they shouldn't give it to us and they shouldn't have to give it to us. That's about all there really was to it.

LARRY: But your effort became tied into the whole statewide?

WILLIAM: Ya. I drew the first bylaws for the first state association actually. Then we expanded. Three co-ops had been formed. In fact, there had been four. This one here in Wells County, one that went out west in Nelson County called <sup>Five Star</sup> ~~Five Star~~, one at Hillsboro called the

Red River. The Red River Co-op is a merger of the one that been formed by Grand Forks and Hillsboro. They merged those two. We could see that we weren't going to be large enough and we couldn't depend on Grafton for our source of power for very long because our road was growing and their capacity was pretty steep. The energy was not sufficient and the price was too high anyway. So we got together with Five Star and Red River Co-ops. Five Star had lines. They had a portable generator that sat out behind the barn and furnished the electricity ~~and electricity~~ for them. They were very small. We got together and consolidated the three, and then became Nodak and I was selected as attorney for Nodak for the consolidated co-ops. Then after that Nodak was very instrumental with some other North Dakota co-ops and some from Minnesota to form Minkota.

~~WILLIAM:~~ LARRY: When would that have been?

WILLIAM: About in 1944. About that time.

LARRY: Did your effort get any assistance or a lot of assistance from Langer?

WILLIAM: Well, he was very supportive of it. When we'd go to Washington, we'd go to see Langer.

LARRY: I mean that a lot of folks give Langer credit for the REA. Blanket credit almost.

WILLIAM: I was down in Bismarck. The first North Dakota <sup>rural</sup> electric was passed under Moses's administration actually, but there was no opposition. I would say that when Langer got to Washington he was very influential in granting of loans, ya. I think that we have never had anything but good support from ~~anybody~~ <sup>anybody</sup> that was ~~in~~ <sup>ever in</sup> Washington representing us.

LARRY: It was the kind of thing where you couldn't really lose anything by pushing, I would imagine, being it was unanimously popular.

WILLIAM: It's probably been the <sup>best</sup> ~~best~~ farm legislation that this country has ever adopted.

LARRY: When did you come back to Grafton from college?

WILLIAM: I graduated in '26 and I practiced in Minnewauken for about a

LARRY: How did the Barnyard Loans work? ~~Were~~ they federally insured loans through a bank?

WILLIAM: A Barnyard Loan was made by a agency of the Department of Agriculture. They were direct loans made through county committees of some sort. The local financial institutes had nothing to do with it.

LARRY: Do you think that some of the policies ~~of~~ <sup>that</sup> Roosevelt's administration was responsible for would have been better discontinued when better times and the war started? Roosevelt critics tell me that Roosevelt is the one that started out the Handout Program and made welfare ~~an~~ <sup>a major</sup> industry.

WILLIAM: I suppose this is true, but you are never going to get rid of welfare as such. There are many abuses of the Welfare Program, but that's the fault of the administration of it not necessarily of the program.

I can remember when welfare was handled by local municipalities and townships and, I'll tell ya, that was pretty bad. In those days I was ~~City~~ <sup>City</sup> ~~Attorney~~ <sup>Attorney</sup> for Grafton, for instance, and I can remember at some council meetings where we'd sit and argue for hours whether ~~some~~ <sup>some</sup> family should get \$10 a month in grocery allowance with 5 kids, you know. It was just--they were peons and treated as peons actually. Of course, economically ~~ally~~ <sup>ally</sup> this had to be. These towns didn't have the proper means or facilities to take care of 'em. ~~Now~~ <sup>Now</sup> as I say, there are many abuses of the program.

LARRY: Do you think that the farmers during the bad years in the 30's were maybe in better shape because they had feed and were in livestock and could butcher ~~meat~~ <sup>pigs</sup> and so forth than the people in towns in some cases. Were the townspeople in worse shape than the farmers?

WILLIAM: No. I think, the townspeople went to work for WPA. I think, we all suffered alike. Now, as I look back on those times, I was married, of course, during the depression and, you know, \$2 on a Saturday night and you had a ~~big~~ <sup>big</sup> night. With \$2 my wife and I would drive to Grand Forks and ~~have~~ <sup>have</sup> to dinner and go to a show.

LARRY: Oh, is that right?

WILLIAM: Sure. We wouldn't come home with any money, but we'd get along



on \$2. Last week I was in New York and three of us went to lunch and we had a ordinary plate at noon. The bill for three of us at lunch was \$51.

LARRY: Ya. Your \$2 wouldn't have taken you there today.

WILLIAM: No. It was on the 107th floor of the World Trades building.

It's a tourist trap because people go there to overlook New York is what you really go there for. There's a \$10 cover charge and we had a drink.

The drinks are \$3 a piece. They put 20 percent on the bill for a tip.

Anyway, it came to \$51. Oh, then about a 4 ounce steak and a salad. You didn't even satisfy your ~~appetite~~<sup>appetite</sup>, you know.

LARRY: What kind of WPA work was done or PWA work was done in the Grafton area? Was it gravelling roads or construction?

WILLIAM: Well, ya, roads and small dams, City Hall was built. That'd be WPA construction. We got some government help on building the courthouse. We built a courthouse here. I think it was \$400,000. It would cost probably 3,000,000 now. Beautiful building. They built these small dams, ~~masonry~~<sup>masonry</sup> dams. They kept busy and they did something and the people that worked on them were not ashamed. They did shovel work, o' course, but they didn't.... They did a fairly honest day's work for a very limited amount of pay, but they did something.

LARRY: Did the money that filtered through the various work projects in Grafton make any discernable difference in the economy do you think?

WILLIAM: Well, I think it had to. It was all spent here. It had to go to the grocery store and hardware and the doctor, not much to the lawyer, but they didn't....

LARRY: Did you notice any deterioration in morale during the 30's? Were people becoming a little <sup>bit</sup> discouraged?

WILLIAM: Yes. They were discouraged but the morale was fairly high. People were sociable. You know, instead of going out and spending \$10 at a bar you went over to a neighbor's house and played Whist. You visited back and forth. I think, there was a great amount of sociability.

LARRY: Do you think that that has changed since the 30's?

WILLIAM: Oh, yes. I think, maybe some of it could be because I've gotten

older. I don't go anyplace except on business now. Well, I shouldn't say that. My wife and I go out to dinner, but we don't ~~visit~~ visit back ~~and forth~~ <sup>even</sup> with our neighbors like we ~~did and we didn't have any money.~~ did and we didn't have any money.

LARRY: Was there a tighter feeling of community in those days?

WILLIAM: Yes, I think so. Course, even in the small towns everybody is under pressure now to maintain a status or to get rich. I don't know what it is, but you just don't seem to have the time. You aren't as close to your children now as, I think, like when my children were growing up.

LARRY: That's something I wanted to ask you about. When you were a boy at home with your folks and your sisters, what would you do? Did your family enjoy reading? Would you play checkers with your dad? Did your mother play piano or....

WILLIAM: Well, I spent a lot o' time down at my grandparents at Minto. There we played checkers. I spent all summers there when I was real young and I'd go down like Christmas vacations and weekends and stuff like that. That family was great to play checkers or play cards. You know, just a social game of cards. At home we read. The whole family were readers. My father worked maybe 'til 10:00 at night and he'd come home and he'd read 'til 2 or 3:00 in the morning. The result was that he couldn't complain that we read, you know. So everybody in the family read.

LARRY: That's changed, too, I think.

WILLIAM: Ya. Except I have a boy in the Air Force and he reads a lot.

LARRY: Oh, I read 'til 3 or 4 in the morning, too, but I don't think that there are too many other people that are that interested or are reading that much.

WILLIAM: No. Course, television is sort of....

LARRY: Ya. Did radio have as dramatic effect on....

WILLIAM: Oh, yes. You had the earphones, of course, to hear. We had a radio with a speaker on it and our basement was full of batteries and battery chargers and everything else. Yes, we listened to the radio and, I think, that did interfere with the reading habits.

LARRY: But you could listen to the radio and....

WILLIAM: read too.

LARRY: Ya, right, or your mother could iron or....

WILLIAM: Ya. It didn't take your whole attention like television does.

LARRY: Could you notice anything in the 20's that made you think that maybe the economy was headed for some trouble before the depression, the banks went under, and the Wall Street took a dive?

WILLIAM: Well, maybe I had sort of an intuition that things weren't going right because it was.... I went to work when I was in the eighth grade on a farm and I worked on that same farm all the ~~time~~<sup>time</sup> I was in high school then. Sometimes the farmer would only want me for a month and then after school was out and then come back for threshing or something like that. Course, then I had to look for another job like with the contracting. It got harder and harder to get a job as we got into the 20's. Then of course, when I was going to college, why, you'd start looking for a job in April. If you got a job out doing some construction work in the summer, you were pretty lucky actually because not everybody got a job.

LARRY: Were the 20's roaring in North Dakota?

WILLIAM: I don't really think so. I can only speak for myself now. Now, I know that kids that go to college now, for instance, it is nothing for them to go down to the saloon two or three nights a week, but we had.... When I went to school, we would go out and have some drinks the night examinations were over and that'd be it. You'd have a celebration.

LARRY: And the rest of the time it was tow the mark and get your work done?

WILLIAM: Ya, you never even thought of having a drink. I lived a couple o' years in the fraternity house and then I lived downtown because I worked downtown and nobody ever thought of bringing liquor into the fraternity house--no, sirs. You just couldn't do it.

LARRY: Now, this was at UND?

WILLIAM: Ya.

LARRY: What time were you there?

WILLIAM: I finished high school in '21 and I finished college in '26.

LARRY: Was east Grand Forks still the place to go if you wanted to....

WILLIAM: If you wanted to drink, ya. Sure. But, you know, you just didn't, you know. I think, part of it was economic and part of it was it just didn't occur to you.

LARRY: Did you play in athletics? Were you athletic at UND?

WILLIAM: Ya. Nothing except intramaurals and things like that.

LARRY: When did independent baseball kind o' fade out in North Dakota? I hear so many stories about the emotional fervor behind the local independent team and how well....

WILLIAM: Well, I can tell you when it faded out here. And that's in the early 30's. The reason it faded out here was that we developed a heck of a good softball team. We killed baseball for many years. We developed a softball team, you know, where we won the state championship for three years and we went to national  ~~tournaments~~ and we used to go to Winnipeg to play and Crookston and Grand Forks. Baseball  ~~just couldn't~~ survive that; but, I think, that it was about that time--well, no, baseball. Well, ya,  ~~fairly active~~ <sup>we're</sup> baseball teams here <sup>World War II</sup> 'til about the  ~~in this area.~~ These teams would have--we didn't. As I say, we killed baseball with softball actually. But they could come to a softball game and pay nothing, you know. Sometimes they'd take up a collection or something. We were sponsored. They didn't have a good baseball team unless you hired a pitcher and maybe a catcher. When I was a kid, they used to have usually four hired players on the city team. Probably about 1920 one of the players that was here was Happy Chandler. Probably came around '18, '19 or '20. He became <sup>B</sup> Senator and <sup>E</sup> Governor of Kentucky and <sup>!</sup> baseball <sup>!</sup> Commissioner. He played here. In fact, he used to *court* my sister around some.

~~LARRY:~~ LARRY: Is that right?

WILLIAM: Ya. He was going to college at the University of Kentucky.

LARRY: He was here in '21?

WILLIAM: He was here in '21, '19, and '20, I think.

LARRY: Oh, is that right? Three years?

WILLIAM: Ya, I'm sure he was here three years.

LARRY: Was he a good ball player?

WILLIAM: Just a fair ball player. He was good enough to be a hired ball player. He wasn't good enough to be in a league, you know, but he ~~was~~ <sup>and another</sup> ~~man~~ <sup>man named</sup> Taylor ~~was~~ came up with a man who had been coach at the university. Andy Gil, I think, his name was. He'd gone to the University of Kentucky and he was the coach at the <sup>u</sup> University and these fellas played ball down there for him. He brought them up here and he played ball here too.

LARRY: Oh, that 's how it worked. The reason I ask is because ~~the~~ <sup>I interviewed</sup> fella that used to coach the Fordville baseball team.... Bill Willer?

WILLIAM: Willer, y

LARRY: Willer, ya.

WILLIAM: Ya, he's a very active guy.

LARRY: Ya. He's a great guy. I really liked him. \*Cause Fordville <sup>beleive</sup> used to have a pretty active baseball team and I can ~~believe~~ that he was a pretty good coach and I asked him if he ever saw Hap Chandler play? And he said, "Ya." And I said, "Was he a good baseball player?" And he said, "Shucks, he wasn't that good. We had guys as good as he was."

WILLIAM: Ya, he was a great talker, you know, at a baseball club. He was a average ball player, I would say. He was probably good enough to be hired but....

LARRY: He didn't later become Commissioner of Baseball because he had been an exceptionally <sup>great</sup> ~~good~~ baseball player?

WILLIAM: No, no. He became Commissioner of Baseball because he'd been a good politician.

LARRY: Ya.

WILLIAM: He could project himself and that.  
What do you think of the way agriculture

LARRY: ~~is changing in North~~ is changing in North

Dakota with farms becoming larger and larger and with it going into almost township sized farms?

WILLIAM: Ya. High mechanism. Well, I don't think it's good for the general economy, but it's good for those that survive in farming. We have any number of fellas around here that millionaires.

LARRY: Oh, sure.

WILLIAM: But, you know, it means we're going to be a state of limited population and, I guess, you can't prevent the larger towns from getting a little larger and the smaller towns from just drying up. That's it.

LARRY: Do you think that it will just naturally proceed in this manner until economic or weather conditions bring it down the way it happened in the past or will legislation have to be passed to insure that we don't have a feudal system or land barons?

WILLIAM: I don't think legislation will cure it. I mean, you can't take property away from people. You know, you might have a escalating tax or something like that that might be *confiscatory* above a certain limit, but it seems to be accepted. It seems to be accepted the way it's going. At least around here I don't see any effort in reforming it or being critical of a young fella that's accumulating a lot o' land. It seems to be accepted.

LARRY: Another thing that seems to be facing North Dakota in the future is the control of resource development or the living with resource development. In the western part of the state, I would say, 80 percent of the older folks that I talked to don't like that. Do you think that they had a reason to be concerned or do you think they're over<sup>c</sup>reacting?

WILLIAM: I think, they're over<sup>c</sup>reacting myself and maybe this is because I feel that the production of energy, for instance, that's <sup>usable</sup> ~~usable~~ here and in Minnesota.... If we get a resource that could be turned into energy and that's useable and <sup>necessary</sup> ~~useable~~ and if ~~it~~ <sup>they're</sup> paid, I certainly beleive that we have any right to take what is a valuable resource to them and what should be a valuable resource and, I think, they should be compensated very adequately. And also, there should be some reclamation

requirements. I have quite a lot of faith that they can restore that land to as good o' condition as it was before the mining. You know, if we're talking about.... I think, that's what we're talking about is coal development.

LARRY: Ya.

WILLIAM: I can see where if I owned a ranch, ~~that I'd say, "Well, I'd like to keep it the way it is."~~ <sup>that I'd say, "Well,</sup> I'd like to keep it the way it is." But also if I had something would keep people alive in Minneapolis, I think, maybe I'd think that was some obligation too.

LARRY: You're a professional man now. When you travel, for instance, when you were in New York, how do you feel, Mr. DePuy, when somebody asks you.... You know, you're introduced to someone and they say, "Where are you from?" And you say, "North Dakota?"

WILLIAM: I'm not ashamed of it. I've been East four times in the last two months to Boston and Maine three times. I wouldn't live in New York if they gave me the town.

LARRY: What kind of reaction do you generally get among professional people? Do they chuckle?

WILLIAM: No. You mean among the lawyers, for instance?

LARRY: Ya.

WILLIAM: In New York?

LARRY: Ya.

WILLIAM: They accept you. I think that maybe the average lawyer in North Dakota has a better general knowledge of the law than they do because they're all specialists. The last time I was there about a week or ago I did business with a law firm, a very good law firm. They do nothing but bankruptcy work. They wouldn't know how to try a divorce case if you paid them a \$1,000,000 for it. They wouldn't even touch it. The firm doesn't do anything but bankruptcy, but they're good in their field.

LARRY: I would think that would be, if anything, a boring type of.... I mean the repetition of those kind of cases. Do you think that North

Dakota has been overlooked perhaps in terms of the recognition that it may or may not deserve as being a food producer and contributing.

WILLIAM: Yes. I think, the rest of the country doesn't realize the importance of what we're producing, furnishing both physically and economically. Well, you know, you say you're from North Dakota. "Boy, it's cold up there," is the first reaction for some reason or another.

LARRY: I spent three years in the army and I got so many bad reactions to my telling people where I was from that I almost became intimidated by someone asking me where I was from. Many times if you're watching a talk show and if they want to convey the arch of a boondock state, it's North Dakota.

WILLIAM: Ya, that's right. Johnny Carson and Fargo, North Dakota.

LARRY: Ya, ~~that's~~ right.

WILLIAM: Well, many years ago I was listening to a George Gobel show and he mentioned that he'd spent a night at the Hoople Hilton at Hoople, North Dakota.

LARRY: Ya.

THE END