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H. CLAY REED (1899- )

1899
Born in Tyrone, Pennsylvania

1907-1916
Attended school at Johnsonburg, Mill Hall, and Lock Haven, Pennsylvania

1922
B.A. from Bucknell College

1929
M.A. from Penn State College

1939
Ph.D. from Princeton University

Taught in Pennsylvania schools for 5 years

1924
Instructor in English and History at University of Delaware

Professor of History and Chairman of History Department

Worked in summers for state archivist Henry C. Conrad

1927
Married Marion I. Bjornson of North Dakota
H. CLAY REED

This interview is with Dr. H. Clay Reed, retired professor of history at the University of Delaware. This interview was conducted on September 1, 1966.

Interviewer: Doctor Reed, where are you from originally?

Doctor Reed: Well, I'm a native Pennsylvanian. I never was in Delaware until I came here to teach. You asked about my name. I have this name for political reasons because I was named for my grandfather who was born in 1832. That's one of the times when Henry Clay was running for the presidency, unsuccessfully, and my grandfather's father evidently was a strong supporter of Henry Clay; and he gave that name to my grandfather, and it was passed on to me. So my connection with Henry Clay is entirely political. I hadn't ever been in Delaware until I came here to teach in 1924. I happened to come here because shortly before that I had been teaching in a suburban Philadelphia high school, and I was taking some graduate courses on the side at the University of Pennsylvania. I got acquainted there with Alex Blair of Wilmington who taught here in the history and English departments. He went to Cincinnati, and I suggested to him that he turn his job over to me, and that's what happened. I came down to see Dean Dutton here in 1923. I didn't come then because I was already teaching high school in another place, but I did come here in
the following fall, 1924, and I stayed there for forty years. I think one reason why I got this job was that I had been an English major in college, but in my high school teaching I taught mostly history. So I was qualified then to teach freshman English, which I did, as well as the history. I was in two departments for the first year after Doctor Seifert became head of the English department. But that lasted for only one year, and after that I was exclusively history.

**Interviewer:** What was the university like in 1924?

**Doctor Reed:** Well, it was small. There were about 600 students, in a proportion of about three boys to two girls; and the faculty, of course, was correspondingly small. I remember Doctor Cooks was professor of philosophy and sociology and psychology. (chuckle) He had what Doctor Seifert called the "settee" instead of the chair of so many different subjects. After while Doctor Cooks got somebody to help him, Kenneth Oberlin, with the psychology; but it took a long time to develop those departments so that there was more than one person in each of them.

At that time we had the separate organization of the Women's College and Delaware College, and we would have a class in freshman history up at this end of the campus; and then we would go down and have more sections of the same course down at the other end of the campus. We sort of shuttled back and forth between Recitation Hall, where we had most of our classes on Main Street, and the Women's Campus which was down at the other end of the mall. And that worked all right.
Perhaps it's a little more stimulating to have both boys and girls in a class, but it worked all right. I had always taught both boys and girls in high school; and when I got disgusted with the laziness of the boys, why it was sort of refreshing to have girls who worked a little harder. And then when one got fed up on the lack of initiative of the girls, why then it was nice to have some of the boys speaking up in class even though you knew sometimes they hadn't done any of their work. They were just willing to talk whether they knew anything or not. But I think it's better to have men and women in the same class.

Where it really pinched us in this dual arrangement was in the small classes, a class where there would be only two or three in some of the advanced courses. It would be much better to be able to get the boys and girls together, and have a class oftener than to have to wait a couple of years until you have collected enough people at one end of the campus to have such a class. And I suppose the bigger enrollment, the bigger size of the institution is is an advantage for everybody concerned because you can have a much richer curriculum than you can where the classes are small and enrollment is too small to support very many advanced courses. Of course, the administration is always thinking about how much it costs to teach a class; and when you have too many classes with only half a dozen in them, why it is too expensive a luxury to afford. Now with our thousands---- How many have we now?

Interviewer: I saw in the paper last night, I think, well, there is over 2,000 new students coming in.
Doctor Reed: Two thousand freshmen and transfers. Well, you see that is three times as many as we had in the whole institution when I started there.

I remember Doctor Hullihen, the president, announced with some pride just before we got into World War II that the enrollment was now one thousand students. (chuckle) And there were many people who thought that it oughtn't go any higher than that. I don't know what they would think now with 2,000 new students to what we already have. But college enrollments are increasing everywhere and buildings go up, doubling and tripling. I guess that's what we are going to have in the future.

Interviewer: It must have kept you pretty busy, going from one end of the campus to the other too.

Doctor Reed: Well, it was a little hard to get from one end to the other in the ten minutes class interval, and we tried to avoid having to do that. We usually had our freshman classes at Delaware College in the morning and had the girls' freshman history right after lunch in the afternoon, which worked out pretty well. I didn't ride a bicycle either in those earlier days, too. I could have gotten back and forth faster, but we walked.

When I came, there were two other people in the history department; and I was the third. That was a good size department. The Economics Department consisted of one person; they called him the head of the department rather than the chairman, and he was the whole thing. The big people on the faculty
were heads of departments. Even though they might be the only one in their department, they were still the head of it. Doctor Seifert was a big figure on campus; and his department had, oh I think, four people in it at the time that I came besides me who had just one class in freshman English. Perhaps you know, he was a Delaware College graduate, quite a distinguished scholar, and a very influential person on the campus. One reason why the English department was bigger than all the other departments was that everybody had to take a considerable amount of English, not only the freshman composition, but a second year in sophomore literature; and that lasted a long time. I think that lasted here longer than it did most other places, where there was a requirement of two years of English from everybody. It lasted longer in the department because Seifert was so influential on the faculty. I think everybody now takes one year of English, don't they?

Interviewer: I thought they still had the two years, but they may have changed it recently.

Doctor Reed: Is that so? Well, now, that might be. If that's true, well that is a holdover from the days of Wilbur Owen Seifert; and I think that is not common in college curricula. So in that way we are still pretty old fashioned.

Interviewer: Who were the other two history teachers?

Doctor Reed: When I came, the head of the department was Doctor Bevon, Wilson Lloyd Bevon, who had come from Sewanee. The reason for that was Doctor Hullihen, the president, who had been here two or three years, I think, before I came, had
been dean at the University of the South, at Sewanee. I suppose he got Doctor Bevon to come. The other member of the department was George Herbert Ryden, who, after Doctor Bevon left, became the chairman of the department himself. Ryden was Swedish descent; and later on in the '30's, he had a lot to do with the celebration of the 300th anniversary of Swedish settlement here which was celebrated in this state in 1639. I have always suspected that that was one reason why Ryden came here--because of the connection that the Swedes had with the early settlement. Delaware's the only one of the 13 colonies that was founded by Swedes. So there were the three of us. I took Alex Blair's place here, and there was Bevon and Ryden. And then when Bevon, who, by the way, was an ordained Episcopal minister, he went back to Sewanee to be professor of religion, theology, down there, then Doctor Ryden became head of the department. And for some time we had Professor James A. Barclay who taught in the high school in Wilmington, taught history, came down. He taught one course, I think, for a while. Dean Robinson, dean of the Women's College, was fond of him; so through her influence he was added to the department as a full-time member. I suspect he was about 40, and he was about 70 before he finally retired from here; and he taught several years after that in King's College. He taught until he died really. But he was a popular teacher with the students, very nice man. So for quite a while there was the three of us, and then we added a sector in European History, really it was English History that we added; and we first had a young fellow named O'Brien who stayed here only
a year. That was during the Prohibition Days. It seems he took a drink with some of the students, or something of that sort, and encouraged the displeasure of the administration, so he left. (chuckle) He was a very good English scholar and a good teacher; but during the '20's in the Prohibition age, liquor was a touchy subject. So he departed, and then he was succeeded by Frank Squire. Have you been around here----

Interviewer: He became dean later?

Doctor Reed: Yes, he became dean later. I think it has been about ten years since he died.

Interviewer: Died in England.

Doctor Reed: People around here now don't know him; but I think there's a building named, a dormitory

Interviewer: I see his wife regularly around town.

Doctor Reed: for him, and Mrs. Squire, of course, is here.

We had another English instructor in between those two, Cunningham was his name. But when Squire came he stayed; and he was very popular with the students and gave good courses. During the war he was in the navy; and when he came back, he was made dean of the university.

By that time we had abandoned this separate organization. During World War II almost overnight we lost all of our men students. They were going into the army, and we couldn't maintain this separation of classes any more. What we really had in effect was the girls' classes, which went on as usual; and then a handful of boys who were still around just came in to the girls classes. Then after a while, army students began being sent in; people, boys who were drafted and were
given some academic training, several months of it, before they went into active service. So we had several hundred of these army trainees, and we had a separate program for them; they were by themselves. And the civilians still continued to be just girls, plus a few 4F's, boys who were too young to be drafted; they were in the other classes. That continued through the war.

And then, of course, after the war was over we had this flood of returning GI's; and in the meantime, this separate organization had been abolished. Dean Robinson, who was the first dean of the Women's College, retired, and the days of the separate organization were gone. So when the GI's came back, we were on this new separation of students, boys and girls, and it has been that way ever since. But many people still thought that it was better to have the boys and the girls---- I remember that the director of the Education Department remarked one time in a faculty meeting that he had the boys and the girls segregated, separated, in his records. (chuckle) And in the library, for quite a while, the boys had tables where they sat in the reading room, and the girls had their own tables, (chuckle) but those were the good old days.

While Miss Robinson was dean, no smoking was allowed on the part of the girl students, and their hours to be off campus were sort of strict. I remember that they were supposed to be back in by 7 o'clock in the evening. I don't know what the rules are now, but it doesn't seem to me to be 7 o'clock.
Interviewer: It's a lot later than that.

Doctor Reed: And also, if a girl got married while she was a student, she had to leave. It was thought that matrimony was incompatible with scholarship. So that's quite a contrast.

Interviewer: That wasn't true for the men? They could stay if they were married?

Doctor Reed: No that wasn't. Although I don't recall that there were very many of the men students married while they were in college.

Interviewer: I imagine the veterans, when they came in, changed that.

Doctor Reed: Yeah, that was a post war development. The veterans changed things a lot when they descended upon us. Among other casualties, the honor system was ended permanently then. They had a vote on it, and the girls were all for reviving it; but a lot of the boys said they wouldn't abide by any honor system, so it never was. Even before that, it had worked very well with the girls, but not so well with the boys. That's before the war. So it was a casualty of the war situation.

But during the war we had an accelerated program. We tried to put three semesters of work into one year, and tried to shorten the semesters a week or so. Instead of 16-1/2 weeks, which is the normal amount of time allowed for a semester, we were doing it in about 14. And it just was a burden on everybody. You just couldn't do as good a job in 14 weeks as you could in 16. And we ran through the year that way, you see, three of these terms took up most of the year.
And after the war then we ran double summer sessions for a while, six weeks a summer session, and that continued longer than the administration expected or even wanted because they had the enrollment in those summer courses with the boys coming back and wanting to get through with their college as soon as they could. So for several years after the war was over we had this year-round operation, with a double summer session each summer.

Well, in those days we had more faculty meetings. We had a faculty meeting every month at Delaware College, and then we had a faculty meeting every month at the Women's College. That was called the Academic Council; and, see, the faculty was common to the two places. Oh, there were a few people in home economics and that sort of thing, women who were not members of the Delaware College, but most of them were. The Education Department was under the administration of the Women's College. As far as I know, the education courses were all for girls. I'm not sure how they worked that; but with those exceptions, English department, history department, economics, and so on, the members of those departments were members of both the Academic Councils of Women's College and Delaware College up here. Now there was an exception to that and that was Miss Drake, who was a professor of chemistry down there from the beginning, and whose department was separate from the one up here. But they had these faculty meetings in late afternoon, and they served tea beforehand down at the Women's College faculty meetings so it always got a better attendance and a little prompter attendance than the
one up here; but it wasn't until, I think, in the 1940's that a joint university faculty meeting succeeded these other two. You see, when they reorganized and did away with that separation, then it was logical to have just one faculty and that was what was done. Later on they started having meetings of the Arts and Science faculty, too. That's when the organization was based on different subjects, different fields, instead of men and women. We spent a lot of time in talk at those old faculty meetings (chuckle).

I remember one of the earliest things that caught my attention was the concern that some members of the faculty had with the better student; and for several years, we were talking, having committee meetings, and all that sort of thing trying to fix up something we could do for the better student. And we finally did. We got an honors degree, to be with honors, which I think we still have; and also a degree with honors in some subject, and I think we still have that as far as I know. You can graduate with honors in English, or in history, or whatever it may be. And so after several years of talk, we finally got that worked out. And then about 20 years later, there is a new generation in the faculty, and they started a campaign to do something for the better student (chuckle). I found that that's happened in more than one case. We would go over a thing, the faculty, get it all talked out and do something about it; and then a new generation of faculty members comes along and they don't remember, don't know what we did 20 years ago on this, and so as you get that longer experience, you see many things keep coming up.
Every new generation the faculty is concerned about the same thing; and they want to do things, sometimes it seems to me, just for the sake of change. They want to change things not because they need changing, but because it seems it's indicated. At least I've found that to be true in my own department. The young fellows, they want to change things. I was like that too. I was 25 when I came here, and I wanted to reform the world too. I remember I got our department to substitute for the freshman history course which we had, which was modern European history since 1500. There was two semesters of that, it was a year's course; and I got our people to change that to include medieval history so that our freshman course ran then from the Fall of Rome down to the present. I had a name for it. What we were doing was truncated history. I picked that up from some education class that I was in, and I'm sure that Bevon and Ryden gave in just on account of my impertunity. I wanted to do it; and they couldn't think of any good reason that we shouldn't, so we did. And later on, I was the chairman of the department myself, and we were having trouble with this freshman course. There was just too much in it, and the medievalists wanted to give more time to the medieval part, and the people interested in recent history wanted to emphasize the recent part. So we were always at sword's points about that, and that lasted for several years until Walter Cushner, who was a recent addition to the department said: "Well, why don't we have three semesters instead of two." And that's what we did, and that's what we had before I got this thing changed way back there. We had a year of
modern history and then we had a semester of medieval history. You didn't have to take them in succession. The regular freshman course was the two semesters of the modern period; but when we stretched it out again to three semesters, we allowed the people to take any two of them in succession, either the medieval and the early modern, or the early modern and the contemporary modern. That gives you more time to get a little depth in the freshman course, and I think it's a lot better than what we had before. But, see, I didn't think so back there when I got it changed (chuckle).

And as for the better student, I remember when these second generation reformers were campaigning, they wanted to do things that took a lot of instructor's time. What they wanted was a complicated business, and I remember one time when I suggested that an easy way to do something for the better student was to give him what he earned. A person who gets A in a course knows a whole lot more about it than someone who gets C, and why shouldn't he be compensated accordingly; and so what seemed to me to be a good thing to do was to have weighted credits. If you got three credits for a C in a course, you ought to have more if you got A in the course, four maybe, something like that. But that never appealed to anybody, it was too easy for one thing. It was just a bookkeeping thing, and reformers always wanted to do something that was spectacular and time consuming and all that. I've never heard of a place that does give weighted credits.

**Interviewer:** No, but it's probably a good idea.
Doctor Reed: I don't know any place that does it. But, yet, it's a logical thing to do. You really give the student what he earns. If he works hard and gets an A in the course, he would be compensated for his extra work. As it is now, we hang medals on him (chuckle), put cum lauda on his diploma, or he got honors in chorus or honors in mathematics; and yet, if you gave a person more credit, he would get through school sooner, and it would be to his advantage in every way. But that doesn't appeal as far as I have ever determined, either to administrators or to faculty members. They want to do something that looks spectacular, (chuckle) instead of just a mere bookkeeping matter.

Well, I quit going to faculty meetings about ten years before I retired, so I don't know what they do at them now. They got so big that you can't afford to let everybody talk the way we used to do in these little meetings back before—I don't know, in the '20's. You could always depend on a few people having something to say about everything that came up. It didn't matter what it was. They just liked to talk. Well, we can't afford that luxury now. I think also we only have four or five faculty meetings in a year. See, we used to have them once a month at both ends of the campus; that was two that you went to every month.

Well, we have had a lot of changes here; but I think for my purpose, the most important one is the adding to our library. That's been—well, Doctor Carlson started that, but it has been Doctor Perkins that has really put the money into the library. Of course, he's got more money to work with;
but right from the beginning, he increased our library expenditure so that now if you want a book, why about all you need to do is ask for it. In the earlier days, each department had an appropriation; and for a long time—oh, up through World War II—we were spending about $3,000 a year total on all the new books, and our department, we had a big share of that, $600, or $800. But that meant that for every ten books, say, that we needed, we could get maybe one; and as the new books kept coming out, see, we got so far behind, it just got discouraging. This year we would get one of those ten books, and next year we would get one of the next ten books; and you can see how that deficit accumulated, and it was pretty rugged really to try to do any research in a library like ours, or to do any graduate work. You see, we were giving masters' degrees way back there. I remember a few people during the depression, they couldn't get jobs, and they came back to school and took some graduate work. Dean Dutton remarked it would keep them off the streets (chuckle) if we offered graduate courses. So we did. But we had very little to work with. We had subjects that you could give a student to work on for a thesis because we always had a master's thesis in history; and the problem always was: What can this fellow do for a thesis that he will be able to find material for it. Now, see, for several years now, we have been giving doctors' degrees; and our library resources aren't any too good for that. Most of these doctoral candidates have to spend quite a bit of time in other places, but it is far better than it was years ago; and I think it will continue to improve.
As I said, we were spending $3,000 a year at the end of the war; and that's what it had been for years before that. Somehow or other it seems that whenever they had to make a cut in the funds, they would cut the library. But after the war the library committee made a survey of various departments and asked them to say what they really needed, how much they really needed for their departments for books for a year. They were urged to be frank about it, not to consider whether you would get it or not; but what they ought to have to do a proper job. And the totals of those added up to $16,000, and at the time we were spending $3,000. The library committee reported that to the faculty, and I remember there was a stunned silence. Nobody said a word. But Doctor Carlson came—well, I guess he was here by that time—he gave us that. He took the committee at its word and gave us that $16,000. You see, that was five times what we had been getting before. So that was a good start. And then when Doctor Perkins came, of course he put some real money into the library. And then for a couple of years we have had this new building, and that's always an encouragement. Oh, I think nowadays, no institution that wants to do anything with graduate work, especially doctoral work, can or should try to get along without a decent library. And you people, you are not familiar with those old days when we had to scratch around or borrow books from other libraries, and all that, books that we should have had ourselves. So research is a whole lot easier than it use to be now.

Interviewer: Did most of the faculty members have their doctors' degrees?
Doctor Reed: Then? "Oh, oh no. When I came, I didn't even have my master's degree finished. I think I probably wouldn't have got this job at all if I hadn't been able to teach both freshman English and history. I got it on the recommendation of this chap I knew, Alex Blair. They didn't seem to investigate much. I had had some high school teaching. In fact I taught for five years in various high schools in Pennsylvania before I came down here, four years at the time when I was offered this job first. But it took me a long time to finish up my doctor's degree. I think I didn't get it until 1939.

Interviewer: That was true of most of the people then also?

Doctor Reed: Yeah, uh huh. Now at first, a master's degree was about all that was expected of people in the English department, for example. Now that would be especially true of people who were not heads of departments. Usually they tried to get somebody who had a doctor's degree to be a head of a department. The other people in the department were usually instructors. Nobody who had a doctor's degree needed to stay around as an instructor anywhere. That's probably true now. It wasn't true, however, during the 1930's, when during the depression everybody felt lucky just to hang on to their jobs and to avoid the salary cut instead of getting a raise in his pay. So the thirties were rather lean years. However, we got along better during the thirties than we have during the inflationary period since. We got an automobile,
for example, for the first time during the thirties.

Interviewer: How were salaries when you first came here?

Doctor Reed: Well, I remember my salary was $1,800 as an instructor. That was a little less than I was getting for high school teaching, but I thought I would rather do college work than high school. After all, high school teaching is hard work. You are in there all day and have to supervise students studying when you're not having them in class and you got all these reports. (chuckle)

Interviewer: I know what you mean.

Doctor Reed: Well, you know, you have been doing some of it. I say, it's really hard work. So when I had an opportunity to come here, I was willing to take a little salary cut. But in those earlier days, if you got $100 more, that was fine. You were extremely fortunate. We didn't have very much of a salary cut here during the depression. I think our salaries were reduced 4 percent and that was at a time when other places were making big slashes in the salaries, and they were letting people go or not hiring replacements and all that sort of thing. You see that's long before your time. You people now don't realize what it was like during the thirties. I don't think we shall ever have that again.

THIS INTERVIEW CONTINUED ON SEPTEMBER 2, 1966

Doctor Reed: Perhaps I might say something about my interest in Delaware History because I never had any desire to go any other place. From the beginning, practically, I got interested in the history of this state. Coming from a
big state like Pennsylvania into a little state like Delaware is quite a change for a person. Here we have only three counties; in Pennsylvania they had 67. I think they still do. And that was quite a novel experience to me to be in a place where things were so small that everybody knew everybody else. Here if you see the Governor walking down the street, you don't pay much attention. You are likely to see him at any time, but in Pennsylvania if the Governor appeared in your town that would be a signal for everybody in town to turn out and see him. And I found, too, that not too much had been done in the way of scholarly research in the history of Delaware; and so I got interested in that. The state law requires us at the University to give courses in Delaware history. Everybody has to take a course in the history of Delaware in order to graduate. So, we had to teach it. It was Doctor Ryden, really, who got seriously interested in the history of the state as a subject for research and writing; and then I did too, and later on, John Runroe has done a great deal of research and writing in the history of Delaware. I think that's true all over the country that more American historians are becoming interested in the history of their own state and are doing research and writing of a serious kind in their states' history. All along that has been one of my main interests, both the teaching and the writing of the history of this state. Some years ago, my wife and I collaborated on a History of Delaware; and within this past year we have published a bibliography of Delaware that is based on our interests in the history of
this state. There isn't any demand for Delaware historians
any place else except at the University of Delaware, so I
really never thought of going to teach in another place, so
I stayed here for 40 years. Soon after I was married, which
was in 1927, in fact before I was married, I spent a summer
down at Dover working in the Archives; and the archivist at
that time was Judge Henry C. Conrad who was quite a noted
historian of Delaware himself and who was an old man then.
He was beginning to lose his eyesight; and I was employed
by the Public Archives Commission to go through some of the
old manuscripts' records of the state which are deposited in
the Archives, which is a fairly new institution. I spent
that time arranging, classifying, and unfolding various manu-
script records, putting them in envelopes, folders rather, and
arranged by subject and chronologically too. I did that for
several summers; I think three. The first one, I was alone
there; but after that I was married and my wife spent a
summer down there with me. And that was very enjoyable doing
that, and it also gave one a closer contact with the manu-
script sources for the history of the state. That was a
further inducement for me to go ahead and work seriously on
the history of the state.

We are a very old state, old colony, one of the first
of the thirteen colonies to be established. We have an attempt
in the 1630's by the Dutch to establish a colony here. That
was at Lewes and that was not a permanent colony, but in 1638
the Swedes did establish a settlement on the present site
of Wilmington. That marks the beginning of the white occupation of Delaware. And so, there aren't very many colonies whose origins go back that far. And so in our Delaware history course we have a lot to cover. We've got a very long history compared, for example, with the state of Nevada which hasn't much before the Civil War except Indian history. And that's true perhaps of most of the states in the west. So we can and do try to make our Delaware history course a reflection of the history of the nation. Many students, especially students of other states, take this Delaware history course rather unwillingly; but yet, especially if they do it in connection with the regular course in American history, you can make the Delaware history course really a meaningful course. You have an opportunity to give time to certain aspects of American history that are particularly concerned with Delaware, and in that way you can sew a little more light on various episodes in the history of the nation that are affected by what was done about certain problems by the people of Delaware.

I found after I came that during the Civil War President Lincoln wanted to buy the slaves, wanted the Federal Government to pay for all the slaves in the nation. He advocated that as a war measure. If the Federal Government was willing to do that, to buy the slaves from the slaves owners and pay them a fair market price for them, that that would cause the war to the opposition of the Federal Government to collapse, and it would be a fair way to solve the slavery
problem, at least from the economic standpoint. And so Lincoln offered to do that and urged the states, the slave states to sell their slaves to the Federal Government. A bill for that purpose was prepared for submission to the legislature here, and it failed passage by only one vote. It was said at the time that that failure was do to one member of the legislature at the last minute changing his vote from being in favor of it to opposing it, and that's what happened. When the state of Delaware rejected Lincoln's offer of compensation for their slaves, compensated emancipation is what it was, then the chance of it succeeding in any other state like Maryland, for example, the chances were much smaller. If Delaware had gone ahead and accepted this administration's proposal, it's quite possible that the other states would have fallen in line, other slave states would have done it too, and perhaps even some of the states that had already seceded would have been willing to do the same thing. But it was stopped in Delaware, and it never got started anywhere else until nearly the end of the war, and by that time the damage was done. Now that was a subject that interested me, and I investigated it and wrote an article about it which was published in Delaware Notes. I think in 1931 or '32. And there were other ways in which Delaware's policy have affected

BECAUSE OF TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES WITH THE ORIGINAL TRANSCRIPTION, THIS INTERVIEW CONTINUED ON NOVEMBER 9, 1966.

Interviewer: Doctor Reed, how did you first develop your interest in Delaware history?
Doctor Reed: Well, it developed almost as soon as I came here. For one thing, not long after I came I had to teach some Delaware history because we require a one-hour, one-semester course of all students now. When I came it was just all the men students because the law requiring it was passed before the Women's College was established. The Women's College's authorities interpreted that law not to apply to the women students. However, some years ago it was reinterpreted to mean that all students should have this course in Delaware history and government that the law requires. And that accounts for quite a bit of our teaching load. Doctor Munroe does it all now, and he has students in large lecture sections; but you have to have that course in order to graduate. It's a requirement for graduation.

Interviewer: I think he gets some help now from the television program that he has developed.

Doctor Reed: Yes, Yes, the television programs that John made are---- I think they are being used quite quite often, and they are very good too.

I was attracted to Delaware history here because not many people had done any serious work in it, and I did my graduate work at a time and place where there was an increasing interest in local history, that is in history research on the state basis. Because, after all, the United States is made up of states, and we have a federal form of government in which a great deal of important things are done on a state level rather than on a local level. In particular, I found
when I got here that near the beginning of the Civil War
President Lincoln had a plan to buy the slaves and pay a fair
market price for them that the war which had already begun and
which was increasing in intensity would soon stop because
the slave owners could see already as soon as the war started
that slavery was on its way out and the sensible thing to do
would be to sell your slaves to the federal government which
would set them free, and Lincoln also had a scheme to colo-
nize them in Liberia or some place outside the United States.
So he urged Congress to pass such a law, and he mentioned
it in one of his messages to Congress; and the representative
in Congress from Delaware cooked up a scheme to introduce a
bill into the state legislature to buy all the slaves in
Delaware, which were about 1,800 in number, and set them free.
The Delaware legislature was to pass this bill on the condition
that Congress would make an appropriation to the state of
Delaware to meet the costs of this. Not long after I came
here I got wind of this, I saw a reference to it somewhere.
I had never heard of this scheme before, but there it was.
So I thought that's a very interesting thing. Here's a case
in which Delaware had an opportunity to alter the whole course
of American history, and so I studied that and went around and
saw one or two people, who were old people. One man in parti-
cular was the son of one of the Civil War Delawareans who
Lincoln got to help him and our representative to draw up such
a bill. So I talked to him, he was just about the last survivor.
And then I wrote this up in an article which I published in
Delaware Notes. Now that's one of the might-have-beens of history which I think are always interesting in themselves. And so that sort of got me started seriously in Delaware history.

And then I spent a couple of summers down in Dover working for the Public Archives Commission, and at that time—I don't know whether I mentioned this before—but at that time Judge Conrad was the archivist, and he was getting old and losing his sight; and so I spent two summers, the second one with my wife, down there, whom I just married, in going over these state records, opening them up—they had all been folded up in little letter-size packets. So I opened them up, pressed them, and put them in folders and classified them. And we had among other things a large number of legislative papers going way back to the beginning of Delaware government under the Federal constitution. And they're down there yet. I sorted them by years, chronologically, and also topically within a year. And just during the past winter I've been going over some of that material down there myself, and I come across these folders with my own handwriting on them; but I don't remember now anything that was in them (chuckle). But they are a very valuable source of information for Delaware history. In a small state like this, it's easy for a person interested in Delaware research just to hop down to Dover and spend a day down there whenever he needs to with these old papers. And then I continued teaching Delaware history; Doctor Ryden and I taught it, and I think Mr. Barkley. I don't remember
exactly whether Mr. Barkley taught any Delaware history or not, but there it was, a good subject for various research. And when John Munroe joined the department, he worked and he still is in Delaware history. So, it's our opportunity here to do that more easily than anybody anywhere else can do it. Here's a place to do your research in Delaware history. And John Munroe several years ago published a very good book called Federalist Delaware that is based on this very intensive study of the local records here. He now knows more about Delaware history than anybody else. So you see, you have the world's authorities on Delaware history right here in the state--Munroe, and Leon DeValinger who is the archivist down there and who was an early student of mine here. And it's very worthwhile work to do. You feel that you are bringing out information about the early history of the state that hasn't been done before.

Interviewer: How did you go about compiling your History of the First State?

Doctor Reed: Well, the Lewes Historical Publishing Company came along and asked of people if they would write a history of Delaware for this company to publish. And, after, I suppose, several refusals, they finally got around to me; and I think that was about 1944, because it came out in 1947, and I was suppose to have three years to do it although I took more time that I was supposed to have. But I got a number of people to contribute chapters to that on various subjects. There were 50 of them in all, so only a very small
part of that was actually written by me, just two or three chapters of it. I had contributions by well-known local authorities on Delaware; for example, Doctor Christy, who for years was the pastor of the Westminster Presbyterian Church in Delaware, contributed a chapter on the history of Presbyterianism in Delaware, and several other people wrote on their particular denomination. I got a prominent Polish citizen of Wilmington to write a chapter on the Poles in Delaware, and another on the Italians, and so on. And then I got people like Harold Hancock who is one of our outstanding Delaware historians even now though he teaches in Ohio—he is a native of Dover and he spends every summer in Delaware, he's done a great deal of work in Delaware history—he wrote a couple of chapters; John Kunroe wrote a couple of chapters, and others. So we had some new material in it that isn't in any previous history of Delaware. And that was published in three volumes. Only Volumes 1 and 2 was I responsible for, and the third volume is family history which was compiled by the publishers themselves. As they went around getting some subscriptions for the history, they would get biographies of various Delaware people; and if they wanted to spend enough money, they could get their picture put in. Books like this have been published for probably nearly 100 years now. In the trade, they are sometimes called "mug" books (chuckle) because the attraction to people is the picture along with—and that's the attraction to the publishers, too, because it is very expensive to get your picture, a steel engraving or
even a photograph, $300 or something like that I was told, they paid to get pictures in. So you see, while they were taking subscriptions for the book, I was presumably writing it; but instead of writing it, I edited it, and that was—- In a way that was almost as big a job as if I had written it myself. But in that, we do have things in there that are done by specialists in the field. I remember I got a Mr. Wilson who was president of the Delaware Power and Light Company to contribute a chapter on—- I guess his chapter was on the early street transportation or perhaps the development of electric power itself. He got one of his staff to do a chapter on the history of the manufacture of gas in Wilmington which the Delaware Power and Light Company still sells. The gas company is part of DF&L. So those people were careful; and they had their records of their businesses, and they were able to do very good chapters. Unfortunately, that history of Delaware went out of print before it was published because the press run was determined by the number of orders they had, and then their practice was to print a few more besides the orders just for general sale. I found after it came out that I couldn't seem to get any copies. They finally told me that they had had a fire in the bindery after the press run was finished, when they were binding them up, they had a fire in the bindery, and the water damage ruined about 100 sets which they had for general sale. And so, you couldn't buy it at all. Only the subscribers got it. And it is coming on the market now because people have died and their books are being sold. So that's the story of the history of Delaware that my wife and I edited.
Interviewer: Now I believe this past year you and your wife put out a Delaware bibliography?

Doctor Reed: Oh yes. It took us, off and on, ten years to do that, including a year or so that we had to wait to get the first people down in Baltimore to get on with the printing of it, but we finally got that out last April, I think. That was, in a way, an interesting thing to do. It wouldn't be interesting at all to anybody that wasn't interested in Delaware history; but we were, so we put all of it together, and people tell us that it is very useful, librarians mostly, people like that. We had a few of them done and bound in cloth and the bookstore tells me they are all gone now. They have about 200 of the total print of 500 copies left. So, I guess they will all be sold out before too long, but we tried to list everything about Delaware that is in print that we could find. And that includes not only books, but articles in bigger books and even just short paragraph references if they are important to Delaware matters in other books that aren't specifically about Delaware. For example, in histories of the explosive industry, and the chemical industries, there would be quite a bit about the DuPont Company. So whenever we found any references in a book of that kind we put them in to make it convenient for a person looking up a Delaware subject to go to these books that he might not know about for his information. So that's our latest.

Right now I'm about to write up some material that I have been collecting for several years on presidential electors in
Delaware. You know that the Constitution provides that the President shall be chosen by electors from each state, and they are chosen especially for that purpose. That's all they do, they decide who ought to be President; and they go to their state capitols on a designated day and vote on this. And that is how we get our President. He's the choice of the majority of these presidential electors. The Constitution says that these electors shall be chosen as the legislatures of the various states direct. And so the legislatures can name them themselves if they want to, or they can have them elected by popular vote if they want to, or they probably can do half a dozen other things. They can choose them by lot if they wanted to, but they don't. The very first election in Delaware, the legislature provided that the electors be chosen by popular vote, one for each county, because we were entitled to three electors. We had three counties, and they were almost equal in population; so it was a very natural thing to do. They did that the first time, but they never did it again. By the time after four years rolled around and they were ready for another presidential election, political parties had developed, taking sides against each other; and the party in control of the legislature, which was for many years the Federalist party, if they legislature chose them, then they would all be Federalists, see, all three of them. If they had had another popular vote, it would have been quite likely at that time, in 1792, that the vote of New Castle County would be anti-Federalist and Kent and Sussex would be
Federalist. That's why the Federalists would get two electors. The other way by doing it themselves they got three. And we continued that right on down to the election of 1932. We were the last state, except South Carolina, to go over to popular election of presidential electors. And in every case, all the states voted to have popular elections by the election of 1932; but they all voted to choose them on the general ticket. That means three for the whole state instead of one for each county or one for each district, and unanimously they have done that. And you have perhaps read about Attorney General Buckson's suit to have that upset by the Supreme Court; but what makes it a little bit strange is that this is all done by state action, in every case, it is the state that has decided to do it. So people could say to Buckson: "So why don't you get your own state to choose these electors by districts." And you see, that's the point of this suit, that when you choose all--when you give the whole delegatal presidential electorate of a big state to the party that gets maybe 51 percent of the vote that those 49 percent of the opposition isn't represented at all. If it's 51 percent Republican in Pennsylvania, say, why that means that all of Pennsylvania's electoral votes go to the Republican candidate; 49 percent of the democratic vote is lost. Well, that's the latest thing I got interested in, and I suppose I will always be fiddling around in one way or another with Delaware history.
Well, I hope this tape turns out better than that first one with all the extraneous noise. The windows are closed now so we don't hear so much of that from the outside. And I don't think of anything else that I ought to tell you so maybe we might as well close up for the night.

END OF TAPE