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(Vapaa) It is July 12th at my home on Moore's Lake in Dover, Delaware. I have with me a person that we are going to talk about—to talk with—about the newspaper business and a few other things that he's been involved in over the years. Now, will you introduce yourself, Jack?

(Smyth) Yeah. My name is Jack Smyth. The Smyth is spelled with an y instead of an i. Actually my given name is Bernard John Smyth, the name of my grandfather who came here in 1848 from County Cavan in Ireland. My father's name was John Bernard Smyth. He was born in Crescent, Pennsylvania while his father was working for the Pennsylvania Railroad and serving in the Pennsylvania militia during the Civil War. My daddy was born in 1862 and the reason that I'm still around is that he never got married until he was 52 years old. So he kind of skipped a generation in there. Shortly after he was born, however, his father and mother (who was Katherine McLaughlin from County Donnegal in Ireland) moved to Renova, Pennsylvania. It was a new town at the time, established simply for the care of Pennsylvania Railroad equipment, located on the west branch of the Susquehanna (River). My dad lived there all of his life and died at the age of 79. Most of his life after working in the railroad shops briefly, he ah—he became a retail jeweler. Went to Philadelphia, learned the watchmaking trade, later studied and became a Doctor of Optometry—which in those days was tied in much with the jewelry business. I was born—he met my mother when he was the chairman of the newly formed executive committee of the hospital in Renova, which was just established and they were looking for somebody to be its first superintendant.

My mother's name was Alice Russell. She was born in Boston, again of Irish immigrant parents. She trained in Carney Hospital there. She came to Renova for the purpose of becoming the first superintendant of the new hospital. It
was under those conditions that my dad met her, wooed her, and finally married her.

(Vapaa) How big was the hospital, Jack?

(Smyth) The hospital originally was 9 beds when it was set up in an old residence, established in 1910—still in existence.

(Vapaa) I was just looking up recently about the hospitals here in Kent County, Delaware and ah—the ah—Kent General Hospital which ah—is probably, I don't know if it's the largest hospital in the County or not. Milford may be larger. But Milford happens to be today in ah—Sussex County—over the Sussex County line, just over the line. Because Milford is the dividing line between the 2 counties. Although the original hospital, Jack, in Milford ah—was ah—the Windsor Hotel, I believe. The top part of the Windsor Hotel, and it was formed, I believe, oh somewhere around the early 1900's. And ah—incidentally ah—you know, of course, that Dr. H.V.P. Wilson just died and he was one of the founders of the Kent General Hospital here in Dover and actually he took out my gall bladder.

Incidentally, I'll introduce myself as the interviewer, George Vapaa, a former Kent County Agriculture Agent.

All right, Jack, we've got you born. We've—where do we go from there?

(Smyth) Well ah—the first thing that is significant that happened in my life was ah—my life was ah—rather a kind of tragedy. My mother died in the flu epidemic of 1918 when I was about 2½ and only about 6 months after giving birth to my ah—ah—only sister, Alice Constance. And ah—she herself passed away at a rather early age. She was only 44 when she died in 1964.

We were—my dad being past 50, and being ah—a widower after such a short married life, had made up his mind he probably wouldn't marry again. He had a sister who was married to a professional photographer and had—ah—they were childless, so my sister and I went to Duquesne, Pennsylvania and ah—for the next ah—10 years we were ah—reared by George Nichols and his wife, who
was my dad's sister.

(Vapaa) What was your dad doing in the meantime?

(Smyth) Well he was--he kept running his jewelry business. He was in partnership with his only brother, Jim Smyth, and the firm was known as Smyth Brothers. And ah--they ah--we lived in Duquesne. He frequently came to visit us. And we lived in Duquesne until 1926 when Nichols himself passed away. Then we went back to Renova. And ah--I was in 7th grade in high school--so we went back there and I graduated from there in 1933, same year you graduated I guess, George.

(Vapaa) Yeah, that's right. When did you say you were born again?

(Smyth) 1915. November 16th.

(Vapaa) Well I'm December 23, 1915. So I'm a little bit younger than you are.

(Smyth) Right.

(Vapaa) By about a month.

(Smyth) By about 5 months--5 weeks now.

(Vapaa) Five weeks, yes. It's kind of interesting I think, because I know when I first came to Dover in 1952 you were one of the first people I met. You had just bought the Delaware State News at the time.

(Smyth) Right. Right.

(Vapaa) And ah--you want to tell us a little bit about ah--would you rather talk about the jewelry business first or about the ah--or about how you got in the newspaper business?

(Smyth) Yeah, there's not much to talk about the jewelry business except that when my dad passed away I had several years of college and pre-med, but during the depression years college ended suddenly and I was there anyhow on a football scholarship--and ended suddenly when I shattered my shoulder. So I ah--went to work in the jewelry business and got married in 1936. And I worked for awhile in the railroad shops, went back in the jewelry business.
My dad died in 1940. Then I was drafted into the armed services in 1944. I was drafted twice—once into the Navy and then they decided they didn't want anybody over 28. So I was sent home again. And then when the Battle of the Bulge in December 1944 why they took me right into the infantry.

I took infantry basic training in Georgia, and at that time I made up my mind that I didn't like the jewelry business—ah—didn't care personally for jewelry and felt like a hypocrite for trying to sell it. I tried to decide then what I would like to do and I decided newspapering would be a—an interesting and worthwhile way of life. So I decided then to become a newspaper man.

And I came—of course we had 3 children at the time—I came back to Renova and told my wife that I was going to sell the jewelry business and go into the newspaper business. That was met with consternation to say the least. But ah—I went over to State College and ah—to take a journalism course and was discouraged there by—but another journalism school told me that I could probably get better experience in the—in a practical way. So I talked with a fellow named Yuler (sp. ?) who was the Editor of the State College paper, and he advised me to buy my home town paper which was a daily and had been for 40 years—probably the smallest daily in the country. And it was a pretty ah—ah—pretty small operation and ah—pretty vulnerable as far as a way of making a living.

(Vapaa) You mean small in size as well as in—?
(Smyth) Yeah, small in every respect. It was only 4 pages a day ah—
(Vapaa) Was it a standard size newspaper?
(Smyth) No, No. It was a regular broad sheet, but only 4 pages a day—has
been that way for years. Pages 2 and 3 often times were never changed. They just stayed the same. And ah--so really pages 1 and 2 were all they made up. But the family that had had it for many years had a son that left Renova, and the widow who was running it--and she was glad to sell out if I would hire her as a proofreader. So she--I had no experience in journalism outside of being Editor of my college year book--so she taught me first of all how to proofread. I went out and sold ads, covered meetings, handled the circulation boy. We had about 1100 circulation. The gross income for the year I bought the paper was $14,000, which is what I paid for it. That included a belt-in, 2 linotype machines and a hand set press.

(Vapaa) Un-hum. I'm going to have to talk to this boy a minute. (a visitor)

(Smyth) O.K. (stopped tape)

(Smyth) It was a small enough paper that I had to practically do everything myself, and it was a great experience for me, and I learned a lot in the 7 years I was there. One of the great difficulties was, of course, that as a railroad town I could see--especially with the arrival of the diesel locomotive--that the town was doomed as a--an economic entity as far as the repair of equipment was concerned. Because the diesel would haul the trains much further than the steam engines could.

(Vapaa) Could they haul a lot of cars?

(Smyth) You can pull more cars and fewer changes of engine and ah--much less maintenance.

So ah--I started casting around when I found out that I thoroughly enjoyed the newspaper business. I started casting around for another opportunity. And again, Yuler (sp. ?), who helped me--suggested getting started--helped me with some--some--all of my basic education there--was very helpful in getting
me to ah--ah--decide where I would locate in the future. And I was looking around for a small daily with potential that I could buy and operate. So ah-- I tried several places, took a lot of information and data and each time turned them down saying there wasn't enough there until in the summer of 1952, I happened to be up in ah--in ah--near New Haven, Connecticut and one of the executives on the New Haven paper--and he said to me, "You know, speaking of a potential daily, Dover, Delaware, a state capital, the only one in the 48 that doesn't have a daily newspaper." And he said, "I was down to Florida last year and going through there," he said, "the town is growing and I think that there's a possibility there. There's 2 weeklies there now. And of course, the state, being small, is dominated by the Wilmington paper. And ah--but they ah--have concentrated in Wilmington and they don't pay a great deal of attention to the news downstate, in the State capital."

So I thought that was a natural. So in November with this fellow, whose name incidentally also was Smith except it was spelled with an i, Bill Smith, we came to Dover, stayed at the old Richardson Hotel and looked around the town--looked at the plant. The paper at that time was owned by John Hanson Barnes, who was the son of the chief counsel for the Pennsylvania Railroad and lived out on the main line outside of Philadelphia. He had been a commander in the Navy and had come out in 1945 and bought the Delaware State News from Mr. Wix, who had owned it for many years. And later added to it by purchasing The Index, but he kept that purchase a secret, because he didn't want the businessmen in town to know. As a matter of fact, Barnes never condescended to live in Dover. So he wasn't exactly popular there, and it was one of the difficulties we had in ah--in ah--starting the daily was that there was a lot of ill will that Barnes himself had generated.
(Vapaa) But you did keep it as a weekly when you first came here for a long--
(Smyth) Yes. We kept it as a weekly for about 6 months as we made our preparations to go daily to get ah--the ah--features, to assemble a staff, and get the feel of the town and so forth. Although we announced right at the start that it was our intention to start a daily. The ah--we had ah--
(Vapaa) I think it would be interesting, Jack, to point out where you first had your ah--your offices and plant.
(Smyth) Well, the offices and plant were ah--on North Street, ah--right across from the ah--Capitol Theatre, right across North Street from the back of the Capitol Theatre. And ah--it was a ah--plant that Barnes had built. He had moved the paper around the corner from State Street where Wix had had it and built this plant there in 1947. And ah--it was a fairly modern plant--only 5 years old--but it soon became too small for our operation. The ah--although there were a number of difficulties with the financial end of it, the acceptance of the paper. For instance, I went around with one of the boys down State Street which is in the heart of old Dover, talked to people about buying the new paper. Ninety-five percent of them said they were happy with the weekly. They ah-- they ah--wished we wouldn't change it. But they got all the daily news they wanted out of the Wilmington paper, which had a large circulation there. And, in retrospect, I am convinced now that if it hadn't been for the fact that Dover Air Force Base was being re-activated at the same time and the people coming in there were looking for a daily newspaper and actually would buy the local daily without prejudice to find out the things they needed, it would have been a much tougher and harder struggle. Because I've learned since then that people's reading habits in regards to a newspaper are about as solid as any habits they get. We went ahead
and converted the Delaware State News to daily. We kept the Index for a weekly for a number of years, but it gradually lost circulation and disappeared.

(Vapaa) Well ah--I remember you were having an awful lot of printing problems, Jack.

(Smyth) Yeah. In those early days.

(Vapaa) Do you want to talk about that?

(Smyth) Yeah. Well the mechanical problems were difficult. Ah--one of the factors was just a human one. On a weekly paper the people--all the people are geared to getting a paper out once a week. Well, they work like the dickens for 2 or 3 days, meet that deadline, get the paper to press, and then everybody relaxes. And it just threw them into kind of a bind when they found that they couldn't relax when the paper went to press.

They had a paper to get out the next day and they should start working on it, but they wouldn't and the paper was late. Instead of getting better it became worse. I can remember in the early days we would pass papers at 10 o'clock at night. And often one meeting we would cover we would have it in the same night's paper the meeting was. It got to be known as the midnight express. Well, we gradually worked those problems out. And as the paper grew, the press we had was an 8 page press and would only run 3,000 copies an hour. Circulation grew and the size grew and we found we had to get another press. And of course, I went in with very little working capital and with a kind of stiff mortgage--ah--ah--not from the banks. The bank mortgage was fairly favorable. But I had a second mortgage from Barnes that ah--that ah--with very stiff terms. And that if I'd ever shown a loss or--he would have probably taken the paper back so fast my head would have spun.

So we didn't have a great deal of capital, so we bought--the first
press we bought, we put a building on the back, and bought an old rotary press from Connells ville, Pennsylvania. And we put that in--a 24 pade ca pacity and a lot faster. But again it was teaching with the rotary press--you had to cast plates instead of printing directly off the type and there were a lot of new processes. None of the people knew them really and we would some--still had late press times and still had some bad printing jobs. Then to compound it all, the people up at Wilmington--the union up there--ITU, International Typesetters Union, felt that the daily down here should have the benefits of their great union. So the first thing I know I was struck by a strike. And ah--I refused to sign up with the union for the main simple reason I couldn't afford it. I felt I was paying on the basis of what I could afford and until I--probably had the first picket line in the history of Dover. And they were--and they were on the picket line for a couple of years. However, I was amazed at that time from across the country as the story went out, we got offered some assistance from other publishers and got other printers in including 2 fellows from my paper back in Renova, and ah--we never missed a publication. Kept the paper going through the years of the strike and up to now we still have no union.

(Vapaa) There's no pressure for one?
(Smyth) No, ther's no pressure for one anymore. And of course, the printing industry itself in the meantime has been completely revolutionized. It's af fected the union nationally, as well as locally, because so much of the linotype is now practically a thing of history. The hot metal type is now gone. It's all cold type and most of the work doesn't take a great deal of skill. A boy or girl can learn how to set the type as long as they know how to type. And most of the type now is set by feeding tape into a computer and there has been a real revolution in regard to both the composing room and the press room
where no longer we have the metal and the ah--the ah--press, we just have
the offset method of printing.

(Vapaa) Now this also involved a move as far as your plant was concerned,
didn't it?

(Smyth) That's right. Yeah. When we were--when we were watching the prog-
ress of the offset thing which came in and really saved the weekly paper in-
dustry, and of course, the small daily too. And ah--as we watched I realized
that this was our future too, and so when we could ah--see our way clear after
unsuccessfully trying to put out a Sunday paper for Delaware--which the old
Sunday Star in Wilmington had folded, I think in 1954. In 1964 we attempted
another one, and we took a $25,000 loss. The idea was good, but we didn't ex-
ecute it properly. One of our main problems again was the mechanical.

Press didn't have good reproduction. And we tried to put a separate
paper out and have it accepted upstate, and in face of the good Sunday papers
coming out of Philadelphia, we didn't have a chance. So we killed that paper,
the Sunday paper, and concentrated on building a new plant and putting in an
offset press which now is 56 pages capacity, 30,000 copies an hour, which is a
far cry from the hand set press back in Renova and the 8 page press we first
had in Dover.

(Vapaa) And what is the circulation now, Jack, if it prints 30,000 an hour?
(Smyth) Yeah, it's about ah--it's about ah--28,000 on Sunday and about 25,000
daily.

(Vapaa) It takes you about 40 minutes to run off your day's edition?

(Vapaa) And how many pages would that be?
(Smyth) Well, it's according to the volume of advertising. We now run no fewer
than 20 pages and usually in the middle of the week when the grocery ads are in,
40 - 48 pages. And often times more than that when you have your--your seasonals.
So let's say it's a much better operation in every sense of the word. And ah--it's a paper that's easier to read. And ah--it's also a paper that people have found more acceptable.

(Vapaa) Nobody can argue with the quality of your pictures or the quality of the type either, Jack.

(Smyth) No. That's made a big difference in the--

(Vapaa) I've had the opportunity over the years as Kent County Agent to be in both of your plants, and certainly this new offset printing--I'm very much for this. And I like the way you can reproduce. It's not a series of dots as your old hot lead process was.

(Smyth) Yeah. That's right. Technology has made a big difference in the newspaper business. One of the factors, of course, is that ah--ah--I like most about the newspaper is the kind of people I've known through the years. And I mentioned--well your work--I started to tell you, George, when we were at lunch about your work and a kind of touching thing you said to me ah--. Some few years ago, we met in New York at a publisher's convention. We had dinner together and I said, "Bill (referring to Yulor) I look back through the years and I think of all the help you have given me, the good counsel you have given me, and all the free advice, and there is no way I could ever possibly repay you." I said, "I just feel so far in debt that I feel helpless." And he said, "You can repay me." He says, "There's a very simple way to do it, help another fellow along the way. The young people in the newspaper." He said, "If you do that, you'll repay me."

(Vapaa) One of the things I've noticed, Jack, is that you've broken in more reporters I believe here in Dover than--more young reporters--than anybody else in the State.

(Smyth) Yeah. That's true.

(Vapaa) And often time its your competition that hires those--away some of
your good workers.

(Smyth) Yeah. Right. Well that's to be expected. We realize this and many of the people are found to be not content to stay with a smaller daily. Yet, we were happy to hire them under those circumstances. They'll often times tell us that. But we feel that it gives them a great opportunity because ah--this is an ideal paper for a young journalist in the sense that ah--that it's a growing city. It's a growing country, it's a small and growing state. And ah--for a reporter to be able to get all these forms of government, which is mostly what a newspaper reports on, and then to have them in such a size that they can quickly get acquainted with the members of the legislature, the county government, the city government, etc. I know from my experience in Pennsylvania that I'd see the governor maybe in 4 years once a year. Here you can see the governor practically every day. If you need to.

(Vapaa) That's right. One of the things I've noticed, Jack, since I've been in Dover you can be almost ah--you'r never more than an hour away from home base.

(Smyth) Yeah.

(Vapaa) If you're living in Dover.

(Smyth) Yeah. Right. That's a great factor.

(Vapaa) It's a thing that people from out of state find hard to understand.

(Smyth) Yeah. Yeah. But it's a tremendous asset.

(Vapaa) Have we talked at all about your Sunday edition that you're going back to?

(Smyth) That was a--that was a different ah--we--we approached it differently. In fact, it was really done after I left for Arizona. And my son who is deeply involved, Joe, who is deeply involved in the first Sunday that failed, took a different approach. Rather than put out a separate paper with the emphasis up in the Wilmington area, he just added another edition to the 5 days we were already publishing, skipping Saturday, and simply--and simply incorporated as the 6th day
day of the regular daily paper. And that way he automatically, and of course some people resented it, but he automatically had a built in circulation. He didn't have a separate Sunday. And it just kept the thing alive and of course, the advertisers—the merchants—were glad to accept it under that basis, because they liked Sunday advertising because they realize people have more time to read the paper, and that many people make their shopping plans for the week on the basis of their Sunday paper, and as long as they have that guaranteed built in circulation that we've already acquired with the other 5 days. Well it was an instant success. But it was the right formula. But whether we would have arrived at that without the embryonic unsuccessful effort of 8 years earlier, I don't know. It's gone along very well. And of course, now we do have Sunday circulation up in Wilmington and it's growing steadily and we cover Wilmington, especially on the weekends pretty well.

(Vapaa) Do you have any Wilmington offices?

(Smyth) No. Not yet. We have a reporter full time up there. We do have a circulation office in Newark. And ah—we're gradually making some inroads up there.

(Vapaa) Jack, I'll have to correct you a little bit. In Delaware it's not Newark, it's NewArk. You remember years ago Newark was originally 2 words. This was back in colonial days. If you'll read your Delaware history—and I have a copy here that you might borrow if you want to—why ah—it ah—tells how some of these towns were named. I think we have some of the most interesting names of towns in Delaware that you'll find anywhere in the country. As a matter of fact, I also have a book here on—it's entitled "Delaware Place Names" that I got from the Superintendant of Documents in Washington. It explains the names of places like Hardscrabble and Masten's Corner and things in that—and Sugar Stick Road, I think is in there. I'm not sure, but there is a place out at Masten's Corner—which incidentally, I don't know if you know where Masten's
Corner is or not.

(Smyth) I'm not sure either. It's down in Sussex area, isn't it?

(Vapaa) No. It's in Kent County. It's half way between Felton and Harrington roughly, but west of the dual highway. It's probably 2 or 3 miles west of the dual highway--ah when you get there--I mean to get to Masten's Corner--

(Smyth) It must be over near Killens' Pond or in that area.

(Vapaa) No, Killens' Pond is to the east of the dual highway. Masten's Corner used to--well, still is primarily a farming community. And it's nothing more than a crossroads--a country crossroads still. There was an old store there. The building still stands. And as late as 6 or 8 years ago you could go in that store and buy high button shoes there. If you wanted to get them. I forget the man's name who ran it--the store, but it wasn't Masten. But ah--Minner! Because his son now works for the liquor commission and has for years. Better get the phone. Let me turn this off. (click)

(Vapaa) Well, we were talking a little bit about Masten's Corner and Hard-scrabble and some of these other places, but Hardscrabble is of course down in Sussex County, and it is between Laurel and Georgetown--roughly halfway--and just up the road from ah--the University Substation Farm. Have you ever been there, Jack?

(Smyth) Oh, yeah. Yeah. I've been there. I knew where that was. But I wasn't sure of Masten's Corner. Hardscrabble always--always fascinated me. It was probably--it was surely named from some depression or panic, as they used to call them back before the turn of the century.

(Vapaa) Well, we'll look it up maybe and see what it is. I'll make a point to look it up and write to you if I don't see you.

(Smyth) O.K.

(Vapaa) Well, Jack, we've still got a fair amount of tape on here on this par-
ticular side. So, well, I think we do, and if it doesn't why we'll just change to the other side.

(Smyth) I think we've exhausted it pretty well.

(Vapaa) No, we haven't.

(Smyth) Oh, haven't we? Go ahead--

(Vapaa) We--we haven't talked at all about the expansion of your Delaware State News into a larger corporation.

(Smyth) Well, that indirectly came about through this improvement in technology--the improvement of printing. When you put in over a quarter of a million dollars in a newspaper press, you want to make money with the press or justify its existence by keeping it running. And a small daily--and I think we were around 18,000 at the time the press was put in--meant that it was run less than an hour a day and so we were looking around for additional publications. And of course, one of the beauties of the--of the offset method is that a lot of weekly papers could actually make up their pages in their own plant and then bring the sheets to the main plant. In fact, all over the country many weekly publishers and some daily too, would get together and finance a central printing, where all the papers would be handled by one press, since either the film or the pages could be bought and brought in and then photographed. So that's where with our situation in 1967 when we moved into the new plant out there on the corner of New Burton Road and Webbs Lane. We just had, of course, our own publication. We didn't even have the Air Base weekly because we lost that to another offset operator in Maryland. The people at the Air Base said simply that they would rather have its paper in offset. They told us that when we went offset we would get the publication. Which we did. Then we were looking for other publications.
(Vapaa) And the title of that particular publication before you get away from it?
(Smyth) Is the Airlifter.
(Vapaa) And it's still going?
(Smyth) Yes. Um-hum. Yeah.
(Vapaa) As a weekly?
(Smyth) Right. Um-hum. And ah--so we ah--most of course, in the weekly papers in the area were already being published by other--a fellow by the name of Hofstetter (sp.?) was the pioneer--up at Elkton--was the pioneer of offset in the area and he gradually either bought up or contracted for practically all the weekly papers on the shore. And ah--he was doing them as far down as Virginia.
(Vapaa) Accomac?
(Smyth) Accomac. I understand since then Accomac and ah--has it own press. But at the time they were taking their sheets going clear up to Elkton. Then he bought out the Easton Weekly and put another press over there. The Milford Chronicle was being printed there and the Georgetown--Sussex Countian in Georgetown. He ended up owning the Laurel paper. He ended up owning the Seafor paper. And this was all before we got into offset. There were really no papers available for us to add to our press, so we were--went over--it happened that one of the fellows that had been with the Air Base paper before we had it was a fellow named Bob Reed. And he had made up their paper while he was stationed as a Sergeant at the Dover Air Force Base. So Reed seemed like a darn good newsman, and so he said to me before he left for an assignment in Japan, "When I get out of the service, which I will after this tour of duty--I'll retire--how about a job?" And I said, "Bob, if there's an opening, we'll see that you have a job." So he came back shortly after he ah--after we ah--became in an--put in the off-
set press in, but we just didn't have an opening. He mentioned that he was stationed--had settled over at Bowie, Maryland. He said they have a couple of lousy papers over there. He said, "Maybe we could buy one of those." So we went over and took a look with the idea that this would be a paper that we could print. And ah--sure enough they were pretty bad.

But they also wanted a price much higher, so we started our own paper and we called it The Blade--The Bowie Blad. So we have been publishing that now--it was our first venture out of--out of Delaware. So we had the Sussex County. And then the New Castle Gazette got a new lease on life and they started to publish with us. And then we were getting some other small publications--the Crisfield paper was for sale and we bought it, down at Crisfield, Maryland. We've been printing that there and we're printing the Bowie paper there and the New Castle paper, and then the Airlifter. But the other ventures in Arizona were mostly because I went out there and I didn't want to retire. I never played gold or anything. I wanted to keep a hand in the newspaper business. We bought a few weeklies out there and we've been losing money with them ever since. But we hope to get them turned around.

And Joe married an Air Force--daughter of an Air Force Major who retired to Florida. He went down to Florida and looked around at newspapers, and saw a couple down there that were reasonable, so he bought those and the Florida operation down at Okeechobee and Arcadia and ah--

(Vapaa) Are there any local people that have moved down there, Jack?
(Smyth) Yeah. Well, from Delaware we have Jim Toomey down for awhile and ah--then we still have ah--Paul Bogus who is a son of people here in Dover. And a fellow I knew back in Renova is in charge of the operation down there. He came in one time and wanted to sell ads on a Saturday afternoon. He lived in Williamsport. His name is Dave Fleming. And so he came down from--well we started
the Bowie paper, we needed a good salesman—I had him in mind at the time. So he went to work for us in Bowie and then when the Florida thing opened up he's been down there as General Manager in charge of that office. Jim Toomey was down for awhile, and then of course, just a few weeks ago why the Millsboro paper was up for sale. It was owned by the Milford Radio Station. And ah--it ah--and we bought it.

(Vapaa) Of course, you know that the Harrington paper has just changed ownership.

(Smyth) Yes. That's ah--an interesting thing, because it's one of the few papers in the country that I know of that is still not offset.

(Vapaa) That's right.

(Smyth) Yeah. In fact some of the fellows from our plant that used to run linotype machines are down there helping keep the linotype machines going. Young Farrow, I guess is the owner.

(Vapaa) Yes. I taught him in school incidentally. And I always knew him as Gilmore Farrow. His father was Harry Farrow. And he was very much--

(Smyth) Is he Clara Farrow's son?

(Vapaa) I really don't know.

(Smyth) I remember Clara Farrow who used to run the old Dover days—had 2 daughters.

(Vapaa) No. No. No.

(Smyth) Different Farrow.

(Vapaa) Different Farrow. Because his mother was the school nurse down at the Harrington school for a great number of years.

(Smyth) Oh, he's a Harrington native.

(Vapaa) Yeah. A Harrington native. And of course, he came up here to get into—well he was going to be a lawyer first. And I think he took his bar examinations and didn't pass them and so he got into the real estate business with Ralph Tischer. And I imagine he's still in real estate to a degree.
(Smyth) Sure.

(Vapaa) But he says now that his primary interest is going to be the newspaper. I certainly hope he goes to offset because we both realize the problems you have as far as getting parts is concerned, particularly for the paper today.

(Smyth) It's going to be worse all the time because this linotype machine, for instance, I'm sure is soon going to be a museum piece.

(Vapaa) I may tell you this, I was down to Harrington not long ago on Commerce Street, which is the main street in Harrington. Looked in one of the store windows and I saw an offset press sitting in the store. So maybe Gilmore, as I know him, is going to shift over to his own equipment. It'll still never be more than a weekly. I don't think he intends to make it more than a weekly. But he can put out a pretty good weekly, I think, with his ah--with offset equipment that's on a smaller size--or smaller than what you have.

(Smyth) Oh, year. I'm sure he could.

(Vapaa) In fact--

(Smyth) It's a good move for him.

(Vapaa) Yes. So--and I expect he ah--plans to hang on to it for awhile.

(Smyth) Good.

(Vapaa) I haven't met any of the people in his organization yet. But ah--

(Smyth) Well, the Burgess boys had it for so many years that I don't know too much--

(Vapaa) Did you ever know Harvey Burgess? The father?

(Smyth) No, I never did. He evidently passed on before I ah--ah came here.

(Vapaa) He was quite a character, Jack. And he was quite a public speaker. Years ago in Delaware we had quite a few people who went out and made speeches. And Harvey Burgess was one of these. He would go to service clubs all over the
country. And he would leave the paper at home to Carrington, his son, and to his other son, Winnie, who set type—and incidentally, drank a lot. And sometimes, we got quite a hilarious newspaper because Winnie every once in awhile would take a turn at writing about his wartime experiences and ah—oh, they were kind of gay.

(Smyth) Yeah, I can kinda image so.

(Vapaa) Incidentally, you had some gay experiences too in the State News in there as I remember it.

(Smyth) Yeah. I drank quite a bit in the ah—the ah—the early days of my newspaper. As a matter of fact, I had always been quite a drinking man. Because I had the fixed notion somehow, since I never had a hangover, headache, or any apparent ill effects from it that I could handle booze pretty well. I had no hesitation in drinking and newspapering. As a matter of fact, I used to pick up a lot of tips, information, stories, just as you mentioned you do today in a barber shop. I always found out a good source in bars too, because liquor kind of loosens people's tongues and they say some things that—. I can remember I think that the best story I ever broke in the days of our newspaper back there—a political story—was a slush fund that the Democratic Party had. And there were a lot of people—the Democrats were having a convention here in Dover. And in the old Treadway Inn there was a party going on and I was drinking along with Jim Miller, who was my Managing Editor. And we were with a bunch of top notch Democrats when one of them started talking about this secret slush fund that Garrett Lyons, who was then the State Chairman, had. And as soon as this fellow started talking about it I realized I had hold of a good story. And it just sobered me up. I remembered exactly what he said and was able to sit down and write a story that very night about it—about the whole thing. I asked him questions. And we came out with a banner headline the next day about this thing that none of the Democrats knew. And he probably would never have said anything about it if it hadn't
been for the booze.

Of course, then, finally after a number of adventures and misadventures and son on, I know that really outside the fact that people knew I was drinking, I was able to keep my ah--ah--keep at the job each day. I was able to avoid any serious trouble for the newspaper. For instance, we never had a libel suit. Never even one filed against us until after I quit drinking. Of course, it was a kind of freakish libel suit. Sombody--one of our reporters, old Harry McSherry, was covering a JP (Justice of the Peace) hearing, where a couple were arguing about something, and they had lived together. And Harry mentioned that so-and-so was so-and-so's common-law wife. So the girl sued. And to our consternation we found she had a case, because in Delaware there is no such thing legally recognized as a common-law wife. So she had a libel suit on her hands. But we never paid any damages for it and it ended up she ah--she left for Florida. And that was the only libel suit that I ever encountered in all the years I've been in the newspaper business.

(Vapaa) Well now, there are a lot of--how many newspapers did you have when you came here?

(Smyth) Well, we have ah--we have 11 at the present time--all weeklies except the Delaware State News, which is a daily. However, on the first we are starting another daily or changing another weekly over to a daily in Arizona--in Phoenix (Arizona). And of course, this is for me--it will be a great experience, because it will be something like history repeating itself.

(Vapaa) Are you going to be Editor?

(Smyth) No, I'm not. I ah--we have--I believe now that my best job that I can do is to advise these younger people that come along and let them--just kind of sit back and let them make their own mistakes and just try to prevent them from making too serious ones.

(Vapaa) Don't you feel that you learn best by making mistakes?

(Smyth) Oh, absolutely. And I allow them to make them. I don't try to run the
papers for them. But I let them know that I'm there and if they want any
advice or so on that I'll give them the best I can, but that won't prevent
them from making mistakes too.

(Vapaa) Let's talk a little bit, Jack, about some of your editorial polic-
ies as far as Letters to the Editor and stuff like this.

(Smyth) Well I was--even before I became--had gotten into the newspaper
business I was always astounded and in fact kind of--. I can remember read-
ing a Harrisburg Telegraph one time when I was still in Renova as a jeweler.
And I noticed their Letters to the Editor was set in six point type. To my
mind that was a--that was an insult to the reader. Anybody who would take a
letter from a reader and put it in the smallest possible type obviously to
save space and to discourage readership. I thought a reader who took his time
to express his opinions to the newspapers should get a better treatment than
that. So then when I became an Editor I thought that this was one thing I
would always do would be to run as many Letters to the Editor as I possibly
could. And one of the things that has come about is you do it. When people rec-
ognize it they'll write a letter and it will get in the paper that encourages
them to write. We've wasted, I'm sure, a lot of space on some unintelligible
letters and some letters that rub people the wrong way, and some letters that
don't make sense at all. And yet, at the same time, we get an awful lot of good
letters. There's ah--we'll always allow for an exchange of opinion, different
viewpoints to be presented, no matter how--matter how assinine some of them
may seem to the Editor. I don't think an Editor is ah--in a sense the ah--has
the all seeing wisdom to decide which person's opinion should be expressed and
that the next person's opinion should not be expressed.

(Vapaa) You can't play God in the business.

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(Smyth) That's right. I don't think that ownership of a newspaper or the title of Editor gives them that right. So, I've always allowed within reason, as long as there is not libel concerned, etc., I've always believed that they should have—. And I've always had an inate, which has never been disabused, confidence in the good common sense of the average American citizen—the reader. That he can take and look at a letter that ah--and he'll say--laugh and say, "Well, this is nuts!" And I think most people would agree with me. But the fact that it appears in the paper doesn't give it any special significance. And I think most Editors think it is either their duty to reedit a letter or rewrite it or--ah—and distory it.

I remember one time I had an old lumberman up in Renova who always signed his name W.F. Peasley. And he was a lumberjack and an illiterate.

(Vapaa) Do you remember how Peasley was spelled?

(Smyth) Yes. P-e-a-s-l-e-y.

(Vapaa) O.K.

(Smyth) And he ah--he would ah--he would bring these letters in and they were even hard to decipher. He'd write them in pencil and I would sit down and retype them. And one day I was doing that and correcting the spelling and correcting the grammar— I was doing that—and I said to myself, "I'm losing this guy. I'm losing the real Peasley." So I made it a rule then to set his letters just as they came in. And with the misspelling --and it made a lot better sense because here was a man with a lot of good ideas, good basic intelligence, and had difficulty in ah—in expressing himself, but yet made himself clear with all his grammatical errors and with all of his misspellings and so forth. And it ah--it became so people looked forward to his letters. He had a good sense of humor. He had good ideas, strong opinions and so on. And ah--so I made up my mind from then

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on, now when people would write me a letter that ah--was either too long or contained something that was potentially libelous--.

I always felt too an Editor should have the courtesy to call the person and explain those things and say, "Now I'm going to send this back. Now here's the part I think might get us in trouble. If you want to say this about somebody, express it in a little different terms and so on." And usually it works. A person appreciates it. And nobody wants to get sued. And they usually write a letter in the heat of anger and then by the time you get it back to them, they're off. And sometimes the criticism is warranted or justified, but it doesn't--but it--it can be--in terms that are not libelous or particularly offensive.

(Vapaa) Well Jack, let's ah--put a peg on one particular case that ah--I'm sure you are familiar with, L. Lee Layton here in Dover. I mean what is your opinion as far as his ah--material is concerned over the years?

(Smyth) Well, I ah--I always disagreed with him. I think he's a fellow with a great deal of ah--of ah--basic intelligence, but he's so warped and so prejudiced in his actual hatred of the Jewish people, and I guess the Catholics, and the ah--the blacks, that ah--that he ah--that he again beyond all good sense and all good reason. Yet, I always published his letters simply because they ah--people would recognize this. And knew they were dealing with a bigot. And ah--so a bigot had a right to express himself. Ah--the only difficulty that I would have with Layton would be that he would--that he would get to be repeating himself. He wouldn't be saying--he's say the same thing over and over again, blame all the world's trouble on the Jewish conspiracy and all this. And I would say, "Lee, this is repetitious. There's no point in doing this all the time. If you have a fresh thought or fresh ideas, something that's good, why don't you go with that?" But I never turned down his letters.

(Vapaa) Now I understand that you used to have all of his material checked for libel?
That's right. That's right. Yeah. He never--

That was about all?

He never--he never wrote a libelous letter. And of course, I was--I would watch his letters very closely. He did write one and we published it in the early days of the integration where Bryant Bowles came to town. Well, Bryant Bowles was a right--white racist, and you would think he and Layton would hit it great. Layton for some reason resented Bowles coming into Delaware and stirring up trouble at the time of this school integration thing in 1954. So he wrote a letter and called in it--called Bowles a convict. Now Bowles had served a sentence in the ah--had been jailed in Baltimore. But ah--he--when we found out about it, it was on a misdemeanor charge and my lawyer promptly told me that ah--that this is libel, per se. That a fellow has to be convicted of a felon before you can honestly call him a convict.

Urn-hum. So, he sued Layton. But he came in and told us that our treatment had been, of his crusade, if you want to call it that, his rabble rousing, had been fair. He realized too he could sue us for libel. But he said he wasn't going to do it. And that was the closest we ever got to a libel suit in my green days. (laughter)

Now ah--

And that's the reason that I think after that Layton always had--very careful of his letters. Because Bowles, I think, gave him a heck of a scare.

But ah--then too in recent years, why Joe has had to change the policy on Layton. Or at least he's said so in the paper.

Oh yeah, he's not only changed policy on Layton, but he's simply told him he couldn't write letters any more if he ah--if he is criticizing any race or any creed or anything like that. That his letters were accepted, but not
under those terms. Which is—which almost—which is almost impossible for Layton to write without that kind of—kind of bigot. And I'm kind of inclined to agree with that part of Joe's—Joe's policy in that Layton had ah—had ah—had his chance to say things and all he was doing, just like a tired recording, was repeating the thing.

(Vapaa) And they're all very long.

(Smyth) Yeah. And Joe's excuse—. Well, not always. He would get some pretty good short letters out sometimes. Ah—in fact, I can remember he used to send a week's supply at once. Some of them were long, some of them were short. And I would use them all. I don't regret having used them, because I used to—think that—used to get a lot of criticism. I'm sure lost a lot of advertisement, especially from Jewish merchants. Who very much resented it. But I—I felt too that I don't think that it hurt the Jewish people. As a matter of fact, I think it really gained sympathy for them. Because any person could quickly spot this guy as a bigot and throw it out. The only waste was the waste of space in the paper, as far as I was concerned. I talked to people that said, "You know I never read Layton anymore because I know what he's going to say." And I said, "Exactly," I said, "That's were he loses his effectiveness."

But Joe of course, felt that ah—it was a ah—it was a degradation to the paper. And of course, while he's running the paper there can only be one boss. And he's the Editor of it. And he had a darn good excuse when Layton put out what was proof of the historic falsehood about ah—Benjamin Franklin's ah—anti semetic views.

(Vapaa) Views?

(Smyth) Yeah. And this was proved wrong and Layton wouldn't correct it. In fact, tried to repeat it. And that's when Joe said, "No more." And of course, that stirred up a rebellion on his own news staff and everything else. Which
ah--which I think was all good; because I think the more we get to discuss
and argue on these things the better we understand them. They're very im-
portant, I think, in our way of life.

(Vapaa)  I don't think there's a livlier newspaper in the State than the
Delaware State News.

(Smyth)  No, I'm sure that's true. In fact, looking ah--I look at newspapers
every place I can across the country and there's very few newspapers--. One
of the difficulties with newspapers, and I think with many business, and
with many facets of American life, is this trend towards bigness. Even we're
guilty of it in buying these newspapers. Of course, we feel that the news-
papers we buy will have--will be able to be independant as far as the Editor-
ial content is concerned. And I'm sure that's true. And I'm sure of many of
these other things--. But the economics of the many businesses are such that
they just--and the tax laws--are such that the little guy is just being squeezed
out. And he doesn't have the resources and ah--anything else. And I know I've
had a number of offers through the years of ah--selling out to the New York
Times and to different chains and night newspapers and different chains across
the country, but I always felt that as long as my son was interested in the
thing, why it would be good.

And then of course, the other thing that happened is the--go behind.
Joe you wonder--you wonder who will keep the papers going? And the thing that
I don't want to happen is that the, which I've seen in many other papers, the
first generation is fine then if you have a son or two or a daughter or two,
the paper is run all right. But then it starts to disintegrate. The different
shares of stock go to different members of the family. And some of them just
take it as an inheritance. They have no interest in the paper at all. And then
the paper ends up unfortunately, and almost inevitably, being run by bankers,
accountants, lawyers or the whole thing together. And that's just disastrous for newspapers. Because a newspaper is a unique type of business. It's the only type of business in the country that has this constitutional mandate. Help to keep the channels of information between the people and their government open.

(Vapaa) Would it be too much to ask you, Jack, how many ah--ah--stockholders you have in your corporation? I'm sure you're incorporated, aren't you?

(Smyth) Oh, yeah. We've been incorporated ever since ah--ever since the ah--the beginning. And I was the only stockholder up until the time that ah--that I ah--realized ah--that if I should die, and the paper became more valuable, the whole thing was explained to me that I should pass away ah--that I wouldn't have enough money--

(Vapaa) You're talking about Davis as a tax consultant?

(Smyth) Yeah. Right. He told me--you know--that if I should die that minute, that my heirs, my 4 children, would have to sell the newspaper to pay the taxes. So, through a series of ah--of tax approved things, I started to give shares away--of my stock. And then, when I got this heart condition, I felt that Joe's going to run the paper he should--he should be in charge. So Bill planned the things so while all 4 of the children, that's the 3 daughters and the 1 son, have equal shares of stock through a device of a holding company--the Smyth Holding Company, that controls the other shares, Joe alone has the decision making power. So if there is any--ever dividends, and we never declared any dividends, any dividends declared they will go to all stockholders. But as far as dividends--decisions of 3 daughters or their families can out vote Joe.

(Vapaa) Let me switch gears on you a little bit. Jack, we often hear about the State of Delapont. Do you want to comment on it?

(Smyth) Well, my experience in--is if there is a State of Delapont, it's certainly a benevolent thing. I think the duPont family and the duPont Corporation

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has leaned over backwards to avoid that. I think that actually the ah--the ah--that it's kind of an unfair term. But it's and inevitable term because when you have such a big worldwide corporation in such a small state that people, rightly or wrongly, are going to arrive at that conclusion. And of course, it's inevitable too that they would have a great deal of power. But I don't think they've ever used it ah--ah--in a--

(Vapaa) In the legislature now--?

(Smyth) Yeah. In a way. I know that if they had wanted to in the early days of the Delaware State News--if they had wanted to--they could have probably curshed us economically. Just put us out of business. They didn't. They didn't even--they had Charlie--you remember Charlie Baker. He was their man down there. Fine newsman. But--

(Vapaa) Real good one.

(Smyth) Yeah. But the point is that's all they had down there. And my feeling is that, of course, when we grew and started to take more and more circulation away from them, then they put a bureau down here and they have a darn fine bureau. And there's good competition between the two papers. Which is healthy. I ah--it's made a better paper of the Wilmington paper and I think its kept us on our toes. We've always emphasized the local scene. We don't pretend that we can go up there and do anything with Wilmington. But at the same time we've pretty near--we've pretty well dominate ah--ah--the State Capital as far as readership is concerned. In the early days, of course, they could have ah--run us right out of town, if they would--wanted to use their economic power. As a matter of fact, my first contact with them was when one misguided circulation man went around to the news dealers and told them, "If you put that new daily on your news stand, we're taking our Wilmington papers off." And, of course, that was a stupid thing to say because right away the news dealers would call me and tell me this. And I would say, "Great." Because that was nothing, you know. And they would say,"We are not going to do it."
And I'd say, "I don't blame you. I wouldn't either. Don't let em push you around." And of course, I liked to have the sympathetic role of the underdog. But, by gosh, it got back to the duPont Company Public Relations Department. A fellow named Rice Yonner (sp ?) called me and said, "Is this true? And I said, "Evidently. I've got calls about it." He said, "Could we have lunch?"

So we had lunch at The Dinner Bell. And Yonner (sp ?) explained to me--he said, "As a representative of the duPont Company, while we do own the Wilmington papers through Christiana Securities, as a company we keep an arms' length relationship. We don't ask them for anything or to do anything. But we don't want them to do anything that would reflect on us." He says that, "This is obviously something that's--" He says that, "This--at this very moment we are fighting out ah--Chicago, that anti trust thing between duPont and General Motors."

And he says, "How does that help us with our case if we are accused of pushing a little competitive daily in the state around?" So he says, "Let me assure you that you won't be bothered with this again."

(Vapaa) Jack, you will remember that Irving Shapiro was one of the ah--lawyers who prosecuted for the government against the duPont Company.

(Smyth) Yeah. Right. Um-hum.

(Vapaa) On that particular divestiture from General Motors. And ah--what's your feeling about the fact that he's now the effective President of the duPont Company. I feel--the first Jewish President, by the way, of the duPont Company. Do you have any feeling on this one way or another?

(Smyth) No. Except that they obviously recognize him as a darn good man at the time of those hearings Judge LaPlace (sp ?)

(Vapaa) Have you ever read the book ah--oh gosh, what is the name of that thing? William Allen Whyte wrote it about ah--the ah--I have it back there on the shelf. But something about, not The Ugly American, but--cause that was about ah--South East Asia, if I remember. But ah--William Allen Whyte wrote a book about ah--corporations, large corporations in America, and how Americans get absorbed into
a large corporation and lose their individuality. And they cite the duPont Company as their prime case. (The Organization Man)

(Smyth) No. I never read that book.

(Vapaa) You didn't?

(Smyth) No.

(Vapaa) Maybe I'd better lend it to you. Because it's back there on the shelf and ah--ah--we'll let you take it when you leave here. And ah--I hate to keep you here ah--any longer than necessary. I don't know whether you have any further thoughts you'd like to ah--express, Jack, either about your family or anything else that would be of historic interest.

(Smyth) Well ah--I--I do thing that--do think that there's a crying need in these days for more individualism and ah--an opportunity for ah--ah--people to express themselves. I have a feeling that both from the viewpoint of unions and government and corporations that ah--our biggest peril really is bigness.

(Vapaa) Bigness.

(Smyth) Ah--newspapers ah--in their--in their role of ah--of trying to inform people ah--simply themselves become overwhelmed by the--the degree of bigness and try to get--get and explain ah--the complexities, for instance, even of the tax laws alone, ah--is ah--is a tremendous undertaking. I have known so many journalists that feel they have to become attorneys before they can become good journalists. And ah--ah--it's simply because things have become so complex. And then you talk about the apathy of the American people, I think it is a degree of helplessness. And I think that the main thing that ah--has to be done in newspapers and all forms of journalism is just kind of drive towards getting things down to simpler terms, simpler basis and kind of return the management of our affairs to the local level.

(Vapaa) Let's take an example, Jack, on a national issue. And I would like to know how your feel about it--Watergate?

(Smyth) Well, I think Watergate is ah--is the greatest civic lesson that the
American people have ever had. And my hope is that it will awaken them to this very thing that I'm talking about. How a government becoming so big and so complex also breeds corruption. Because as word of action says, "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely." And you have powerful government on any level, you—you start to lose accountability. Men are just—er—ah—just being human beings. History will tell you that they get so much power that it changes them. It changed Richard Nixon. It changed all the men around them. They had completely lost their moral sense, that they completely forgot what they were. They were there for the glorification of and edification of Nixon. Who they believed in,

(Vapaa) Yeah. Do you think that he'll be impeached?
(Smyth) No. I don't think so. I think that—
(Vapaa) Would you say that he's a victim of the system?
(Smyth) Yes. I think he's a victim of the system.
(Vapaa) I'm inclined to agree. And I have so written to the Congress—Congressional people.
(Smyth) I think it would be a mistake to simply say he's a bad man, and everything that's come from him being a bad man. I think he is better—I think at the same time that he should be an example of what's wrong with the system. And we should learn as much as we can from this and change the system accordingly.
(Vapaa) Do you have any recommendations on how this might be changed? Have you thought about that at all?
(Smyth) Well, I think we're starting to move in the direction of having things starting to change. One of the things that I think is atrocious to the newspaper man is the degree of—of government secrecy on all levels. A closed school board meeting and council executive sessions and all of these—these things that seems when a fellow becomes elected to a simple little job in a town, he doesn't want anybody to know how he's conducting this. He wants his job as a councilman to be conducted with the same degree of secrecy as he runs his hardware store,
and so on. And he--it's awfully hard for people to make a difference between private life and public life--where the public servant ends and the private citizen begins.

(Vapaa) Well, Jack, I don't have my flashlight here so I can't see how much--how much tape is left. I guess there is a fair amount--I'll wager about a half a reel--but we don't have to go--

(Smyth) No ah--

(Vapaa) You've got other fish to fry this afternoon.

(Smyth) Yeah. I got--

(Vapaa) And ah--I should like to ah--thank you for ah--participating in this discussion. I'd like to thank you for my lunch. I hope that we can get together again before too long.

(Smyth) I just ah--it's always fun and I--I really enjoyed this. As you know, I enjoy discussing these issues. And I appreciate the opportunity of getting ah--some of my ideas and background on tape. I think this is a good project. And ah--

(Vapaa) You know, one of the things, Jack, that you said years ago--and I have it retyped and I have it framed--that you--it's one of the best compliments that I ever got from anyone--that you never me me--I don't know whether you remember it or not--that you never had been to a meeting or heard--talked to me when you didn't learn something.

(Smyth) Um-hum. That's true. That's true.

(Vapaa) And ah--I always felt that this was the greatest compliment that a person could get. And particularly a person who had a life dedicated to other people.

(Smyth) Yeah. Yeah.

(Vapaa) So thank you very much this--

(Smyth) That's perfectly all right. It's well deserved, George. You've ah--despite some bad setbacks you--you continue that way. I ah--I learned a lot from you today. And ah--it's always good.
(Vapaa) Well, at least we're both turtles. (laughter)
(Smyth) Yeah. Thank goodness for that.
(Vapaa) O.K. And maybe we'll--
(Smyth) I don't think I ever had a tougher guy to take that test though.
(Vapaa) Oh, yes. In fact we have had lots tougher ones. (laughter) The
night my son was married we inducted a bunch of turtles in New Jersey. Oh, my.
This was in a motel and I guess it ran until about 2 o'clock in the morning.
(Smyth) Un-huh.
(Vapaa) It was a mixed group and it was a party and ah--and ah--well we
really had a good time.

Well, thanks again.
(Smyth) O.K.
(Vapaa) And we'll get this thing typed up and I'll see that you get a copy of it
(Smyth) Great.
(Vapaa) And maybe you'll even want to print it, I don't know.
(Smyth) Yeah. Never can tell. Never can tell.
(Vapaa) O.K. then.
(Vapaa) This is George Vapaa again putting a tag on the end of our discussion
with Jack Smyth who has ah--left.

I should point out to anyone who might be listening to--or listening
to this tape or reading the transcript that Jack comes into the State of Delaware
from Arizona about twice a year to see his son and to check up on ah--I guess on
the Independant Newspapers, Incorporated of which he is the Chairman of the Board.
And ah--for this reason why we still consider him very much of a Delawarean,
even though he has moved to Arizona for health reasons for both himself and
for his ah--ah--wife. And ah--with this why ah--we'll close the tape.

THE END

Oral History Project of the University of Delaware
George K. Vapaa, Narrator
HERE AND THERE....The Little League played a big part in our recent four-week visit to Delaware. With three of our nine grandchildren, living in the Dover area, playing on three different teams my wife, Ev, and I saw more than our quota of games. It was the end of the season, some contests were to make up for rainouts, a few of these were forfeited. But we saw enough of Mike Smyth, Steve and Mark Biddle to know they are coming along just great. An extra attraction was that our only son, Joe Smyth, is managing a team. It was fun watching this bearded six-footer, who looks like a fugitive from the House of David, directing these youngsters. It seems like only yesterday when he was that size and knocked down when a foul tip hit him square in the center of his forehead....The dedication of LL umpires truly impressed me. I was chatting with Josh West before one of the games at the superb C-W park. He told me of his years of interest, as a manager, a league official and now umpire. These men do this tough job, without pay take their share of abuse from emotional parents because they love the game and know it makes boys into good men....John Hill, who just left the PR post at Wesley, proudly showed me through the child's clothing store he and his wife have expanded on Loockerman St. The lines they carry fill a long-time Dover need....One day I had my daughter Connie drop me off on Division St. so I could take my walk north to the Biddle home in Woodcrest. It gave me a chance to go through the new and quite beautiful Henry Belin duPont building on the Wesley College campus. I'm sorry my old friend Bob Parker is retiring. But he's done wonders in his years as president, leaving Dover with a tremendous community asset. Our daughter Lisa tried to enroll in the nursing course, but it had been filled since March....One most enjoyable evening Ev and I spent visiting our good and long time friends, Charlie and Thersea Stump. (I always call her Esther because I can't spell Thersea.) Anyway we were neighbors 20 years ago over on East Division St. — and their sons, Chip and Rob, were Joe's buddies. Charlie has just recovered from a heart attack. He's back with the Highway Dept. where he's a key administrator. It was a great get-together. We were joined late in the evening by their youngest, Julie, who is just 21. She wants to be a journalist. and you can bet I encouraged her....My
With three of our nine grandchildren, living in the Dover area, playing on three different teams my wife, Ev, and I saw more than our quota of games. It was the end of the season, some contests were to make up for rainouts, a few of these were forfeited. But we saw enough of Mike Smyth, Steve and Mark Biddle to know they are coming along just great. An extra attraction was that our only son, Joe Smyth, is managing a team. It was fun watching this bearded six-footer, who looks like a fugitive from the House of David, directing these youngsters. It seems like only yesterday when he was that size and knocked down when a foul tip hit him square in the center of his forehead....The dedication of LL umpires truly impressed me. I was chatting with Josh West before one of the games at the superb C-W park. He told me of his years of interest, as a manager, a league official and now umpire. These men do this tough job, without pay take their share of abuse from emotional parents because they love the game and know it makes boys into good men....John Hill, who just left the PR post at Wesley, proudly showed me through the child's clothing store he and his wife have expanded on Loockerman St. The lines they carry fill a long-time Dover need....One day I had my daughter Connie drop me off on Division St. so I could take my walk north to the Biddle home in Woodcrest. It gave me a chance to go through the new and quite beautiful Henry Belin duPont building on the Wesley College campus. I'm sorry my old friend Bob Parker is retiring. But he's done wonders in his years as president, leaving Dover with a tremendous community asset. Our daughter Lisa tried to enroll in the nursing course, but it had been filled since March....One most enjoyable evening Ev and I spent visiting our good and long time friends, Charlie and Theresa Stump. (I always call her Esther because I can't spell Theresa.) Anyway we were neighbors 20 years ago over on East Division St. — and their sons, Chip and Rob, were Joe's buddies. Charlie has just recovered from a heart attack. He's back with the Highway Dept. where he's a key administrator. It was a great get-together. We were joined late in the evening by their youngest, Julie, who is just 21. She wants to be a journalist, and you can bet I encouraged her....My wife and I split on the 4th of July. She spent it at the Biddle home; I went along with Joe and Madonna Smyth and their six offspring to the annual picnic at the Sugar Hill Farm home of Ned and Ivy Davis north of Odessa. It gave me a great opportunity to renew contacts and make new ones with politicians, mostly Democrats. I like the way Rep. Jim McGinnis has matured. Sen. Roger Martin seems level-headed. Sen. Bill Murphy is unusually dedicated. Francis Biondi claims U.S. Rep. "Pete" du Pont can be beaten—but I don't buy it. Bill Davis, Ned's brother and INI advisor, told me of the trip he, his wife and family took to Coudersport and Emporium, Pa. — back in my home town territory. Clay Davis, new Georgetown attorney and nephew of Bill and Ned, impressed me greatly. We recalled how his late dad, Henry, was coming to work for the DSN before his untimely demise. This young fellow has a fine family, too....Ev and I did get together for another picnic a few days later. This was in honor of Sam and Sally Carrow, newly wed. Herman and Nancy Brown hosted the affair at Burrwood, a lovely home surrounded by magnificent trees. It has quite a history, not space enough here to tell it. Enjoyed chatting with old friends "Reds" Wheatley and "Zeke" Barnard. "Reds" told him the fascinating story of the annual Delaware reunion in Florida — and how it's grown. Judge Bill Bush and I engaged in a debate about courts and journalism. We also met, for the first time Cubbage Brown, going to Delaware law school, his lovely wife Mary Brooke Brown, who teaches nursing at Kent C.C. (her class is also filled) and the youngest of the Browns, Linda, who's a beauty at 14. Herman was in great form, as usual. He is, in my book, a guy with a great future in public service. Behind that engaging chuckle is a keen mind. Another lawyer, the first I ever had in Dover, Henry Ridgely, arrived a bit late with his wife Sandra....Walking around Dover High grounds one day I met Isabel Fleetwood, who spent years building a great classified ad department at the DSN. She's now in school administration work. She and husband, Hank, are delighted their son, Scott, a recent graduate of U. of D. has accepted a fellowship in entomology at Louisiana State....High on my agenda in Dover was several delightful hours spent with George K. Vapaa, surely one of Delaware's remarkable citizens. Undaunted by illness that would have discouraged any ordinary person, George retains a sparkling vitality and a keen interest in life. After lunch at the Dover Diner, where I became a "turtle", we went to the lovely Vapaa home on Moore's Lake. There he interviewed me on tape asking what caused me to come to Delaware from Pennsylvania in 1953. It's part of a project Vapaa is doing for Dr. John A. Monroe, history professor at the U. of D.....
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Paradise Daily News

Should Be With

Jack Smyth Story (Transcript)

George K. Vapen

NARRATOR

Jack