



## **Citation for this collection:**

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Interview with Lloyd Teitsworth at his home in Wilmington, Delaware, July 8, 1971, by Myron Blackman. Project: Delaware in the Depression.

Q When did you first become aware that the Depression was something out of the ordinary?

A Well, as I said, when it started I was nine, and I'm afraid I was rather protected from it. My mother was a schoolteacher and rather a frugal woman. The whole family was overly frugal I'm afraid and constantly expecting some kind of disaster, as I remember. But I don't really recall the Depression as a sudden revelation. I mean, nobody suddenly said to me, "Hey, we're in a depression." But I constantly remember--I mean I remember being constantly reminded to not waste food and--well, mainly food, that was the big item. And I noticed sort of casually that nobody in my household had a car. But I really didn't care for cars then, so it didn't bother me very much. And I had enough to eat. And as I say, my mother was a schoolteacher and my uncle had a stationery store where my aunt worked, and with two women in my house working, my sister and I and my grandmother . . . so I really don't think I can say that I suddenly became aware of it. I became more aware of the sociological situation after it was over. And just about the time of the--when it was over, the war was starting in Europe and the economy started to leap up in this country, and it leapt up rather slowly in Delaware, I think, too, because for instance I graduated from high school in '38 in June, and there was practically no possibility of getting a job. And I waited I guess it was about a year before I could get a job. And as I remember, I got a job for \$18.00 a week at that time, that was about 1939, which is--I don't know how it compares to salaries--I think it was low even for that time. Salaries and jobs really didn't bust loose until just before the United States got in the war--you probably have that as a date, '41 I think.

Q What was your family situation like during the '30s?

A My father had left in '24-- 1924--and the situation was, I was living at 9th and Van Buren, which was then a middle-class neighborhood, with my aunt, my sister, my mother and my grandmother. And I don't really know what you mean by situation, you mean financial situation?

Q Yeah, but I guess--well, some people had severe hardships, they had to do special things to conserve food, money, clothing.

A I don't think we went through that. My grandmother owned the house she lived in, so we didn't have a rent problem. And it was big enough to house us all, so the only real problem we had was food. And we had--well, my mother's salary was adequate for that. And we weren't I don't think too demanding kids for clothes and so forth. It's rather dim, I confess. I don't really think I could--I don't really think I even have an opinion. I really think it didn't touch us very hard, if that answers your question.

Q Were any of your friends or relatives or neighbors in bad situations at that time that you can remember?

A I recall only that some of my friends, the kids I went to school with, were

*Illegal?*  
 the children of trades people in center-city Wilmington, and I don't recall that they were living under--they were living in very small houses, row houses and many of them had a lower income than I did. I remember for some reason, although it probably is out of proportion to correct value, but a lot of people who were involved with your legal things--I don't know how to explain it. One of my best friend's father and uncle was a bookie and bootlegger--not bootleggers, but dealing in contraband booze or something. And they made a living, or they seemed to make a living, rather on the shady side of things, and it wasn't particularly bad, it was a living. They weren't condemned for this. If your father and uncle's Blackie the Racketeer, why that's great, you know, you're gonna be a racketeer when you grow up. I mean, nobody really condemned for this. And we also had a very interesting police situation in Wilmington about that time. Again, this was--I didn't experience this first-hand, but I think it was rather corrupt. You might look into that, '30, '34, when the chief of police finally got racked up and dismissed and jailed or something. His name was Black. So the rackets were very prevalent, but they were sort of benevolent kind of rackets, I mean, they weren't the--they didn't go around killing people or anything, they just had I think numbers and horse racing and prostitution. They were interesting but harmless. But I don't remember the situation of the fathers or the families of the kids I went to school with being generally better off than I was. Matter of fact, I would imagine that they were less well off than I was. But I went to a pretty gamey school, too, the very center of town. It was beginning to decay then, even.

Q What was it like to go to school during those years?

A Well, I never liked to go to school. It was a constant trial. The teachers in the schools were--I thought then were very bad and ill-prepared and not qualified, and that situation was the same all the way through my school. I just met people that were absolutely, totally unqualified to teach, and I got them for 12 years. I never went to college; that was the end of my education after the 12th grade. So school was bad news for me. The only way I got through school was in music and mechanical drawing and such odd kinds of talents, I guess you'd call it. But--and all of my friends had the same problem more or less. I'm not sure that they realized that their problems were caused by just bad teachers, but they got in their share of trouble. I don't think there was anything serious, I mean honestly. I think the trouble in schools today is a lot more terminal than it was then, a lot more serious. I just recall one--my school in toto was a disaster, just a terrible thing, a good thing to leave. I was happy to get out of that condition. I still don't like schools to this day, good or bad, I mean considered good or bad.

Q What was that story--could you repeat that story?

A Oh, the defeat the deficit thing, yeah. In 1934 or 1935--somewhere between 1934 and 1936, Wilmington High School was then on Delaware Avenue, Delaware Avenue and Madison. And I can remember the kids wearing tags saying "Defeat the Deficit," and organizing dances and selling, I think selling cookies or cakes, having bake sales--these of course were high school students--in order to defeat the deficit. Now where the deficit arose, I don't know. I don't even know if it was a legitimate deficit. It could possibly have been caused

by thieving teachers stealing their board of education's funds or something. I don't know that, but . . . but they--it seemed to me, I got the impression that the monies that were collected were donated to the school to keep the thing in operation. About the same time they had a split schedule. I mean the school was much too crowded and whether or not this split schedule was because of the crowding or because of the shortage of teachers, I mean the inability to pay teachers, I don't know. But some kids would start at 7:00 in the morning 'til noon and some would go from like 10:30 until 4:00, or from noon to 5:00 or something. That was also in the defeat the deficit period, and I don't know if the two were connected or not. But I'm sure that the newspapers of that day would certainly have this recorded.

Q Living in the center of the city, I guess--I've been getting conflicting reports. Some people say that--who lived in Wilmington say that they never saw anybody who looked like he was out of work or never saw any welfare lines or unemployment lines, whereas other people say the opposite, that they did see quite a number of [inaudible]. Did you ever see any?

A I don't recall any. I recall people selling pencils and selling apples, but I think you still find 'em selling pencils and apples. I don't recall any bread lines or soup lines. I can't account for that. I'm sure--I had a feeling that Delaware was rather representative--a representative state in the Depression. It's possible that there was a little more money floating around here. I haven't researched it. Maybe the presence of the "family" smoothed things over a little. But I don't recall bread lines or soup lines or--and welfare was not in existence, I don't think, was it? As such? '32 was welfare?

Q Well, it was started as soon as Roosevelt got in.

A '32, huh?

Q Yeah. There were private charities, but then about '33, soon as Roosevelt got in, there was U.P.A. . . .

A Yeah, and C.C.C. work, I remember that, too. But whether that was considered as part of the effort to defeat the Depression, or not, or just to keep the bums off the street--probably a combination of both.

Q Did you know anybody who was involved with the C.C.C.?

A That was as I recall before my high school, or maybe the first part of my high school time, and I do know--I know of one boy that I can recall, his name was Duncan, Jimmy Duncan, who got involved in the C.C.C. It was--it had a bad image, I suppose. I haven't really looked at it nationally or looked into the history of it, but in my mind it had a very bad image of a pretty tough way to go. I mean, it was pretty much a last resort. And this particular guy didn't turn out any too sterling. But I've never visited any C.C.C. camps. I think they did a lot of work in mosquito control downstate, and you can see the evidences of something that must have been their endeavor still in . . .

Q Did you ever see any--there were a lot of hoboes traveling around, people

wandering around. Did you ever come into contact with . . .

A I can recall them coming to ask for food and work. It wasn't an army of these people. I mean, we weren't surprised when we saw them, as I recall. They were rather a common sight. They weren't a pest and they weren't--as I say, there weren't a great many of them, but there were enough of them so that the kids were not surprised to see them, accepted them.

Q [Inaudible]

A Generally my family would give them something to eat, yeah. And also--and I can't prove this, but I can just remember the impression. I came from a terrible family, by the way, horrible bigots. There were no Negroes incidentally in this parade of people who came, or this group of people who used to come. It wasn't really a parade, but I can't recall there being any Negroes involved in it in my neighborhood--probably in other neighborhoods there were. But I can recall people telling me, or maybe my family telling me, that it's no good to give these people food because they'll throw it away. And I suppose they had seen 'em--they wanted money, of course, which is certainly a lot nicer to have than food. It stores a lot more easily. But I think the impression among my family was that they would buy liquor with it, which was a terrible thing to me.

Q The Negroes or the--any kind?

A No, these were whites. Negroes were really not very prevalent, as I say, in my neighborhood. It was almost--it was, as a matter of fact, a lily-white neighborhood I lived in. And people--well, white collar workers and a couple of doctors and . . . but I can't recall where the nearest--I guess the nearest black people were six, eight, ten blocks away from 9th and Van Buren at that time. And at that time Wilmington was very bigoted and very hard on the Negro. I can't imagine that the Negro didn't have that much harder time than the white man during the Depression. But I wasn't exposed to 'em. They never went to school. They were never in school when I was in school--in the Wilmington schools. There was no Negroes in the schools that I went to.

Q I think then there was one Negro high school I think in Wilmington.

A Yeah, Howard High. That took care of all the Negroes in school, I mean that "took care," you know. If you went to high school and you were a Negro, you went to Howard High.

Q Do you remember--well, a book I was reading entitled the first chapter "The Gloomy Depression of Herbert Hoover," and the second chapter was called "The Exhilarating Depression of Franklin Roosevelt." Do you remember any commotion, you know, [inaudible] commotion when he was elected?

A Delaware--I may be wrong, I say Delaware and Wilmington, but maybe I mean my family--as I say, I was very young at the time and really not capable of distinguishing--were Republicans. Delaware was a Republican state and conservative and I think of course they would have voted for the devil if the Republicans had put him up. I recall when Roosevelt won the election, the comments and the threats--again, whether it was my family or whether

it was my friends, that he won because he promised that he would restore liquor, legal booze, and that it was gonna be a nation of alcoholics. I can remember--this sort of penetrates through that dim haze that I have. They liked Hoover and they liked all the Republican Presidents--the people that I knew and I associated with and my family. I of course didn't know anything about it or didn't care at that time. But I think the feeling that Roosevelt did spring into some kind of action--I can remember the plowing under--I think he started initially with the crop situation, farmers. I don't really know when that did start. But I mean, that made a big furor I know among the Republican friends, that he was wasting food. And I think this was probably either the result of this frugality that most people felt that they should go through. I mean, to plow under good edible food was totally beyond their comprehension at the time and it aroused quite a bit--as I remember, quite a bit of antipathy to the guy.

Q Did--of course, your mother always had a salary coming in, being a school-teacher, even though they did cut the teachers' pay.

A I don't know that they cut it. She was a music teacher and a little less necessary than most. I think part of the Depression, though, she did teach the three R's. But see what I mean, her specialty was music and she was a music teacher. And the salary that she got, I had no way of comparing--I didn't know what other people were making. I always assumed that it was an adequate salary. I recall not believing her when we couldn't afford this or couldn't afford that. We used to go on vacation to Ocean City. It was a sort of a collective family affair--uncles and aunts would get an apartment and we'd all crowd in there--Ocean City, New Jersey. And one uncle or both generally had a car and we'd all go in that car. And it was always a big deal whether we were going to be able to go on vacation for a week at Ocean City. And that was our travel for the year. I remember that. And that was up to maybe '35, '36. But we always had to go in my uncle's car, we never had a car. Matter of fact, nobody knew how to drive in the house that I lived in--the three adults, of course, didn't know, and we were too young.

Q Did things ever seem, well, did things seem to improve as the years went on?

A Do you ask if things improved as a family group, do you mean the economics of the family, or my own personal economics?

Q Both.

A I think the economics of the family--well, I think the economics of the family probably improved first, because of this business of--the family had a stationery store which started to--had good reason to catch on and expand and to make money. And my aunt worked for that and was part of that corporation. So that situation started to look up. But our physical situation didn't change. It may have--there may have been more money coming in in the bank, but again, the frugality bit--we never splurged and moved to a bigger house or a new house or even had better clothes. We seemed to always be very careful, just sort of automatically, not to spend money. The thing to do would be to not spend it. If you had it, you put it in the bank or you'd buy stock with it or something. And if you have it, it's a

deep, dark secret.

Q Was this always the case--had it always been the case, or was it just because. . . .

A Well, I think when the money, when the economy of the country changed, the food that we ate wasn't greatly improved. And it was never bad, but it never got much better, either, you know. I think they just got in a habit of being frugal and trying to save things and eating on a very modest scale and dressing modestly and conservatively and spending conservatively. And when the money got a little looser and a little easier to come by, or there was more of it, the conservatism and the mechanics of spending and living stayed the same, generally. They really didn't change. And this guy Stewart that I mentioned, if you talk to him, he may illustrate this even better than I have. Once you have had this notion of saving and being frugal and being careful, it's a habit, it's a personality trait which a lot of people just don't get out of, they just continue that way, regardless of the amount of money they have available to them, they won't change. And that's I think what happened to my family. My own personal economy--economic status--was rather arduous, and I really didn't seem to care. I got married in '41--of course you're not interested in that area beyond that, I guess. But I was--oh, I was single, of course, all during the Depression, I was very young. But my own financial status was very bad for a very long time, and I seemed to have not minded somehow, I really didn't care. I had a job and I always--it was a year after high school when I got my first job--I worked steadily and I've worked steadily ever since. And for many, many years I worked for a very low salary.

Q I'm sort of curious about this frugality which stayed with people of let's say your mother's generation. It's in reverse with the next generation, with the materialism that people of I guess your age or maybe a little older trying to--and their idea of getting security was having, you know, a big house, two cars. . . .

A Yeah. I don't know what caused that. I know that it exists. I really don't seem to be able to put my--I really haven't given it much thought. I'm sure that the shock of the--maybe not a person's own personal disaster or their own personal lack of money, but to see the neighbors or to read in the paper the evidences of people who used to be very rich and now have nothing, or to hear of the friends or hear of just non-friends, just other people, that have now--are selling apples or they're selling pencils or they're starving to death--although I really don't recall anybody starving to death in Delaware. I imagine they did; I imagine they do now. But it's not the personal experience that causes this trauma that sort of makes people withdraw inside themselves and live on that scale. It's a threat they've been told about. I mean, it's a thing that they can get second-hand. It's happened I know in a number of cases. I think you can still find this [interrupted by telephone]. It's a little like--I'll take a flyer and see if I can make this work. There are people who live out here in Devonshire, people who live in the suburbs around Wilmington, who haven't been in Wilmington for five years. There are kids, school kids, who have never been to Wilmington, not because of any personal experiences they've had in center-city Wilmington, but just because of this contagious fear of this thing, the downtown scene, the muggings and the burnings and all this

and that. And in their mind it's a terrible thing. It's an exaggeration, but it's an effective deterrent. And I think maybe that would be a good thing to investigate in somebody else's thesis, how many suburban housewives absolutely refuse to go in . . . but anyway . . .

Q In a sense it's like the effect of propaganda.

A Well, I guess it is a form of propaganda. I don't regard it as intentional.

Q I mean, just the [inaudible], not necessarily the cause.

A Yeah. We talked to a lady today who gave some concerts. She was talking about opening an art exhibit out on Bancroft Park there--out in--the Delaware Art Center. And they wanted to have this reception from eight to ten, and she said, "Well, people are afraid to come into town from eight to ten now." This is really just barely in town, you know. This is really a posh neighborhood out there. There's really not too much reason why people should be afraid except when they pass that city line, they're afraid. Well, the same thing probably happened to a lot of people during the Depression, in Delaware and in other states. They saw and heard of the horror that happened to people who used to have money and who lost it all, and how they're now something less than human because they haven't got enough money to live on. I mean, it changed only--it changed just their economic status in the eyes of these people, but it--their social status, which was probably even worse, you know, was destroyed. And these people did not want this to happen to them, and they thought that if I have a thousand dollars, you know, and I'll put it in the bank, and I won't tell anybody I have it, but I'll have that security, it'll be there, always be there. I don't recall banks being suspect, and of course they collapsed in what was it--'32?

Q '32, um hmm.

A Not collapsed--well, I guess they did collapse.

Q They were closed for auditing and then reopened.

A Yeah, a four-day holiday or something.

Q Yeah. Some of them did fail, but not in Delaware, apparently.

A Didn't have any banks fail. Well, I don't recall a mistrust for the banks, although there--I'm sure throughout the country there was a big mistrust of banks. But I don't recall that here. But I do have a feeling, and I can't really remember reasoning this out or discussing it with anybody, this feeling of putting your money like a squirrel burying nuts or something, and very quietly and secretively so that nobody really knows you have money. Maybe they were afraid people would borrow money or steal it from them or something. But frugality just carried through, and it became a habit. And there are people, as I say, 30, 40 years later, who still practice this, still automatically and unconsciously just refuse to spend money for anything that's not absolutely necessary.

Q But then why would people who--talking with a few people--well, with one



particular person, the feeling was that because of the want in her family, the money she did have now went towards getting her security in an outward way, in the house, in the car, in never having her children, you know, going through this sort of thing.

A Yeah. I'm sure there's a feeling, though I'm not sure this is--again, something that's in Delaware and is not other places--is the feeling that my children will never have to go through what I went through. I really know that that exists. I really can't feel that way myself. I can't really understand why people would do this, unless the Depression was so traumatic to them, and it may be totally different if it really was traumatic. I can understand that situation could exist. The people--when I went to high school, and again, this was about '35 to '38, there were maybe three of my friends--and I knew--maybe 50 people I would know, maybe three of them had a car in high school. One of them was a boy from a very rich family and the other was the son of a man who was a painter, house painter, and apparently he was making a living. But they had their own cars. It was an incredible thing for me, I couldn't understand how anybody could have their own car, any high school kid. But now it's the rule, I'm certain, rather than the exception.

Q Probably there's three that don't have cars now.

A Pardon me?

Q Probably those three in that whole number don't have cars now and everyone else has.

A Yeah. You're deprived now if you don't have a car. And in the suburbs, of course, it's a little more understandable, too, to have a car. I mean, you do have further to go. I never had too far to go to school, ten blocks, maybe. But it was just out of the question, and it was one of those things that was not considered. But I don't think that owning a house--you say owning a big house--I'm sure--I guess that's also some kind of a status thing, it certainly is, but I don't really consider a house as a luxury.

Q I don't really mean that that's a luxury, I mean it is a possession of a thing, that a feeling of security is in the possession of things. The more you have, the more secure you are.

A Yeah, I don't really share that feeling. I know it exists, but I really don't feel that way. I think the more things--maybe this is a result of the frugality, too, but I think the more things you have, the more encumbered you are. And people think they have things and that they are valuable. But occasionally I've had things and I've tried to sell them, because I didn't want 'em any more, or they were just an investment that I would like to shake loose of and turn into money, and it was very difficult to sell things that you have. It sort of negates--to me, anyway, it negates this feeling of security. It's turning liquid money into something that's not negotiable. A house is not that way. A house today is a negotiable item. A car is not. A radio is not, or a television set is not. But a house is really an investment, I think. In that sense, in the money sense, it's not a luxury, but you can have a house that's too big for you.

Q Did you have a radio in those days?

A Yes, we had a Atwater Kent radio. I don't know when that arrived on the scene, probably 1930, maybe.

Q Do you recall what you listened to?

A Listened to Amos and Andy, and--was it Lowell Thomas? There was another guy that was of his ilk . . . Ed Wynn and the--later on the big bands, I was listening to the big bands, Harry James . . . news of course. That's all that I recall listening to.

Q Did you ever listen to the Mercury Theater, Orson Welles's?

A I only recall that as a name. Are you referring to the invasion? I didn't hear that. I never heard that until many many years later on a record. I can sort of recall the newspaper reports of the scare. I think what probably happens, the specific area that you're interested in was really dim and doubtful in my mind. I really didn't have any sterling recollections and certainly no trauma. My trauma was from other things, like school and . . . well, school was the biggest problem, I'm sure. I didn't miss things like going away on vacations and cars and . . .

Q Well, what I'm finding out with all these interviews is that--well, it's not really [inaudible] . . . . You know, when I first started the interviews, I had the feeling from what I read and heard, that people, you know, were deprived, deprived of one thing or another thing, and in very bad straits. But I've found out that that hasn't been the case, that everybody--everybody's experience was very different than everybody else, in small ways and in large ways.

A Well, when you speak of deprivation, what do you have in mind? I mean, there's only about three deprivations that I can consider would be a traumatic thing, that the Depression would cause--lack of food and lack of shelter and possibly lack of clothing. And the other things, the lack of a car and the lack of ice cream and--these things . . .

Q They were much more in the nature of necessities, like one family had a house and had a mortgage on the house and they never could pay the mortgage and they never could keep up payments and there were all these threats that the house would be taken away. Another family might have had the house but yet not had enough money to heat the whole house, so that they would have a coal stove in the kitchen and that would be the only heated room in the entire house. Or some families had to grow their own gardens to supply themselves with food, and rarely had meat and more often had vegetables, or if they had a chicken, they would have eggs, or things like that. And some people, their clothes were very worn and their children's clothes were very worn and couldn't afford new clothes for their children. Things--necessities, like today, a car or--but then when you're dealing with children in that era, also ice cream was then a necessity, too, or candy. One person told me about having a nickel, suddenly, he had a nickel, and he doesn't remember from where it came, he might have done a small favor for someone, and he went into a candy store and he bought all the candy he could get for a

nickel and got sick. And that's one of his memories. And to a child, maybe that is a necessity.

A Yeah, well of course to a five-year-old child, a nickel's worth of candy--for a nickel?--still, even now, could be quite a treasure. So it's pretty hard to relate that specifically to Depression times. When you're talking about children, to children, everything is new and everything is needed. When they want something, the reasons and the difficulties in obtaining it are not important, it's just the fact that they must have it. So this happens regardless of whether you're in the Depression or not. That's one of my problems, too, because as I say, during that time I was quite young and quite dumb, and I suspect considerably protected from the big bad world, with three women to contend with, four actually, all the time, and the world was described as a pretty terrible place and we mustn't do this and we mustn't do that and you mustn't talk to Catholics and all that stuff.

Q Was the--well, you mentioned the bigotry in your family. Was that--I don't know [inaudible] . . .

A I think so. I think the Negro, the black man, as he's now called, the colored they referred to 'em as, of course, that's another new word to you, I'm sure, were considered pretty definitely an inferior kind of a beast, but rather acceptable in various situations, domestic help, for instance. Although the homes in Wilmington--in middle-class Wilmington--would always have a shed toilet for the colored help to use, and they would never eat at the table with you, of course. I don't know whether or not this is news to you or not, I suspect it isn't, but--and there are people today who have that same attitude, in Delaware. And once you get down below the canal, man, that's bigot country. And there's a lot of it in Wilmington, mostly among the old people. But I don't think that had anything to do with the Depression. It's remarkable that the Negroes, though, during the attitude that people that I knew had about them, it's a wonder they survived, because they were certainly second class and not worthy of much consideration.

Q Do you think there could be another depression similar to the Great Depression?

A I don't know about similar. I'm sure it won't be--I mean, there's safeguards that are taken now against this. I think before another Depression occurs of that extent, that a revolution will occur, probably shift the wealth around. I can't imagine that the country--although they do some pretty stupid things--I can't imagine that they would go back into the same routine and follow the same pattern of 40 years ago. There have been depressions which have been sort of nipped in the bud. In the past 20 years there's been a couple of them, recessions--at what point do you call a recession a depression? And when now--what was the unemployment percentage during the Great Depression, do you know?

Q I couldn't say. Much higher--it was higher than it is now. It's never been that high since, I'm sure.

A It probably didn't mean much, because what happened is that the salaries

probably fell to such dismal lows that to be working really wasn't the answer, because they still weren't making enough money to live on.

Q Um, but prices fell, too.

A Yeah, that's true. Did they fall, really?

Q Yeah.

A Do you know the percentage that they fell? Did they fall comparable to the salaries? Do you know that?

Q I'm not really sure, but I know the people who were working still had to-- still didn't get all the things they would have gotten in normal times from their money. I imagine that salaries were--fell to a greater level than the prices. But the prices did go up on certain things. Certain food commodities, I think, people could still buy quantities of and they would always have enough . . . but I'm not sure of the comparative prices.

A I don't remember prices. I don't recall ever reading or hearing that--in 1918 to 1928 or '29 that prices leapt up during that period of prosperity. How much--I don't recall ever hearing that inflation was a problem.

Q No, it was never a problem. They seemed to be making more money all the time. I mean the government seemed to--and the stocks and everything. But there was a lot of installment buying in the stocks and in other things.

A Yeah, well this is the precaution that they've made and installed controls on, I mean, margin buying.

Q If there was another depression, how do you think the young people of today could do compared to the young people of the '30s?

A Oh, I don't think there's really any basic difference. Young people have always been foolish and they're still foolish, and their no more foolish than they were before, I don't believe. More access to more foolish props--cars and dope and booze may be a little more easily obtainable now. I really don't think--by your question, I mean . . .

Q Well, I guess I shouldn't say young people. I should say the people born after the Depression who might be 30 years old by now.

A How would they react to another depression?

Q Yeah, how would they react, how would they do in a depression?

A I think when people are under duress that--what I'm trying to say, I think, is the fiber, the guts, the makeup of a human being is such that when the chips are down and things are tough, they will survive by hook or crook. And they'll do things that will allow them to survive. And I don't think that the 30-year-olds now are any more or less strong, morally or physically, than the 30-year-olds of the other depressions--or the other depression, hopefully we'll not do this again.

Q Put the younger ones, you feel, the teenagers, let's say, or the early twenties, you feel they are not as strong or . . .

A No, I think they're equally strong. Matter of fact, if anything, they should . . .

Q You believe foolish and equally as strong . . .

A Physically they should be stronger because they're bigger and they've had better diets, generally, in the past 30 years, access to a scientific diet, anyway. So they should be mentally and physically capable of at least as much mayhem and discomfort as the ones were in those days. I'm sure that would not be a problem--I don't feel that that would be a problem. But when you're talking about the past generation or this generation as opposed to the previous one, you're really talking about in the scale of humanity, timewise, you're talking about people 30 seconds ago as to people now. It's a very short span, one generation. There's no possibility of any genetic change or very little genetic change. So they are the same people and they would react . . .

Q But there has been social change. You know, our generation and people--you know, kids younger than me, have been brought up in a great deal of wealth. And some people seem to feel that take away the wealth and we'll flounder, fall apart; and other people feel that, you know, in spite of the wealth, if it's taken away, we'll succeed, we'll do well.

A Well, these terms you're using--wealth, what is wealth? And succeed, what is succeed? I mean, to stay alive, is that what you mean by succeed? Or do you mean flourish and have a big house and two cars? Is that succeeding?

Q No, I imagine staying alive, surviving.

A I think they would survive. I think people--the social changes that have taken place are surface things. And I mean, the guy's still got two ears and toenails and they have babies the same way and--these things haven't changed. And they still need to eat. And while there have been changes, and some people--particularly if you are more concerned with material things, the world 30 years ago would be almost unrecognizable to you. If you think that the scale will last 10,000 years, certainly there's no real remarkable change, no remarkable change in the human being, in the human animal, with the possible exception he's gotten 3/8 of an inch taller in this country--certainly not in China.

Q Do you think the Depression has taught the country a lesson, taught the people a lesson?

A I don't think history will--is capable of teaching lessons, and that's the big fault of history. This brings me to one of my favorite arguments of all time--I mean, not of all time, but of my time. That is that people like to delve and dig and scratch around back to previous times and come up with these fascinating little bits of esoteria, the warp in the woof of George Washington's jock strap or something, you know, beautiful thing, here's George Washington's jock strap, you know, that's--someone's gonna write a

thesis about it. And it just should be left along unless these people are so radically in need of occupational therapy. But don't clutter up the minds of the world with these things. Now, if you could take the reasons for the great wars and the reasons--I don't mean theoretical reasons, I don't mean imagined reasons, actual reasons--you know, why did the Romans act the way they did, why did they expand their empire, why did it lose strength, why did it collapse, why did World War II start, why did World War I start? Put these things into a mathematical formula and say, O.K.,  $A+B=C$ , and stay away from the totally unimportant little things in history. Try to find out how to create a formula so that history will do somebody some good. Right now it does nobody any good except to prevent a lot of people from graduating. For instance the University of Delaware--[one] has to take a course in Delaware history, and it's the keystone of their existence. And you tell me--I'm sure you could, but I wouldn't believe you--why a guy who's going down there to study chemical engineering has got to pass a course in Delaware history and waste a half hour or an hour and a half a week for a year--it's just unbelievable to me.

Q It's being phased out.

A It's being phased out, yeah. And I've heard reports from historians that the study of history is being revised--not revised, but the method and the reasons for it and the methods of teaching it are all being revised. I haven't seen any evidence that this has caused any great advantage, but . . .

Q What do you think of this . . .

A Of what?

Q Of this, what I'm doing--or [inaudible] . . .

A I really would have to be convinced that it would be worthwhile. My own thinking of it at the moment is that if you produce an interesting story, and maybe even you might make a few graphs or bar charts or equations from this--I doubt if you will--but the big thing about this story is that you are at the University of Delaware and if you do this successfully, you will get a certificate of some kind--what are you after, your Master's or your Doctor's?

Q Doctor's.

A You will get a Doctor's degree, and this will be written up very carefully and six copies of each on the [sounds like "Oslam"] machine and it'll be stored in some library somewhere and forgotten forever. And the first one to forget it will be you. And then you'll get a job somewhere perpetrating this historical jazz on somebody else, and maybe even getting a student of your very own that you can direct into these obscure channels and have him write a thesis and make six copies on the Oslam machine and store it in the library someplace and it'll be forgotten. I went through these theses business down there in--course that's no big deal, of course everybody knows that this happens.

Q [Inaudible] . . . just turn this off.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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