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HOWARD KENT PRESTON  
RETIRED PROFESSOR OF ENGINEERING  
UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE

Interviewed by:  
John Gauger  
August 30, 1966

Transcribed by:  
Marie McNulty

HOWARD KENT PRESTON

INTERVIEWED ON AUGUST 30, 1966

PERSONAL DATA SHEET

Born in Trenton, New Jersey

1909 - Graduate of Lafayette in Civil Engineering

1910 - 1912 - Lafayette College, instructor in mathematics  
and drawing

Summers - draftsman for American Bridge Company

1912 - Delaware College teaching engineering and mathematics

Brief period in industry during World War I in  
Tennessee

1920 - Return to Delaware College as professor

1928 - Chairman of the Department of Mechanics

An inspector on construction for Evans Hall, Mitchell  
Hall, and the Women's Gymnasium

Several summers as business administrator for Delaware  
College

Fall, 1944 - July 1, 1946 - Acting Dean of Engineering

Member of the American Society of Civil Engineers,  
the American Association of University Professors,  
Alpha Chi Ro, Phi Kappa Phi, and Tau Beta Pi

1954 - Presented a certificate of service from the Delaware  
Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers

January 31, 1955 - Retired

INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR HOWARD K. PRESTON  
August 30, 1966

Interviewed by: John H. Gauger

PP: Professor Preston  
JG: Mr. Gauger

JG: This interview is with Professor K. Preston, retired engineering teacher at the University of Delaware. The interview was conducted on August 30, 1966, by John H. Gauger.

Professor, Preston, where were you from originally?

PP: Trenton, New Jersey. You mean what was my home state?

JG: Yes, yes.

PP: Trenton, New Jersey.

JG: And then how did you come to Delaware?

PP: Well, in Trenton, New Jersey, after I graduated from high school, I went to Lafayette College. And, then, after I graduated, I went up to Syracuse, New York, with the Lackawanna (?) Railroad. And I was there for a year and a half or something like that. I guess it was because I went down to Lafayette in the mid-year, in February-- I forget the date--but anyway, it'd be a couple. . . I graduated in 1909; 1910, it must have been 1911, I guess. And then I got married. That was my first wife; she died later. And we came down here as bride and groom. That was in September, 1912, before the opening of college. I think I was here a week or two before my wife's father died, and we were bringing her mother with us. And, ha, ha, here's something rather amusing. The two of us stopped down here on our way from Washington where we spent our honeymoon to see about getting a place to rent. And I went to the Newark Trust Co. There were two banks here at the time: the Newark Trust Co. and right across the street was, that's the Farmer's Trust Co. now. And

*[Corrected to: Farmers Bank of the State of Del.]*

PP: (Cont'd)

right across the street was the Farmer's, which is now Wilmington Trust. So, there's been quite some confusion about that. So their real estate department became very good friends of mine. Warren Singles (?), he's the secretary that handled the thing. And he said, "You know, there's hardly a place to rent in this town. And as soon as a place is empty, why somebody picks it up. Somebody from out (?) that's waiting to come in." "But," he said, "I'll let you know." So, I think the next. . . Oh, he did tell us about one place. He said, "There's a place right around here behind the building on Delaware Avenue." There's a row there of--I think there were four--duplex houses, two houses together, you know, four twins. A couple of them have been torn down lately on account of they're right behind where the Methodist church is, you know?

JG: Uh, huh.

PP: So, he said, "I don't know whether that would suit you." He said, "It's only \$14 a month." So he gave me the keys to go down and look at it. So we did. And we went in, and it wasn't too bad except for one thing. Of course, at that time, very little of the homes in town were connected to sewers. They all had outdoor privileges, you know; and they had a man come around and clean them up. On the outskirts they had cesspools. So undoubtedly loved the place. And they had. . . They seemed to be pretty. . . My wife's, my first wife's mother was a paralytic. She couldn't get around too much, but it was quite a jump for her to go way down to the end of the yard to the toilet. So we went upstairs, and there was a bathroom. "Sure, look, there's a bathroom." With a tub and no water. If you wanted water, you filled up a bucket down in the kitchen, heated it up, brought it upstairs, and then ditched it out to get rid of it. It wasn't even connected to the outside. So that was the kind of a thing that we had. And I said, "Well, if that's the only thing we can get. We've got to have a place to live." And they had given up their house up in Easton, Pa., where they lived. Well, we took it. And a couple weeks later, right after college had opened, I remember very distinctly. This was before my wife and her mother arrived. They had a lot of things, selling their property up there and one thing or another. And I think it was during the first few days the college was opened. There was a knock on the door. I was teaching the class there, and here was Mr. Barton--they called him Hazel Barton--he was a character. And he

PP: (Cont'd)

said, "Mr. Singles wants to know if you'd let him have the keys to that house of yours down on Delaware Avenue. You said you'd like to rent it." In the meantime I rented another place, and I was going to pay the rental for that up to March 1 if I had to because I signed that thing, that lease. And I said something funny, "Yeah, I've got the key right here." He said, "All right," and I never heard any more about that. He ruined it right off. Apparently he had somebody else who was in the same boat I was, and he couldn't find a place to go. I never did find out who it was. So we had another place that was rented by Tillie Thomas. She was the wife of Jakie (?) Thomas. Those were the names that they had. They didn't call them Mr. Thomas and Mrs. Thomas. Everybody knew everybody else by their first names, you know. Except the teachers, and they were all professors. So, they owned the paper mill which is now where the Hollingsworth place is over. . . You know where Hollingsworth is?

JG: Yes.

PP: Well, there used to be a wallpaper mill there. At one time it was an organ place; and then Mr. Thomas took it over and made it into, made wallpaper. So the college carpenter--I was boarding with him for the two weeks before my family came down--and he said, "I think there's a nice place over on Prospect Street, much better than the one you have over there. And that's only \$15 a month. And that has heat in it, and, of course, an outside toilet." But the cellar was dry, and it looked very comfortable. So I said, "All right I'll take that," and I went around to Mrs. Thomas's and I told her. And I told her my predicament, and she said, "Well, you go over there; and, if you have to take the other place that'd be all right. Just tell me. Just take it month to month, that's all." Well, nothing could be better than that. So we took it. And that's the way we came. And incidentally, I didn't tell my wife about this at all. I put down the carpets, and I had everything in it. I had the kitchen stove going, and the potatoes were boiling and everything when they arrived. And, by that time, I used to come down from Main Street by bus that ran from Main Street down to the Pennsylvania Railroad to meet the trains. And there were something like 10 or 15 trains a day there and 4 or 5 more over on the B & O. So there was a lot of them. Of course the bus service knocked all that out. So I told Mr. ~~Withers~~ (?), Ott Withers--he ran the buses. He had two or three things that he did in the horse and buggy time.

Widdoes

Widdoes?

PP: (Cont'd)

So, when they came we went on up and \_\_\_\_\_ looked kind of funny, we went by the street by way of Delaware Avenue, which was where she remembered we had gone. However, it wasn't too clear in her mind. Maybe we'd gone around the block the other way. So we went over there. And when we pulled up to the house, she said, "This isn't the place we rented." "Oh," I said to \_\_\_\_\_, "Don't you know where we live?" "Oh, my gosh," she said, "I don't know. Isn't this the place you told me about?" Ha, ha, ha. \_\_\_\_\_ pleasant surprise. She hadn't seen the other place, you know. I know it didn't sit well with her. So that was that. And that was the arrival.

And then, at that time I happen to know the population here was about 2,000 altogether. There was a sign on the road from Wilmington here somewhere. Incidentally, we didn't come in under the railroad. You know how you go from here out to Wilmington under the railroad. We came over through Lumbrook (?). I don't know whether you know where the Shepherd place is out on West Main Street. You go by where you turn now, by the A & P place and by the firehouse. You go on out there about a quarter mile, I guess. And it was just a country road. It went from there down over the railroad tracks. There wasn't anything there; there wasn't a sign, not even a bell ringer to tell you there was a train coming. \_\_\_\_\_ tracks, and you went down and around that way. But there's a sign somewhere that said 2000 population; and I don't remember what else was on it maybe something about the university, I don't remember. So there were. . . About--I have down here--1912, I got this, I went back. That was just about what I thought; well, I've got some actual figures from the catalog. I don't know whether you've seen the 1912 catalog or not. If you go back, I think out some of these things \_\_\_\_\_. And there were 169 students here then and a faculty of 28. And that includes the people who were in the agricultural extension because they were teachers too mostly, teaching some--a total of 197 people. And that included the president all the way down. So we were a very, very small place. However, they paid a better salary than my own college paid when I was up there. So Depot Street--that's what they called this South College Avenue later--called Depot Street. I think you'll find that on an old map. I have an old map of 1888, I think it is, something like that, or 1868. That was just about a mile to the Pennsylvania Railroad. And so, I have

PP: (Cont'd)

something here that I've already mentioned, but there were two people that ran buses; Al Stokes was another one, and Charles Greyhorn was a third one. And \_\_\_\_\_ was the first one I think to get an automobile bus. The other buses were horsedrawn.

JG: Oh, I see.

PP: They were just little. . . They looked like Black Marias; you know, they seat four people on each side. And they'd go down to meet the train, and your baggage would be in between; and it was quite. . . Once in a while some people decided to walk that mile, and that was a dirt road, too. I mean there weren't any sidewalks then.

JG: And Al Stokes would be Pete Stokes' father?

PP: Yeah, Pete Stokes' father, that's right. And the streets were all dirt roads with hitching posts on them here and there and watering trough at the college entrance up there right just on the other side of where College Avenue runs into the college up there. They have sort of a fence around there where you go in. Well, there was a watering trough there right in front. That's where they used to dump the freshmen, you know, sometimes. Ha, ha. It wasn't always full, though. Sometimes they had to fill it themselves. And later there was a stone trough; this trough here was a metal one, a great big, a great big, I imagine it was a yard and a half in diameter and about so deep. It was quite a big trough. There was nothing but horses going around then at that time. And then later on one of the Curtis sons, Walter, or maybe the two of them, gave a stone one down in front of the academy; and that's now on the academy grounds inside, \_\_\_\_\_ right in on the ground. And \_\_\_\_\_ they prohibited filling them because hoof and mouth disease was going around. And they claim that, a good many of them, that one horse would come and drink in there and a hundred horses would get the disease. So after that it was never filled up. So, then there were very few crosswalks. Occasionally somebody had some stones left over after they put in new curbs, and they'd use them to build a crosswalk. Just anyplace wherever they happened to think about it. They were large granite, I think granite, slabs. I had a settee 2 feet wide and 4 or 5 feet long and by me they were much bigger than that settee. And they were about 6 inches thick too. There



PP: (Cont'd)

were many trees outside of the curb. See, when the curbs came along, they put those in. Well, it'd been only just a country road at one time. . . . That road goes back to sometime in the 1600's, I think. Very close to that road there used to be what they called the Queen's Highway or the King's Highway, I forget which. But it went up there.

JG: Uh, huh.

PP: And I remember later on when I lived over on West Main Street there was a depression in the back of the houses on the west side, or on the south side, where people said that used to be the old King's Highway or whichever it was that led out to Fair Hill and on to. . . . There was a crossing of the Susquehanna River way up there somewhere, and that's the way we used to go to Baltimore and Philadelphia, one way. That, of course, was all; it looked as though it had been the way the excavation was shaped.

JG: The trees were actually out on the street?

PP: Now these trees along there. . . . Well, they had put the curb in the back later on to widen the street, but they didn't cut down the trees. So they waited until finally some of them died, and they came and oh, they were a long, long while. If I can remember correctly, you used to be one of the bunch. But they refused to cut those trees down. They wanted shade for the horses and \_\_\_\_\_. So, there was one up West Main Street I recall very well where cars began to get--automobiles were coming in then--and they were reckless bodies, oh, jalopies they were I guess. They bought them secondhand just as they're doing nowadays to soup them up. And one time somebody came through there and didn't see the tree on the side of the road and banged into it. He killed two or three of them. It was nighttime. Well, if you could see some of the lights--lamps--they had on the front of the cars. They were all right for other people to see the car coming, but they didn't show much more than eight or ten feet ahead of the road. They didn't have the glary kind of lights that they have now. They were. . . . They were made of.... Well, acet~~al~~ine gas, <sup>e</sup> that's what it was; and some of them were just oil lamps. That doesn't seem so long ago, but it was. Now, there were few houses for rent as I mentioned. And we never moved in that one. The elementary school was on Main Street, and that's where the kids \_\_\_\_\_ (double voices) is now. And I don't know whether you \_\_\_\_\_ because they just put a new front on or added to it. And they added on to the back a couple years ago (?). It was

PP: (Cont'd)

much smaller than it is now. (Voice muffled)  
grammar school was on the southeast corner of Delaware  
Avenue and Academy. That's across the street from the  
firehouse. You know where the firehouse is now--the old  
firehouse?

JG: It's a parking lot now, right?

PP: (Voice very muffled)  
And in 1924 the junior high school in Newark. . . Oh, wait  
a minute here, I 's see. No this other time. . . The  
grammar school, I mean the high school was in the Newark  
Academy Building. That was the high school when we came  
here.

JG: The college wasn't using that any more then?

PP: The college never did use it.

JG: Oh, didn't they?

PP: You mean where the Academy is now?

JG: Right.

PP: Up on Main?

JG: They never had used that?

PP: No, no, the college. . . No, no. They claim that the  
college originated up on New London, up on New London Road  
there. And I remember, there was quite a stir about when  
you had a procession of some kind, I mean an inauguration  
of a president of a university, or college, or whatever  
it was, they lined up according to. . . Well Harvard was  
first, and someone was second, and someone was third,  
depending on when they were founded. And Dr. Hullyon (?), *Hulliner*  
the president at one time, he came on in the early 20's.  
He discovered what was. . . What he believed was the  
beginning of the university here. And that was up on  
New London where they had a school. A minister had a school  
up there with about a dozen students or something like that.  
One or two boarded in and whatnot. I never knew the exact  
history. However, William Lewis's book--of course, you know  
about his book. It tells something about that. And don't  
know whether he got hearsay about that or not. But Dr.

PP: (Cont'd)

*Hullyon* Hullyon claimed that put us about seventeen hundred and something when the university began. Of course it was Delaware College when I came here. And then when Dr. Hullyon came, he said, "This should be called the University." Not from the point of view of \_\_\_\_\_, which is a collection of numerous colleges. But we do have numerous departments--the Department of Engineering, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Arts & Sciences, and so on. And also, it being, as he'd say, the headstone of the educational system in this state, and they always call that a university. So after that, the trustees adopted that name.

JG: Dr. Hullyon started that?

PP: Dr. Hullyon. My recollection is that he is the one that brought that about. And from my own point of view, I thought he was stretching things a little bit because this was about 1920. This was about eight or ten years after, maybe 1922, I forget when it was, Dr. *Harter* resigned. So. . . But I was speaking about the high school being in the Newark Academy Building. And there was some kind of a connection there that this became a place of, I think superseded the one on New London Road. But I don't know the dates about that. They had one class in the grammar school when the junior high was building. In other words they had come back again from the other high school; I have a date here--it says 1924 the junior high school was in the Newark Academy. . . Well, that was not the whole high school in there. I was talking to someone just last spring who said they were in the last class in the Academy Building in high school. So there is some confusion in my mind there as to how much there was high school. I don't know whether senior high school could have been, must have been there too. Really a ramshackle place. I suppose you've read that sign, have you, out on the front?

JG: Yes.

PP: Tells you about, I think the most important thing was that Edgar Allen Poe spoke there one time, ha, ha. You know, he did speak there one time somewhere. I don't know whether it was at the college or not. But in the meantime, the college was going on; and I suppose you have the dates about that--about the college building which was, was that

PP: (Cont'd)

two wings? No, the middle part was the original one; and the wings were added on later on. And the middle part was--oh, when I came here they had. . . You went up steps and you went into a room there which was the chapel. We had a chapel there at that time. And gradually. . . They even had chapel after they built Wolfe Hall. They used to have chapel down at Wolfe Hall. But that was only. . . I don't know whether it was once, twice, or three times a week. It used to be every day at the old place. And then they had to change that into a dining room. And then they had the chapel exercises at. . . That was when Wolfe Hall was built. And I remember the dining room was right under the chapel there. Of course there were only about. . . I suppose there were only about 25 or 30 students who dined there at all. And the rooms were up over the chapel. Now that's another thing, you see. You wouldn't know that when they remodeled that. . . In 1916, or along about there, when they remodeled that building, Mr., oh, what's the name of the dormitory on the righthand side up here?

JG: Harter?

PP: No, the one. . . Well, Harter was the first one up there. But this one was the one this way. No, no, it was a very, very common name. Anyway, he gave the money to uh. . . The old building was falling apart, and he gave the money to. . . There used to be wooden steps going up there instead of concrete steps as they have now. And they built a concrete wall on the inside of the building, and you can see the iron S's (?), I think something like that, on the outside to tie the brickwork to the concrete so to keep it. . . It was getting pretty weak. It could be, from my point of view, that some of the brick they used was not too strong. And apparently it lasted twice as long as anyone might have expected it to in the first place. All the bricks were made down here in town, I think, at Jonathan Johnson's (?) brickyard down there where the shopping center is now, the Newark Shopping Center. Yeah, that was a brickyard down there. And he made, oh, you see all these brick houses around here. I imagine most of them he made. He made all kinds of bricks, you know. When they make bricks, there's the good ones and then there's the not-so-good, a little bit not-so-good, and then the other ones that are only half baked. They're the ones they put on the inside, put the plaster on, you see. So, that building was tied in by, what's this gentleman's name. . . I can't let

PP: (Cont'd)

a prominent name like that go by. But anyway, they changed that thing. . . Now, anybody who was here in 1912 would go look at that place and they'd say it wasn't the same building at all because they changed the rooms so much. They made two or three rooms into one, and one thing or another.

JG: So the students had roomed in the old college building before this dormitory was built?

PP: The what?

JG: The students actually roomed in the old college building? Were there student rooms there?

PP: Oh, yeah. They had rooms up over. . . I say this is what is now. . . Well, now, maybe there are several rooms in there. I haven't been up there. It used to be as you go in there was a room there that would hold the whole student body--a couple hundred students. And that was what was called the chapel, and they used to have all sorts of exercises in there. Well, the commencement exercises, the opening of college; and everything could be held inside. Usually they held them outside if the weather was all right, but they could go inside for, oh, a number of years before they had to do something else. Oh, yes, and then on the wings. . . On the lefthand wing--I see looking it at this way, that would be the west wing. They had chemistry in there and biology. And in the one on the right, the east wing, well, I know it became part of. . . It became the faculty club. But, I think one or two of the other departments of the college were in there; and I didn't have much to do with it in those days until 1912 or up to about 1918. And. . .

JG: What building were your engineering classes in?

PP: Pardon me?

JG: Which building were your engineering classes in?

PP: Well, in what we called Recitation Hall. That's now the Arts Building, isn't it? With the columns on the front there?

JG: Yes, the columns on the front.

PP: Have you ever seen it without the columns?

JG: I haven't been in it since they redecorated it.

PP: Oh.

JG: Yes, I saw it before that.

PP: Uh huh. And, well, the testing work was over in what was called Mechanical Hall. And now that's Athletics. That was turned over later when the Engineering Building was turned over to the Athletics Department. And then the little brick building in between Recitation Hall and that, that was the Public Health, State Health Department.

JG: Oh.

PP: And Herbert, uh, well, he was a State Health man. He lived on College Avenue down there. . . His house was about where the Mathematics & Physics Building is now.

JG: Oh, uh huh.

PP: There were a couple buildings in there. And he lived there. He was the head of the State Health, which wasn't very much. I know one thing. They gave the students on the faculty, (?) everybody. So, I think the first use I had of that was when they had a typhoid epidemic here. You see, we didn't have sewers all over. Some of it drained out into the gutters and, ha, ha, crazy things. Some of us had cess-pools and some a little of each. Well, I know they didn't drain sewage, but they drained washings and sink things (?). If the sewer ran downhill as it did when I later moved up on West Main Street over the railroad at what they called Quality Hill (?), ha, ha. And I know ours went out there. It went out and came diagonally down so it would go out over. I don't know how it got to a place where it was on a level perhaps with the cellar. It ruined the cellar too. So, those were some of the. . .

JG: About when was the typhoid epidemic that you mentioned?

PP: That's something I never did very closely. . .

JG: Well, you had a flu epidemic in 1917, was it?

PP: Oh, yeah, I wasn't here then. I was down in Tennessee. I had a year and a half or so that I was away from the college. I went down there on the powder plant, the government powder plant during the First World War. And we had the flu down

PP: (Cont'd)

there. And I got back here after the flu was over, quite some time. Oh, well, it must have been '12, '13, about 1913 or 1914, somewhere around in there when that typhoid hit because I know that one fellow is still living here who had a milk route. He had to give it up because they made tests, and he was a carrier. And, of course, they didn't pasteurize the milk. We'd get the milk right from up in the country here, you know. The farmer would raise the milk and bring it down without ever hearing of any such thing as pasteurizing. And that was when they decided they had better put in better water mains and sewers, which they did. And, of course, they emptied the sewer in White Clay Creek.

JG: Oh, they did?

PP: And untreated, yeah. Of course, that was. . . However, \_\_\_\_\_ not to use it, that's all. But a lot of them went in swimming there, and I never heard of any particular trouble about it later on. But ultimately the town built a \_\_\_\_\_ tank in down, oh, down about where MacDonalds. . . You know where the MacDonalds place is? Back in there. They used to have some \_\_\_\_\_ tanks in there, and that would purify the water perfectly. The only thing was it was very limited in the amount it could take. So the town gave that up a few years ago. Instead they had added some extra tanks, but instead of getting more they just joined in with the County Sewer system. All of theirs dumps in the sewer and goes to Cherry Island off Wilmington and is disposed of there. There's something I saw just a day or two ago a picture of this new construction going up on Cherry Island in Wilmington. They take care of the whole county now, New Castle County. So it was quite a long jaunt then from what we had in those days.

Well, now the next thing. . . Are there any other questions?

JG: I wonder what you thought of the teaching facilities here when you first came. Were they adequate for teaching?

PP: The facilities? Not too much, no. My room was the first room as you go in Recitation Hall, the room on the right. And that was practically. . . Practically all my courses were in there. And then on the left was the President's secretary, and in back of her on the further left was the President's office. And then in the back there was a

PP: (Cont'd)

long corridor along both of these rooms. On the left as you go in was what we called the English Room. That's where the English Department held their classes, lectures, and whatnot. And occasional times in between anybody could use them if they wanted to; they just had to find out if it was empty. Then, there were two classrooms, two small classrooms. Then on the right was the Physics Laboratory and classrooms which--Dr. Harter was the President of the college--he taught those.

JG: Oh, did he?

PP: And, let's see. Then, at the right, at the end of the hall, down at the far end of the hall, right behind that was the, oh, the college. . . What did they call him? He was the business administrator, but they had a different name for him at that time. And his secretary. Well, it was just a small room for both of them. They didn't have separate rooms for them, but they kept the books. And everything was on that side of the campus, you know. Those three buildings up there. Well, Taylor Gymnasium was there. Not the swimming pool, but just the, it was the righthand portion of it. But I don't know whether you remember there used to be a track around in the balcony. There used to be an indoor track around there.

JG: Oh, yes.

PP: It was about so wide. They could run around it, you know, and get up a little speed. I don't think they ever did any racing up there; there wasn't room enough to do it. I'd say the whole room was about as wide as this is long, and then they used to have the dances in there. And then the they had chairs up there on the track. The floor wasn't very comfortable because the track was elevated at about 30 degrees I think going around the curved part. Ha, ha. Anyway, we made out. It was a good spirt there between the town, town and gown (?). Some places were not too well thought of. The boys themselves were mostly, I think, a very well poised. . . Some of them got in trouble once in a while. There were stories about when they went down to the college and got a cow, a young cow, and put it up on the belfry somehow, ha, ha. It was easy enough getting it up there, but the thing was to get it down. I never did hear about how they got it down. And then they plugged up. . . One morning they plugged up



PP: (Cont'd)

all the keyholes in all the buildings--they put cement in them. But the funny thing about it was we had a man who was a superintendent of the grounds and buildings. And he did all the. . . Well, he took care of cutting the grass and. . . We had two or three people, hired people. And it was his job to manage them. And he was always up and around early in the morning, 6 o'clock, I guess. I never knew what it was, but we always found out about it. . . We never stopped it because he got up and had the keyholes all cleaned out                     . I guess the boys. . . I don't know that they ever found out who did it, but it was just one of those things. That's one thing I think that every college in the country in those days they used to, the boys used to do that thing. They did it in my own college. But there was always something about                      the current issue of students, the current ones that students didn't have sense enough to know that all these things have been going on for years and they're always ready for it. I don't think there was any one time, even when I was in college, when they had to shut down the chapel for anything like that, any of these crazy things. And so they had all the rules (?). And another time they--I remember this one myself--they had one of these big ox carts. I don't know if you've ever them. Each side has wheels and the wheels on them are about 5 feet in diameter. It would take three men to lift one of them, you know. Darned if they didn't have that up on the platform there for everybody to see. We did see that. They didn't get that cleared up by the time chapel opened. And, of course, what they had done, they had taken the whole thing apart down at the farm. That's where they found this thing, I think. And they hoisted it up there. I don't know how they ever got it up there. Of course, everybody was asleep, ha, ha, ha. Then they put it together up there. Then another time, there used to be, right across the corner of let's see, the B & O Railroad and Main Street. This would be on the southeast corner, was the monument, tombstone man, a man that made tombstones. Thompson his name was. And, of course, he had all these tombstones out, some of them partly carved with wife out, you know, so there was very little he had to do. And he could do these things when he wasn't rushed to get things out. And then at the bottom maybe he'd have some piece of poetry or something. Well, the place was full of all kinds of things ready to go. Well, one morning he woke up and they were all up on the campus, ha, ha. They had a different professor's name on each one, ha, ha. That's one I had never heard of before. Well, I think it cost the student body \$50 or \$100 for someone's whose got chipped or something like that. But

PP: (Cont'd)

anyway, it used to be that, if they didn't find out who did it, why the whole student body had to stand for it because they took it for granted that the student body as a whole knew about it. Maybe there were only three people, but. . . And then another time, right after they built Harter Hall up there, some crazy duds ran a Ford car down the steps. They were really nice old, beautiful, blue stone steps. And of course, as it went down, the crankcase hit the steps not too hard, but nevertheless, it would take a chip off of it. Well, it was all right. They knew who did that, and they paid for it. That was just one of those stunts, and a little bit out of the times. And then they built Mitchell Hall over there, and Mr. Sharp--that's the name I was trying to think of, Sharp Hall--Mr. Sharp had gone down to South Carolina or was down there and saw these beautiful box-wood trees. I don't know whether you've seen them or not. They're higher, maybe higher than that lamp there. And I think he paid something like \$600 apiece for them. And then he had to have them hauled up here and put in front of Mitchell Hall because he liked Dr. Mitchell very, very much.

JG: What did Dr. Mitchell teach?

PP: He was President before Dr. Hullyon, I think.

JG: Oh.

PP: For two or three years, for a few years. However, that would appear in the catalogs. Yeah, I'm sure that it was Dr. Hullyon who followed him. And so, some of the boys got \_\_\_\_\_ a little bit; and then they thought they were going to try to jump, who could. . . "You can't jump over that." So they ruined a couple of them practically. So they caught them, and it cost the parents \$500 because they broke off parts. I think it's all about covered now. But it took a long, long time to do it. They had to pay the damages. Over a series of years, it was a very small amount relatively, you know. Oh, people were burned up about it; I was too at the time. But, when you stop and think about all the colleges, they all have something like this. I don't know, it wouldn't be a true university history if it didn't have some of it in there, looking back on it.

JG: Who was Mr. Sharp?

PP: Mr. Sharp was. . . He's still living.

JG: Oh, is he?

PP: And he's been on the board of trustees; he married one of the Du Ponts. And he's been a great benefactor. I think he did a good deal of the financing for some of the dormitories up on this campus. Of course, you know there was a time up until a relatively short while ago that the college couldn't build dormitories. They had no money to build them with. The state couldn't build them. They didn't have enough money to go around; they couldn't take all that money to build something for these students when their secondary and elementary education was suffering for lack of funds. So it was up to people like Mr. Sharp and his wife of course who were very, very wealthy to help out. I'm just stating an example. There are a lot of people like that. And of course I believe that Mr. Sharp had some influence with other people. I mean he could impress upon them the importance of these things. I think he contributed some to the ones on the other side, the west side of the campus up there by Main Street. But he's done so many of those things that I couldn't begin to tell you all of them. And I don't think any of it was for advertising for him; he didn't care anything about it. Well, he built Mitchell Hall; he paid for Mitchell Hall. He left in his will--the way I understand it--he had left in his will I think something like \$200,000 to build Mitchell Hall. But it was to be done after he died. So you can imagine how far that \$200,000 would go; and he's still living. Well, this was in 1930 when Mitchell Hall was built. So, he said, "Well, I don't know. Why not give it to them now? I'd like to see it." And I think it cost him \$250,000 to build it, before these additions had been put onto it. I know numerous changes have been made inside, and those I guess he didn't have to give. I don't know anything about that except that that statement came from somebody. I don't know who. Whether it was the president or who about his saying that he thought he'd better give the money now and see the building rather than letting the money accumulate and so on. I don't know him well enough, but if I saw him now, why I'd like to say, "Mr. Sharp, I admire your intelligence in having this thing done when you could do something for a dollar that it takes ten dollars to do now. And I think also you probably didn't have a very good idea how long you were going to live." Now in 1930, that's 35 years. Of course, that \$200,000 would have amounted to something too all this time. That's another thing. But he's been a very, very fine man; and he does no fussing about it. \_\_\_\_\_.

PP: (Cont'd)

Now, talking about these different things that they need, somebody had to give them the money for the Mathematics & Physics Building, I guess. But these dormitories that have been going up--Gilbert, that's one of the last ones, isn't it? That one that goes across the campus down there and these others over here? Harrington. All those and this new one over here on the other side of the railroad. I don't think anybody has contributed anything to those, but they got the legislature to pass a law allowing the college to borrow additional bonds for self-liquidating which is a sensible thing to do. They get the income from the ones they're using. And from that--I have an idea it was a pretty funny business that they didn't put down not only the cost of janitor service and heating and light and water, but they didn't put down interest on the money they're paying and also the amount they have to put aside to pay them off. So that would be kind of funny business if they didn't do that. I'm just guessing. I hope they are anyway, ha, ha. And I don't know whether I've ever seen anything about the bond issues in the paper about it, public bond issues. I don't know, but, anyway, they borrowed the money. That's the way I've understood that's what they're doing. Maybe you could check up on that.

JG: I think that's right.

PP: Huh?

JG: I think that's right.

PP: So, I've got down here the next thing on here that came to my mind. Now, this is my first draft of this thing, understand. The Opera House. I don't know whether you know where the Opera House was. Do you?

JG: Across from the Academy Building?

PP: Uh, yeah. Williams Real Estate there and next door. That was the Opera House at one time. And then the Post Office was where the ticket office is. Finally, the Opera House. . . They gave up this Opera House. They used to have. . . All they had in that Opera House that I can remember was the silent movies and then the college used to. . . The college had commencement exercises in there for a while when they couldn't use the one in, on the campus. But in those days

PP: (Cont'd)

they had to have the boxes in this ticket office, and you had to go there. There were no deliveries of mail then. You had to call for it. We used to have the college commencement there if it rained on account of the chapel having to become a dining room. And the basement there, of the Opera House, was used for annual church suppers and bazaars and one thing or another. Most of the churches didn't have room for those things. And there were a lot of that kind of thing going on. It was pretty busy. Then, beginning with the stores. There were two or three general stores. McFarland's, that's where the Placement Bureau is now.

JG: Oh.

PP: It was called McFarland's. There were two brothers. They were both bachelors and brothers. You could buy anything you wanted in there if you liked that sort of thing, ha, ha. No, one side they had groceries. . . I don't know about these stores. Have I got anything else of interest to you? You've got some other things there; I don't know.

JG: Sure.

PP: These two were bachelors, and the whole thing was divided into two parts as you went through, from one to the other. And over on the other side was, oh, dress goods and all kinds of things, shoes, and oh, things of that kind. I was going to say hardware, too. They had some, but not much. And that's now what they call (?) Robb Hall, I guess, isn't it? That's what they call it now?

RAUB

JG: Yes.

PP: And where the Placement Bureau is now. Then there was Pete Sherwood's place. That was another one. He was down, oh, who'd be there now? Well down somewhere along the area there where the, on, let's see, on the south side of the street, Main Street, where the Card Center is. You know where that Card Center is, next to the Wilmington Savings Fund?

JG: Yes.

PP: Right along in there. And that was Pete Sherwood's place. And that was a general store. And then he had the newspapers there. He had boys delivering newspapers, or you could go there and buy one. Old Pete, he wasn't a good businessman. How he ever lived, I don't know. When he died, they sold out his place; and then they found out about hundreds and hundreds of dollars that people owed him and never paid him. Of course, I know two or three people myself. I happen to know that they had to stop doing business. They went to Wilmington, you see. They paid them cash, because they wouldn't lend. . . . Because they didn't know them. But they got all their credit used up here, and then they'd go to Wilmington. That was about the time the buses began to come. It was easy to get into Wilmington and out again. Isn't it funny that some people live that way?

JG: It sure is.

PP: Many of them. . . . Well, one of them I know was trying to keep up with the Joneses, if you know what I mean.

JG: Yes.

PP: They couldn't do it. He was a teacher at the college, too. So, however, apparently he got enough out of it to keep his wife and her sister, I guess it was, in a little four-room place over on Cleveland Avenue in fairly good comfort. Now, at the corner of West Main and New London Road, that's where Linden's Restaurant is. There's a restaurant there named Linden's or Linton's.

JG: Linton's. Linton's?

PP: Linton's? I know it was, it still is?

JG: I'm not sure.

PP: And that was a \_\_\_\_\_ store. And there had been another store. But there were a couple of general stores in there that had just. . . . And in back of him, where Robert Jones is now, was Chatman's. They sold dress goods, notions, and all kinds of things like that. And, well, I have down here something that \_\_\_\_\_. This was on the other side of the tracks, Quality Hills (?).

JG: Uh huh.

PP: A good place to live. There was a doctor right up there. There was a \_\_\_\_\_ doctor in that house, what's his name; oh, well, anyway, Dr. Blake, it was when I was there.

PP: (Cont'd)

Then Dr. Downs came. Remember Downs? There was a school named after him. Well, now the doctor who succeeded him is there. Across the street from him was the minister. And then was Dry Goods and groceries, and then there were these two stores on the corner. And then there was a boarding house next to Dr. Upthorpe, right next to this doctor who was up the hill (?). And then there was the undertaker and a tombstone man, and there was a mason in there somewhere--I forget his name. And a dentist. So within you might say 100 yards, ha, ha; and, of course, there was Dr. Harter and myself and across the street was Professor McCue, Dean McCue, Dean of the Agriculture School later. And, oh, Dr. Leary, he was the head of the Chemistry Department. So there were about, I don't know how many college people lived up there. And that's how it got the name Quality Hills. And, ha, ha, . . .

JG: I guess the doctor there now is Dr. Armstrong. Is that right?

PP: Doctor?

JG: Armstrong?

PP: No.

JG: No?

PP: No. Is there a doctor up there now?

JG: Yes. Dr. Armstrong is up there.

PP: Oh, well there's another one. . .

JG: That's not the one you mean then?

PP: No, I'm thinking of this time when all these things were there. You see, the tombstone man isn't there any more.

JG: No, you were saying Dr. Blake was in that house and then. . .

PP: Yeah. Well, it's not Armstrong; what's his name? Oh, he's quite a doctor for the ladies and the babies. Oh, well. . .

JG: Dr. Mencher?

PP: Who? Mencher. Mencher. Yeah. Didn't Mencher have his place?

JG: Yes.

PP: Well, where's Armstrong then?

JG: He's over on Main Street someplace. I'm not sure.

PP: Oh. Well, I just don't happen to know about him right now. Well, I think that's a good place to be. You didn't have to far for any kind of help you wanted, ha, ha.

JG: Ha, ha.

PP: Dr. Harter, see he lived. . . I lived in the house later on right next to Dr. Harter, and I don't think any more. Of course, Dr. Harter, he was the Presbyterian minister. He lived right across the street. No. No. He lived up where young Robert Jones, across the street from Jones' Funeral Parlor. That belonged to. . . That white house where they have the parking space for the. . . Right next to the parking space that they use for funerals. That's Bob Jones' son. And then further up, there was Frazer. He was the major of the town, and he was the one that gave Frazer Field in honor of his son Joe. That's marked on the brass placque on the gate as you go in. However, I think Joe really provided his own because he became a very wealthy engineer. He graduated from college and went down to South America. I think he was in Argentina. But, anyway, down there he made a lot of money building railroads down there. And he went hunting or something and got pneumonia and died down there and left his money to his father. So his father bought this field. I don't think. . . There was no. . . Nothing was said about his having to do it or anything. So Belmont, that's up there where the President lived before he came down here.

JG: Oh, yeah.

PP: And that's a dormitory, isn't it, of some kind now?

JG: I'm not sure.

PP: For graduate students, I think. Isn't that right? Something of that kind. And that's where Frazer lived.

JG: Oh.

PP: Yeah. So then, of course. . . I have a note here about Quality Hills. It's sort of amusing in a way. One time a man came selling vacuum cleaners, and he tried to sell us a vacuum cleaner. Well, we already had one; but anyhow we let him give his spiel. And he used to tell us about all



PP: (Cont'd)

these things, and somebody. . . (End of Side 1)

Side 2

I have a list here of people who lived over the railroad at Quality Hills up there about to Old Oak Road (?) or Carlton, Corbit Street, up that way. They all lived up somewhere in that range. Dean McCue, of our Agriculture School, now Dean of Agriculture, Arthur Woodeer (?). He was in the Agriculture Experiment Station. And Dr. Harter, the President of the College. Dr. Penney (X), the head of the Chemistry Department. Dr. Reed. He was a biologist. And Dr. Roan (?), the Presbyterian minister. And then there was a string of girls; I can't think of their names now. And Joseph Hossinger (?). He was the business administrator for the College for a while before they got Wilkinson, A. G. Wilkinson. And the Vinsingers. And they, I think, the parents of them both died; and the children are both married. Oh, yeah, and Mr. Houck. He was the Episcopal minister. And he lived right up on the other side of Dr. Harter. And then Frank Cooch. He's the father of the present postmaster. And Alfred Curtis. He was. . . Now that's another place that the College owns up there. That big stone place that sits back just before you get to, well, it's right next door to Belmont. And he was the owner of the Curtis Paper Mill down here. And Professor Short. He was in the Engineering and Mathematics Department the same as I was. He was here, he had been here quite a while; and he was a graduate of the College too. And Professor ~~Holton~~. He's still living; he's about ninety some years old. He retired about, oh, fifteen years or more ago. But his son \_\_\_\_\_ is in the Department of Biology over there.

*Houghton*

JG: That's his son?

PP: And Frank Collins. \_\_\_\_\_ Collins, I see that name. He was mayor at one time. He lived up there in that large brick house right across the street from the new Presbyterian church.

JG: Oh. Uh huh.

PP: That great big oak up there is about this big around at the bottom. I always said I'd give \$2,000 to have that on my lawn. Oh, that's. . . I could have bought that lot up there for \$10 a foot.

JG: Oh, no.

PP: Only I didn't have the \$10. And then the minister from the Christiana, the Head of Christiana Church. Do you know where the Head of Christiana cemetery is?

JG: Yes.

PP: The minister of that church down there. He lived up there just this side of the water tank, right next to the water tank on this side. And that water tank wasn't there either at the time I'm talking about. That came later.

JG: That minister, I can't think of his name. There's a room named after him at the Student Center? This minister that was from the Head of Christiana Church?

PP: Uh.

JG: I can't think of his name--~~Blainingham~~ (?). Was that it, ~~Blainingham~~?

PP: Oh, no, no.

JG: He's earlier than that.

PP: No. ~~Blainingham~~ was. . . I don't think he was the minister. At least of any church here. I used to see him once in a while. He used to come up and visit, and he used the Faculty Club Room there in the east wing of Old College. The Faculty Club ~~used~~ to have a room in there. They use it now for, I think, the French classes meet in there or something. And he used to get there. . . I'd see him writing. . . We had three rooms, two rooms, I guess, and a large entryway. One of them was a billiard room, and another was a reading room, a meeting room. And, this ~~Blainingham~~, Ed ~~Blainingham~~ I think his name was, used to come up frequently and visit the college. And I don't know. . . And, of course, he wrote two or three books about Delaware.

JG: Uh huh.

PP: So. . . Oh, I have down here. I added this. Ten college people, three ministers, one banker, and one industrialist amongst all these people, ha, ha. And there was all. . . You can see why they called it Quality Hills.

JG: Right.

PP: So, then the different churches that we had there. There was of course a Methodist and a First Presbyterian which

PP: (Cont'd)

is the old church, what they call the Stone Church down there now? That was built in I think 1868. That's near the peak of the front of the stone in the front of that. I think you can read it with the naked eye, 1868. And that was started off, as I understand, as they built the basement and the floor overhead formed the roof. And then some years later before they got up to where they could put the roof on, I mean the rest of it. Then, there's St. John's Roman Catholic Church. That at one time was a Presbyterian Church. Do you know where that is?

JG: On the corner of Chapel and Main.

PP: Chapel and Main, yeah. Of course, now, the principal part of that is out there on, oh, on the road that leads to Du Pont Corners up there.

JG: Right.

PP: I forget the name of that road there.

JG: Possum Park Road?

PP: Possum Park.

JG: Possum Park.

PP: Yeah, Possum Park. So, oh, I think. . . I have down here in the corner about Alice Kerr. That's "Kerr." She pronounced the name "Carr" instead of "Kerr." And, Bill Holton---you know Bill Holton that lives over in one of these apartments over here. I think, though, I have this down here. . . It's a recollection that they were in the last class of high school that graduated from down there. I wouldn't want to say that that's actually true. That calls to my mind. . . I was making this thing out, and I was someplace where I was asking about, trying to get this information. And when I got home, I must have written this down in the corner without any comment.

Then, there was about the town's layout. Now, oh, yes, this is another, October 7, 1965, was when I had to give this talk down at the YWCA.

JG: Oh, uh huh.

PP: The town boundaries. That's one thing I was going to describe. The town boundaries ran from about Corbit St. out to this place I was telling you about, Lumbrook. And it's almost identically a mile, almost a mile--I mean from what you can gather from the map. I have a map. And the other way, the southern boundary of the town, there's a monument right across from, oh, I'd say if you walk across the street, directly across the street from the walk on the north side of Mitchell Hall, you know there's a building there they have for the French students?

JG: Yes.

PP: And you walk down about 50 feet or something there to the brick building alongside of that and right in the grass there--you have to scratch around for it--I uncovered it here a few days ago--is a stone about so big. And that stone ran. . . A line ran from there right straight across, almost due east, to a point in front of the, oh, it was the Continental Dyeing and Fiber Co. then. It's now the Budd Co. That was the southern boundary. And Cleveland Avenue was the northern boundary. And that was about a quarter of a mile from one of those, maybe three-eighths of a mile. Now, I remember making this statement somewhere in there on that other s ee I have that the area now, without the additions that have been made since last October, is twenty times the area, twenty times what it was then. You see then, it was about a half a square mile roughly, between a quarter and a half a square mile was the total area in the town line. And I lived in a house where Mitchell Hall is now. And I was outside of the city, ha, ha. Then they extended the boundaries down to the railroad, and now I guess it goes down pretty nearly down to the Howard Johnson place, down that way somewhere.

JG: Yes. Uh huh.

PP: And all around here, all this stuff. And it's going down over the hill and up on the other side beyond Christiana Creek out there, and along that now, of course, along that now, I don't know what the population is now, but. . . I don't know, it's somewhere around. . . I can't figure out or find out very much about it--12,000 people?

JG: About that.

PP: And about 20,000 within, right next door here. You know there must be 5,000 or 6,000 in these different, in all these different apartments you know.

JG: There is.

PP: That's the difference. The thing is, you don't have to say, "Well, look, there's only so many houses. You can't have that many." The population. . . I bet the population of this one down here now, I bet there's 700 or 800 of them. That's just that one area.

JG: Oh, yeah?

PP: And I see now that the town voted to bring in, what is it, 47, 43 acres more for some new development company. I don't know where it is, but it was in the paper.

JG: Yes.

PP: Now, there's some other interesting things there. One, of course. . . Of course there was. . . I recall a center down here. You know where the, well now let's see, the Catholic church is?

JG: Yes.

PP: And then there's a shopping center?

JG: Uh huh.

PP: And the railroad, a lone railroad track goes across there. Well, that used to be the railroad track if you wanted to go to Harrisburg and points west, you'd get on--that was the Newark Center Depot of the Pennsylvania Railroad. That line runs down and still connects in with the railroad down there. And so it ran along up the Christiana, I mean White Clay Creek, and it ran on up into Pomeroy; it was called the Pomeroy Division, I think, at one time. And it ran on up there. You'd go up there and change cars at Pomeroy and get on the main trains that left Philadelphia for the west. And so that's gone by \_\_\_\_\_ years ago. There used to be a ticket agent there too. And the buildings are still there, used by the Agway people.

JG: Oh, that building.

PP: Yeah, yeah. And then we had hotels. The Deerpark Hotel which was at one time I guess was a women's seminary. Do you go back that far?

JG: Yes.

PP: I think Bill Lewis mentioned that in his book. There's some place where that's written up. That was just a. . . I think. . . Of course, the B & O Railroad, you know,

PP: (Cont'd)

hasn't been there too long. Somewhere in the early 1900's or something or maybe the 1890's when the railroad went through there. I know the Pennsylvania Railroad, they wanted to come through the town; but, somehow or other, they got a law passed that they had to be a mile from the town, ha, ha.

JG: Ha, ha.

*Willis*

PP: They didn't want to be bothered with another. . . Of course, those trains in those days did make quite a racket. And then the other one, of course, was up here. It was the Washington House, and that was pretty much the way it is now. And that was owned by Vic Lewis ~~?~~ And he was a former pitcher for the Pittsburgh Pirates, I think, or one of the big teams. He was a pitcher there. And when he had to give that up, he came and bought this place down here and ran it for a long, long time, Of course, another thing too. They never used to have a road that, a railroad that you could go to Delaware City on the train too.

JG: Oh, there was?

PP: Uh huh. There used to be quite a train. A lot of people. . . There was a lot of traffic between here and there. And they finally got down to a one-car train, and that's been given up now. I don't know whether they still have. . . Whether they've dug up the tracks or not. They run on, I think to Bear, at least someplace. I've seen them out there. Oh, right now there are some concrete mixing outfits down there that. . .

JG: (Unclear)

PP: I don't know.

JG: When did that start? Where did you board that train?

PP: Well, you boarded the train at the regular Newark Station.

JG: The Pennsylvania Station?

PP: Pennsylvania Station, yup. And they went out and there was a big curve around there that turned, made a right-angle turn. Of course, the Pennsylvania Railroad runs, what, north

PP: (Cont'd)

east? The railroad went out and turned southwest, <sup>east</sup> oh, to Delaware City.

Then I have now about the horse racing on Main Street. When I first came here there was horse racing on Main Street on times when the businesses were closed-- Sundays and holidays. And many of the prominent men of the town owned horses, and in the wintertime it was quite a time to see these horses race up and down between the two railroads. That was from railroad to railroad. And, well, right across the street from, what they have all torn out now, right across the street from the west end of Old College, there was a house there where Tyson, Mr. Tyson. And he was a trainer for a number of horsemen who owned horses, you know?

JG: Uh huh.

PP: I forget where the stables were. And then he had a couple of horses of his own. I don't know if he ever raced any. I don't know much about it--whether he raced any of his own or not. But he had some nice horses, I suppose. So that was his business. I never saw any racing except the, with sleighs; but Mr. Holton tells me they used to race carriages too--two-wheel buggies--in town. Of course, there was only room enough for. . . The horses would have to go. . . They certainly couldn't go more than three or four abreast at the most. But downtown there were trees out in the street, you know. I often wondered how they ever got away with that.

JG: There was a picture of the sleigh racing in the paper last winter. Did you see it?

PP: Oh, was there? I didn't know that they ever had pictures taken.

JG: There was one picture of the sleigh racing down Main Street.

PP: Did it show more than one horse?

JG: It showed two horses abreast.

PP: I was just wondering if they're standing still, ha, ha. When they took the picture. You know they used to take time exposures mostly. I wonder how. . . What paper was that in?

JG: The Newark Weekly.

[Dan?]

PP: Oh, oh, I see. Oh, yeah. Well, I'd like to see that. Well, that was going on when I first came here; and it wasn't around long however before it died out. This Joe Hossinger (?), he was one of them. And, oh, the fellow that was a magistrate, \_\_\_\_\_ Thompson. Mr. Thompson had one. Jimmy Thompson, head of the Newark Lumber Co., his father. And one or two other people I've met; and we talk about old times and they always say, "Yeah, my father had a horse that he used to race down there." Then there was the football field. Let's see, when I first came here, that football field up there was being built--the Joe Frazer Field. So they couldn't. . . That's where they had played football, but there wasn't much of a. . . It wasn't developed very much I understand. So, in the meantime, they played in the field right across from the women's college. On this side of the street from the women's college where, well, where the Episcopal church is. They had a field there about 150 yards long, I guess altogether. It didn't have any stands, but they kept up their schedule there for one or two years. I forget now how long. I know it was one season. Of course, there are houses all along there now. And there's a doctor's office and different ones. And then over on Cleveland Avenue, there was something that was very interesting. There were people named Brittingham who lived. . . You see, the railroad used to be a grade crossing down there. That bridge wasn't built here until, oh, the 1930's I guess. It used to be a grade crossing there at South College Avenue, the Pennsylvania Railroad. And there was a house in the southwest corner. It would be on this side of South College Avenue and on the other side of the tracks. Now the people were named Brittingham. And Mr. Brittingham was interested in automobiles, and he developed--he never got anywhere with it but he developed--a steamer. Something like at the time the White and, what was the other steamer? There were two steamers that. . . I know Dr. Blake had one. Now I forget which one it was. And it was over on Cleveland Avenue where this engineering company. . . That was where he had his plant. I never saw. . . I don't know as he ever developed or got a car out. He may have done it for trials, but I never knew about it. And the first thing I knew the local Veterans of Foreign Wars or somebody took over and made a bowling alley out of the place. But he was a--if I'm not mistaken--he was a salesman for. . . It just runs in my mind it was fancy goods like lace and things of that kind. But his mind was on steamers, ha, ha. Isn't that funny?

JG: Were you at Delaware College when the women's college was begun?



PP: Oh, yeah.

JG: You were then.

PP: That was started in 1918, I think.

JG: Did you have any responsibilities for that?

PP: No, no.

JG: I know some of the men teachers did have to teach in the women's college.

PP: Well, I did go down there when Professor Short left the college to go to. . . He went over to the Continental Diamond. You see his wife was one of the Wrights, Sam Wright's sister. And Sam Wright, of course, was the owner of Continental Diamond practically before it became a stockholding company. And, of course, it was somewhat smaller than it is now. But when he went over there. . . I forget now when that was. It was in 1920, I think. I'm not sure about that--1920 or 1921.

JG: But you always thought you'd rather teach than work in industry.

PP: Well, I meant to say. . . When he went, I finished the term out down at the women's college, the classes he had down there--one class in trigonometry, I think it was. That was all. Of course, I didn't mind. I had a full course up at the other place, and they said, "Oh, you'd do that, won't you?" I said, "What's the difference, I've got four classes, four courses, eight courses, it doesn't make a bit of difference. You just meet them all." (?) But I didn't take it that way, ha, ha. When I first came here, I'll tell you, I thought I knew something about teaching. I know how I'd been taught, and I thought I got the works. And the classes we had, in mathematics I'm thinking about particularly, we got the works. If you didn't know it, you didn't pass. That's all there was to it. We had to know something about it. But I found out when I came down here. There were a lot of students, you know, coming into trigonometry and geometry, who didn't know too much about algebra. I'd say, "How'd you pass?" "Oh, so and so, he passed us all right. He's a good fellow." Ha, ha.

JG: But you always preferred to teach rather than go into industry yourself?

PP: Oh, yeah. I have been. . . You see, I'd been teaching; and then I went into engineering at the Du Pont Company until the War was over. Then they stopped work on the plant down there. And that was a place, my golly. They did things down there. They didn't even own the place in February. On July 4, they turned out the first powder. Mind you, all this stuff that had to be brought in there. Sulphur from Texas, and everything. Of course, this wasn't a new outfit down there; they put their best men from the plants that they had in different places, you see. They took a man from here, a man from there and sent them down there; and they got a dollar a year. However, they did get agreed something. . . I think something like they got \$1.75 or \$1.00 a pound for all the powder they could turn out. I don't think they made anything much on that, but they didn't lose anything. And, of course, the government paid all the salaries. When I went down there in May, they had surveyed; this place was a mile and a half long and three-quarters of a mile wide, just wild country. There were 30 miles of railroad in there. I mean standard gauge railroad. How many miles of this narrow gauge stuff, I wouldn't know. But they worked 24 hours, 24 hours a day. Of course, I didn't; we didn't have to work a 24-day. They had three shifts, that's all. But, I got up at 5 o'clock in the morning--I was living in Nashville--and I got back at 8 o'clock at night. That was a pretty good day. We worked from 7 to 6, and when the whistle would blow, there we sat until 6. And the rest of the time getting out there. We went out in cattle cars with holes cut in the side and wooden benches for seats. That was our parlor cars. We called them the Forty and Eight. Do you know what that referred to?

JG: No.

PP: Well, the Forty and Eight was the forty cars. . . It had something to do with the War. Something with forty and eight. . . Made for eight and held forty, something like that. That's the way the G.I.'s had to go over in Great Britain, uh, France, you know. They called them the Forty and Eight. Something crazy. That's what they called these things. So when that closed up in, oh, by December, I guess, I got another job with the State Highway Department. I was Resident Engineer over there on Staten Island to Manasquan. I guess, down on the Seaside Highway. They had quite some concrete road over there. And then I got a telegram from-- I forget what time, it must have been sometime before the second term began. They wanted to know if I'd consider coming back to the college. Well, I liked the place and my

[Manasquan?]

PP: (Cont'd)

wife did too. And New Jersey, in a certain way, they couldn't pay, they couldn't pay the wages because as soon as anybody was free, industry took them up, you see. And, of course, the state government. . . Governments like that, they have to have the legislature pass increases in salaries. And so, the way. . . Oh, we were doing pretty well over there. They had our salary, but they manipulated it some way or other so they could pay our living expenses too. Pay our board and room and whatnot. Which wasn't a small amount either because of my wife's mother and we had a boy--he was about three or four, four years old, I guess. So all that made quite a. . . So, anyway, we made a date to come down and see him. Dr. Mitchell was President at the time; and, before going to see him, I went to see a couple of these fellows who had suggested maybe getting me back because somebody was leaving, you see. So I went to see M. V. Smith--he was you might say the dean. He was acting dean, I think, of engineering. The regular dean we had had gone up to New Brunswick. And I wanted to see what this was all about--how come and one thing or another. . . Well, they said Dr. Mitchell had come to them and asked them whether they had anybody to suggest. "Well," they said, "We think you ought to get Preston back here if you can." So he found out my address somehow or other, and that's how I got the telegram. I had made a date; and, if I was agreeable, I was to come meet them on Sunday, I think it was. So I went to see these fellows. And Professor Thompson--he was in the Ag. . . He was acting dean of something--I forget what it was. But, anyway, he was another one who recommended me. And Professor \_\_\_\_\_, he was here in Electrical Engineering. And all three of them apparently had given me a pretty good recommendation. And so Dr. Mitchell thought that was fine and said he would try to get me to come down here. So I came down and went to see him. And he had a guest for lunch; he invited me to come to dinner Sunday noon. So I went, and he had another guest there. So we talked, and we visited with another man--the fellow who had taken over my job when I left, I think it was. He and his wife and a couple of kids. So we talked and chatted, and as we were going out, Dr. Mitchell said, "Have you made your decision?" I said, "Well, everything hasn't been talked about that might be." He said, "Well, no, we didn't talk about the salary. The salary is \$2,700 for a full professorship." Well, Dean Smith and Professor Thompson had told me. . . They said, "Don't forget, the salary is \$3,000 for a full professor." Well, apparently that had been talked about, and they said, "I don't think you can get him back for less than \$3,000," see. And poor Dr. Mitchell. . . I suppose he was between the two deans, you know, not having the money to spend and trying to get somebody. He wanted to get me back because this other fellow was leaving to go the same place that the dean was going. The two of them were quitting at the same time. Of course, you can get along without the

PP: (Cont'd)

dean, but you couldn't get along without this fellow with the heavy classwork, ha, ha. Well, he said \$2,700. Oh, I said, "Well, never mind considering. I wouldn't think of coming back for less than \$3,000." Because really I was practically getting that where I was, and I could hold on a little bit longer if I knew I could get something I wanted. Although I did like the idea of coming back here. And by the time I got home, back over in Red Bank, no Asbury Park it was by this time, the telegram was there: "\$3,000 O.K." Ha, ha. It said, "Come on." That was another thing. I said, "I don't know where I can live in this place. I know when I left here, we . . . When we first came here, we had a time getting a place." And I said, "I understand Dean \_\_\_\_\_ is leaving and I think I could make arrangements--he is going to Newark, N. J., and I'm coming down to North Delaware--I think we can do this. He can make some arrangement; I'll talk to him about it." Stiltz, they did hauling too, heavy hauling. They can take him up to Newark, N. J., stop in Asbury Park, and bring me over. And it turned out, for \$70 a piece. That's a big truck, a whole big truckload. I don't know what it would be now. It would be \$700, I guess; I don't know. I haven't any idea. So that would work out all right I was sure. "But," I said, "I want Dean \_\_\_\_\_'s house at the same rate he's paying. Now this is all part of the thing." I said it was just as much that; and that was \$25 a month, you see, because the college owned the place.

JG: Oh.

PP: The place where Mitchell Hall is now.

JG: Oh. Uh huh.

PP: Right now it's across the street from. . . Well, it's right alongside of the dormitory there, right across the street from Wolf Hall on Delaware Avenue. There are two houses?

JG: Yeah.

PP: Well they were where Wolf Hall was. They just moved them across the campus and let them in there. But I said that I wanted that place at that rental. So they said, "Well, that's all right." But, boy, there were a lot of people who had their eye on that place. But I told them that I had to have a place. I said if it was just myself and my

PP: (Cont'd)

wife, I said I wouldn't be worried about where we were going to go. But I said that with a crippled mother-in-law and a son, I had to know something about what I was going to have to pay. So that worked out all right. Poor Dr. Mitchell; he was an awfully, awfully nice fellow, that's all. He was a wonderful fellow. But he couldn't do all the things that he would like to do. Well, I don't know that any college president ever does, except maybe Dr. Perkins right now. He gets pretty nearly everything he wants.

JG: And you stayed at the University from that time on?

PP: Yeah, I've been here ever since. Yup.

JG: Over the years do you think of any outstanding students that you've had, people who have (double voices)?

PP: Oh, yes, yes. I've had--I can't think of the name of one of them now. There's. . . One of them was chief engineer of Hercules Powder Company, just retired a couple years ago. I can see his face right now. And then, another one was chief engineering of Du Pont Engineering. And then there was Crothers, Alec Crothers. He's in a nursing home in Bloomington now. I saw him about a year ago. He was the one who started the Marine Terminal in Wilmington. Then he went to Philadelphia on the board, what was it, the Port Authority of Camden and Philadelphia. They had some kind of rig up there, and he headed that. And then when the war came on, he was over there directing docking facilities on the, I think, the western shore where these boats were accumulating, you know, for D Day? And he was one of the directors over there. I don't know to what extent, but he must have been in a pretty responsible job to leave Philadelphia to go over there. I'm not thinking moneywise. I'm thinking of the value of it and the idea about. . . The government didn't usually. . . It got the best people and only paid them half their worth. It's still doing that. And paying other people, ha, ha. They were a lot worse then; the thing was I wanted to get my money. And, well, there had been two or three more that I can think about. I was thinking about Alec Crothers. Now he came here from down-state where, at the time--see, he was in the class of 1916--so I had him right from freshman all the way, different classes all the way through.

JG: Oh.

PP: And he, uh. . . The boys that came up here, we had to help them an awful lot. They only had two-year high schools down there. Well, what did they do? Well, they admitted anybody.

PP: (Cont'd)

If the superintendent of schools said he's college material, that's all they had to do. They didn't have to have four years sometimes. Oh, where they had four years of high school, they had to have the four years. But I think he came from down there where they didn't have very much. And, well, in the early days--and that's about when I first came down here--there were teachers down there, some of them were teaching school who never had more than a grammar-school education. We were way down as far as the whole system was. I saw a list of somebody's estimate of the teaching facilities of different states. Naturally, Massachusetts with M.I.T. and Yale and Connecticut. . . We were all the way down; I think Delaware was down pretty near 48, maybe 46. There may have been a couple western states that were below. But, when Mr. Du Pont, Pierre Du Pont, got interested in the situation there, we soon pulled up. Now I think we're right up there in the first 10, somewhere like that.

JG: Uh huh. I think so.

PP: So, they did pretty well. And a lot of these boys who came here, they were serious minded. I mean they. . . And others were not serious minded. Some of them. . . One fellow, he was a very smart boy, but he registered a "C." In my course, this one course. He only got a "C." And he didn't work for that. He didn't have to work because the whole class as a rule, he didn't have any competition. And so he just lazed along, that's what I told him. And so I think about six months after he had graduated, a friend of mine at Du Pont called up and gave this fellow's name. He said, "We've let him stay. We want a layout man down in Virginia." Some plant they were adding to or a new plant; I don't know what it was. "And we wondered about so and so. What do you think of him?" "Oh, he's a good fellow," I said, "You don't have to worry about him. He's all right." "Yeah, but you didn't mark him that way. I came down to get his records, you see. "Yeah, well he didn't have to work," I said. I know, but I'll take the responsibility for him." I saw him last spring sometime. I think it was at a testimonial dinner they had for Professor Jones. He was leaving, you know. Well, pretty nearly. I think he has resigned now; retired, I think he's retired now. And I met him there, and I wanted to talk to him about that; but somebody butted in, and I never got to say anything to him to see whether he remembered how he got his job, ha, ha. But he was with the Du Pont Company then, that was all. It was just a question of whether I thought he was capable of this layout business

PP: (Cont'd)

because there's some responsibility in that, you know. You're laying out that plant of some kind, and there's maybe a million dollars worth of stuff. You'd better be right, ha, ha.

JG: That's right.

PP: And I used to teach a civilian course, too. That was one of my things that I taught. And we had quite a number of funny things, strange things, that happened. I had one boy--I remember one of his names was in mine. My middle name is Kent. And I had two fellows with the same name. One fellow's name was Preston Kent something, and this fellow--I couldn't tell them apart. They had the same last name, but they didn't have the same first. But, anyhow, he had this freshman Surveying; and he flunked it. And I think he failed in some other courses, too. It must have been Mathematics. But, anyway, he had to take it over the next year. And, as far as I was concerned, all I knew about him was that he was taking this course over. And I called him in, and I said, "Look here, I don't get this at all. You failed this once. You're smart enough. Why don't you do it?" He said, "I don't want to be a civil engineer." "Oh, well," I said, "How come, what do you want? Why didn't you take the course you wanted?" "Well, they don't have that course here. My father won't. . . I've got to be an engineer first." So, I said, "You're not going to be an engineering keeping up at this rate." Well, that's the way it went on. He just. . . What he did, he actually flunked himself out of college. He just made up his mind that he was not going to do it. At the examination we had--of course, there was no need of his coming in at the examination because he didn't know. He'd never studied. And he was just not interested in surveying. But he had a picture of me he put inside the book--a pretty good profile of me, you know. And I had asked him what he wanted to be. He said he wanted to be a landscape architect. Well, he had the wherewithal to draw pictures, you know. And if he could go to. . . There were plenty of schools where they taught that kind of thing. But his father wouldn't do it. So, that was the last I ever heard of him. He flunked himself out--everything. Well, isn't that funny? Two or three times I've had cases of this kind where the boy had to pick a certain course because daddy said so. It didn't have anything to do with the boy's qualifications, but there are people like that. I know my own boy, my oldest son, who was. . .

PP: (Cont'd)

Now he's manager--I forget what they call him--of a \_\_\_\_\_ company in Trenton. (This sentence is unclear) \_\_\_\_\_ . He's got his third book out. And he wanted to be a chemist when he was a freshman. Of course, one of the rules usually was then that you take your freshman year the same for everybody. And then you decide in June what you want to be. If you wanted to be a civil engineer, why you had to take surveying in summer school, and so on. So he wanted to be a chemist; that's what he thought about. Well, the time came around to decide. He had been building himself. . . . He had been using in high school, pouring two things together, you know?

JG: Yeah.

PP: Both of them like water and you get rainbow colors, ha, ha. That appealed to him. He didn't understand. . . . No, they didn't understand what chemistry was for. So, then he built himself a radio, one of these crystal things. Did you ever make one of those crystal things with a whisker (?) on it and crystal and 6-volt battery? Well, he built himself one of those things. He wanted to be an electrical engineer. That's what it was. Well, of course, come time in the fall you had to decide in the sophomore year which way you wanted to go, electrical, mechanical, civil, because there was a division there in subject matter. He'd gotten a job with T. D. Smith, Professor Smith. If you saw the paper, he just died last month. And he got a job out helping him surveying. Well, that was what he wanted to be. He wanted to be a civil engineer. Well, he went on through and he did; he finished civil engineering and that has been his job ever since. He was with \_\_\_\_\_ people, and they were bridge builders.

JG: Oh.

PP: See, I think they built the San Francisco Bay Bridge and cables. These suspension bridges--that was their. . . . And I don't know how many of them down in South America they built. But then they finally, Bethlehem Steel and U. S. Steel took over that business; and so they went into. . . . They started years ago going in for prestretched (?) concrete. That's building in great big, long members (?) out of concrete, already reinforced, you know? They didn't have to have forms to pour in on the job. They were done in a big yard where they had the facilities for it. All they had to do was haul the pieces, put them together, and that was it. A lot of



PP: (Cont'd)

money saved in that. Well, that's his business. So that's how. . . Sometimes boys get ideas. . . I never talked too much about it because he was good in mathematics and I knew whatever--it didn't make too much difference where he'd go, he'd find his way. So I didn't try to discourage him any.

(END OF INTERVIEW)