

VOICES OF LANSING: AN ORAL HISTORY

LANSING PUBLIC LIBRARY

Lansing, Michigan

DONNA WERBACK

Interview 2

Transcript of an Oral History Interview

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Donna Marguerite Werback

PREFACE

This transcript is the product of an interview conducted August 14, 1990, for the Lansing Public Library Oral History Project, by Geneva Kebler Wiskemann.

Signed, dated agreements of release and biographical information accompany the original cassette.

**Transcribed by Patricia Siggers
Lansing, Michigan**

September 30, 1990

VOICES OF LANSING
Oral History Project

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8 Donna Marguerite Werback

10 This is Tuesday, August 14, 1990. I'm Geneva
Kebler Wiskemann, interviewing Donna M. Werback.
12 We're at Donna's sister's home at 503 Curtis Road,
East Lansing.

14

DW: I didn't get to see a patient file, as such, but I
16 did find entries in two records for this great aunt
of mine.

18 GW: Oh, this is what you found at the State Archives
about part of your family.

20 DW: These are my notes that I made about Mary Ann
Cowherd, and this was the first book that they gave
22 me to read. It's a record of admissions, I guess,
but it did give me the case number you see and the
24 date when she was admitted. The first volume only
went to 1893, so I found her quite soon in the second
26 volume -- '95. She died in 1904. Then in the
patients' general register; do you remember those
28 books? < Laugh >

GW: Oh, yes! They're libre size. Yes, I broke my back
30 lifting those.

DW: I bet you did. I didn't attempt to lift it. I could
32 hardly turn it around on the table.

GW: Seriously, I had spinal fusion.

34 DW: Yes. I'm glad to know; because I decided I couldn't
read it unless I stood up to read it, because it was
36 about up here on the page, you see. By the time I
had stood up while I made these notes, I was all worn
38 out.

It had the whole thing. I knew what her age
40 should be, and that she was single, born in Canada,
and her father was a tinsmith. They were
42 Congregationalists. I don't know when they said
"Education, com." whether they meant --

44 GW: Probably meant common school.

DW: That's what I figured, yes. It gave her residence as
46 Jackson, and by that time several of her brothers and
I think her father and mother were all living in
48 Jackson, so that jibed. This is the signature of the
Justice of the Peace for her commitment, I suppose.
50 No insane relatives; cause was epilepsy, which I had
heard verbally before but I had never seen it written
52 out that way. I had never heard of dementia

epileptica, but if they want to call it that, that's
54 alright with me.

GW: Duration one year at the age of fifty-five,--and yet
56 she was transferred to the mental facility?

DW: I think she had had it intermittently since she was a
58 baby.

GW: And the damage was accumulative?

60 DW: I think so, but I think that the acute stage probably
had just started within the year, so that's the
62 reason they said it. Then I was interested in the
fact that these big pages in their final column over
64 at the right, said: Under treatment, so many years,
months, and days, and worked it all out.

66 GW: Yes. They're beautiful records, aren't they?

DW: They are.

68 GW: You knew more about this person than most people
know. Some people come in with only a name -- and
70 maybe that's wrong.

DW: Yes, true.

72 GW: Well, did you feel that you got what you wanted
there?

74 DW: I think so. I was hoping maybe to find more about
her parents, I mean if they had had to sign it, and
76 last night I was going through your finding aid.
There are one or two in here that might give me a

78 little more information, but I really don't need it.
 It's not germane to what I'm trying to say, so I
80 think I'm just going to leave it there. I confirmed
 what I needed to know. With my great grandfather, I
82 knew that he was still in Brentford, Ontario, up to
 1882. I knew that his book of poems was published in
84 Jackson in 1894, so whether he was living there at
 that time or whether he was over visiting his oldest
86 son who did work there, I don't know.

GW: This was your maternal grandfather?

88 DW: Yes. I haven't seen you since I got the information.

GW: You found the finding aid that I wrote helpful to
90 you, didn't you?

DW: Yes! I'm filled with admiration that you stayed with
92 it that long. That could drive you up the wall,
 < Laugh > trying to work through those details. I
94 shudder to think I may have a few papers in the
 archives someplace myself, but I hope not.

96 I had seen you before I went to Jackson and
 found the bits in the Jackson City Directories about
98 my great uncles, didn't I? Did I mention it to you?

GW: No: They have good directories here at the Library
100 of Michigan.

DW: I still may, in the next two weeks, go down and ask
102 to see some of those -- particularly for Detroit.

GW: Oh, look at the family that you've picked up here in
104 the 1880's. Here's Alfred C., 1875.

DW: Yes, and he was still there then, but he apparently
106 then was the first one to leave because he wasn't
there in 1891. I know he ended up in Spokane,
108 Washington. This man I know stayed there until I
think about 1905 or 6, somewhere along in there.

110 GW: Christopher.

DW: Christopher. His daughter was the same age as my
112 mother. They were first cousins, and Mother used to
go and visit Hazel Cowherd out in Jackson. They were
114 close friends besides being cousins, but Hazel didn't
come to my mother's wedding in 1907, and I assume
116 that the whole family had moved west by that time. I
know they ended up in California.

118 Anyway, this is the oldest brother in the
family, and this is his son. It makes it very
120 confusing, because there are three Thomas Cowherds
altogether.

122 GW: Oh, Christopher, and here's Thomas, and here's
another Thomas.

124 DW: Yes, Thomas R. L.; that's his son. He clerked at
Foote and Jenks, and I didn't realize that Foote and
126 Jenks were that old. I know back in the 1930's, my
father used to make photoengravings for Foote and

128 Jenks. It was one of his accounts. By that time
they were making flavorings and things of that kind.
130 I don't know just what they were doing back in 1888,
but it's interesting to go digging.

132 Then this one and this one and this one were the
three children of this one. See they all have the
134 same address; but this one, this one, and this one
all wards.

136 GW: Yes. Clara, Ella, and Thomas R. L., were all
children of Thomas.

138 DW: Apparently he didn't have any other name or didn't
use any other name. Then in 1898, by that time some
140 of them had gone. I know that George was the son of
Christopher. He went to California with his family,
142 and then he ended up as a businessman out there and
was one of the big developers of San Marino out in
144 Los Angeles County. I know that about him.

 This I think, is my great grandfather, who wrote
146 the book of poetry. I think he was living there by
then.

148 GW: Thomas; identified as a gardener.

 DW: He was born in 1817, so by 1898 he was well along in
150 years. < Laughter > He probably had to identify
himself someway.

152 This is the son who was the father on the other
 page there, and he apparently had progressed from
154 being a tinsmith to heading up a sheet metal works.
 He also had a telephone in his office, which I
156 thought was interesting; real progress.

GW: Turn of the century.

158 DW: Yes, I get interesting bits from this.

GW: Every solution poses another question though, doesn't
160 it? You could keep going on and on. Well, you had
 some good results there. I'm pleased to know that.
162 Now the census -- 1894 census, if we had one for
 Jackson and right now I can't tell you whether we do
164 till I check, because we don't have them for all the
 counties. They threw the State censuses out, during
166 World War II -- for scrap paper. < Laugh > We don't
 have those, except those that have survived in
168 various offices, usually the County Clerk's Office;
 but there's a possibility. Well, the 1900 census, of
170 course is easy to access at the State Library. Yes,
 I can see your work is just beginning, Donna. I
172 found this biographical sketch in the State Library
 that you had submitted on that old form that Esther
174 Loughin circulated. It was very interesting.

DW: Here's the new one that I had made out for you. I
176 don't know whether you still want it or not.

GW: Oh, yes. This is fine. I thought today for the
178 Voices of Lansing Project, we'd talk mainly about
your professional career here in Lansing, maybe that
180 part before you went into the military, Donna.
Before we do that, I know you've been thinking a lot
182 about Moral Re-Armament. Is there anything you'd
like to add about that?

184 DW: Not that I can think of especially. I sent you that
one thing on the change --

186 GW: Yes. That was a beautiful publication, yes.

DW: There's more news, which is just coming out now,
188 about all the people that have been at Caux, in
Switzerland this summer. Of course, they've had
190 large numbers from the Eastern Nations in Europe,
besides people from other continents, et cetera.
192 That's most of what's new, but I don't really have
more to add myself.

194 GW: Well your father, Andrew G., and mother, Bertha, came
from Detroit to Lansing about 1925.

196 DW: Yes; September 2nd, to be exact. < Laugh >

GW: That German efficiency gene pool shows up in you,
198 Donna. < Laughter > Why did they come to Lansing?

DW: My father had been asked to become the manager of the
200 Lansing Colorplate Company. He came up and started
work there August 1st, and the family moved the

202 second of September, so we'd all be ready to start
 school the following week.

204 GW: He had been in that business in Detroit?

 DW: Yes. In fact, he started way back in 1900, as an
206 apprentice in one of the Detroit engraving plants and
 worked there for four and a half years. At that
208 point the photoengravers in Detroit went on strike.
 It was a long drawn out strike; and he ended up
210 taking a job first in Philadelphia, and then in
 Rochester, and Toronto, and he was working in
212 Cleveland when I was born in 1909.

 GW: I noticed that you were born in Ohio.

214 DW: Yes. That's how it happened. Then we moved back to
 Detroit. I always say WE moved back to Detroit: Of
216 course, I hadn't lived there before -- but in 1910.
 My father worked in engraving most of the time,
218 between 1910 and 1925. He also did some building of
 houses and garages. Back about the time of World War
220 I, there was a great need for garages to be built
 because people were buying cars and needed to have a
222 place to put them; so he did that, more or less
 moonlighting. He had been in management in two
224 different engraving plants before he had the chance
 to come to Lansing, so he liked it.

226 GW: You were about sixteen years old when you came here
then.

228 DW: Not quite. I had just one more year of high school,
so although I graduated from Lansing High School, I
230 never really felt quite a part of it; having come in
it so near the end of my time.

232 GW: That must have been a little bit difficult at that
particular time in your life, to make that abrupt
234 change.

DW: Yes, but it was interesting.

236 GW: That's probably when you met Jane, and you became
such a fast friend.

238 DW: That's right.

GW: Then you stayed here, 1931 to '34, you were
240 bookkeeper for Lansing Colorplate where your father
was manager. Did you like bookkeeping, Donna?

242 DW: Yes, I've always enjoyed bookkeeping. Of course, it
isn't done my way anymore except in very small
244 situations. It's all computerized now so it's quite
a different business, but I always said that was the
246 one thing I knew how to do.

GW: You did it very well, apparently, because you did it
248 all through your career. Secretary-Treasurer of
Donovan, Gilbert & Company: What was Donovan,
250 Gilbert Company?

DW: Investment securities. It was started by two young
252 men who had been Lansing representatives of Detroit
securities dealers; Bill Donovan and Nelson Gilbert.
254 They started on their own in 1934. I was the rest of
the staff at that point.

256 GW: You worked there for four years apparently, before
you went in the WAAC's.

258 DW: Eight years, actually.

GW: Eight years, oh yes, '34 to '42. You're right. Then
260 you went in the WAAC's. That must have been quite a
decision.

262 DW: It wasn't a difficult decision for me. I'd have gone
in sooner if they had been ready to have women, but
264 we had to wait until Congress acted. The legislation
was passed in May of 1942, and the first group of
266 trainees went to Fort DesMoines on July 20th, I think
it was. Jane and I were sworn in, in Detroit on July
268 11th and then put on leave until we had to go to Fort
DesMoines.

270 GW: What were your first reactions to the military,
Donna? Do you remember? You really hadn't been away
272 from home except to college. It was quite different
this time.

274 DW: Yes, although I had for the three summers while I was
in college, I had been a camp counselor near Detroit

276 for the whole summer; so I was quite accustomed to
 camphood, you might say. I really don't remember any
278 special reactions to my introduction to the Army. I
 know we always had to hurry up; then wait when we got
280 there, as they say.

 GW: Everyone says that. One of the questions that the
282 interviewers for Women's Overseas Service League
 always ask, is the reaction of men to you as a woman.
284 I'd like to ask that now. How were you treated as a
 female?

286 DW: I was always treated very fairly, I felt. I don't
 know. We were given every opportunity. Being chosen
288 in the first group that went to the Commanding
 General's Staff School at Fort Leavenworth was
290 certainly a real privilege, to be one of sixteen
 people in a class of three hundred. It was a bit
292 overwhelming.

 GW: You mean you were the only woman?

294 DW: No, no, sixteen of us.

 GW: Sixteen women? That's still a lot.

296 DW: Yes. Then from there I was assigned to the Fifth
 Service Command Headquarters at Columbus, Ohio, as
298 the Assistant WAAC Director for that four-state area.
 The following year when the Women's Auxiliary Army
300 Corps was dissolved and the women were made a part of

the Army of the United States, we dropped one A out
302 of our WAAC. By that time there really was no need
for two of us full time in the WAC Director's Office.
304 The director herself was made sort of an adjutant to
the Commanding General, just a staff person, and my
306 assignment as her assistant was just an additional
duty. My main duty became work in the Personnel
308 Authorization Division, which kept track of how many
military and how many civilian personnel each
310 installation was allowed to have, and make monthly
reports to Washington. So I always felt fully
312 integrated in the Army. When people asked me where I
was assigned, I was more likely to refer to the Army
314 rather than WAC's, because I was very little with
actual WAC units.

316 GW: Some interviewees have talked about the men not
knowing whether to say Ma'am or Sir, and that type of
318 thing, but that was just a transitory thing, wasn't
it? because it was all so new.

320 DW: Sure. At the beginning when we were wearing the
stiff hats like the French Army had, it was always a
322 problem where to put them when you got inside;
whether you kept them on in the mess hall or whether
324 you took them off. After awhile they adopted the
little bonnets that you could stick in your pocket,

- 326 same as the men did, or tuck it in your shoulder
 strap or something. So we learned as we went along.
- 328 GW: If you were that age again, at this particular time
 of world crisis (which overwhelms us all this
330 morning), what would your reaction be? Would you do
 that again?
- 332 DW: I think I'd be waiting to sign up again.
- GW: You would? You'd recommend the experience to another
334 young woman.
- DW: Oh, yes. We were lucky. Being the first, the
336 quality was higher. I don't mean that in a snobbish
 way, but it was sort of the cream of the crop. They
338 took the people who had the best record first. When
 we went to take our initial examinations, Jane was in
340 the group that went at 8:00 o'clock, and I went later
 -- probably 10:00. She was just finishing getting
342 her master's degree, and I hadn't gotten around to
 that yet. We caught up in time. Of course, I had
344 the advantage. I got my master's degree later at
 Uncle Sam's expense.
- 346 GW: That was 1948 you went back to the University of
 Michigan?
- 348 DW: Actually, I went there from the fall of '46 until the
 end of January '48, when I got the degree.

350 GW: I'm familiar with those publications that came out of
the U of M at that time: Some of those you authored.
352 They're new covered paperback publications. Yes, I'm
very familiar with those in my experience in the
354 archives, because what you wrote about inheritance
tax, for instance: That was the type of thing that
356 was my tool when I had to look back at the record to
see what had gone on before and about policy
358 formation.

DW: During my years in the State Budget Office, we often
360 had students come through getting field experience,
you know. One day we had some students from Ann
362 Arbor. I was introduced to this one young fellow.
He said, "Oh, I've read what you wrote about taxes."
364 I said, "You just made my day as an author; I'm glad
to know." < Laughter >

366 GW: It's always rewarding to know that somebody's read
it.

368 DW: Yes. I think myself, the two things I wrote were dry
as dust. I wouldn't recommend them to anybody, now.

370 GW: But they were informative. They accomplished what
you wanted. So when you came back from the war, '46-
372 '47, you were a student at the University of
Michigan. Then it said '47. You moved very quickly
374 into the Department of Administration Budget Unit.

374 DW: Yes. I moved into the Budget Office before there was
a Department of Administration. I was very
376 fortunate. When I was first out of the Army I didn't
quite know what I wanted to do, except I didn't want
378 to go back to what I had left when I went into the
Army. My horizons had gone up too far for that. I
380 went to Ann Arbor, and I talked with Bill Haber, who
had taught me Labor Economics in Michigan State
382 University years before. He was teaching in the
Economics Department at the University of Michigan
384 then. He was the one that suggested that I
investigate public administration, which I had never
386 heard of up until that point. So at his suggestion,
I went over and talked with John Perkins, who was a
388 young faculty member and currently the head of the
Institute of Public Administration.

390 He was very interested particularly in my
experience with government finance, which I had when
392 I was in the securities business, because we handled
about 99 percent municipal bonds. I used to rate all
394 of the financial prospectuses for the bonds that we
had to sell. I'd get most of my information from
396 that, from Lottie Many, whom you may have heard of in
the State Treasurer's Office, particularly; Municipal
398 Finance Commission, it was.

GW: Ma-ny?

400 DW: M-a-n-y. She was a long-time employee there. It was
one of those cases where the woman who's usually the
402 second one in the office was the one who really had
the knowledge and got the work done. I'm sure you're
404 familiar with that? < Laugh >

GW: We were talking about Haber and how you got into
406 Public Administration.

DW: Oh, yes; so I decided that come September of '46, I
408 would start working toward the master's degree in
Public Administration, but that fall Kim Sigler was
410 elected and he asked John Perkins to be his Budget
Director. That took John Perkins right out of the
412 class that I was taking from him down there, but when
he went into the Budget Office he started to rebuild
414 the Budget staff, which had been wrecked by wartime
personnel problems. He wanted me to come and be in
416 the Budget staff.

Just about the same time, maybe a little bit
418 before that election in the fall, the Department of
Revenue and the Institute of Public Administration
420 had a notice on the bulletin board down there that
they were offering a joint fellowship in -- taxation,
422 I guess they called it. Whatever it was, I applied
for that and was appointed to it. That's when I got

to know Frank Landers. He supervised all my research
426 for the Department of Revenue. Then Perkins got him
to come to the Budget Office and head up the research
428 part there. They were both just waiting for me to
get out of Ann Arbor so I could come to work for
430 them. I didn't fall into it, but it certainly was a
case of knowing the right people at the right moment.
432 It all fit together very nicely.

GW: Do you feel that your military background and what
434 you'd done there contributed?

DW: Probably; maybe made me move and act more
436 authoritatively.

GW: Yes. I'm sure it did. Did you have to take a State
438 Civil Service Exam at any time, or were you
appointed?

440 DW: No, they were all under Civil Service and I worked my
way up. The one thing they did; I started at the
442 bottom of (I don't know whether they still have the
same levels now that they used to have, but I think
444 it was) grade II, Roman Numeral II. I can't remember
whether I started at \$250 a month or that was where I
446 ended up, but instead of having to wait six months or
a year for each promotion, they moved me up at the
448 end of each month for about five successive months
till I got to the top of that.

450 GW: They expedited your step increases.

DW: Expedited is a good word. < Laughter >

452 GW: Well, they wanted to keep you. Then you worked from
'47 to '58, for the Budget Office; a far cry from our
454 budgets today.

DW: I know. I can't believe the figures when I read
456 them.

GW: They are just figures on paper, aren't they?

458 DW: Yes.

GW: You've been reading perhaps -- I guess since you
460 were away on your excursion to Canada that this
divestment of funds headline appeared on the State
462 Journal.

DW: I haven't gone back over the State Journals. I've
464 been getting my Florida paper up here from Fort
Myers, and I had a stack like -- well, there are some
466 of them that I haven't gotten to yet. < Laugh > I'm
trying to catch up on those, but I didn't have my
468 sister save the Lansing papers for me.

GW: They have been investigating a situation where the
470 legislature, especially the appropriations committee,
would thoroughly wash funds through the different
472 agencies. They started with the Bureau of History,
under the Department of State. Then they have gone
474 on and found it's in DNR and of course, when they get

to the Department of Transportation, we know that's
476 been going on for many years.

DW: The Highway Department always was a law unto itself.

478 GW: Indeed, indeed; and what they did was appropriate
money and then ask the agency to grant it out for
480 sometimes very worthy projects, but the problem was,
it was washed. It was not auditable. The paper
482 trail was rather obscure on purpose. We didn't hear
of that sort of thing -- certainly under G. Mennen
484 William, under whom I worked for so many years.
Michigan just had no scandals.

486 DW: It's true.

GW: We weren't like Kentucky: You've heard about that,
488 or out west where I've heard archivists tell me that
you had to pay for your job. To the party, you had
490 to pay specific funds to keep your job, and that sort
of thing.

492 DW: Michigan went through that ages ago.

GW: Oh, yes. We've gone beyond that, in our business
494 ethics. I was always impressed with G. Mennen
Williams' administration, that it was --

496

< Tape 1, Side 2 >

498 DW: Of course, you know when I was in the municipal bond
business, we did a lot of work or a lot of business

500 with the State Treasury. Theodore Fry was State
Treasurer, and he always had the reputation of being
502 very clean about the whole thing. Then there was one
two-year period in there when the Republicans got
504 back in. We had a Republican State Treasurer. I
can't even think of his name now. Anyhow, he went to
506 work selling off a lot of the bonds that were in the
sinking funds at the State Treasury there, that
508 because they had been issued before the depression,
had six or seven percent coupons on them; so they
510 commanded quite a premium. He would confuse people
with his bookkeeping on it, because he would say
512 "This was \$10,000 worth of bonds but I got \$15,000
for it." Of course the \$5,000 was just the interest
514 differential was all it was. He didn't make any
profit on it, but he kept running and making an issue
516 in publications. At that point I learned to say, "A
plague on both your houses." Both parties can do
518 that if they get the wrong kind of people in.

GW: Manipulation.

520 DW: Yes, exactly. Have you by any chance seen the book
that Frank Landers wrote a couple of years ago about
522 the State Budget Office?

GW: No.

524 DW: You should have that. I'm sure they'd have one in
the State Library.

526 GW: I'll check. He was an impressive government service
man.

528 DW: Yes. He goes back to when he first worked for the
Tax Commission, before they created the Department of
530 Administration, et cetera. He did a lot of research
work, and he has given a very fair, I think, picture
532 of how life was. He tells a bit about some of the
rascals we had to cope with. Incidentally, I think
534 I'm in there several times: So is Jane. She worked
for us, you know, doing research on dietary standards
536 in the mental hospitals.

You should look that up and read it. I think
538 you'd find it interesting. It covers the same
period, mostly, during Soapy Williams' twelve years,
540 was it?

GW: I'm glad you mentioned that, because I'll be familiar
542 with some of those names, some of the people.
Landers was there for a long time.

544 DW: Yes, till he got into the international business. He
doesn't tell much about that, just refers to it, and
546 then he ends up telling what happened in the State
government on some of these things that takes care of
548 loose ends.

GW: Be interesting if someone writes a book about the
550 NOW. < Laugh > Quite a different story. I don't
know whether it's a breakdown in morality, business
552 ethics -- How do you read that?

DW: A lot of people have never learned that honesty was
554 anything but a policy. I mean, they don't have any
absolute right in their minds. They just don't think
556 there is such a thing.

GW: That word "absolute" comes from Moral Re-Armament
558 again.

DW: Well, yes; it's used there, of course, very
560 effectively.

GW: Forrest Coggan sent me a tape since I have seen you.
562 I think the fact that I told him that I had
interviewed you spurred him to look through some more
564 materials that he brought from Denver after Blanche
died, and he sent me a tape of Mr. Hamilton speaking
566 in Detroit. It's very interesting, and of course
there, I heard the word "absolute" so often:
568 Absolute unselfishness; absolute honesty.

DW: The thing is -- I've heard people say that's
570 impossible -- Well, it may be, but at least it gives
you a standard to use to measure what you're doing --
572 how far you fall short.

GW: Well, it's a lifetime experience to prepare for that
574 absolute, isn't it? I'm not surprised that Moral
Re-Armament is having a rebirth at this particular
576 time.

You were with the Department quite some time.
578 How many women do you remember working with you in
the Budget Office? Were there a lot of women?

580 DW: Quite a few. Of course, as usual, most of the women
were doing clerical work. The Chief Budget Examiner
582 was a woman. It was Grace Murray, whom you've
undoubtedly heard of in the State government.

584 GW: Oh, yes.

DW: I was working as her assistant. Besides being Chief
586 Budget Examiner, which meant that she was an advisor
to all the other examiners, she was responsible for
588 all of the mental health budgets. I took all of the
public health ones, but we both worked on both of
590 them. I mean, we worked together to a great extent.
We were the only ones who were examiners. The actual
592 preparation of the budget documents was handled by
women, who did all the editorial work. Then the
594 execution of the budget, including putting out
allotments and getting monthly reports and checking
596 them; that was all handled by some senior women
employees there. So I would say that the women had

598 very important roles in it, besides the two women who
were secretaries to Mr. Landers and to whoever was
600 handling the research part of it.

 When I first went in the Budget Office, my
602 assignment was in research. At that point Frank
Landers was head of research under John Perkins, and
604 I did a couple of studies for them. The first one
was on restricted funds. We worked out a tabulation
606 of all of the taxes and fees that could only be used
for certain restricted purposes.

608 GW: A lot of them!

 DW: Yes, which is a great problem, of course, in
610 budgeting. Ideally, there should be none but knowing
what rascals people can be, if you want to be sure
612 that your increased gas tax is only used for highway
construction, you restrict it to that. < Laughter >

614 GW: That's how that came to be, wasn't it?

 DW: Yes. I had only been in the Budget Office about four
616 months when I developed difficulty with my eyesight.
I had it tested locally and then tested in Ann Arbor
618 at the University Hospital. They found that I had a
melanoma right in the field of vision in my left eye.
620 The only thing to do for that was to remove the eye,
so since that time I have had only the one eye to
622 work with. So they decided at the Budget Office that

that was going to be too much of a strain for me to
624 keep on with research, which meant sitting and
reading through the annotated statutes endlessly.
626 That was when they shifted me over to the public
health budgets. There was always someone else
628 heading up research. Then when the Department of
Administration was created in 1948, John Perkins was
630 appointed the first State Controller and head of the
Department of Administration. Frank became the
632 director of the Budget Division. A little hard to
remember some of these shifts that we made early on.
634 Actually, of course, because Kim Sigler lost the
election in 1948, John Perkins was State Controller
636 less than a year. I think it may have been only from
July 1 to December 31, 1948.

638 GW: Was that when Philetus R. Peck came in? P. R. Peck?

DW: He came in before. He came in about the same time
640 that I did. He was the one who headed up the first
records division. Did you start with him then?

642 GW: They were very young at that time. You know, the
records center was actually planned with Red Miller's
644 Red Tape Program, et cetera.

DW: Pre-war, this was.

646 GW: Yes, and then the war came; but it was the fire in
February of '51, that was the real catalyst for that

648 building. P. R. Peck was the driving force. Because
he had been in the Navy, he brought in Navy
650 specifications for the shelving. It would hold up
Atlas himself. < Laugh > When I went into the State
652 Archives with a tour with a teacher from Rumania last
month, I saw a brand new piece of shelving that had
654 buckled. It had already buckled under the weight of
some of those large libers. I looked at that and I
656 thought: "Oh, P. R., if you saw this! It would
never have happened with your specifications."

658 He was a real mentor to the people that worked
in the early archives, when I went to work there,
660 because we shared space in the records center with
the Department of Administration. We had two
662 agencies working very closely together, of course in
every respect, but physically close too. In fact,
664 P. R. Peck bought supplies for me to work with and
bought a typewriter for the office when our
666 Historical Commission didn't have funds to supplies,
because they had to be acid-free and that type of
668 thing. He said, "Well you need a typewriter": And
he said, "I'll authorize it." We ordered a green one
670 because our walls were green, and we wanted it to
look nice. He came out, and he said something very
672 Navy-like. "I didn't know you were going to get a

green one. Don't let anyone know you bought a
674 colored typewriter in a color anything but black --
unheard of in State service." Of course, by the time
676 we retired the typewriter, everybody had blue and
pink and everything else.

678 DW: That reminds me of when I first met Phil Peck. It
was before I started to work in the Budget Office.
680 It must have been the summer of 1947. I stopped to
see Frank Landers, who had just come over to the
682 Budget Office from the Department of Revenue, and
Phil Peck came in the office so Frank introduced me.
684 He said, "This young lady outranks both of us. I
didn't know what he was talking about at first:
686 Well, I was a major and they were only senior
lieutenants, I guess, in the Navy. I wouldn't even
688 think of it by that time, so they were both teasing
me about that from time to time.

690 GW: He had a great sense of humor. I remember that he
could come into the Records Center, calm and friendly
692 with everyone; and maybe the next day or maybe right
after that, he'd call a little "board of directors"
694 meeting, you know, and he'd point out all the things
he'd seen that he wanted corrected in the next day or
696 two. He just laid it out like that. < Laughter >

DW: He might be laid back, but he was still in charge.

698 GW: He was definitely in charge, and he could walk
through the building and see more things (either good
700 or to be corrected) and, of course, he got results.

DW: Tell me, do they still have the Records Center out on
702 Charlotte Road?

GW: It's North Logan.

704 DW: Out by the Health Department, that's right.

GW: Right; used to be DeWitt Road, and now it's North
706 Logan. Yes, and really the archives did not move out
of there. They shared common storage area, and the
708 archives did not move out of there until last year
when they moved into the new building.

710 DW: Now, have they moved everything into the new
building?

712 GW: I believe that they've got everything out of their
auxiliary storage by now; however, that space is very
714 fast filling up.

DW: That's what I was thinking.

716 GW: You see, people have waited ever since the fire -- to
1950's. When you think about local government, even
718 school district records that should flow in -- just
from Wayne County alone, if we took all the materials
720 that should come in -- they'll be saturated, I
believe they say at their present rate (I believe I
722 heard Lee Barnett say) that in five years they will

be completely saturated, and they'll have to go for
724 auxiliary storage. Of course, I told them the
building was too small. They did not allow enough
726 space.

DW: I had an interesting experience a few years back. I
728 was researching the life of a friend of mine who was
in the Foreign Service, so I figured there were
730 records on her in the National Archives. I went to
the main building there in the center of Washington,
732 and they were not as particular as the State is here.
I mean, I didn't have to tell all about what I was
734 doing. I just walked in cold and made out the form
that I needed to, and applied for it and got a pass.
736 They brought me a box not unlike the box here, but I
never knew until then that the bulk of the storage
738 now is at their center way out in Maryland. It's
only the old, old things that are downtown now, back
740 pre-war. I don't know; it must be pre-New Deal, too.

GW: It's almost showcase downtown; and then they have so
742 much in Arlington, and Bethesda, and out in the
Midwest, and in the Great Salt Mountain in Utah.
744 We're scattered for security purposes now, and
volume. Think of the volume.

746 DW: I know. Several years ago, like about twenty-five or
so, the local American Legion Service Officer checked

748 something for me; ended up came out of the Army with
flat feet and they thought that they could compensate
750 me in some way for it. I wasn't interested in it,
but I thought if I had anything coming, I'd at least
752 investigate it. We made out the application for the
information. The response that came back to us was
754 that all those records were destroyed in a fire in
St. Louis some years ago.

756 GW: They did have a serious fire there that destroyed a
lot of our records.

758 DW: If I could furnish the name of the doctor who
examined me, they would see what they could do about
760 it, but who has any idea of the names of all those
nameless doctors that you go through? I abandoned
762 that, but that just shows what a fire can do to a lot
of people.

764 GW: Oh, yes. That was very serious for particularly Air
Force, I believe -- Air Force records that were lost
766 in that fire, because that was the main personnel
records office. In fact, I had their address and the
768 name of their commander at all times so that we could
refer people there. A lot of people would write to
770 us or call us for things that were not even under
State administration; but it was our job, I felt, to
772 always refer -- If you didn't know, you'd better

find out so you could refer to other people on. I
774 don't always run into that State service today (and
philosophy).

776 DW: That's too bad. I'm afraid I've wandered off the
subject. < Laughter >

778 GW: No, no, you can't wander off at all. I think that's
all part of your story, and it's a fascinating one.

780 It's good to hear you talk about these people that
were really exemplary civil service employees. I was
782 always proud to be an employee of the State of
Michigan.

784 DW: I was too, and it burns me up when I hear them making
derogatory remarks about bureaucrats, et cetera. I
786 know there are some rascals, but not all of them are
like that.

788 GW: I worked like a dog. < Laugh > I'm sure you earned
every cent you ever got.

790 DW: One fall, between Labor Day and New Year's, I worked
a whole extra month of uncompensated overtime putting
792 the budget together.

GW: I got 400 hours one time, because I worked every
794 Saturday. We were not open on Saturday, but that was
the day that the graduate students from U of M could
796 come. So I went in and worked, and the students
would come in and work. Finally, Dr. Reisen called

798 up and said: "You know you've got all this overtime.
We can't afford to have you take any time off, and we
800 have no money to pay you." I said, "Well just forget
it": And they did. That was what a lot of us did.
802 It would never happen now: Never happen now. I'm
not sure that I would be proud to be a State employee
804 today. It's part of an agency. Some of them I'm
very disappointed in.

806 DW: That's too bad.

GW: Yes. I expect it'll change. I don't know how I can
808 make it change.

DW: It's a little like what I think has happened to the
810 teaching profession; that they don't have the
professional standards they once had. They're more
812 interested in the dollars.

GW: Well, things swing one way, and then they swing back.
814 Here it says, "Moral Re-Armament from '58 to
'65," and you've talked about that in your interview
816 back on the 17th of July. '65 to '71 says Mackinac
College. I didn't realize you were associated with
818 the college, Donna.

DW: Oh, yes; because the center at Mackinac Island was
820 idle, really, from Labor Day until the following
summer, for the most part. Somebody had the
822 conviction that the best way to deal with that was to

start a college there, which would keep the place
824 humming between September and June. So we started
work on it in the early months of 1965. First we
826 thought we would open for our first freshman class in
September of '65. The more we got into it, the more
828 we realized that that was not possible. We had to
wait until '66. We operated for four years;
830 graduated one class of twenty-some students, I think.
< Laugh > It was a very interesting experience for
832 me. It started out using the property that had
belonged to Moral Re-Armament, and we added both a
834 library building and a classroom building for it.

Altogether, we had something between one and two
836 thousand students. I don't remember that I ever
heard that. I know one year, about our third year,
838 we were up near -- several hundred. It wasn't near a
thousand but maybe six hundred, or something like
840 that, students. We had lots of dormitory space, of
course, and we had a beautiful new classroom and
842 library, et cetera.

Then we ran into all the 1968 unrest among
844 students the world around. It got to the point where
between that and finances, which were always a
846 problem, it was touch and go. The trustees decided
along toward the spring, maybe March or April of

848 1969, they would discontinue the college. Then they
realized they had some students who were finishing
850 their third year there, who would have difficulty
getting a degree from another college if they had to
852 transfer; so we did continue through the 1969-70
year, mainly for the benefit of those students.

854 I ended up teaching the introductory course to
public administration, which was a great challenge
856 after it had been so many years since I had studied
it. I took a quick refresher course, going down to
858 the University of Michigan Institute of Public
Administration and getting some of the newer
860 literature. I found that they had changed a lot of
their theories about public administration since
862 1946. When we opened the college and dedicated it,
we had an academic procession, of course, and I
864 marched in with the Administration, that I was the
business manager for the College. Then we had
866 acquired a new business manager after a couple of
years, a man who was very good, and I was very glad
868 he came and took that over. I worked under him as
the finance officer and still did all the budgeting
870 and that kind of thing. Anyhow, then when we had our
one-and-only commencement in June of 1970, I was part
872 of the faculty, so I marched in with the faculty.

874 < Laugh > That's the extent of my college staff
 experience.

876 GW: Sounds like it was a rewarding one. You mentioned
 that there were definite changes in the philosophy of
878 public administration, from the days of your student
 time at U of M and your teaching time at Mackinac
 College. What were some of those?

880 DW: The main difference that I noted was that whereas in
 1946, we still thought the authority came from above.
882 We were still drawing organization charts in
 hierarchies with the top dog up here and the
884 underlings down at the bottom, et cetera. In the
 intervening years, there had been a lot written about
886 democratic government. I think they had a different
 name for it. Anyway, you couldn't just organize
888 things arbitrarily and say "This is the way it's
 going to be done." You had to get people together,
890 and get them to cooperate and work things out in a
 group.

892 GW: Goals and objectives; you began to hear that.

894 DW: Yes, whatever. It was a parallel to economic
 democracy, which of course, some of the big
 corporations like in Japan or like Volvo in Sweden,
896 where the people who actually do the work are the
 ones who do the planning too. It was just this

898 shift, which was general throughout global society,
really, so I had to think of that.

900 I had six students in this public administration
course, plus two who took it later as extension.
902 Because nobody had very much money at this point, I
didn't want to assign them all to use or to buy a lot
904 of textbooks, so I had written as a faculty person to
ask for sample copies of two of the up-to-date
906 volumes by authors that I was familiar with from 1946
and 7.

908 I got those and then I discovered a little
handbook (paperback) put out by the United Nations
910 which gave simple instructions for government
administration and how to organize, and went through
912 all of the planning and organizing and staffing and
all the things that you have to do, which I thought
914 summed it all up. Those could be bought for
something like a dollar and a half apiece, so I got
916 eight of those for the students in the class. My two
sample volumes, I put in a little carry-all in the
918 library there for the students to use so they could
all use the same books. We made out alright. I
920 don't know that any of them have gone on to careers
in public administration, although one of the young
922 men wanted to go into the Foreign Service, but I

don't think he did. He got waylaid by some more
924 attractive offer.

It's very interesting: We had a reunion at
926 Mackinac Island a year ago this summer, over a long
weekend. Quite a large number of the students came
928 to it and brought their husband or wife and the
children. They had a great time together. Of
930 course, these students are now just at the point of
mid-life crises and career changes, et cetera, having
932 been twentyish twenty years before. They were now
fortyish, so it was very interesting to talk to them.
934 All in all, I think although on the surface you'd say
Mackinac College did not succeed, it certainly did a
936 lot for the students who did go there; and I learned
a lot from it, so all was not lost.

938 GW: No, the institution may have floundered, but the
people did not.

940 DW: Yes, that's true.

GW: That was what was most important. After you left
942 Mackinac College, there's a gap there. You mean from
'71 to '74 you actually did something for fun? Did
944 you ever stop work?

DW: < Laughter > No, that wasn't quite it. Just at that
946 point my mother was in need of somebody to go up
there. My father had died in 1965. I had always

948 lived with them before I went to Mackinac, while I
was working in the Budget Office, et cetera; so I
950 moved back to Lansing. I thought that I would
probably get a job in Lansing. In fact, Civil
952 Service was advertising for someone who -- I think
it was to be in the Department, but to supervise the
954 budgets for all the institutions. It was something
that actually I had good training for, but when I was
956 interviewed for the job (I went and took the written
test and was called in for an interview), they asked
958 if I was free to travel to go visit these places. I
said I would, but actually I shouldn't. I had
960 realized by that time -- This was maybe November,
December, 1970, after I'd been home with my mother
962 for a few months -- I realized that she really needed
the steadying influence of having somebody living
964 with her, and seeing that she got safely to bed at
night and organized the next day.

966

< Tape 2, Side 1 >

968 That was the reason for that gap in there. She and I
did a lot of traveling -- not extensive traveling;
970 but we did have a couple of winters in Florida and
one in California during that time.
972 CW: That was an important time of giving to your mother.

DW: Yes. I learned a lot from that, too. Having never
974 married and never had a household that I was really
responsible for, I had not been through this before.
976 That too, was a time of learning.

GW: Indeed, it would be; it would be. I had not thought
978 of that, Donna, but that's true. That's true; so
that as you've continued your life alone, that put
980 you in good stead, didn't it?

DW: Yes.

982 GW: You needed that too -- part of your education. Then
'74 to '82; Secretary/Treasurer, Newton Associates
984 Realtors in Fort Myers Beach. You went into a whole
different --

986 DW: Some of the people that I had known in Moral
Re-Armament and at Mackinac College, too, had gone to
988 Florida. The older couple had lived there
originally, before they were with Moral Re-Armament.
990 Mother died early in 1973. I didn't put down there,
but I did for about six months, I worked as a
992 bookkeeper for the State YMCA of Michigan, which was
supposed to be a part-time job. It was more like --
994 you know how those jobs are. Their offices then were
down next to the Lansing YMCA in a house where Dr.
996 and Mrs. Herron used to live. It was interesting,
because after all these other experiences, I thought

998 for once I'd like to do a job that I thought I knew
 how to do. This is a trap, I decided afterwards,
1000 < Laugh > because it was too simple. All I could
 think of was how inefficient the operation was, and
1002 how it could be done much better. I thought, "I've
 been in management too long to sit here and do the
1004 simple clerical work and not be able to change it,
 not be able to direct improvements on the thing."
1006 < Laugh > So, I hadn't made any move for a change at
 all. I suffered through that winter, early 1974,
1008 when it was a real nasty, stormy, Michigan winter
 that's worse. Then I had a phone call from these
1010 friends down there at Fort Myers Beach, saying that
 they had need for a part-time bookkeeper and if I
1012 wanted to be a part-time bookkeeper, why didn't I do
 it in Florida instead of up in Lansing?

1014 GW: Sounded good.

 DW: Sounded good, and I responded very positively to
1016 that. I went down there and spent a week with them
 along in April and decided I would quit the YMCA and
1018 get myself down there. I started there on the 15th
 of June, and I was just a part-time bookkeeper to
1020 start with. We were trying to arrange my hours so
 that what they would pay me would come to just what I
1022 could earn under Social Security and not have to pay

1024 it back to the government. Their business grew very
1026 successfully, and I finally decided that if working
1028 full-time, I might as well give up the Social
1030 Security. I had started drawing it before my
1032 sixty-fifth birthday because I was taking care of
1034 Mother at that time, and I was not about to ask her
1036 to pay me a salary for doing it. So anyhow, I wrote
1038 to Social Security and told them I now had an
 opportunity for full-time employment, so don't send
 me any more Social Security. Actually it made it
 quite a bit more in the years that I was working
 there, and when I finally did retire at the end of
 1982, it made quite a difference in the benefit that
 I got. It worked out fine, and it was a very
 interesting experience down there, too -- and a good
 time to be in that field.

1040 GW: You've been in Lansing, but you've certainly spent a
1042 long time away from Lansing, very different times.
 When you return each time you must have seen great
 changes.

1044 DW: Yes, and lots of places that I just feel like I'm the
1046 stranger now. The changes are mostly for the better
 I'd say, although some of it's decayed, of course,
 but that happens everywhere.

GW: What about Lansing do you think was most rewarding to
1048 you, Donna, in all those years?

DW: I never thought of it.

1050 GW: Every community contributes something to you, as you
in your place in time.

1052 DW: Yes.

GW: Would your life have been any different if you, say,
1054 had stayed in California or stayed in the Army?

DW: No, I was very happy to come back to Lansing,
1056 particularly after my year down at Ann Arbor. I
always liked Lansing because of the size of it, and
1058 the diversity, and all of the activities that I could
take part in -- like singing in the Peoples Church
1060 Choir and singing in choruses when the Players Guild
gave a musical; several other things like that. I
1062 was on the go all the time. I was always, from 1934
on, I was active in the Lansing Business and
1064 Professional Women's Club.

GW: You said when we were looking at some of the
1066 materials I copied from the State Library's file (and
here's a copy of the bulletin); you said you were an
1068 editor for them.

DW: I helped work on it. I was part of the staff: I
1070 shouldn't have said "editor." That was the year when
Margaret Siebert was the state president, and the

1072 state president always appointed someone in her local
area to edit the bulletin. I think there were four
1074 of us altogether. One was in charge of mailing it
out. I was in charge of paying its bills. I guess
1076 the other two did the editorial work.

GW: It was a team production.

1078 DW: It was a team thing, yes.

GW: You mentioned the Civic Players. They've a long
1080 history in Lansing.

DW: Yes. Actually, Jane and I went to the very first
1082 play they ever gave. It was back in the early
thirties. It might have been while we were still in
1084 college. If not, it was when we were first out of
college. They gave "Captain Applejack," I think, at
1086 Eastern Auditorium. I'm sorry to say that my memory
isn't as good as it used to be.

1088 GW: Oh, Donna, your memory is phenomenal. Your syllabi
with the dates; I know you've done your homework to
1090 refresh your memory, and you find that talking about
it does trigger memory, doesn't it?

1092 DW: Yes; and names. I always have been very fortunate to
be able to remember dates.

1094 GW: Well, it's the figures, isn't it?

DW: Names, I have trouble with. For three days I
1096 couldn't remember the last name of a woman I was with

1098 in Canada week before last, something that I knew
perfectly well. It began with "G." I finally looked
on my calender, and I had written her name out on the
1100 day that we met her. So fortunately, that one I was
rescued on, but I have real blank spots.

1102 GW: But your mind is very agile when it comes to figures,
and so dates --

1104 DW: It's the dates that I -- I guess I have a logical
mind so that things come along in a logical
1106 progression.

GW: When you were with the Civic Players or active with
1108 them, what role did you play with that group? Were
you ever on stage?

1110 DW: I was in two or three of the musical numbers, just in
the chorus, and move around. The only straight drama
1112 I was in was "Victoria Regina." I was the maid in
the very first scene when two gentlemen came to
1114 wherever it was that Victoria and her mother were
living, to announce that the king had died, and so
1116 she was the queen. I came to the door, and I had
three lines to say. I think all three of them were,
1118 "Yes, m'lord." < Laughter > This is the extent of
my being on stage. It was a lot of fun. I always
1120 enjoyed the rehearsals. You learn a lot!

GW: Oh, yes, and the camaraderie of the people.

1122 DW: Yes, and we've had lots of very gifted people. Of
course, I haven't had anything to do with them for
1124 thirty years or more. Anyhow, I enjoyed it back in
the thirties.

1126 CW: Do you have any suggestions to people in Lansing,
particularly in the business community, for the
1128 future?

DW: Oh, I wish I would have, but I can't say that I have
1130 been close enough to it to have any ideas about what
would be helpful to them. Lansing, I think, is like
1132 most other places. To me, things seem so much in
transition, and I find it hard to picture just what
1134 it's all going to be like when it settles down
someway; because it certainly is not the place it was
1136 before. Of course, it never has been. I know when
we moved here in 1925, I had been used to Detroit as
1138 a big city. I had gone to Northwestern High School,
which at that time had 4,000 students. To come here
1140 to a school that had only somewhere around a thousand
-- (I know the graduating class wasn't more than
1142 three or four hundred, and it was only a three year
high school so it wasn't all that big) it just seemed
1144 like coming to a small town.

When we arrived, (it was September 2nd) and a
1146 night or two later I remember going downtown. They

1148 had just opened the repaved Washington and Michigan
Avenues. I think they had been widened, but we
weren't living here then so I didn't see it. It made
1150 them modern streets. They still had streetcar tracks
in the middle.

1152 At the same time, about September 1st, the
telephone companies had merged. They used to have
1154 the Citizens Telephone Company, which served Lansing,
and of course Michigan Bell served the State.
1156 Finally, I guess Michigan Bell must have taken over
the Citizens, but everybody was still learning new
1158 telephone numbers; so I always figured that Lansing
was coming into the modern era at that point.
1160 < Laughter >

1162 When I went to college, most of the time we were
living on the east side of Lansing, so I went to
college by streetcar. Fortunately, by my second year
1164 I had joined the sorority and spent a lot of time
there and had lunches there, so I had at least one
1166 foot in East Lansing.

1168 It isn't the same place it was. There has been
a lot of history. I was thinking this morning about
the time when the labor unions -- the UAW -- were
1170 getting organized, and they were having sit-down
strikes. When they marched from Lansing, they were

1172 coming out to the campus. My brother was old enough
 then so that he was in the student group that met
1174 them with bats and what-not and stopped them over
 there where they started up the hill to go to the
1176 campus itself. They never got there.

GW: They marched down Michigan Avenue.

1178 DW: They marched out Michigan Avenue, yes, past Harrison
 Road, and they got up to that west entrance there.
1180 That was where the students met them and said "No
 further" and got them turned around and headed back
1182 to Lansing. I remember that, because Bill had a
 little balsam wood bat that he had made.

1184 GW: Balsam wood? < Laughter >

 DW: Yes, it wouldn't hurt much. I think that's what it
1186 was, but it was only about that long. It would be a
 good cudgel. It was about the size of a nightstick.
1188 That's when the students stood for peace and order.

 GW: Was that a formal organization of students, or just
1190 spontaneous?

 DW: No, just spontaneous.

1192 GW: And they turned the UAW around.

 DW: I can't remember what year that would have been;
1194 probably in the late 1930's, although my brother was
 only in high school at that point. I'll have to ask
1196 him when it was.

GW: [In] '38-'39: A sit-down strike had triggered
1198 additional strikes -- the sit-down strike in Flint in
'38.

1200 DW: Was that '38? I've always thought of it as '36.

GW: Time is such a deceiver, isn't it? < Laugh > But a
1202 lot was going on at that time.

DW: Yes. Now that's sort of passed away, too. I mean,
1204 look at what's happened to the membership in the UAW
-- well, the whole CIO.

1206 GW: Quite different.

DW: And the work to be done in the world has changed too;
1208 so people don't just sit and copy figures anymore,
and they don't stand and screw bolts on something
1210 that's going past them anymore: The robots do that.

GW: We should be doing more important things.

1212 DW: Yes; which is kind of hard on the people who aren't
really qualified mentally for those more important
1214 things. We need more labor-intensive jobs for the
simple folk.

1216 GW: Well, we see efforts by major corporations such as
Oldsmobile or B-O-C now, (Buick, Olds, Cadillac), to
1218 retrain pipefitters and other people who do not find
as much need for any more. Some of those people
1220 respond to training in such a fine way. It was as if
they were waiting all their lives to do something

1222 more challenging than they'd done in the past. I've
witnessed some of that: So some of those "simple
1224 folk" had great potential that was never tapped --
but maybe didn't have the education or the
1226 opportunity to specialize.

DW: True.

1228 GW: But then there's that group of people who'll never
rise regardless of what we do, but that still have to
1230 have work.

DW: I've always admired the good apprenticeship programs
1232 that they have in Europe; Germany, and Switzerland,
and Denmark, and some of the others I've had reason
1234 to know more about. But you run into problems.

A couple or three years ago I had a friend, a
1236 German, who brought her nephew to this country to
give him the treat of seeing America. He had just
1238 finished his training -- supposed to be as a cabinet
maker, which he liked; but he had started to work for
1240 an employer, and he found that this employer didn't
need cabinet makers because he made things that came
1242 already cut out, and all that the employees had to do
was to put it together and turn it out. It was the
1244 production thing, you see. He was bored to death
with it so he quit. He wasn't going to have that.
1246 He wanted to get into photography, which I guess he

has gotten into, so it doesn't always work -- for
1248 some reason or other.

Back when my father and grandfathers were boys
1250 coming up, they were apprenticed. My father spent
five years as an apprentice for an engraver.
1252 Actually, when the Detroit Photoengravers went on
strike, he was just about six months short of five
1254 years. That was one reason he went to Philadelphia,
and he finished his apprenticeship there for six
1256 months. Then he could earn a journeyman's wages; the
great sum of \$18 a week. < Laugh >

1258 GW: Americans today, I see in my grand nieces and
nephews, are so impatient. To go through the
1260 apprentice program would take too long.

DW: Tell me: Where should I go? One figure I need for
1262 my manuscript is a comparison of the value of a
dollar in 1907 and 1990. There must be a reference
1264 librarian who will look that up for me.

GW: Yes. I'll get that for you, at the library.

1266 DW: Would you?

GW: Sure -- 1907, and 1990. That's important, sure.

1268 DW: My father was then working in Rochester, I guess. I
came across a letter that he had written to my mother
1270 in which he worked out their whole budget on \$18 a
week, believe it or not. He was going to give his

1272 wife \$12.50 of it; out of which she was to pay the
 rent, and buy the groceries and other household
1274 expenses, and for her own clothing. That left \$6.50
 [sic]. He was going to have a dollar fifty for
1276 carfare, et cetera, (I think he took his lunch to
 work) and they were going to put \$5 every week into
1278 what he called the mutual emergency fund -- which is
 saving for the future.

1280 I want to put under this -- this is a footnote:
 To make intelligent comparisons, remember that 1990
1282 dollars are worth so many times the 1906 dollars. It
 won't make a bit of sense to just to tell it this
1284 way. The \$19 (He'd been raised by that time from \$18
 to \$19) in 1906 would be equivalent to so much in
1286 1990 dollars.

 GW: We can come up with that, I think without any great
1288 problems.

 DW: I know I used to use figures like that all the time
1290 in the budget office, so I know they're available.
 You just have to know where they are. < Laugh >

1292 GW: That's hard to -- you know, you spend that for lunch.

 DW: I know. < Laughter > It's awful! but we made out
1294 alright. What's her initials? -- why we don't need
 to have one dollar bills anymore? As the Canadians
1296 have learned < unclear > or maybe they were fifty

cent pieces. I was trying to think the other day:
1298 What do we really need? the way we spend it these
days. Of course, a lot of people have wanted to do
1300 away with pennies and just start with nickels. I'm
just grateful I'm not an Italian and have to deal
1302 with ten thousand lira notes -- or the Japanese yen.

GW: Yes. Very complicated on the world market, isn't it?
1304 Right. Well, you are a wonderful informant, Donna.
You've had such a rich experience, and it's still
1306 going on. Still going on!

DW: I seem to go from one thing to another, don't I?

1308 GW: Well, that's the way your life has been. Everything
has flowed from level and one experience to another.

1310 DW: It's been very enriching, too, all these things that
come along and I've gotten involved in.

1312 GW: It doesn't sound like you were ever very aggressive
for them. They just seemed to -- came to you when
1314 they were due.

DW: They just came my way.

1316 GW: We really don't have a lot of control over what
happens to us.

1318 DW: No, and I think that's when people get into trouble,
when they decide things ahead of time and then have a
1320 fit when it doesn't work out the way they expected it
to. Nobody ever said that life was that way. Well,

- 1322 maybe a few poets have. I was thinking of Invictus,
 you know: "I am the master of my fate; I am the
1324 captain of my soul." Well, that was just bluster,
 really.
- 1326 So, have we covered everything? Probably not.
 GW: No, we haven't. We could talk for a long time, but
1328 that's probably enough for today. I don't want to
 tire you all out.
- 1330 DW: I know, I'm always surprised when I get started.
 GW: We find that memory triggers memory, and we go on.
1332 Is there anything you think we've left unsaid for
 this session?
- 1334 DW: No. --
 GW: We've gone through a lot of different things. I hope
1336 you and I can stay in touch, Donna.
- DW: Oh, I'd like to do that, yes.
- 1338 GW: If I can help you with your research --
 DW: You mentioned something about a picture. Do you need
1340 to have that?
- GW: I would like an up-to-date picture for our file, if
1342 you have -- just a snapshot would be fine.
- DW: I don't have much of anything with me, practically
1344 nothing of my own.
- GW: You can send it later, when you get back to Florida.

Lansing, Michigan

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