

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

History of Salem Printing

Publishing Experiences

O. H. 668

GEORGE ROGERS

Interviewed

by

Don Bennett

on

November 27, 1974

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

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INTERVIEWEE: GEORGE ROGERS

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SUBJECT: business side, problems of running a daily newspaper, editor-publisher viewpoint

DATE: November 27, 1984

B: This interview is between George Rogers, who has just retired as publisher of the Salem News, and Don Bennett of the Youngstown Oral History Program.

Mr. Rogers, what is your background or schooling for your area of the news-publishing business?

R: I was a graduate of Salem High School in 1927 and also a graduate of Mount Union College in 1931. I started with the News as a cashier in October of 1931. I started right in the midst of the Depression in 1931 as a cashier of the Salem News. I later developed in to more or less, an office manager, who supervised the circulation, classified, and also the accounting of the newspaper. During the war years, I had to work actively as circulation manager and various details.

B: Mr. Rogers, has your part of the news business always been the business side?

R: That is correct.

B: Could you give a brief description of the early problems of the News in the 1930's, 1940's and 1950's?

R: Parts of the deficit depression of the News was in a rather precarious position. They were trying to maintain a circulation of around 3,000. I'm afraid it was going to drop below that. The income was not good. We were, of course, part of the Brush-Moore newspapers at that time because Brush-Moore was formed in 1925, 1926. Louis L. Brush, who was president for a good many years, owned

the Salem News and the East Liverpool Review. He together with Roy Moore, and William H. Mosery of East Liverpool, formed a syndicate after they acquired the Miriam Star from President Harding shortly after he was elected President. The Brush-Moore group at that time included the Canton Repository, the Portsmouth Times, Steubenville Herald Star in East Liverpool, the Salem News, and the Irontown Tribune.

- B: You mentioned earlier that at one time you were business manager before becoming publisher. What is a business manager of a newspaper?
- R: In the Brush-Moore setup, the business manager pretty much acted as the general manager or the publisher of the newspaper. His title was business manager. However, in those days, there was sort of a bilateral independent of the rest of the operation. Then Thompson Newspaper took over; that is not their type of operation by any means. They feel that one man should be responsible for the newspaper. So after their acquisition I became publisher and I was over all the departments including the editorial. I feel that's a better operation also because the system of more or less an independent editor causes a certain amount of friction that shouldn't exist where a newspaper should be pulling together in all departments.
- B: What was your role as editor when you became the publisher?
- R: I can't say that the responsibility they simply name, and the control over the news department. I saw fit that I had to step in there. There wasn't an awful lot of difference. In other words, the business manager and the publisher were responsible for the operation of the newspaper, hiring the personnel, showing reasonable growth, making a profit, and the whole thing put together.
- B: The early years that you worked for the Salem News, how much of a part did the advertising play then, in regards to now?
- R: You mean incomewise?
- B: In proportion to incomes, yes.
- E: I would have to say that it was pretty much relative as it is today. Naturally, the advertisement has grown over the years. There are more chain stores coming in. Circulation and growth meant more advertising. I would say right now, and I don't think I'm disclosing any secrets, that approximately 75% of the income would be

from advertising, and that's all categories, including display advertising, classified advertising. It's the front page readers that you notice, and also the letterhead.

B: Could you briefly give me an idea of how much a page of advertising would cost, a column of advertising? How do the advertisements set up and so forth?

R: Advertisers just have news based on their own interests, the column inch or agate line. An agate line is a method of measuring national advertising and advertising placed by an agency. It happened to be computed in the interest by multiplying by fourteen because they figure fourteen agate lines to an inch. An agate line is what they call 5½ point when you get into typesetting.

B: Do they have general fixed fees throughout the newspaper business for an agate line of advertising?

R: Every newspaper has their own rates. Usually they're based on a national or open rate that would be your highest rate. Your contract rates according to volume would vary accordingly.

B: Is it cheaper to advertise by contract continuously or can you try to get these type ads in the paper?

R: Yes. All major stores would operate under a contract.

B: Does that mean that every so often they will have an ad appear or do you set some guidelines?

R: The News operated for a great many years on what we called a frequency contract. A certain amount, one time a week, two times a week, or three times a week. Recently, we have got in to, for volume advertising, a deep volume rate. They would get a special rate if they ran 20,000 issues a year, fifteen, ten, and so forth.

B: What page of the paper is the best page if you're an advertiser?

R: Frankly, I hate to say.

B: Generally, where would someone try to get their ad?

R: Many of the stores have definite locations. They do not pay any premium for that. I suppose you haven't noticed that McCullicks appeared on the back page for many, many years. You usually see Horace Schwartz on the society page. Strouss didn't come in to Salem until 1949 or 1950. They have always been associated close to the society

page. The advertisers pretty much take them under favor.

B: Do you have any guidelines, day by day, how much advertising is going to be in there?

R: No. When we base the number of pages we figure advertising. Our news hole is based on 63 columns a day. To decide the number of pages you were going to run that particular day, you would add up the total space, divide by 21--21 inches is our column length--to get our columns. Add that on to our 63 columns in the news hole and the page determination is based from that. In other words, if we ended up with 208 columns, we divide by 8--8 columns per page--that would be . . . I can't divide quick enough.

B: 27.

R: 27. All right, then we would have to go to 28 pages. The Salem News are two-page jumps. Any time you see a flashing in the paper, that means you had 26 pages and you would actually use four rolls of 30" news print, which is the widest news print we use down there. The next two pages would be on 15" news roll.

B: What was the largest newspaper you can ever remember putting out in one day?

R: That was the sesquicentennial edition in 1956. That was practically a year's project. A lot of that was actually run over a period of time. When we were printing that paper I think we went ahead sixteen pages. We would have to make sixteen-page sections and store them away until we got all the sections off. I had forgotten the number of pages, but the number that sticks in my mind is 208 pages.

B: This now is a collector's item, am I correct?

R: I hadn't been told it was, no.

B: They are kind of hard to get a hold of. I know that I've asked. The library has them, but I guess the people in the News have, I'm sure, several copies.

R: I don't know what shape they're in. We did not sell out the edition. We ran enough of all of them. I think they're in a warehouse or some storage. I don't know what shape they're in. I just couldn't tell you. After all, these are going to get brittle over a period of time.

B: You made the statement earlier that you have 63 columns of news hold. Does that mean that every day in the paper

you put that many columns in?

- R: No, not necessarily. That's a figure we use for page determination. In other words, the news hold could drop to below 60 or it could go up to almost 70 if certain days the advertising was such that it just didn't fit. We would have to either go up or down on it. You just can't say that 63, you're going to have that many every day. That's a figure picked out. We're going to try to base the size of the paper as close as we can to that figure. In fact, adding of it may include our being able to round it as tight as we might like to because we had a lot of five-columns ads in the paper. That means that you can't stack them up like you would like to, so that means going to more pages.
- B: What is the average newspaper that the Salem newspaper puts out a day?
- R: The average number of pages? I should say that it is averaging around twenty pages a day.
- B: Are there any days considered to be not a good day to advertise?
- R: I wouldn't say so. However, Saturday is usually light because most advertisers in Salem, naturally with no Sunday paper, probably don't figure their message will hold over too long. Tuesday is usually a light paper. In fact, the page sizes have changed over the years quite a bit. A good many years ago Friday was the big paper. They based it on all the Saturday business. Then the special food stores went back to Thursday and the rest of the merchandisers did too. They figured their ads would hold over the weekend and pretty soon the special foods went back to Wednesday. Just the last couple of years Monday has become a very important paper. It's one of the heaviest in the week because the stores, naturally, are trying to get business all week, not just on the weekend.
- B: Have you noticed any pickup because of the plaza and various new businesses coming in, in ads?
- R: By all means, that has to help.
- B: Is there that much advertising out of town? I mean for your local area.
- R: We figure the Salem Plaza belongs in town.
- B: I'm talking for your surrounding small communities and so forth. Do they advertise?

- R: The Salem News enjoys quite a bit of advertising out of Columbiana, some Lisbon. Hillier's Market advertises down there every week for three columns. We do not restrict it from anywhere anymore. The newspaper used to have a policy that they wouldn't take advertising out of the trade area. With the event of the automobile and so on, that's become horse and buggy outlook really. The News for a good many years has taken Hills in Youngstown. We've taken Colt Furniture in Alliance all these years. They've been a very good account.
- B: I notice that our plants here in town, they generally restrict their ads to informity, am I correct? There are days they're doing this or that?
- R: It's what the newspaper called institutional advertising.
- B: Can you expalin that?
- R: It's something like Ohio Edison trying to explain their problems and so on. They aren't selling any merchandise direct, they're selling the name of the company or the product. The factories in Salem are not regular advertisers by any means. The one time a year that the News taps that source would be on the progress edition, which for the last several years we were publishing on the last Friday of February.
- B: You mentioned different types of ads. Could you just briefly describe the different types of ads and what they are?
- R: The bulk of our advertising was what we call retail. That would include the department stores and foods, and all the clothing and drugs and so forth. General advertising is often referred to as national advertising. It's usually placed by an agency and it is promoting one product. Practically all automotive advertising is national advertising. Although, some of that are breaking that down. In fact, the last several years we've been running this American Motors right in our classified ads. They're classified right. In a larger newspaper, you see cigarette advertisements, soap, or Campbell soup or whatnot. That's all national advertising.

Then we have the classified. The classified is used by used car people, the real estate people, and also the general public for various wants and small items they have for sale. Also, for business notices for smaller businesses, plumbing, or home electricians, or whatnot. That is the different types. In addition, we do have what we call legal advertising now, which is usually set in six-point advertising and was required by law, such as any public notice, and ordnance by the city, or when a

city or a political subdivision is advertising for bids, things that are for sale, or whatnot. Those are the general categories of advertisements.

B: Today, what can you see as the biggest change in the news industry?

R: The biggest change? Do you mean newswise or business-wise or what?

B: Businesswise.

R: Actually, the newspaper industry as a whole has had a remarkable growth period since World War II. In other words, the Salem News has grown from a paper of around 3,000 to over 13,000 when I retired, which is remarkable. The population hasn't grown that much. During my period we did expand the Lisbon-Columbiana suburban area. The motor routes continue to grow and grow as you have seen all over the area. I suppose the biggest change in the newspaper industry is how we print the paper. In other words, we used to have about six lanotype machines that had to sit all the way down to type, and a few other machines. Now, we have what we call copygraphic machines. I suppose they were semi-computer, which your imputes would tape from a perforater tape with a code on it. You would just automatically run it. In other words, we could get the whole newspaper out on one copygraphic number zone, the setting, the body type. In other words, this one machine will set 60 lines a minute, whereas we used to have about four lanotypes just setting newscopies as fast as we could go. Then we have what we call a 7200 machine that will set various size heads up to 1". It's a very quick operation. It's done on what we call cold type because it's paste up. The Salem news is not offset printing. We're still printing it from a letter press. The way we make the plate then is engraving.

B: What would be the time in the 1930's and 1940's to print a paper up, in regards, to say, today?

R: I just don't follow you there.

B: Is there any cut-down in the time? Today you said it's printed up much faster.

R: Yes. Your manpower is much faster too. In other words, we're printing a lot more pages today with half the men that we had at the height of our period.

B: Are there any newspapers in the area still using the hot type or is everyone going over to the computer-type?



R: They're all getting there. Actually, the bigger city papers have been the slowest to move. I just don't know how far Youngstown Vindicator has converted. When they moved in that new plant over there, I think they did put in an awful lot of automatic equipment. The unions have fought it because it meant jobs. The old, slow device of setting type and so on is simply gone. That's all there is to it. I think New York is one of the last sebastians of the old typesetting. Finally, the unions are giving in there and they started the chain. Actually, the metropolitan papers did much to start the change than the smaller newspapers.

B: This is basically union?

R: Yes. In the paper tomorrow you'll see a reporter in a newsroom typing his story and the thing will automatically be transcribed and typed, even with the corrections he has to make directly. Right now we have to have women who punch tape to convert the story sent out from the newsroom in to the tape. It's not going to be too long when that's going to be bypassed. The typewriters that the reporters use will be so equipped that they will move directly to typesetting machines in the composing room.

B: Can you state that they will make corrections and so forth?

R: Yes, that is in use right now. It's not too general.

B: These new type machines, what is the average cost today?

R: The typeset News had, the 2100 series, I don't know how much it's gone up with inflation, but we hadn't bought any for a couple of years around \$20,000. They had better machines, not expensive at all, around \$7200. They're coming out with more sophisticated machinery all the time. In fact, when we went up to one of our papers in Michigan a person could actually set a whole ad on it with various type pieces. That mixed type we don't have down at the News, but that's something that's coming.

B: In the Thompson chains do you have any interplay of equipment, or is every paper ran individually?

R: Every paper is run individually. If you're talking about equipment, sure, if we have a piece of equipment we're not using in Salem and they can use it in East Liverpool or Stuebenville, we will send it down to them. Not all the Thompsen papers in Ohio are converted to this type of operation. East Liverpool is still on the hot type. They're moving as fast as they can.

B: Within the Thompson chain, how much independence do they

give, say in operation?

R: The general manager is responsible for making a profit. They operate under a budget system which we adhere to very closely. It's a very good operation. I would say editorially they do not interfere at all as far as the publishing decisions of the editors or certain issues that may develop in the community. In fact, I'm quite sure they never, during the period I was there, did they give you any of their taking in endorsements of political candidates.

B: If I'm correct, what you're stating is they expected you, for the trade area of Salem, to produce a certain set profit?

R: That is correct.

B: This figure could fluctuate according to the economy of the times?

R: Yes, it can. Of course, if unforeseen circumstances come up, I suppose if all the newspapers are starting to fall behind the expected budget, that's a massive course of events. If one drops, unless the manager can get a good cause, a loss of a main store, or certain developments in the community, a loss of a big industry that would cause the community to become somewhat frustrated, why they naturally take that into consideration. Everything being equal, the community doing well, you have not lost any major stores, and you start to drop, naturally they're going to look at what's wrong with your manager.

B: Since you have been a successful business manager and a publisher, could you tell briefly, what are some of the things you would avoid if you were telling someone to start out in the business?

R: Avoid? I have to think a bit about it. It depends on the type of community that you're in. I don't think editorialwise that you would go in and try to upset a community at least overnight. I think a newspaper should be a voice of the community, a fight towards progress. I don't think a newspaper, to be successful, would dare to go against the grain of the community too much. For instance, I remember the general manager or the divisional manager here told a man that he knew went into a town of Florida, that was back before civil rights had developed as far as it has, and starting preaching about integrating the swimming pool. At that time, that was suicide. He was starting up, but he got out in a hurry. I just don't think a newspaper can start ripping the

community apart in that manner. I think that they have to take it gradually, doing everything they can to help a community, but they certainly aren't going to fight everybody in it at the time, because they all would be against them. That by no means, would I say newspapers should not come out and speak up for what is right. I think they have to do a little over a period of time and make sure that they at least have some support in what they're coming out for. In other words, if you go into a community and start editorializing on things the community isn't ready for yet, why, I think you defeat your own purpose both businesswise and your chance for future employment.

B: As a publisher, what was your viewpoint in regards to politics?

R: We tried to stay independent of politics as much as we could. I was not active in any political organization. I'm sure Ray Dean wasn't. In fact, they wouldn't allow him to be because he liked to maintain independent judgment. However, I'm sure you have read the News and probably feel we have, which we have probably leaned towards the more conservative side. However, we did not have to take to endorse candidates in the office or party who we thought were best qualified.

B: In the early years when Louis Brush was the owner, did you have some problems?

R: That's another story. Louie was very active in the Republican party. Actually, the News, today, is considered a Republican newspaper. Somewhere along the line, you have to declare through some archaic law that, I don't know how the state can operate anymore, whether you're Democrat or Republican, because all legal advertising, it eliminates a county, is supposed to be advertised in a Democrat and a Republican paper. These simply don't exist anymore. We have one-newspaper towns and a lot of our own newspaper counties. How the state is getting around that, I don't know.

B: What are some of the state laws in regards to publishing notices and so forth, and papers, legal notices, education notices, and so forth?

R: Well, for instance, the school district, since you're a teacher, would have to publish every year its financial report. It has to publish, which is a small notice usually around July, the budget hearing for anybody that wishes to go in and look over the budget for the coming year. All cities and townships and various political subdivisions have to do the same. When they

are going to sell bonds after an issue has passed and they're permitted to sell the bonds they have to advertise the sale of the bonds. When they are selling or purchasing large items they have to advertise, but they don't. The laws change from year to year. I can't tell you right now that I think perhaps a school or any political subdivision would probably buy perhaps \$5,000 worth of merchandise or equipment without advertising bids right now. It used to be much smaller. It allows a chain naturally, with higher prices. Of course, the state requires all cities to advertise their ordinances that passed. If there's to be a tax levy, or a bond issue for a school or any political subdivision, it has to be advertised through the board of elections. The state does prescribe the fee that can be charged.

B: This is a fixed rate?

R: Yes. If the paper is under \$15,000. From then on they charge the general rate.

B: You mentioned that when you started the circulation was 3,000, now it is 13,000. Can you attribute this mainly to improved roads and transportation, the enlarged trade and influence area?

R: I would think so. Over the period of time we've also expanded our news hold, our news coverage. In other words, we made a great effort to cover news from Columbiana, Leetonia, Lisbon, Damascus and whatnot. I suppose back in the early 1930's we were more just Salem than these environments. We had correspondence set up in those days, but we did not go all out like we do today. We found the circulation was there, so naturally we wanted to protect it; and for future growth it meant expansion in our news hole, news coverage of a greater area. In other words, if you notice the News, we probably have as much space covering the News branch of the district and United almost as we do Salem. That's important because we have a lot of readers in those areas.

B: Do you feel that the circulation will continue to rise?

R: I don't see any reason why it shouldn't. There are some possibilities with the high cost of newsprint and the course of the newspapers to rise that will cause the price of the newspaper to go up. Naturally, on your fringes, the resistance is going to be greater. I suspect every time we raise the price of the paper and the Vindicator raises their's, which would be our Metropolitan competition, that you become more and more newspaper families.

B: The News does have a lot of circulation in the out-lying communities like you mentioned. A newspaper there, do you expect them to sell all of them or do you have a system where they can send these back in, or what is your program regarding the News?

R: When I left we did accept returns. Is that what you meant, from newstands?

B: Yes.

R: We had carriers set up and motor routes in all those communities too. It's very important for a newspaper to control their returns though, because as I say, the price of newsprint has been going up in the last year to \$165 a ton to over \$250 right now, even triple its returns.

B: What is the actual cost of putting out a single newspaper? It would only cost us 15¢. What's the actual cost of it? Do you ever break this method?

R: Not recently. The old Brush-Moore accounting system used to break their cost down to what we call the page costs. We haven't been doing that in the current accounting except for opposing unit costs. I suppose a page could be very easily figured.

B: We're about running out.

What effect does the radio news, the radio, the television have upon the news today?

R: I think the newspaper publishers have a great fear of what radio will do for them and against them. What they actually found out if whether the appetite of people is for the news. Now television started it over again. As a whole, I'll think you'll find that the newspapers have not lost in circulation. Over the years their advertising has increased. Newspapers as a whole, over the country, take up, by far, the greatest portion of the advertising dollars. Television has grown naturally, from nothing in 1950 up to at least two-thirds the way of what the total newspaper estimated income is during the year. Television has cut in drastically on national advertising, and to a certain degree on local retail. I can't say if television is going to hurt the newspaper over the years to come. They simply do not have the time to allocate to various smaller advertisers. It would be hard for a television company to reproduce all the items that a grocery runs in a newspaper each week. There's a certain advantage to print media where people can decide what they want to buy, whether they

want to, rather than have their heads stuck on a television tube when the advertising program is flashed on. I suppose one of the greatest competitors to newspaper advertising hasn't materialized yet. That's the day when CATV (cable television) develops to where it's in every home, and that could very well be. A good many newspaper publishers have realized that and have made attempts to control the CATV network. Whether that develops or not in the next generation, I can't tell you. It's happening rather slow.

B: Is there any moral commitment you have in regards to the type of an ad you would take? Are you willing to take any type of an ad?

R: Yes, there's a moral commitment there. It's pretty much up to the judgement of the general manager. I suppose you have seen ads, especially some of these X-rated movie shows at times. They raise questions in our minds whether to run them or not. In fact, we have had quite a few of them. I don't recall we ever just turned any down blankly, but some of the cuts or pictures they wanted to run in the ads we said we refused to run. What we try to do is to not accept any advertising that wouldn't be in good taste. After all, we figure that a newspaper is a family affair, and certainly we do feel that subscribers can object when something gets in there that they think would not be in the best interest of the children who probably read it.

B: In your many years on the newspaper what can you remember as your most amusing incident or incidents?

R: Most amusing? I would hate to say.

B: A foul-up of some nature or sort.

R: I wouldn't consider a foul-up very amusing when you're trying to get a paper in everybody's home every day. I suppose some of the most amusing things are some of the slips that get through, what we might refer to as a typographical error, which makes a lot of nonsense. Some of them could be a little risque in their meaning. I can remember a lady who was a very religious person setting lanotypes back in the old days. She was setting types on St. Patrick's Catholic Church in Leetonia and I think she has mass at 8:30 a.m. and other asses. She forgot to put the "m" on.

B: Some newspapers use gimmicks and so forth to attract readers and so forth. Do you feel the Salem News ever did this in the past?

- R: We've attempted gimmicks. I can't think that they hold subscribers. The only thing we use that would be outside promotion with carriers was this magazine campaign we ran once a year. That was very good when we started it and it's still a good promotion to get newspapers. I can't say the success in getting magazine subscribers is too great though. The number of magazines and the quality of magazine has simply gone down. Naturally, a lot of the newspapers, I hardly consider them gimmicks; we have newspaper boy promotions whereas a certain number of starts, where they can get a trip to Cedar Point or whatnot. That's good because it started in that manner, usually at least 50% of them.
- B: What do you remember about World War II, the problems of World War II? Were there any problems?
- R: As far as the newspaper was concerned?
- B: Yes.
- R: Lack of help. Back in those days I had to run the classifieds and the circulation and go out in the mail room and deliver papers and everything else. We just didn't have the help.
- B: Did you hire many women or couldn't you find them satisfactory?
- R: Not too many women were available then. The newspaper was not a fat industry in those days. It did not have the money. Women would go in to the shops in Salem or anywhere else and make twice as much money. You could see what the problem was at the newspaper in trying to get help.
- B: Today, do you feel the news industry is being competitive with the other job fields?
- R: Yes, I would think so. Newspapers have become much more prosperous since World War II. Their ability to pay better wages are greater. I can't say that would compete with Lordstown's wage structure. A newspaper does have something to offer that a lot of them don't, and that is a fairly good assurance if they do the job, of steady employment. They're not subject to layoffs.
- B: Do you have any set fee for writers, people in the shop, or is this just sort of a nationwide scale?
- R: The only place we have a scale is in our mechanical end. Of course, we have to bend the mark for the workers, advertising men. If you see a good man and you want to keep him, you're going to have to offer him the going rate

to have him interested in the job.

B: You mentioned an advertising man. Do these people that go out and get ads get a commission or do they work on salary?

R: No. They work on salary. We do that in plants where they make considerable extra money. It's not a commission basis, no.

B: What about your reporters, do you sort of have a system of a beginner and so forth, or a scale for them?

R: Yes. It's something that's just set down. We do have a minimum of what we would begin a man. Of course, that would depend. Now, if you're going to take somebody that looks like they might have some ability in their writing field of a high school, you are not going to offer him as much as the graduate of the journalism school.

B: Do you try to get, today, students from journalism schools?

R: Yes, we have hired several. I would say this though, an awful lot of cases we've been terribly disappointed in. I would prefer if you could find a natural at a high school really, to train them. You pick up a young man from journalism school, especially if he comes from several hundred miles away, is more or less a stepping stone to a larger paper. We can hire somebody whether he's from right out of high school or from a journalism school in this locality. If he lives in and is interested in it, he will probably stay a little longer. We hired kids out of journalism school that can't even write good English. I have some criticisms for some of the universities and the J (journalism) schools.

B: Being in the news business most of your life, what would you say would be the essential qualities of a good newspaper item?

R: A good newspaper item or a good newspaper reporter?

B: A good newspaper reporter. We'll do it that way.

R: All right. Basically, I would like to see him have a good command of the English language. He has to have a certain amount of an ability to write also. He would have to have an exploratory nature, whereas he can go out and get stories. Ray Dean called it a nose for news. He has got to be a hard worker, and also, he's got to have a certain amount of a good personality, whereas he can get the calmness of people. I think too many we've got are sort of oddballs from the J schools.



As a whole, they simply don't get along with the public. A good reporter naturally, does not necessarily have to be a good public relations man. He's got to dig even where he steps on people's toes. On the other hand, I see too many reporters who are discourteous. Naturally, I think if they get to ire the people, they're simply not going to get the stories. In other words, an editorial man or a newsman is going to get a certain amount of leads. He's going to build up a certain amount of friends or people that have a certain amount of confidence in him, let's say at the school or city hall. And if the chap knows that the story is going to break some time or if something is going on, he will give him a tip. If you can't make those contacts, you don't have those outside contacts, he's not going to get any stories period. A good reporter has to be a "good Joe" in a certain way to get his leads.

B: Do you have a union here in the Salem News?

R: Just in the composure room. The ITU.

B: Do you offer fringe benefits to all employees?

R: Yes. We had group insurance. We have pension plans, vacation plans, et cetera. I would say the Salem News offers practically all the fringe benefits that any other company does.

B: Do you offer stock options?

R: Thompson stock can't be bought over in the market. That's something you couldn't buy from Brush-Moore because it's all family named, three families.

B: The activities of the community, do you think it's the paper's responsibility to cover them extensively?

R: Yes.

B: I think that's about it. Do you have any further comments you would like to make?

R: No, I believe that's all. I think I said a while ago that I think the newspaper should be a voice in the community, and when you mentioned if they should cover all the activities, I was thinking more or less civically. We cannot send a reporter out there for all the media that goes on. That involves a lot of overtime and brings the costs up prohibitively. Often you can get the media story without having to have a reporter at it. A newspaper should take an active part like it did since I retired on the memorial building project. Sorry it

failed, but there are times that everything we go after doesn't come to pass.

B: I noticed that they do a very good job of certain interests. For example, they cover the school quite well; they cover city hall quite well. You said earlier, reporters have people inside. Is this generally how they find this information out?

R: The city hall reporter should have certain contacts up there that he can get the tips and he's got to and also go to the school board. We always have a reporter at the school board meetings in Salem. The school board hasn't liked a lot of the positions we have taken. When you figure the school boards are spending 75% of the communities taxes, why, I think they should be looked at a little bit.

B: One last question, what do you feel has been the biggest crisis Salem News has faced since you've been connected with it?

R: The biggest crisis? I can't recall of anything that would come to the crisis stage. During my period there, we never had a strike. We were at loggerhead several times and thought we were going to, but we always managed to work it out. There was that one time the competitive newspaper started in Salem. It didn't last very long. I can't think that was at a crisis period, however. It was not a daily, it was a weekly. I suppose the biggest crisis right back in the 1930's was when you were wondering where they were going to get the money to meet your payroll.

B: Do you feel the paper problem today can create a problem?

R: Do I feel what?

B: The paper, the rising cost of paper, and in some cases a shortage of paper?

R: It's always a problem. It's a case of how long a newspaper can continue to pass costs on because I think all businesses are looking at that. It's not only newsprint costs, it's other material costs and paper costs. Of course, we're getting into a recession right now, how long it will last, I don't know, and what it will do to the newspaper I do not know. However, for the period of years I was there, it seemed to be a gradual increase all the time of high prices and wages, but I would say up to the last year or so wages have increased faster than the cost of living has. I know it has in the case of the Salem News. The ability to pay these higher prices or pass prices on

doesn't create any big problem. You get in to a recession, people out of work, purchasing power being destroyed, the newspaper will suffer like anybody else.

B: If you have no further questions, I think that's about it.

END OF INTERVIEW